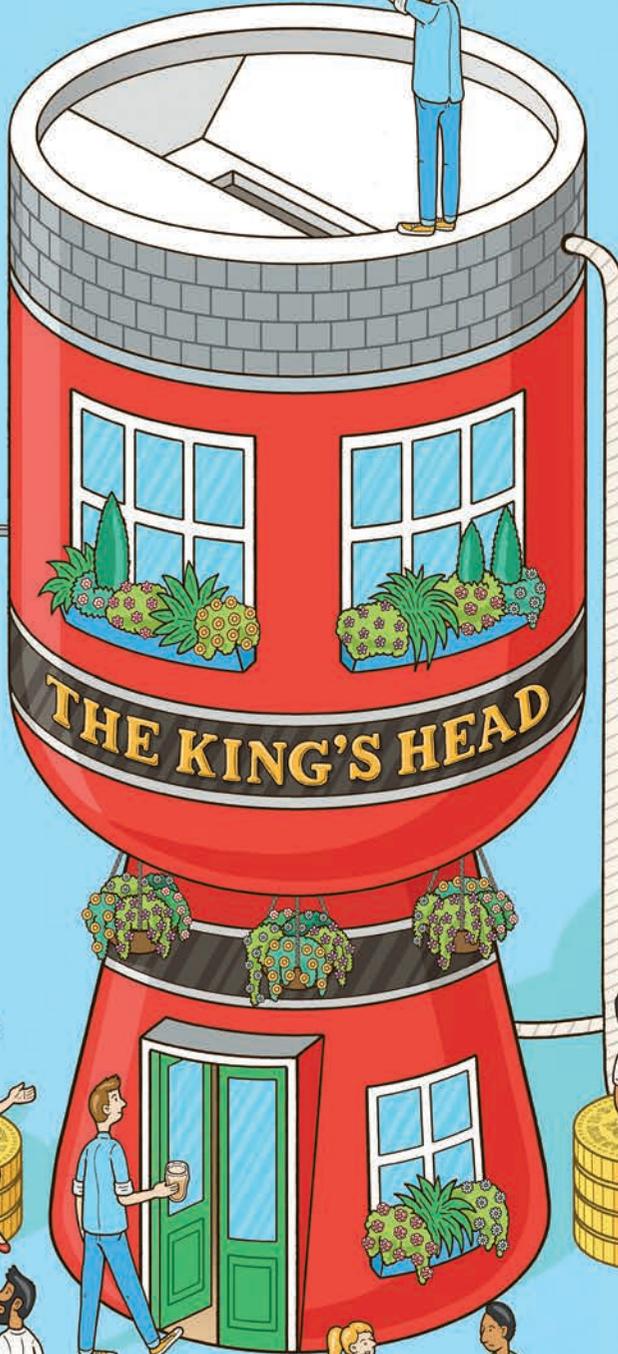


# BEER

ISSUE FIFTY-FOUR | WINTER 2021



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How pub-goers are taking action to save their locals



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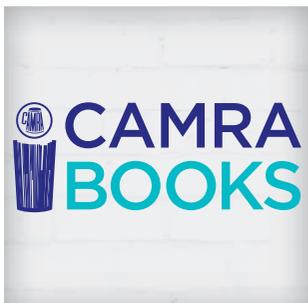
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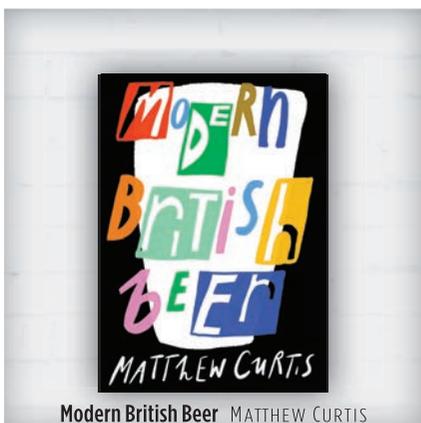
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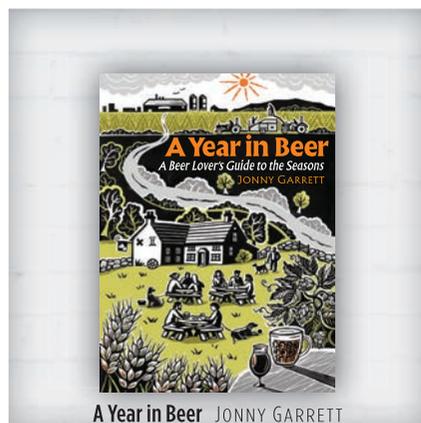
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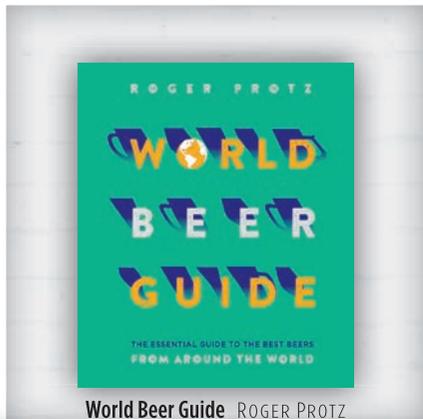
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# From the editor



Increasingly, community ownership plays an important role in the lives of many people. When a much-loved or neglected pub closes or goes up for sale, it can often be one of the last community services in the area. What can people do to save their pub?

The loss of a pub can be a collective emotional blow to a neighbourhood. It will also have an effect on the local economy and community infrastructure – there is nowhere to meet, reduced focus for community life and

no cohesion. In her feature on community ownership, Laura Hadland looks at how some localities were galvanised into action and became a powerful force bringing creativity, business acumen and hands-on support to save a pub. People become proud of their pub and there was an added bonus – as yet there hasn't been a single failed local operating under community ownership.

After months of disrupted trading, Heather Knibbs looks at what pubs and breweries can do to make sure they provide a safe space for women. A busy pub is a good thing – but not if half the population feels unsafe or excluded. If everyone in favour of a safe space for all spoke out against the behaviour that leaves women feeling they don't belong in a pub or working in a brewery, then true inclusivity might be closer than we think.

There are still some breweries that can trace their roots back more than a century. But time was not kind to such family companies and most have gone. Greed, incompetence and poor business acumen all contributed to their decline. In his article, Will Hawkes talks to some of the people who want to ensure their business survives from generation to generation.

Who knows, in 100 years people could be talking with pride about breweries founded during the glorious reign of Queen Elizabeth II!

● In the *What's Brewing* section you will find eight pages of the latest news from CAMRA including the Golden Awards, *Good Beer Guide* sponsorship and the return of the Campaign's much-missed beer festivals. More news is on our dedicated online platform at [camra.org.uk](http://camra.org.uk)

**Tim Hampson**



## GUEST CONTRIBUTORS

**Laura Hadland** looks at some of the communities that have taken back control and saved their beloved local from closure



In her first feature for *BEER*, **Heather Knibbs** asks: are pubs providing a safe space for women?



**Emma Inch** interviews CAMRA's own real ale hero, Christine Cryne



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# Pillar of the community

Is community ownership the future of the British pub? asks **Laura Hadland**

ILLUSTRATION BY PHIL HACKETT

## The announcement of a £150m

Community Ownership Fund in the March 2021 Budget suggested the government has great faith in it as an effective model of pub management. Grants of up to £250,000 in match funding are being made available for groups of people wanting to take control of community assets, including pubs.

Most pub projects won't need the full amount of match funding available. In the past, some venues have been purchased by community groups for sums in the region of £100,000.

All the evidence suggests the government is backing the right horse. The first community-owned pub opened its doors in 1983 and now nearly 150 projects are running successfully. There hasn't been a single failed business while operating under community ownership in more than 35 years because, by their very nature, community pubs have a loyal customer base to support them.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak said: "While local assets around the UK have been at risk of vanishing over recent decades, history has shown that community groups can run them successfully when given the chance; the hardest part has

been raising the cash needed to buy them before it's too late." Split over four years, the Community Ownership Fund will potentially support a large number of grassroots organisations in their own bids for pub ownership, bolstering the support and advice already available from CAMRA and charities like the Plunkett Foundation.

Community ownership gives people the opportunity to rescue a business and grow it to precisely meet their needs. The success of all of the current projects bucks the trend for pub closures in the sector more broadly. The impressive record is particularly remarkable given that most pubs come under threat in the first place because their owners declare them to be unviable.

There are a number of models available to run these projects – as charities, community-interest companies, a non-profit company limited by guarantee or as a community benefit society (CBS).

The most common framework is setting up as a CBS. There are around 90 such societies currently in operation, around two-thirds of the total number of community pubs in the UK. They are primarily owned by local people and

**'All the evidence suggests the government is backing the right horse... There hasn't been a single failed business while operating under community ownership'**







sometimes more far-flung investors who buy community shares. These shares can cost anything between £1 and £500, and there is usually a minimum shareholding value, which will range from £30 up to £1,500. They are governed democratically with each member having one vote, regardless of how much they have invested.

A CBS by definition has to serve the interests of its community. This is in contrast to a cooperative, which serves only the interests of its members. One of the most recent projects to get off the ground is the White Hart Community Inn in St Dogmaels, Pembrokeshire.

Less than two weeks before its 250th birthday in May 2019, the White Hart Inn closed its doors. A group of 70 residents, shocked at the closure, determined to buy the pub and make sure it did not stay shut.

It took them less than two years, half of which was under the stringent conditions of lockdown during the coronavirus pandemic, to raise the £240,000 needed. More than £150,000 was pledged in the first month as the community got behind the venture.

The CBS's offer on the pub was accepted in February 2021 and now fundraising continues to help pay for the work needed to open the doors on the business once again. There are more than 400 shareholders. They are mainly local, but the project has also attracted investors from wider Wales, as well as the United States, Canada and New Zealand. The management committee

### Councils' key role

"As well as this new funding announcement, the government and councils must make sure pub-protection policies in the planning system are enforced so developers can't exploit the pandemic. This would also give communities the opportunity and time needed to use the new Community Ownership Fund to take over their pub or social club if it is threatened with closure, change of use or demolition."

**Nik Antona**  
CAMRA national chairman

is in the process of surveying locals to find out what they would like to see from the pub when it reopens, including events and the food and drink offer.

**The first community-owned pub in the UK** was the Red Lion in Preston, Hertfordshire. After the death of the previous landlord in 1980, Whitbread decided it wanted to sell the property and it be turned into a steakhouse-style restaurant. This idea raised more than a few eyebrows locally. In fact, it was so unpopular that people in the area raised £90,000 to buy the pub and the doors were happily thrown open again in 1983.

The Red Lion is now run for the shareholders by a board of directors in conjunction with the managers, Ray and Jo Lambe. A central part of its community, the pub boasts an enviable home-cooked menu, a darts team and four cricket teams plus a two-acre garden. Cask-conditioned beer is offered from five handpumps. Such is the quality of the offer that the pub was named as one of the top four in the country when it became a finalist for CAMRA's Pub of the Year in 2019.

George & Dragon is  
a former CAMRA  
Pub of the Year



**Clockwise from left:** Regulars celebrate 30 years of community ownership; Jo and Ray are at the helm now; barbecue fundraisers helped raise money to buy the pub

The George & Dragon in Hudswell, North Yorkshire, went one better and won that award. The original closure of the pub in 2008 had left residents of the small village with no facilities beyond their village hall. The fundraising campaign and extensive refurbishment needed to relaunch the pub took two years. But having brought the business back online, the team behind it was able to set up a shop staffed by volunteers, community allotments and a village library with free internet access.

It was the first community-operated business to be named Pub of the Year by CAMRA, winning the accolade in 2016.

The pub's Stuart Miller says: "Being part of the community is what first attracted us to the George & Dragon. This community combined with our vision and love of beer to create an amazing, friendly atmosphere while supporting local breweries and producers. Our success has enabled us to attract more people to the pub, supporting other local businesses and ensuring it remains a viable enterprise while still acting as the heart of the village."

**"It's a great way to ensure the pub is fully tuned in to the community... You can sense people are proud of their pub"**

Changes to the planning system in recent years have really encouraged more community groups to look into ownership of their pub than ever before.

**This frenzy of activity is in no small part thanks to CAMRA's campaigning.** Long-standing member of the Pub Campaigns Committee and CAMRA's national planning policy adviser Paul Ainsworth has spent many years helping branches and independent campaigners resist pub closures. He believes community ownership is a superb model:

"It's a great way to ensure the pub is fully tuned in to the needs of the community. There is a unique atmosphere; you can sense people are proud of their pub. It's there to deliver for local people what they want from a local pub, rather than what a landlord thinks they want."

People like Paul have to be eternally vigilant to prevent viable pubs from

being permanently lost. He says sometimes it is plain to see that businesses are being deliberately "mismanaged for tactical reasons" – purposefully run down so the owners can smooth the passage of an application for a change of use, perhaps converting a central London boozier into lucrative apartments, for example.

Initially, there were permitted development rights, which had allowed developers to change the use of a pub building without applying for planning permission. In the early 2000s this led to the closure of huge numbers of pubs. The introduction of Assets of Community Value (ACV) in 2012 assisted campaigners in the protection of pubs.

Buildings whose main use or purpose was 'furthering the social wellbeing or social interests of their immediate community' could be nominated as an ACV, which gave groups nearby the right to bid if the building was up for sale and also gave it more time to fundraise in order to make a purchase.

Then, in 2015, any pubs that had been named as an ACV had permitted development rights removed



An ACV listing has helped campaigners delay redevelopment of the White Hart in Cray's Pond, Hertfordshire

entirely. This exemption was extended to all pubs in 2017, giving a new stimulus to the market. Anyone wishing to sell a pub had to dispose of it as one and could not change or convert it. CAMRA was aware of 56 projects either trading or in the process of being set up when the law was changed. That number has now shot up to 147 as the opportunities for community-ownership projects have increased.

The White Lion in Cray's Pond, Oxfordshire, is an example of a pub that has been listed as an ACV. Its story continues to rumble on, although perhaps the situation is looking more hopeful than it has previously.

The building was sold to a private individual in 2013 by Greene King. He tried to turn it into a residence despite not having permission and, after three enforcement notice prosecutions by the council, he was ordered to leave and pay £20,000 costs in March 2019.

The local had already been made an ACV, after an application by the parish council, before it was sold as a pub investment in 2013. The status expired after five years, so a community group that had formed to save the White Lion applied for a renewal. This application was appealed by the owner, but a tribunal

was refused and the covenant renewed in January 2021, which limited the owner's options for how he could use or dispose of the building. The latest news from March 2021 was that the owner had been in conversation with potential tenants, who already operated hospitality businesses in the area.

**Part of the magic of community**

ownership is being able to provide much-needed amenities to people nearby. Mark Waters is a shareholder and former director at the Red Lion in Preston, and credits the success of the UK's longest-running community pub to the diversity of the offer put on by the pub's managers.

Ray and Jo Lambe have been successfully keeping the rudder steady for the past decade. "Jo's food isn't overly typical pub fare," Mark says. "It's home-cooked and delicious, often using local, seasonal produce."

**'The wheelchair-accessible Bevy Bus gets plenty of use, including bringing residents to the Friday lunch club'**

Mark also praises the well-kept and changing selection of real ales, ciders and perries on offer at the freehouse.

"The Red Lion walks a fine line between pub and restaurant, and we're keen that it remains well and truly in the former zone. The pub is hugely well supported by drinkers and the local community simply going for a pint. That's a huge thing. It's the social pavilion for four cricket teams and other local sports clubs and societies. It really is our community's beating heart."

The Bevy in Brighton, East Sussex, is the only cooperative pub on a housing estate and it also provides an enviable set of services to the locality.

One important service is the wheelchair-accessible Bevy Bus. It gets plenty of use, including bringing residents to the Friday lunch club and transporting their sponsored university rugby team. It also takes local Brighton & Hove Albion fans to home league games. The lunch club is not the only activity on offer. There are arts and crafts sessions, a regular dementia café and family activities alongside more



traditional pub events like quizzes and music nights.

The pub also boasts a training kitchen with an edible pub garden where young people learn cooking skills. While the Bevy has been unable to put on its usual £3.50 community lunch menu during lockdown, it has been providing a much-needed meals-on-wheels service to vulnerable people.

“As a pub owned by the community, we have an understanding and a certain level of trust, which is just not available to the council or other organisations,” says the Bevy’s secretary, Chris Llewellyn. “That is why the moment Covid-19 kicked in, we knew which of our regulars might have trouble accessing food and we were able to get together a network of volunteers to deliver our meals on wheels almost immediately.”

**These businesses are successful**

because they are run by their community, for the community. They put services that are needed and valued at the heart of their operation. This ensures that they are well used and well loved.

It is this symbiosis of need and purpose that the Plunkett Foundation seeks to nurture and grow through advice and financial help. The charity supports rural communities tackle the issues they face through community businesses.

**Clockwise from above:**

Bevy has a community role; the pub provided meals on wheels during lockdown; cask beer is part of Bevy offering

It has helped to establish more than 700 community businesses over the past 25 years, including numerous pub projects. It is a long-time partner of CAMRA in supporting these ventures.

James Alcock is the chief executive of the Plunkett Foundation. He believes that if it is managed correctly, the government’s new Community Ownership Fund could save numerous pubs and transform the communities that need them most.

“The pandemic has highlighted the value of community pubs in providing lifeline services and activities to support people in need,” James says. “We already have 250 community groups working with us to save their pub and we need to ensure this fund lives up to its promise.”

CAMRA’s Paul Ainsworth agrees. He is optimistic about the future of the pub. “The public appetite for pub-going is as strong as ever. Pub companies could well be looking to offload premises after lockdown and new operators are waiting in the wings to take over. Community groups are well placed to buy and owners are obliged to

sell because getting a change of use is more difficult now.”

The data backs Paul’s assertions. CAMRA keeps a database on permanent and temporary pub closures via WhatPub. The numbers of permanent closures have come down noticeably since the change to planning law in 2017. Paul has also seen a significant number of planning applications where he lives in Barnsley and he believes “the sector’s actually in quite rude health, despite the pandemic; it will come roaring back”.

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**Laura Hadland** is a food and drinks writer, and author of *50 Years of CAMRA*. She writes about beer, among other things, on her blog *The Extreme Housewife* ([extremehousewife.com](http://extremehousewife.com)) and supports small businesses, including pubs and breweries, through her creative agency Thirst Media ([thirstmedia.co.uk](http://thirstmedia.co.uk))

# Kith and kin matter

**Will Hawkes** looks at a new generation of family brewers

**For all its faults, sometimes Twitter** comes up trumps. “Yesterday I brewed with a legend,” wrote Alice Batham on the social media website in May, above an image of her father, Tim, who runs the Black Country brewery Bathams, digging spent grain.

“[He] has put through thousands of brews on the same brewhouse our ancestors installed.”

Alice, 27, is the sixth generation of Bathams to have served this legendary brewery, founded in 1877 and run from the back of the Vine (also known as the Bull and Bladder) in Brierley Hill, since the early years of the 20th century.

Family bonds form the backbone of many of Britain’s most famous breweries, of course, but what sets Alice apart is that, at Bathams, the family is still involved when it comes to digging out the mash. It’s a tradition of hard work

that connects her and Bathams to an impressive variety of Britain and Ireland’s breweries, from historic institutions to 1980s micros and even the edgy iconoclasts of the craft scene. Brewing is full of people who have followed their forebears into the brewhouse.

There’s Jane Kershaw, 2019 Parliamentary Beer Group brewer of the year and also a sixth-generation brewer, at Joseph Holt in Manchester; Owen Scullion, who runs Hilden brewery in Lisburn, which was founded by his parents, Ann and Seamus; Ed Clarke, yet another sixth-generation brewer, this time at Hook Norton in Oxfordshire; Tom Bott, whose family links to Titanic in Stoke have helped him build Signature Brew in London; Howard Goacher, who runs the Maidstone brewery set up by his parents, Phil and Debbie, in 1983; and many more besides.

For Howard, 29, the brewery has been part of his life since he can remember. “When I was a kid, school holidays meant going to work with Dad,” he says. “We’d be delivering beer or helping out around the brewery. On Sunday mornings, I used to come in with Mum to do all the checks. If I wasn’t at school, I’d often end up coming into the brewery.” By his teenage years, he was trying beer at home, gradually getting to the stage where he preferred it to the “fruity drinks” beloved of his peers.

He joined in August 2012 after completing a two-year diploma in vehicle mechanics, moving immediately to spend three days of the week working for Eddie Gadd at the Ramsgate brewery, with the other two days spent at Goacher’s. It was part of an agreement with his father, who didn’t want



**Above (left to right):** Cousins Tom Bott and Sam McGregor co-founded London’s Signature Brew

**Right (left to right):** The Titanic brewery crew includes Tom’s brother, Will Bott, his father, David Bott, and his uncle, Keith Bott



DEREK BREMNER, SIGNATURE BREW, HOWARD GOACHER



**Above (left to right):** Howard Goacher with his parents, Debbie and Phil – who set up the Maidstone brewery in 1983

Howard to walk straight into a job at the family brewery.

It meant he was exposed to a different approach to brewing – crucial, he says, to his development as a brewer. “We’ve always been very traditional in our beer styles, and what we do,” he says.

“But at that time, Eddie was brewing some contract beers, some 12 per cent double IPAs, which really pushed the boundaries of what I knew about brewing. I learnt there was a lot that could be played with and adjusted.”

Other family brewers have also benefited from flying the nest, at least for a while. Jane Kershaw worked at Anchor in San Francisco before stints with Molson Coors and Budweiser UK, while Alice followed her Masters in Brewing Science & Practice at the University of Nottingham in 2017 with stints at Brewsters brewery, Grantham, and Thornbridge in Bakewell.

“I definitely wanted to go elsewhere before I came home – it has really

challenged me and expanded my knowledge,” says Alice, whose elder sister Claire works at the brewery as part of the pub estate team.

#### **Some have spent rather longer**

away from home than that. Tom Bott co-founded Signature Brew, the sleeper hit of London’s craft-beer revolution, with cousin Sam McGregor in 2011, but his introduction to the world of brewing came at Titanic in Stoke-on-Trent. Owned by his father, Dave, and uncle, Keith, since 1988, the year Tom was born, it has been “ever-present” in his life.

That’s not to say he and Sam talked up the connection when they founded Signature, although they’re much more publicly appreciative now. “When we

**“We didn’t want the industry to think we were a subsidiary of Titanic. We wanted to be seen to be standing on our own two feet”**

first started, we knew that we needed the support of Titanic but we were – probably unnecessarily – at pains to distance ourselves from them,” he says. “We didn’t want the industry to think we were a subsidiary of Titanic. We wanted to be seen to be standing on our own two feet.”

Now the link is much stronger. Tom’s younger brother, Will, is head brewer at Titanic and he’s recently joined the board, having decided in 2016 that he was more use to Signature as a brewery manager than a brewer.

“[At Signature] we’ve spent years learning from Titanic and absorbing as much support as it could offer, and now Signature is more sustainable, with a great team of people, I’m back helping Titanic. We’ve learnt a lot in the past 10 years, [so] we can help it move forward.

“If there are things I can help with – in terms of range development or progressing the technical side of the brewery – I’m really keen to do that, while ensuring Signature is still as



exciting and prosperous as it's possible to be. Keith would probably define it as [me] coming back to speak to the dinosaurs; he might be right, but I wouldn't phrase it quite like that!"

For all that new ideas are valuable, a key strength of these family brewers is continuity. If ideas are good, it doesn't matter how old they are. Bathams Best Bitter (4.3 per cent ABV) is one of England's most celebrated beers, having first been brewed in the early 1950s. "We take great pride in our heritage and history. It is a great feeling to follow in the tradition and keep it within the family," says Alice.

**For those who didn't grow up in** a brewing family, it might seem very exciting. For Alice, it was clearly just how life was. "I can't remember when I first visited the brewery, [but] I must have been very young," she says. "It was a fairly big part of our lives and in my teenage years I'd help my dad on the weekend and get a bit of pocket money. I don't remember when I first tasted the beer, but I do remember buying my first legal pint in a Bathams pub on my 18th birthday."

For Howard, there's an approach that comes from being a family brewery that extends beyond the immediate relatives. "We try to look after our customers," he says. "If we've got a long-standing customer and their direct competition wants to sell our beer, we'll generally try to put them on to something else. We try to stay in touch with the landlords who sell our beer as much as possible – we send them a Christmas present every year."

This philosophy, he says, means they now stand out in a world where many breweries no longer operate in a traditional way. Goacher's buys all



**Top:** Alice Batham with her father, Tim **Above:** Alice was Young Brewer of the Year

**"We take great pride in our heritage... It is a great feeling to follow in the tradition and keep it within the family"**

its hops from Kentish growers, and knows them well – a huge advantage when it comes to securing hops from the sunniest or best-protected part of a garden. They also package and vacuum-pack the hops themselves, giving them control over the quality and freshness.

Other elements of how family-owned breweries operate are much like others, of course. Both Howard and Alice are pleased their jobs take in a variety of tasks. "I'm currently brewing and focusing on improving the quality side of production, but I do all sorts really – I think that's very important," says Alice, who is part of a team working under head brewer Martin Birch. "One day I'll be pipe-fitting with my dad, the next I'll be doing lab work. It's very varied."

For many of these young brewers, an almost indiscernible force seems to have convinced them to follow in their

parents' footsteps. Alice felt its pull during a university year spent in Newcastle, New South Wales, as part of her English degree. "I'd always thought I'd take a creative route, but I spent that year out very far away from home and I realised it was something I needed to take a chance on," she says. "There was no parental pressure at all – I came to the decision on my own."

Perhaps the most interesting question is whether breweries like Goacher's and Titanic, both founded in the 1980s, come to resemble Bathams or Joseph Holt as successive generations take charge. In Maidstone, Howard is getting the next generation acquainted as early as possible, bringing his one-year-old daughter into the brewery. Who knows? Maybe one day she'll be celebrating her dad on social media, too.



**Will Hawkes** is the author of *Craft Beer London*, a guide to the city's beer scene. He is a former British Beer Writer of the Year. He tweets at [@Will\\_Hawkes](https://twitter.com/Will_Hawkes)

ALICE BATHAM

# Club's lasting legacy

Brewers are rediscovering the delights of the dark stuff as porter and stout make a return after decades away from the limelight

## The Sun Inn on West Street,

Faversham, is the sort of ancient hostelry that brings a smile to your lips and joy to your heart. It dates from 1396 and has wood-panelled walls, beamed ceilings, huge inglenooks and – as befits an inn in the heart of the Kent hop fields – a frieze of the plants above the bar.

In 1845, it was bought for £800 by Henry Shepherd of the local brewery, Shepherd Neame. It was essential Sheps, as it's known, supplied the Sun with porter, for in 1793, the Porter Club of Faversham was founded in the pub and lovers of this potent dark brew continued to meet there for 80 years. Sheps' version of porter was especially prized as it used Spanish liquorice for additional flavour, which arrived through Faversham Creek, at the time an important port in Kent.

Porter and its stronger cousin, stout porter – later reduced to just stout – were cult brews of the 18th and 19th centuries. They were consumed in such vast quantities that large breweries sprang up in London to meet the demand. It was this demand that created a commercial brewing industry and put paid to publicans making beer in the cellars of their pubs.

The brewers called porter entire butt, as it was served from just one cask or butt. It replaced a beer that was a blend of pale, brown and stale ales. Stale meant it was aged in oak vessels for many months, where it picked up a lactic character from wild yeasts trapped in the wood.

The name entire butt was soon replaced by porter as a result of its popularity with the large army of porters who



**'The Sun has – as befits an inn in the Kent hop fields – a frieze of the plants above the bar'**

worked the docks and markets of London and had prodigious thirsts. Porter and stout were produced in enormous quantities. Whitbread's brewery in the Barbican made 122,000 barrels a year, with similar amounts from Barclay Perkins, Meux Reid and Truman's. But production came to an abrupt stop in World War I, when the government banned the use of dark roasted malts.

It said the additional energy, in the shape of gas, coal and electricity, used to produce roasted malts should go into munitions and baking.

**Such restrictions could not** be imposed on the rebellious Irish and, as a result, porter and stout production for most of the 20th century became synonymous with Guinness and other Irish versions.

But you can't keep a good beer down. Speaking to four brewers on my patch, south Hertfordshire, I found all were busily promoting their porters

for the autumn and winter. Mad Squirrel near Berkhamsted, which now has a popular bar in St Albans, brews London Porter (5 per cent ABV), which has twice been named Beer of the Year by local CAMRA branches.

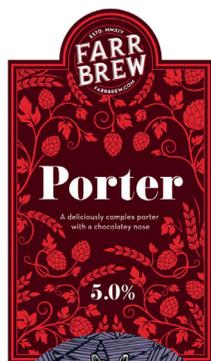
Farr Brew near Wheathampstead doesn't hide its light under a bushel with Our Most Potent Porter (also 5 per cent), which is on sale in the five pubs the brewery now runs.

A brand-new brewery, Two Bob in Welwyn, has an excellent interpretation of the style, while Mark Fanner at 3 Brewers on a farm close to St Albans promises his porter will be "a belter".

A similar picture is repeated throughout the country, with most brewers having both porter and stout in their repertoires. The beers are popular as a result of their rich and delectable flavours, created by a blend of malts. Farr Brew's version, for example, has six malts. Crystal, chocolate, caramel and black malts give fruity, creamy and coffee notes to the beer. Unmalted roast barley is often used, adding a grainy, chewy and acidic note to the beer.

Hops have to be robust if they're to make their mark and English varieties, with their spicy and peppery notes, best meet the challenge.

With big brother stout also enjoying a renaissance and available in oak-aged and imperial versions, the revival of these styles from the 18th century is now in full swing. The members of the Porter Club in Faversham's Sun Inn have handed a truly great British beer down to us.



Roger Protz's latest book, *The Family Brewers of Britain*, is on sale from CAMRA's online book store. Follow him at [@RogerProtzBeer](https://twitter.com/RogerProtzBeer)



# Balancing the bar

After one of the most challenging periods in their history, pubs are welcoming punters back through their doors. But are they, along with the breweries that supply them, providing a safe space for women?

WORDS: HEATHER KNIBBS ILLUSTRATION: JULES SCHEELE

## Among the focus points for

companies big and small in 2021, gender equality has been declared a priority for many businesses. Not least among them is the brewing industry, one not commonly associated with women.

When considering breweries in the UK that are making strides on this issue, a standout player is Cloudwater. The Manchester-based outfit, which was established in 2014, is among the most popular names in the British craft beer market and demonstrates how an inclusive workforce can yield great results for all concerned.

Anja Madhvani, brand ambassador for Cloudwater Soda, described to me how the working atmosphere is a step above what she had previously been used to in the brewing industry.

“At the moment 23 women make up 50 per cent of the Cloudwater team. Our work impacts the company at every level, and I think that creates a really special dynamic. There is a real human focus, which is why I enjoy working here so much.”

A lot of breweries are assessing what they need to prioritise, not only for their female workforce to feel comfortable in the workplace, but also to feel

empowered. For Anja, a company’s outward image gives a strong indication of its dynamic behind closed doors.

“Mostly, what I want to see is that it is consciously inclusive of women. I want to see branding that feels gender-neutral,” she explained. “If a company uses sexist jokes or innuendo in its marketing, that says to me that it isn’t genuinely invested in creating a culture that feels safe and supportive to all.”

In its 2019 *Gender Pint Gap* study, consumer group Dea Latis reported that male-orientated branding and advertising was a key factor in women choosing not to drink beer in general. This comes as no surprise to Anja.

“Beer marketing doesn’t really reach beyond the gender binary, which becomes really apparent when you compare it to the likes of other industries such as cosmetics and fashion, where brands are increasingly aware of the diversity of the consumer.

**“Our work impacts the company at every level, and I think that creates a really special dynamic. There is a real human focus”**

“I feel that beer is really behind in this sense, and certainly TV ads from macro brands focus their marketing towards men.”

## From TV screens to local pubs, that

old perception persists. While she does not count herself as having been on the receiving end of negative attention, former CAMRA Campaigner of the Year Lyn Sharpe does notice the immediate reaction of staff when she walks alone into a pub.

“You can see them almost looking as if to say, ‘Oh, she’s lost’, and then it’s, ‘Are you waiting for somebody?’” And when she peers at the ABV on the various pump clips, sympathetic bar staff will offer wine or a cup of coffee.

While Lyn knows in these cases that the offer is not made with any malice and is often out of kindness, she’s aware it is symptomatic of a wider perception that beer still isn’t the drink for women.

It remains a stereotype to be challenged within the British beer scene. While breweries such as Cloudwater might be walking in step with what modern consumers would expect, 



many elements of the brewing industry are still several paces behind.

In May this year, Twitter was flooded with women sharing their experiences of sexual discrimination while working in the British beer industry. Many recognisable names were publicly called out and aftershocks are still being felt as 2021 draws to a close.

This year I was disheartened, but sadly not surprised, to learn of an incident involving one of my closest friends when she had visited a pub.

While preferring that she and the pub in question remain anonymous, there was no doubt for either of us that her unpleasant experience wasn't unique to women visiting pubs.

She described to me the sunny day when she visited this pub with her partner and some friends. While the group remained outside on picnic benches, she went inside to order a drink at the bar. Almost immediately after she entered, a male customer loudly exclaimed: "Look at the t\*ts on that!"

Realising the comment was directed at her, my friend felt instantly mortified but gave no response and went straight to the bar. Unfortunately, the man followed her and proceeded to ask if he could feel her breasts. Comments followed about her body and what he would like to do to her, words he repeated in a loud voice to his friends on the opposite side of the room, who cheered him on. The comments left her wondering if she had done something to bring the perverted observations on herself.

**"I felt disgusted, and I wish I could say that at the time I felt disgusted in this man's behaviour. But I felt disgusted in myself, in my own appearance and the T-shirt I was wearing. I felt I somehow deserved the comments for being in a pub that was unfamiliar to me."**

At no point during this harassment did any pub staff or fellow customers intervene. Instead, with her partner and friends still outside and none the wiser, my friend was left alone to try and laugh



**"I wanted the ground to swallow me up. My heart was racing, and I was really scared he was going to touch me as he was standing very close"**

off the comments, all while scared that the situation would escalate.

"I wanted the ground to swallow me up. My heart was racing, and I was really scared he was going to touch me as he was standing very close. Thankfully, after not getting much of a reaction from me, he left me alone. The bartender apologised for the man's behaviour.

"Five minutes later, the man probably forgot the whole event; five days later, the bartender probably forgot the event. Three years later, and I think about this event often.

"I drive past that pub and think about how I felt that night... the beating heart and the shame I felt. How I wanted to get changed, how I didn't dare go and order more drinks... how I didn't feel safe and wanted to go home."

In 2021, an experience such as this should be surprising, but a recent survey for a Women on Tap: United Against Harassment event highlights a still widespread problem.

Of the 741 participants, 77 per cent of women visiting pubs/bars had experienced sexual harassment. More than half of the women surveyed who worked in pubs/bars reported witnessing harassment more than once a fortnight.

Often female staff themselves are the victims, with 85 per cent of them having experienced sexual harassment.

So, what more can be done? It was a question addressed in May on Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* in a discussion about sexism and discrimination in the UK beer industry. This prompted a response by CAMRA vice chairman Abigail Newton on what the Campaign is doing to make sure its own events are safe spaces for women. In June, CAMRA's National Executive announced plans to form a focus group to look at this issue.

#### **But surely the question must**

also be asked: what more can we as individuals do? The same survey that offered those disappointing numbers of sexual harassment victims also revealed another result that was concerning for a very different reason. Of those surveyed, 75 per cent had witnessed harassment in a pub/bar, but only 48 per cent reported the incidents to a member of staff.

While there is no denying that calling out harassment in the moment can be very intimidating, it surely must be a necessary discomfort in order to drag down those staggering percentages. What would my friend's feelings towards that pub be now had the bar staff or her fellow customers spoken up in her defence? How many women would feel safe in a pub environment, or working in the British beer industry, if more of us called out unacceptable behaviour?

The movement we saw on Twitter in May, an echo of the ongoing #MeToo campaign, demonstrated the impact that unified voices can have.

If all those in favour of a safe space for all spoke out against the behaviour that leaves women feeling they don't belong, then a truly inclusive industry might be closer than we think.



**Heather Knibbs** is a member of Derby CAMRA and is a proud supporter of equality within the industry. Her Twitter thoughts can be found at [@HevRev18](https://twitter.com/HevRev18)



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Campaign  
for  
Real Ale

The model for middle-ranking brewers?



# The brewing mother ship

**Roger Protz** travels to Bedford to visit the town's latest visitor attraction – the new Charles Wells brewery

**The new Charles Wells brewery is** in Cut Throat Lane, Bedford, an address that sums up the state of the modern brewing industry. It helps explain why the Wells family decided to sell its Eagle brewery and downsize to a new site called Brewpoint.

The Wells family has been brewing in the town since 1876 and the current generation has designed a formula with Brewpoint that offers a dynamic new concept of making and selling beer.

Under one roof, visitors can watch the brewing process, sample the end product in a spacious taproom and increase their pleasure by matching beer with food in an adjoining restaurant or open-air terrace.



MD Peter Wells – right to move on

This could be the model for the future of Britain's middle-ranking brewers who find themselves squeezed between global giants on one side and the large number of smaller craft producers on the other.

Brewpoint grew from the decision in 2017 to sell the Charles

Wells Eagle brewery in Havelock Street to Marston's for £55m. Wells not only lost its brewery, but also such major brands as Eagle Bitter (3.6 per cent ABV), Bombardier (4.1 per cent) and Kirin lager, along with McEwan's and Courage beers.

The Eagle site had become too big for Wells. The brewery can produce 750,000 barrels a year, but capacity had slumped as a result of Wells losing contracts to



New beers have been developed

BREWPOINT



Inside or out?  
Brewpoint  
offers both

brew Red Stripe, Corona and Cobra lagers. Red Stripe alone accounted for a quarter of annual production.

To add to the pressure, the off-trade and free trade is increasingly dominated by heavily discounted national and global brands that mean smaller brewers like Wells have to make and sell their beers for minimal profits.

“Big brewers are dominating shelves,” Paul Wells says. He has been with the family company for 45 years and is the

**‘The brewery can produce 750,000 barrels a year, but capacity had slumped as a result of Wells losing contracts’**

non-executive chairman of what is now called Wells & Co. He and Peter Wells, the MD and a member of the fifth generation to work at the brewery, recall an emotional meeting of all the family shareholders, some of whom live in Canada, and told them why

the Eagle brewery was no longer fit for purpose.

“They had a great attachment to Havelock Street,” Paul says, “and they couldn’t believe we wanted to sell it.”

“But when we explained how the modern beer market operated and we had lost key brands and the brewery was running half empty, they realised we were right to move on,” Peter adds.

“The business had to change. We no longer sell to the off-trade – we 

supply our pubs and also sell online. “There’s a lot of enthusiasm for buying beer online,” Paul says. Online sales of alcohol in Britain have grown by 80 per cent since the pandemic struck.

Other family members employed at Brewpoint are Ed Robinson, who is developing a sustainability programme for the company – his mother is Paul Wells’ sister – and Nick Wells who looks after properties.

Pubs remain the bedrock of the business. There are 150 leased and tenanted outlets and 20 managed. The estate covers Bedfordshire, surrounding counties and several in London. There are also 17 in France, bought from Allied Domecq when it sold its John Bull franchised pubs in Europe. They are now branded Charles Wells and are found in Paris, Lyon, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Montpellier and Reims. A small brewery is being installed in the Reims pub and it will produce cask ale – in the heart of Champagne country.



Find your ideal beer and food match

Brewpoint is on a four-acre site leased from the town council. Brewery, packaging, bars, restaurant and offices cost £11m and there’s plenty of room to expand. The present brewhouse can produce 30,000 hectolitres/18,000 barrels a year, but that can grow to 80,000hl/48,000 barrels.

“We wanted to stay in brewing,” Paul says. “The family has an emotional

attachment to making beer. We could have moved elsewhere, but we were keen to stay here in Bedford.”

Head brewer Ian Jones says he’s producing more cask beer than he expected – around a third of the output. Peter adds there’s an equally encouraging demand for cask in Wells’ pubs, where the split is 65 per cent lager to 55 per cent ale – that last percentage includes keg as well as cask. The three new cask beers that have replaced Eagle Bitter and Bombardier have been well received, Peter adds.

**The brewhouse is German-built and**

is based on a mash mixer, lauter tun, kettle and whirlpool system. Following the mash, the sweet liquid or wort is filtered in the lauter, boiled with the hops in the kettle and then filtered again in the whirlpool.

The system also includes a tall cylinder called a hop gun. Pellets and



Beer lovers are spoiled for choice at Brewpoint

SHUTTERSTOCK, ALAMY, BREWPOINT



Brewpoint brewery is German-built and can produce up to 18,000 barrels a year

unfermented beer are caught in a whirlpool inside the gun, which extracts maximum oils and resins from the hops that create aroma and bitterness.

There are currently 22 fermenters, but there's room to add additional vessels as demand increases. The brewhouse can cope with eight different brews a day and within a few weeks of opening, 30 new beers had been developed. They include a Vienna lager, West Coast and New England-style IPAs, and a sour cherry beer for the French pubs. None of the beers is pasteurised and non-cask varieties are sterile filtered. Two original Charles Wells yeast strains are used.

Brewing water is drawn from an on-site bore hole that taps into the same aquifer that supplied both the Havelock Street and the original Horne Lane breweries where Charles Wells first set up its operation. The water is hard, which is ideal for ale brewing, but has to be softened for lager beers.

The environment gets maximum support at Brewpoint. Heat reclamation

**'The brewhouse can cope with eight different brews a day and within weeks of opening, 30 beers had been developed'**

and water-saving equipment have been installed and spent grains and hops are supplied to local farmers for cattle feed. Waste water is treated before it's put back into the local system.

The three cask ales are Origin (3.7 per cent) brewed with Pale, Crystal and Wheat malts, and hopped with Azacca. It's a full-flavoured beer with biscuit malt and fruity hops on aroma and palate, with a bitter and hoppy finish.

**Legacy (4.1 per cent) is made with** Pale and Crystal malts, and hopped with Citra and a new variety called Sultana. It has a fruity aroma with a strong lemon note, honeyed malt and fruity hops on the palate, and a fruity and hoppy finish. DNA (4.3 per cent) is a traditional British bitter brewed with Pale, Crystal, Wheat and Munich malts, and hopped

with Fuggles, Target and American Willamette. It has a spicy and peppery aroma with a touch of caramel, a malty and hoppy palate. The finish is spicy and peppery from the hops, with a continuing caramel note, honeyed malt and a touch of citrus fruit. Monthly seasonal cask beers will also be produced.

There's a small area within the restaurant that can be booked for private meals and events. It includes a nanobrewery where customers can brew their own beers with help from staff. The room is decked out with fascinating memorabilia of the brewery from its inception to the present day, watched over by a large portrait of a benign and bearded Charles Wells. Brewpoint may be a modern concept, but the proud roots of the company are not forgotten.

● **Brewpoint: Cut Throat Lane, Bedford MK41 7FY; 01234 244444. Taproom and restaurant open 8am-11pm Monday to Thursday; 8am-1am Friday and Saturday; 8am-10pm Sunday**



## Real Ale Heroes

Number 36: Christine Cryne

# Reluctant hero

A prolific volunteer, this reluctant real ale hero is in danger of underestimating herself, writes **Emma Inch**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILL AMLOT

### My first visit to London in more than

15 months happened to coincide with the hottest day of the year so far. I'd forgotten how humid the city can feel and how, even amid the bellow of traffic, people are drawn to the green spaces to revel in it. So long had it been since I visited the capital that, as I walked from Victoria through the bustle of Hyde Park, I was as wide-eyed as a tourist.

The Household Cavalry clip-clopping up South Carriage Drive in a heat haze looked strangely make-believe, and the sight of five grey cygnets tripping along the edge of the Serpentine caused me to stop to take a photograph.

By the time I reached my destination, I was dry-mouthed and in need of a seat. As luck would have it, my lunch partner for the day – Christine Cryne – had already secured a table in the welcome cool of the pub. And it goes without saying that she'd memorised the beer list.

Christine Cryne is a part of London. Born in the East End and still living in the capital, Christine has been central to the city's beer scene for more than three decades. She's been a key player in two major festivals, and an untiring advocate for London's beer and brewers. But her influence reaches much further than the capital city's limits.

Since joining CAMRA in 1977, Christine has raised the profile of beer through her tastings, writing and ability to draw people into it in a way that some others are unable to do. She's been instrumental in how many of us understand and judge beer, and has quietly yet firmly held open the door for other women to join her in this male-dominated world.

**'She has raised the profile of beer through her ability to draw people into it in a way some others are unable to do'**

But the most striking thing about the work Christine has put in over the years is that, despite the depth of her expertise and the breadth of her influence, beer has not been her paid job. On the contrary, her work in beer has been carried out almost exclusively as a volunteer.

Christine is rightly proud of her successful paid career during which she worked for companies such as Unilever and Schweppes, and spent time as the CEO of the Chartered Institute of Marketing. But alongside this she has consistently volunteered for CAMRA at a branch, regional and national level,

giving her time for free in a way that has enhanced both the life of others and the industry as a whole.

### Christine is not alone, of course.

CAMRA's success is built upon the work of volunteers who organise and campaign right across the country. But what sets Christine apart from many of her peers is the variety and volume of volunteering she has done throughout her life, both within the world of beer and beyond.

In addition to her tireless work for CAMRA, Christine has taken voluntary roles in several not-for-profit organisations. She currently sits on the board of BeyondAutism and is about to embark on a new challenge as chair of leading adult education charity the Mary Ward Settlement.

What also sets her apart is the level of humility with which she approaches the contribution she has made. As Laura Hadland, author of the recent *50 Years of CAMRA*, says: "Christine is so matter-of-fact about her role in CAMRA that it could be easy not to recognise the monumental scope of the contribution she has made over the decades. She is disconcertingly unassuming about the important part she has played."



Christine Cryne was the first female organiser of the Great British Beer Festival, which she first took on in 1992



**Above left:** Christine at a Regional Directors meeting **Above right:** Giving her retirement speech as the organiser of GBBF

As we sip our Hophead, Christine is just as self-effacing as Laura predicts. She laughs as she tells me: “I’ve always been a workaholic to be honest, so it just goes with the territory!”

When I question her further, she says: “In the UK we have a culture of volunteering and I think that’s lovely. But the one thing about being involved in volunteering is that it helps you, too. It gives you experience, it gives you challenges you’d never get in your working life. So I think it’s a bit of a quid pro quo.”

**It’s certainly true that volunteers get a lot back from their work, but I can’t help feeling Christine underestimates her own considerable contribution just a little.** Christine was the first female organiser of CAMRA’s flagship event, the Great British Beer Festival (GBBF). She initially took on this role in 1992 and held it for four years.

Although she remembers a few negative responses from the wider world, Christine does not recall any internal opposition to a female organiser.

“The one thing I did that I was really pleased about was that by

**‘It’s true that volunteers get a lot back, but I can’t help feeling Christine underestimates her own considerable contribution’**

the time I stood down, half of my organising committee were women and of those, two then went on to be organiser after me. One was Paula Waters and the other was Alison Bridle. So we had three females organising the GBBF, one after the other.”

Christine’s influence on other women did not stop there. The current GBBF organiser, Catherine Tonry, describes her as a mentor from whom she has learnt a great deal, and Jane Peyton, founder of the School of Booze, says Christine was the first woman she saw in such a prominent senior role in beer and that was a great inspiration. She works “unshowingly” without drawing attention to herself because the most important thing is always the beer and not the personality or gender of the person behind it.

The GBBF is not the only festival where Christine has had an influence. She also played a key role in founding and organising the London Drinker Festival, which ran at the Camden Centre from 1985 until the closure of the venue in 2018. Beer writer Roger Protz credits the London Drinker Festival with playing a pivotal role in his beer journey.

**“I recall drinking with Michael**

Jackson in a pub near King’s Cross that sold Everard’s beer. Michael said his pint of Tiger was ‘a bit nutty’ and I agreed, and then both of us thought that ‘a bit nutty’ wasn’t a satisfactory way to describe beer. Just a couple of weeks later, I went to the London Drinker Festival with a notebook and tasted small amounts of many of the beers available and started to attempt to work out why the beers had their specific aromas and flavour. At the time there was no Beer Academy or any other body to help educate people and I had to work it out for myself – starting with that wonderful and much-missed festival.”

There is no doubt Christine’s work has also influenced many other’s knowledge and appreciation of beer. Recently, she chaired CAMRA’s wide-ranging review of beer styles and,



**Right:** Christine and husband John have been called ‘CAMRA’s power couple’



as a master trainer, has delivered many tastings and enabled others to do the same. Christine estimates that during the pandemic she delivered online sessions to around 1,500 people. She has an ability to present in an accessible manner, and enjoys introducing people to food and drink pairings, often coupling beer with chocolate, cheese or cake.

“The nice thing about it is that you get a different audience. Although you do get a lot of beer aficionados, I think you get more who are just interested in things. I think you need to think about bringing beer to a new audience, and food and beer matching is a way of doing it.”

Through this, Christine has drawn many new people into beer and enhanced the experience of others. Roger recognises the value of this.

“Christine’s contribution to beer appreciation is astonishing and she has done wonders to help people appreciate

**‘She has an ability to present in an accessible manner, and enjoys introducing food and drink pairings, coupling beer with chocolate, cheese or cake’**

beer with greater knowledge and depth of understanding. The work is tiring. Many people do not appreciate just how much time unpaid volunteers such as Christine devote to the cause.”

**I can’t end my meeting without** mentioning her husband, John, himself a former CAMRA national chairman and GBBF organiser. Laura described them as “CAMRA’s power couple”. Christine giggles when I say this but, having achieved so much together, I can’t help feeling there may be some truth in it. But how do they manage to work alongside each other?

“Oh, we never agree!” Christine laughs. “Well, no, that’s not true.

I suppose we’re a bit like chalk and cheese. I mean, the one thing we do have in common is we’re both businesspeople. We have a lot of middle ground and we’ve both got a sense of humour.”

Christine’s sense of duty and commitment to helping wherever she can is apparent the more time I spend with her. But as we prepare to step out of the pub, she tells me: “I couldn’t have done any of it without John, you know.”

This may be true, but I have a feeling that this determined Londoner, this prolific volunteer, this reluctant real ale hero, might be in danger of underestimating herself again.



**Emma Inch** is chair of the British Guild of Beer Writers. You can find more about Emma at [fermentationonline.com](http://fermentationonline.com) and follow her on Twitter at [@fermentradio](https://twitter.com/fermentradio)

# Flight of beer

**David Smith** reports on how a shared love of real ale brought three aerospace engineers together to form a nanobrewery just north of Bristol, and how they are supporting his passion for returning a historic aircraft to the skies

**Dan Gillians, Greg Shipton and Keith**

Lewis met while working in the aerospace industry at Filton, Bristol, and realised they had a shared interest in beer. Starting with a few brewing experiments at Dan's house and garage, they soon established a small facility within a workshop at Winterbourne Medieval Barn, eight miles north-east of Bristol city centre. After a while, Greg left the project and was replaced by James Shorney.

Built in 1342, the complex was renovated from dereliction and the building-at-risk register with help from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, an army of volunteers and council support.

It is operated by a trust, providing the community with a multipurpose hub, which encompasses workshops, meeting rooms and a bar.

The first brew workshop on-site was tiny but fitted the trio's purpose. As engineers, they welcomed the technical challenge of making the brew equipment, but then, plans for the barn handed the team the perfect opportunity to grow the business.

During lockdown periods, new fully temperature-controlled brew plant and fermenters were installed in a larger workshop that forms one of the barn's outbuildings. It was here I first met Dan and his colleagues, and our shared passion in aviation became a regular talking point. Their beer names fascinated me.

Dan said: "Since the early days, the huge renovation project at the barn has allowed us to take over more space, refurbishing and improving our brewing equipment, scaling up production and allowing the luxury of increasing the recipes we wanted to try.



**From left:** Two of the three engineers, Dan Gillians and James Shorney, with David Smith

**'Every bottle it produces has a mention of the People's Mosquito on the label'**

"This increased the pressure to create 'brand names' for our recipes, so it was a natural fit to use aircraft that were central to our shared interests."

Gladiator (4.4 per cent ABV), Lightning (4.1 per cent), Beluga (3.9 per cent) and Mosquito Porter (5.1 per cent) are among the Three Engineers' range.

When the team realised I was involved with returning a De Havilland Mosquito to flight, it became a shared ambition and an eponymous brew was born.

From the start, the team was supportive of my aviation dreams with just as much enthusiasm as getting wider appeal for their ales. Every bottle it produces, no matter what brew, has a mention of the People's Mosquito on the label.

**Dan described how the team** had been able to expand during the lockdowns and future plans.

He said: "We all work full-time at Rolls-Royce, so it was just

incredibly busy in the early days, yet with spare time, weekends and among the various lockdowns, we just about managed to keep up with demand while building better brewing facilities. The area has a rich aviation heritage, so we have plenty more aircraft marques lined up to use that will match our upcoming brews."

The team has also been able to open a brewery tap at weekends.

Dan said: "We normally produce in batches of 250 litres every few weeks, and even now, we are just about keeping up with demand, both from our customers here at the brewery tap and at our stockists in the Bristol area. It will not be long before we need to look at stepping up production again.

"We do fancy trying to brew a New England-style IPA, so we are working on sourcing the correct ingredients for that right now. We certainly hope to make an impact in the microbrewing industry, making artisan ales of distinction that literally do fly off the shelves."



- [peoplesmosquito.org.uk](http://peoplesmosquito.org.uk)
- [threeengineersbrewery.co.uk](http://threeengineersbrewery.co.uk)

# Why pubs matter in the UK

Pubs Matter is a campaign to get everyone talking about why pubs and social clubs across the UK are a force for good

## It's about community

The pub has long been a mainstay of British high streets and communities. However, in recent years, the local has adapted to become much more than just that.

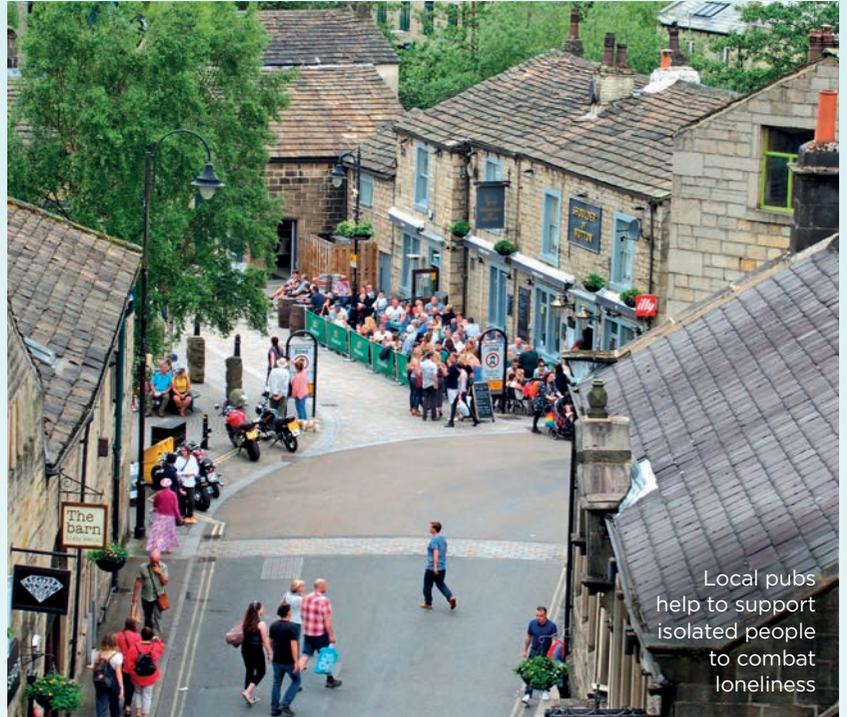
There are hundreds of examples of local pubs that have opened as a post office, greengrocer or library, and in doing so have transformed the lives of thousands of local residents at a time. Moreover, pubs raise more than £100m for hundreds of charities and worthy causes, and provide a further £40m in funding or in-kind support for grassroots sport.

All of this is at stake with so many pubs on the brink of failure as a result of months of enforced closure or unreasonably tight restrictions.

## It's about mental health

For some people, the loss of a local pub isn't just the loss of a local small business, it means the loss of their social network.

Loneliness is a scourge that blights many communities up and down the country, but this is also something that pubs have helped to fix. Countless locals



Local pubs help to support isolated people to combat loneliness

## 'Locals have started social clubs for isolated or traditionally hard-to-reach groups of people'

across the UK have started social clubs for isolated or traditionally hard-to-reach groups of people. The ongoing closure of pubs means that for these groups the pandemic has been especially hard to cope with.

## It's about local economies

The social cohesion that pubs provide for society is absolutely vital, but so is the economic contribution they make. Pubs, and the brewers that supply them, provide £23bn in value added to the UK economy each year, supporting 900,000 jobs – over 40% of which are occupied by people under the age of 25.

This is at risk if we don't act now to start enabling publicans to get back to what they do best.

## About the campaign

Pubs Matter is a campaign to get everyone talking about why pubs and social clubs across the UK are a force for good. We want to shout from the rooftops about why pubs matter to people and communities.

Anyone who loves their local is encouraged to share why #PubsMatter to them on social media and contact their MP, using resources at [whypubsmatter.org.uk](http://whypubsmatter.org.uk)

The organisations behind Pubs Matter represent people who love pubs – the people who run them, the people who brew beer for them and, most importantly, the people and communities who use them.

Partner organisations: CAMRA, British Beer and Pub Association, British Institute of Innkeeping, The Independent Family Brewers of Great Britain, Society of Independent Brewers and UKHospitality. **#PubsMatter**

**PUBS  
MATTER.**

# Homes from home

Hollie Stephens describes her 10 favourite real ale pubs

**There has probably never been** a better time to be a cask ale drinker, but it is not enough to simply have great beers available from excellent breweries. We beer lovers must also have great places in which to drink them.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we lost access to ‘third places’ – the social spaces other than home and work where we spend our time. Many of us struggled with the loss of our pubs, even though it was temporary. Drinking at home didn’t

feel quite the same. We missed that certain something beyond the act of drinking a beer. The atmosphere, liveliness and the sense of community offered by pubs. And, of course, a perfectly pulled pint of cask ale.

Fantastic pubs are about more than just the beer. That is not to say that the beer isn’t important – only places that consistently serve a good range of well-kept cask ales will ever top my list of favourite pubs – but there are other

factors to consider beyond what goes in the glass. Comfy seats and cosy corners. Friendly, knowledgeable staff who can recommend something I’ve never tried before. Interesting surroundings, or perhaps an intriguing history. A warm greeting, and a sense of feeling as though I am welcome there.

In my opinion, these are things that all great pubs should offer. Here are some of my all-time favourites, and why I think you’ll love them, too.



## Kean's Head NOTTINGHAM

The Kean's Head isn't the sort of place people usually stumble upon by accident, so it's best to ask someone who already knows it to take you there. It's tucked away in a tiny, quiet street opposite a stunningly beautiful 15th-century church. Inside the pub (which is owned by Castle Rock brewery), exposed brick walls are decorated with old metal beer signs, and pump clips line the ceiling beams. On cask, there's a selection of Castle Rock ales along with guest beers, plus an impressive selection on keg, too.

There's also a special connection to this place for me – it was where I enjoyed my first pint of cask beer. Each time I return to the Kean's Head, I try to sit at that same table in the corner, with a pint of the same Harvest Pale (3.8 per cent ABV), and take a moment to remember all the fantastic beers I've had along my real ale journey so far.

## Mute Swan HAMPTON COURT, GREATER LONDON

It usually takes a lot to get me to love a gastropub, but this place is a long-term favourite for a pint after a walk by the Thames and gets top marks for location and great service. Window seats offer views of Hampton Court Palace, while the walls towards the rear are decorated with black and white photographs and maps of the area. Dogs are welcome and will be offered water bowls or treats by bar staff, while owners enjoy a well-curated selection of local ales, which is a nice touch.





## Mayflower

ROTHERHITHE, LONDON

For me, the Mayflower has all the aspects of a truly cosy pub atmosphere: wooden floorboards, dark-painted walls, eclectic decorations and a brick fireplace. Beyond the comfortable interior, there's a patio offering fantastic views of the Thames, close to where the *Mayflower* left its Rotherhithe home port in 1620, on the first stage of its voyage to the United States. The handpumps showcase beers from some of the capital's newer breweries, such as Bexley brewery and By The Horns Brewing Co. The food menu offers sharing nibbles and filling British classics, perfect for making a leisurely afternoon of watching the boats on the river.



## Ye Olde Mitre

HOLBORN, LONDON

This place is particularly hard to find the first time (and even the second if your sense of direction is as bad as mine), but it is worth persevering. The pub was built in 1546 for the servants of the Bishops of Ely, and today provides respite from the hubbub of the city.

During lunchtime, it can get especially hectic, with tourists and office workers shoulder to shoulder at the bar. While some other pubs in the area have received makeovers in recent years, this one remains very traditional, with benches and stools, wood panelling, and tankards hanging from the ceiling. For those who enjoy the atmosphere of a proper pub that feels a little like stepping back in time, Ye Olde Mitre is not to be missed.

## Kings Arms

WATERLOO, LONDON

There's a bustle to this pub that makes me come alive. It's homely and unimposing, filled with happy locals and afterwork drinkers alike. The bar service is fast and friendly, and the staff quick to offer tasters if I'm deliberating over which beer to try. The ale is always

well kept, and with plenty of rotating pumps, it is one place I am sure to be able to try something I haven't had before. Towards the back, the pub opens out into a more spacious room with a Thai kitchen. The food is delicious, and the spicy umami dishes pair beautifully with cask beer.



**'The ale is well kept, and with plenty of rotating pumps, it is one place I am sure to be able to try something I haven't had before'**



'This pub is rich in history, with links to Samuel Pepys and Charles Dickens, and today, actor Ian McKellen is a leaseholder'

## Grapes

LIMEHOUSE, LONDON

This small and quirky 16th-century pub on a pebbled street seems almost frozen in time, even as modern developments have sprung up along this part of the Thames over the past two decades. Inside, there's a small but strong selection of traditional real ales, and a warm welcome. It can certainly get a little cramped at busy times, but I like to sit on a bar stool along the edge of the room and drink in the atmosphere. This pub is rich in history, with links to Samuel Pepys and Charles Dickens, and today, actor Ian McKellen is a leaseholder. I haven't been lucky enough to run into him while enjoying a pint yet, but I'll keep trying.

## Queen's Head KING'S CROSS, LONDON

I first discovered this charming Victorian pub when it was the location for a friend's music night. Happily, I found it boasts a delightful selection of excellent beers, as well as a good range of cider. There are tasty meat and cheese plates



on offer, and a great range of seating options for drinking alone or as part of a group, from bar stools to perch on to comfy leather sofas to sink into.

The regular music events have been off the agenda recently due to the pandemic and associated capacity restrictions, but the Queen's Head team has now restarted the regular Thursday night and Sunday afternoon sessions.



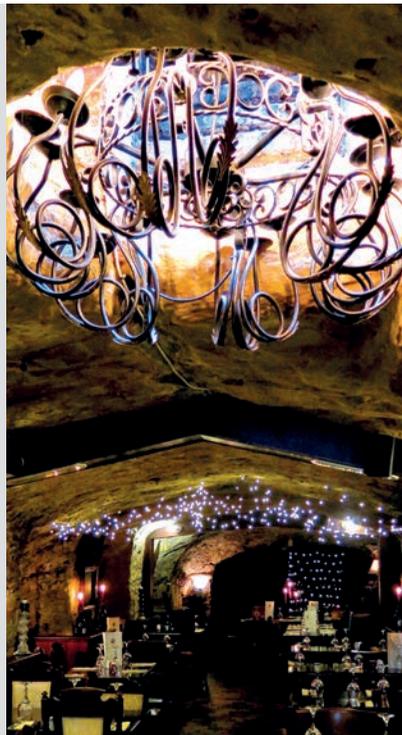
## Harp COVENT GARDEN, LONDON

A long-standing London institution, the Harp needs no introduction. For a London born-and-bred real ale fan, visiting this Covent Garden institution seems like something of a rite of passage. Afternoon or evening, it's usually packed, and tenacity and agility are required in equal measure to make it over the threshold, beyond the drinkers milling around outside near the entrance. Pint in hand, I like to head for the upstairs room and settle in for a few moments of quiet, before inevitably descending the staircase to brave the crowds at the bar once again, as the range of beers on offer here is always too great to leave after just one.

## Hand & Heart NOTTINGHAM

I tend to love pubs with plenty of history and dripping with character, and this one fits the bill perfectly. It is built into sandstone caves that date back to Saxon times, and the building housed a brewery in the 19th century. The front section feels a little like a cosy living room, with patterned walls, comfy sofas, cushions, a bookcase and even a piano, which is used for intimate performances. There are also some secluded corner spots, perfect for sitting alone with a book and a pint on a rainy day. Towards the back of the Hand & Heart there's an inviting dining room where you can enjoy a meal surrounded by the cave walls and ceiling - definitely a unique experience.

**'You can enjoy a meal surrounded by cave walls'**



## Eagle FARRINGDON, LONDON

There are not a lot of places where you can enjoy a pint of cask beer in a bustling pub with mismatched chairs, and also eat a meal as memorable as those on offer at the Eagle. The Mediterranean-inspired menu gets chalked up daily before service begins from the open-plan kitchen. Watching the chefs cook is mesmerising, turning out one rump steak sandwich after another during a busy lunch service. It's high-quality cuisine, but without the stuffiness of fine dining, and probably the only place you can have a pastel de nata and a pint of bitter at the same time.



**Hollie Stephens** is a freelance beer writer. She contributes to publications including *Ferment* and *Pellicle*. Follow her on Twitter at [@GlobeHops](#)



Fergus Fitzgerald  
created Adnams' bestseller

# A ghostly pale ale

Jeff Evans discovers how a traditional brewery embraced modern beer styles

**It seems you can teach an old dog** new tricks. This is a story of how even the most traditional of breweries can move with the times.

The early years of the 21st century encompassed a period of considerable change at Adnams in Southwold, Suffolk. The historic seaside brewhouse had served the long-established company well but was coming to the end of its days and gradually being replaced, beginning with the fermentation vessels and progressing to the disintegrating cast-iron mash tuns and kettles made of wafer-thin copper.

At the same time, veteran head brewer Mike Powell-Evans opted for a well-deserved retirement, leaving his office in the very capable hands of a young brewer recruited from Fuller's. When Fergus Fitzgerald arrived, he noted that Adnams' flagship beers, Southwold Bitter (4.1 per cent ABV) and Broadside (6.3 per cent), were still in excellent shape, indeed, both growing strongly in

the market. He was also enthused by the infrastructure investment that Adnams was making at a time when very few other breweries were showing the same sort of commitment. "There was a lot of optimism about the future," he says.

That said, Fergus also realised that, nationally, traditional brown bitters were slowly heading into a decline and being replaced by golden ales. He was also aware of increased competition from new breweries because of pubs opening up their beer lists.

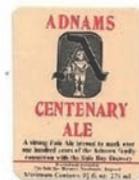
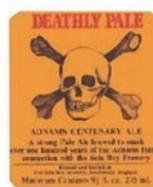
"Adnams had always been seen as a traditional brewery in terms of its beer styles and the growth of the previous decade didn't suggest we needed to alter this approach," he says. "However, the growing interest in new beers and styles gave us confidence that we could, and should, take advantage of the capabilities of the new brewhouse."

Moves in this direction had already been made by Mike when he created a seasonal beer called Explorer (5 per cent) and laced it with Columbus and Chinook hops from the US. But a conscious decision was made in 2009 to develop

a new programme of seasonals that took Adnams out of its comfort zone by employing hops, malts and yeasts it had never considered before to brew styles such as kölsch, American IPA, Belgian wit, bock and weissbier.

"The reaction was great," says Fergus. "Some beers went better than others but, overall, it worked." The series continued the following year, but Fergus found he had a slot to fill for

Halloween. For this, he initially took inspiration from a mysterious bottle he had spotted in a cabinet at the Red Lion in Southwold. It contained a strong ale of around 9 per cent ABV that had been brewed in the 1970s, to mark the





**Above:** Seaside brewery has been Adnams' home for 150 years **Right:** The past inspired new direction for the brewery

centenary of the brewery. The name of the beer was Deathly Pale, and the label featured a skull and crossbones. What Fergus was looking at, however, was not what the public received, as that design was changed at the last moment and the less contentious name of Centenary Ale adopted instead. Only a few of the original bottles escaped from the brewery.

**The name Deathly Pale, however,** seemed ideal for a Halloween beer, but by the time the beer went into production, it had been ditched once again and replaced by the safer, and perhaps more evocative, Ghost Ship. As for the recipe of the new beer, inspiration came from a brewers' dinner publican Mark Dorber had hosted

a year earlier at the Anchor, just across the creek in Walberswick, where there was great enthusiasm for a new American hop called Citra.

"I managed to get a sample and immediately decided we needed to brew with it," says Fergus. The hop seemed perfect for Ghost Ship, which, reflecting its origins as Deathly Pale, would be light in colour. Some sweetness and body would be encouraged by adding Caramalt and Rye to Adnams' Pale Ale malt, although the spotlight would be on these

**"Southwold Bitter will always be the soul of the brewery... but Ghost Ship is the heart of the brewery now"**

new hops. A few other varieties also went into the copper, including Columbus and Centennial, but all the dry hops were Citra. Released in cask at 4.5 per cent, it became the brewery's bestselling seasonal and, understandably, was repeated in 2011 when supplies ran out early. Such demand persuaded Adnams to make Ghost Ship a permanent part of its range.

**As with all beers, the hop blend** is adjusted to accommodate annual variations in the harvest but, says Fergus, Citra remains "the central force". "The aim with every brew is still the same lemon, lime and light elderflower notes that we had when it was first brewed. That elderflower note is really what we look for when we do the hop selection."

Currently, Ghost Ship is available in cask, bottle and can, and there's also a low-alcohol version. More significantly, the brewery now produces twice as much Ghost Ship as Southwold Bitter.

"It's our main beer," Fergus says. "It sailed past Southwold Bitter a few years back. Southwold Bitter will always be the soul of the brewery. It expresses something about the house yeast that in Ghost Ship sits more under the surface, but Ghost Ship is the heart of the brewery now. Its success has probably helped cement that idea within Adnams that we can innovate and do things our own way – that we can be proud of what Adnams has achieved in its 150 years, but that we don't need to be tied to doing things exactly the same way."



**Above:** Ghost Ship is in cask, can and bottle, plus there's a low-alcohol version



**Left:** Wild Beer's Andrew Cooper – still rewriting the rules  
**Below:** Simon Hobbs' 'signature' is beer and Wagyu beef



# Into another realm

**Susan Nowak** takes a magical tour packed with science and witchcraft

**In Glastonbury, just days** after the summer solstice, the usual ancient rites had been cancelled. But I lacked neither mysticism nor alchemy when I embarked on a brewery visit that turned into an adventure.

So it was – and still is – the aim of Andrew Cooper and Brett Ellis, who founded the Wild Beer Company in a farmyard close to the tor a decade ago “to rewrite the rules and challenge perceptions”.

Mine certainly were. I learned of alternative fermentation involving wild yeasts – or, as Andrew put it, “leaving the door open”; their menu of ingredients from leaves and herbs to kelp and plums; and “library” of wooden barrels, once holding sherry, brandy or wine, where some beers are aged for years.

‘Dirty beers’, lambics inoculated with wild yeasts, are just one sector of an astonishing range crafted in the best sense of the word; ‘clean beers’, made with any of 15 yeast cultures, embrace

traditional styles including stouts, IPAs, bitters and more – anything but traditional in execution. In a normal (pre-Covid-19) year, their draught beers are served in hundreds of pubs nationwide.

**Both worked as brewers** before setting up Wild Beer, but they brew with food in mind. “We both have a culinary background; Brett was a chef and I have run restaurants,” said Andrew. “Our creative ideas are often inspired by food; when we are talking about new beers, we often ask, ‘how does that fit in with food?’”

It fits very well at their restaurant Wild Beer at Wapping Wharf on Bristol harbourside. With 22 taps, they encourage pairing with meals, and some dishes contain beer. “But we certainly don’t shoehorn it into everything we do. Flavour comes first.”

**‘My perceptions were challenged. I learned of alternative fermentation involving wild yeasts – or, as Andrew put it, “leaving the door open”’**

Andrew had put together a beer and cheese pairing just for me, with unique cheeses and charcuterie produced next door at Westcombe Dairy.

“A brewery and a cheesemaker reflecting this particular local terroir is the essence of what Somerset food and drink is all about,” said Andrew.

He began with Sleeping Lemons (3.6 per cent ABV), a preserved lemon gose, its acidity cutting through a superb soft ricotta with its own citrus slant. Young Caerphilly had a real wow factor, spritzty acidity in the centre, flavour developing outwards to the rind accompanying flagship Wild IPA (5.2 per cent); with two wines and a Belgian ale yeast, it has pink grapefruit notes – “very food friendly”. A prince among Cheddars was gallantly partnered by 9 per cent Japanese-inspired Ninkasi, with its touch of

Somerset apple juice and gooseberry: “A really quenching long drink – a sipper and a sharer.”

Their original, Modus Operandi (7 per cent), is slightly Flemish red in style with “cherry pie character”. The pairing suggestion is “an earthy meat” and that, too, came from the dairy in the shape of a spicy saucisson.

**Producer of these marvels** is Tom Calver. Milk to make the cheese comes from his Friesians, which graze lush pasture “tapping into the microbiological diversity of the soil; everything starts with the soil”. So it’s back to that terroir! A spring in the farm’s hillside supplies the brewery with water – and the spent grain feeds some of his beasts.

The century-old business briefly betrayed its origins by making block Cheddar for supermarkets. But in the 1980s, Tom’s father, Richard, took the brave decision to start making Cheddar by hand again, to their original

recipe. Watching them at work is spellbinding.

Tom said real Cheddar (natural accompaniment, in his view, real ale) was saved by some incredible people, including customers “and Cheddar makers supporting each other”.

**It was hard to leave this** mesmeric spot where, as Andrew put it, science and witchcraft are both at work. Happily, I was off chasing more magic in the legends of Merlin the Wizard, Arthur the King and his Knights of the Round Table...

At Tintagel brewery it's writ large: Arthur's Ale (4.4 per cent, light brown with a hint of figs), Pendragon (4.5 per cent, pale, hoppy IPA), Sir Lancelot (4.2 per

cent, lingering hops aftertaste), Merlin's Muddle (5.2 per cent, complex and creamy), not forgetting Calibur, the Cornish word for Excalibur, a powerful 5.8 per cent dark old ale with – naturally – a puff of smoke in the roast malt, earthy hops and dark fruit. (Poldark, 4.5 per cent, is at the party, too, as a mild – he wouldn't like that.)

Here, too, we're on a farm, the highest in Cornwall; the brewery set up in 2009 in a redundant milking parlour. A new brewery, visitor centre and restaurant opened in a magnificent barn in 2017. Grazing nearby is its 170-strong herd of beer-fed Wagyu cattle, the sumptuous beef eaten in the restaurant and sold in the shop.

Liz and John Heard set up the brewery, later joined by their daughters, Lucy, Laura and Eliza. “Dad had had enough of Cornish beer not being quite Cornish any more,” said Lucy. “Beer was being filtered, ingredients and taste not as good, so he said, ‘let's brew our own’.”

Family friend and retired brewer Andy, now deceased, gave them offbeat beer recipes, which were tweaked by Liz, an expert in science, taste and aroma, said Lucy. Dave Fitchford, Tintagel brewer for the past decade, makes the 10 regular beers. I found them a joy – spanning a wide style and flavour spectrum.

Lucy has charge of their handsome herd

of black Friesian crosses and Wagyu bull sire, having nagged her dad for cows since a small child. When she was 18, she bought into the whole Wagyu ethos. “Beer enhances the marbling and flavour of the meat,” she told me. Her cattle eat spent grain from the brewery, while leftover beer and ends of barrels go into their troughs in the final months before slaughter. “They really smack their lips!” she said.

**Though off the beaten** path, folk head to the spacious new bistro and bar owned by Simon Hobbs. Tintagel beers and luscious Wagyu beef are the ‘signature’

on the menu, from my melting steak and Lancelot Ale pie with perfectly crimped shortcrust lid and luscious gravy to a meltingly tender



**Right:** Tintagel's Lucy Heard with her herd of black Friesian crosses  
**Below:** Perfect match – head chef Max Savage with Tintagel beer and food



burger with onion rings in lacy beer batter and seriously chunky chips. Other choices include exceptional Wagyu sirloin steaks, River Fowey mussels, pork belly in cider, beer-battered fish 'n' chips and dressed Cornish crab. John's recipe contribution is the Wagyu beef brisket, slow simmered in ale on the Sunday carvery.



**Susan Nowak** writes CAMRA's *Good Pub Food*, and has made many TV and radio appearances talking about pub food and cooking with beer

# Birthplace to Dracula... and some scary ales

Following some long years' absence, **Steve Hobman** pays a slightly nostalgic visit to Whitby and discovers a lively post-lockdown ale scene in this bustling seaside resort

**The Yorkshire fishing port of Whitby** is quite the colourful place – much famed for local Captain James Cook, the ruined Benedictine abbey, which inspired the legend of Count Dracula and, more prosaically, kippers and fish 'n' chips.

For some years now it has been a world shrine for Goths, dedicated followers of Bram Stoker's horror classic. Goths do like to party, so it's just as well there are a lot of characterful pubs, positively bouncing with good beer.

I have fond memories. As a fledgling newspaper reporter, guest of the RNLI, I took the helm to slowly, nay anxiously, steer the town's lifeboat back into port after a rather bouncy sail on a turbulent North Sea. Heading for, to my eyes, a quite narrow gap between the two 19th-century piers, I recall feeling a touch queasy. Possibly butterflies, more likely the couple of swifty pre-boarding pints of Camerons Strongarm (4 per cent ABV).

No criticism intended of that legendary ruby red Hartlepool brew. Launched in the 1950s with the slogan Beer for Hard Working Men, it was, and remains, a fine pint from a brewer who stuck by cask throughout the dark keg years.

Back then, Camerons and contemporaries such as Vaux of

Sunderland and Tetley's dominated, with traditional brown beers. On this reprise, I quaff a pint of Abbey Blonde (4 per cent) in the beer garden of Whitby brewery to contemplate a very different beer-escape.

Nowadays, the town enjoys a veritable cornucopia of ales from across Yorkshire, the North East and two local brewers to wash down the ubiquitous fish suppers – I venture Whitby may reasonably claim title as the world's fish 'n' chip capital.

The eponymous brewery began life in 2013, launched by former home brewer Richard Wells as Conquest. By 2016, there was expansion to a 20bbl plant and the move to the current converted barn site, sitting just by the 13th-century Gothic abbey ruins and spooky graveyard that fed Stoker's frightful imagination.



When we call, still under the cosh of Covid-19, there's a steady but affable queue. Settled in, service is smooth as the ale. That first Blonde tippie, brewed with Styrian Bobek hops, offers fruit and floral notes, crisp with a dry finish. A real rewarding thirst quencher if you have just beaten the 199-step challenge from Church Street to the abbey. Originally built as a test of faith for pilgrims to St Mary's Church, the steps now simply tax the grit of the tourist horde.

We also sample Saltwick Nab (4.2 per cent) named for the nearby cliff beauty spot – a rich, ruby best bitter. Paying heritage tribute, there's Whitby Whaler

**Left:** Lady Luck's typically eccentric Shipwreck Blonde



**“Over the Goth festivals, Black Cat is our bestselling beer – they absolutely love it. The pub is rammed”**

Session IPA (3.9 per cent), Shipwreck Blonde (4.5 per cent), Black Cat (4.5 per cent) porter and triple-hopped Horseshoe IPA (5.5 per cent).

Specials include Gorilla Juice (5 per cent), a banana and treacle stout, Evil Bunny (6.8 per cent), a dark treacle stout, and Liquorice Root Tea Pale Ale (4 per cent). Black Cat, chocolatey and roasty coffee porter, is the beer of choice for the biannual Goth festival invasions in April and October (in ‘normal times’). The boys brew nothing else for the two weeks prior, producing some 40 barrels.

Arran, son of the pub landlord Richard, told me: “Over the Goth festivals, Black Cat is our bestselling beer – they absolutely love it. The pub is rammed.”

Post-lockdown trade has bounced back, he says. “Since reopening, it’s been busy. We are so small, we can quickly turn around new brews and offer something fresh to the pub every week.”

The beers can often be found at the Smugglers, Robin Hood’s Bay, and even some 50 miles north in the inimitable

Darlington Snooker Club. The scary pump clips are designed by tattooist Lilac-Mae from nearby Seven Sins Ink.

Local CAMRA Pub of the Year for three consecutive years, the



(4 per cent), bronze ale with a light toffee note and hint of citrus, and Jet Black, a porter (4.5 per cent). The IPA (5.2 per cent) is pale, dry and hoppy with a long bitter pull. Then there’s Black Death (6.66 per cent) – “Gothic stout as dark as death and as tasty as sin”, they say.

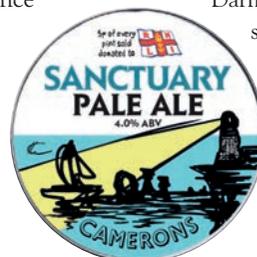
**The beers can be found around** town, including at Wetherspoon’s Angel Hotel in New Quay Street and the Board Inn at the foot of aforesaid steps and close to the celebrated Fortune Smokehouse, from where pungent kipper aromas assail visitor nostrils.

Nearby, Camerons is still very present in its flagship Pier Inn. A bit whacky and a big Goth favourite. Today, a variety of ales regularly sit with Strongarm. Maybe

**Above:** Camerons’ flagship Pier Inn  
**Top right:** The Board Inn is at the foot of the 199 steps to the ruined Gothic abbey, which test tourists’ fitness

Sanctuary Pale Ale (4 per cent), Boathouse Blonde (4.4 per cent) or offbeat specials such as American red rye Thirst Blood (4.3 per cent).

If it’s whacky you’re seeking, then look to the tiny Lady Luck brewery, housed in a converted kitchen at the back of the Little Angel, Flowergate. Since 2018, young brewers Arran Nattriss and John Crow have been creating an eclectic stream of ales on their 0.5bbl plant. They do four cores: Kraken





Little Angel is a Grade II listed traditional three-room pub, said to incorporate part of the old castle. With an impressive array of nine handpumps, the house brews sit alongside some of Yorkshire's best: Ossett Yorkshire Blonde (3.9 per cent), Daleside Old Legover (4.1 per cent) and Roosters YPA (4.3 per cent) for us. As we peruse the beer list, a friendly fellow drinker calls out to recommend the morbidly popular Coffin Dodger (6 per cent). We just aren't ready for that, so Kraken IPA is taken – a fine British-style IPA – along with the easy-drinking Shipwreck Blonde, brewed with Hallertau hops.

Many Whitby pubs are strong on sporting events, big screens commonplace and here there are three. Live music, too, when allowed. A beer terrace offers views of the Esk Valley/ North Yorkshire Moors Railway.

On the stroll from Little Angel to the train station, you stumble across the Station Inn, fondly dubbed 'the waiting room'. All traditional dark wood across three rooms, there's a cracking mix of ales – Ossett Yorkshire Blonde and Whitby Jet Black alongside Timothy Taylor's Boltmaker (4 per cent) – and real cider.

Whitby – population only 14,000 or so – sustains three micropubs. At the station is the Waiting Room, of course. A bit confusing, yes. The town's pioneer, it is the purist micro here: no screens, spirits nor children. A CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year, there are five rotating cask ales, but it only opens at 5pm and is closed on Wednesdays.



Sadly, we find the Quirky Den in historic Grape Lane still Covid-closed. However, we manage entry to the busy Arch & Abbey in Skinner Street, where there are four real ales and six ciders. This erstwhile ladies dress shop harks back to a more genteel age furnished with rugs, prints, pot plants and cast-iron tables. We welcomed splendid pints of Ryedale Gold (3.8 per cent).

**Ploughing through the thronging** holiday crowds, we head back across the bridge to the Endeavour in Church Street. Named for Cook's first ship that sailed to the Antipodes, you should find four cask ales and Yorkshire tapas in this one-room house where you can eat your own fish 'n' chips, but Covid-19 rules prevent our entry.

So, it was to the Black Horse, a small two-room hostelry rich in Whitby's history. Four handpulls, two cask ciders, but just one ale on offer – Hambleton's Thoroughbred IPA (5 per cent) – perfect with a pork pie from the fine Yorkshire tapas menu, but sold out after a hectic day. There's snuff, though.

Sitting by the ancient Market Square, the Black Horse is said to

**Clockwise from top left:** Station Inn; Fox & Hounds, Goldsborough; Waiting Room micropub; Black Horse

have one of Europe's oldest service bars, along with a distinctive frosted glass frontage from the 1880s. It has long quenched thirsts for the once-thriving and hard-drinking jet, shipbuilding and whaling industries. You might imagine Cook's jolly Jack tars cramming in, desperate for a pint after yet another intrepid South Seas sojourn.

For intrepid beer seekers, Whitby's dramatic cliffs and moorland hinterland offer a beguiling choice of pubs. Here's just one: the Fox & Hounds in the hamlet of Goldsborough, high above the bay.

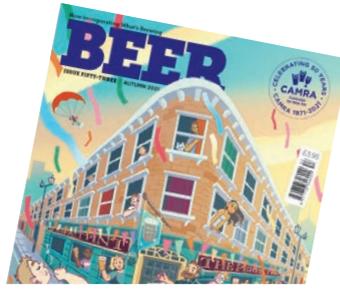
Head past Sandsend beach and Lythe on the A174 before taking a B road to this simple village pub with well-kept beer garden. Well worth the journey. Your reward: excellent Sheffield's Bradfield Farmers Blonde (4 per cent) alongside Timothy Taylor's Landlord (4.3 per cent) – and a dramatic sea view.

Watching a solitary vessel ploughing back to port far below, my thoughts suddenly return to that lifeboat adventure of yore. I may never be at that helm again, but I resolve to steer back to Whitby sooner than later.



**Steve Hobman** is the founder and lead consultant for Beer Tours UK, formed to showcase British brewing and pubs. [beertoursuk.com](http://beertoursuk.com)

# Your shout



Write to *BEER*, CAMRA 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW or email [wb.editor@camra.org.uk](mailto:wb.editor@camra.org.uk)

**Having recently received *BEER*,** it dawned on me that, although the plastic packaging is recyclable, others opt for a compostable cover, which is more sustainable.

Can you tell me if CAMRA has plans to use this type of packaging?

**Ged Dore, Witney, Oxon**

**Editor replies:** *CAMRA continues to monitor the cost of compostable packaging, but, as you say, the current plastic wrapper is recyclable.*

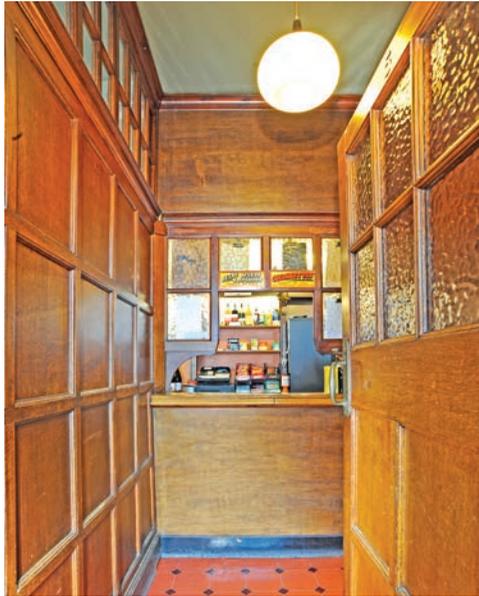
**Re Guinness Foreign Extra Stout,**

I purchased the smaller bottle in Cargills, Colombo, Sri Lanka's Harrods, more than 40 years ago. Should be nicely matured by now! It was gift-wrapped with a ribbon and carrying string! The label says it was bottled by Guinness Exports Ltd, Liverpool, England, and has a unique bottle number L. A 851212 (I assume the L refers to Liverpool). No ABV or volume are shown, but I think they were 12.75 fl oz bottles.

By the early 2000s, the beer was brewed in Sri Lanka by Ceylon Breweries Ltd at 7.5 per cent ABV in 625ml bottles. Guinness is no longer brewed in Sri Lanka, but the similar home products are Lion Stout (8 per cent) and Sando Stout (7.5 per cent). Both are just too drinkable!

**Grahame McDonald, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear**

***BEER* (autumn) mentioned the Jolly Taxpayer, a Portsmouth pub.** Not many pubs share that name, but memories flooded back for me as I lived close by between 1965–70.



Fond memories of Portsmouth's Jolly Taxpayer

It's in a built-up residential area of terraced housing and three-bedroom semis. Consequently, its clientele was a mix of wage earners and low-to middle-salaried folk, a healthy mix for ready conversation.

It was a Brickwoods house, then a local business, which folded in 1983. Its best bitter was an acquired taste and, after a while, quite palatable and at 1/8d (8p) a pint in 1970. Food? Crisps in three flavours.

During the time I was a regular, the landlord was Edgar (Eggar) Harris, a classic tenant of his time – stocky, genial, usually in an open-necked shirt and waistcoat, not one you would choose to get uppity with.

He was something of a pub entertainer and on weekend evenings he would take up his

place at the pub piano. He would knock out old favourites sprinkled with contemporary hits.

Sunday lunchtime sessions would be punctuated around 12.30pm by the arrival of Harry laden with cockles harvested that morning at nearby Langstone Harbour. These came in newspaper in pint or quart portions.

Such was pub life some 50 years ago. I miss many aspects of it. It is not all bad now, but nostalgia is soothing.

**Gordon Mott, Plymouth, Devon**

**Reading about *Stingo* (*BEER*, summer) reminded me of a verse I composed for a competition organised by the brewery to promote Red Barrel:**

“We all try nightly every year, some really edifying, delicious beer, all rally round every licensee, with Red Barrel by Watney”!

In my defence, I was young and my taste had obviously not developed, and Watney's did not appreciate me singing the beer's praises, as I did not win.

**Mitch Irving, Earl Shilton, Leics**



# Many happy returns

A fine history is no protection against closure but, while too many heritage pubs have been lost, there are some heart-warming tales of enlightened owners who saved their historic gem, as **Paul Ainsworth** reveals

PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL SLAUGHTER LRPS

Since 2007, the number of UK pubs has fallen by around 10,000 and heritage ones have not been immune from these losses. Fortunately, closure rates have steadied recently and gloomy predictions that the pandemic would decimate the pub population have not come to pass. Closures have regularly been offset by rescues, some quite unlikely, and we can tell several joyful stories of heritage pubs coming back from the brink.

We begin in Middlesbrough where, opposite the railway station, stands the **Zetland Hotel**, built around 1860. Its chief glory is the spectacular lounge added in 1893, though this was rarely open in the often-troubled years before the pub closed its doors in 2015. The rescuers were Joanne and Philip Christie who, after carrying out a painstaking restoration, reopened the pub (subtitled Christie's Brasserie) in 2018. The lounge, with its display of round-arched mirrors and sumptuous tiling and plasterwork,



Sumptuous tiling and round-arched mirrors saved at the Zetland Hotel

now acts as a dining room, and the restoration exposed other ornate fittings.

Also in Yorkshire, the prospects for the **Coach & Horses**, Barnburgh, near Doncaster, looked uncertain when, after years of neglect, owners Wellington shut it and put it on the market in 2016. This 1937-built village pub has one of the very best interwar interiors in the country, multiroomed and largely intact. Again, enter enlightened new owners, Gordon and Ben Jones, who had a bid for the pub accepted in 2020, then

undertook an exemplary refurbishment. Of particular note are the gorgeous, glazed counter screens in all four bars, but at their best in what is now the Whisky Bar.

A third Yorkshire example is the splendid **White Hart** (not to be confused with the equally wonderful Olde White Harte nearby) in

Hull, which Marston's closed and sold way back in 2007. The new leaseholder made numerous planning applications for alterations, but the doors stayed shut and the dust gathered until it reopened in 2018, serving as the tap for the Crafty Little Brewery from nearby Brough.

The pub itself was rebuilt in 1904 and fitted out in the style of a smaller Edwardian drinking palace. The beautifully preserved front lounge is dominated by an astonishing curved, ceramic-fronted counter, one of only 12 left in the UK, but has other good features like the mahogany back-fitting with unusual glazed, towered cupboards.



Coach & Horses, Barnburgh, from left: Lounge Bar; rising screens in the Whisky Bar; glazed counter screens in the Tap Room



**Clockwise from top:** Curved, tiled bar at the White Hart, Hull; Old Toll Bar, Glasgow, with fine gantry; slate flagstones at Dovey Valley Hotel, Machynlleth; no expense was spared restoring the seven-bar Boleyn Tavern, East London, both inside and out

Leaving God's Own County, we head for the outskirts of Glasgow where the **Old Toll Bar** sits on Paisley Road West. By the time this late-Victorian treasure closed in 2013, it had become tired and unloved, and had structural problems – many of us feared the worst.

Thankfully, in 2016, Milo Solimum saw a diamond in the rough, refurbished the bar and has been rewarded with a buzzing pub. Recently, the basement has been brought back into use. The star feature here is the ebullient gantry (the Scottish term for barback) with its two sets of four spirit casks. Four huge old advertising mirrors adorn the walls and other Victorian features include a panelled ceiling, carved woodwork and painted windows.

And so to Wales where, not far from Machynlleth, you'll find the **Dovey Valley Hotel**, built to serve Cem maes Road station (closed in 1965). For a long time this small hotel-cum-pub was run

**'No expense has been spared on recreating original fixtures, and the skylight now looks down on something special'**

single-handedly by Maurice Davies until his death. Seemingly headed for residential conversion, against all expectations, it was bought by Michael Denton and his mother, who have turned it back into a hotel (four en-suite bedrooms) and lovingly restored the glorious public bar. Stepping back in time is a hoary cliché, but this is the real deal. Most of what you see dates from changes made in 1913, including the servery with its glazed screenwork and sashes (unusual away from the north of England). The room is simply furnished with slate flagstone floor, fireplace and old handpumps against the rear wall. Over the side door is a reminder of dark days for beer drinkers – a Watney's Brown Ale sign.

**Our final pub is a recent redemption.**

In 2018, the monumental **Boleyn Tavern** in London's Upton Park was sold as unviable by Greene King after its neighbours, West Ham United, moved to the London Stadium. This June it reopened after a £1.5m restoration. The interior, previously a dilapidated barn-like space, now looks much as it did when it opened in 1899 with its original seven bars, both large and small.

No expense has been spared on faithfully recreating original fixtures, and the spectacular glazed skylight now looks down on something really special. Congratulations to Remarkable Pubs for a, well, remarkable rescue.

We'll have six more tales of happy returns in the next issue.

● **There are pubs with historic interiors looking for new owners/tenants. For details, email [info@pubheritage.camra.org.uk](mailto:info@pubheritage.camra.org.uk)**

# A brief history of cider

Cider's story goes deep into human history. It's a tale that combines human and plant migration, glaciers, great dynasties and the cradle of civilisation

**55m BCE (before common era):** Evidence in fossil records reveals the first instances of members of the wider *Rosaceae* family that show apple-like characteristics in the region of modern-day north-west China.

**55m-10,000 BCE:** Over the following millions of years, thousands of species of apple evolve in this Central Asian region and, during interglacial periods, spread throughout the temperate climes of the northern hemisphere.

**10,000-3,000 BCE:** With the end of the Ice Age, the ancestor of modern, domestic apples, *Malus sieversii*, begins to move west from its refuge in the

Tien Shan mountain forests, thanks to animals, and traders on the Silk Road.

**3,000 BCE:** The people of Mesopotamia, in modern Iraq, were among some of the first to master agriculture. The key to the domestication of apples and pears is cracked through the development of the grafting process.

**1,000 BCE-50 CE (common era):** The age of orchards begins as the Greeks, and then Romans, carefully select varieties they wish to preserve, and house these trees in collections, often in walled gardens. The species *Malus domestica* (the progenitor of all eating, cooking and cider apples) is born.

**50 BCE-400 CE:** Romans invade Great Britain, bringing with them domestic apple varieties and modern orcharding techniques. They are allegedly greeted by Celtic Britons already making a crude proto-cider, made from crab apples. Meanwhile, varieties of apple, with properties prized for creating a stable cider (rather than good for eating), are emerging in northern Spain and southern France, probably from Moorish Spain.

**400-1066:** The Middle Ages prove a quiet

time for cider in Britain. Whatever knowledge and understanding of apples and cider that did exist was not largely exercised, or at least was not documented.

**1066-1600:** After the Battle of Hastings begins the process of the Normans introducing superior knowledge and skills associated with tree husbandry and the subsequent fermentation of apples. Their bold, tannin-rich apples eventually found a suitable home in western England, while the growing areas of the South and East developed a tradition of growing eating apples.

**1120:** 10 acres of orchards are recorded in Nottingham.

**1270:** Cider making is recorded in Yorkshire, Hampshire and Sussex.





**1320:** Reference is made to babies being baptised in cider in Sussex.

**1420:** The Wycliffe cider bible is published. It owes its name to the verse, “For he (John the Baptist) shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor cider.”

**1600s & 1700s:** People in Devon begin to be afflicted by a condition called Devon colic, leading to terrible abdominal pains and occasionally death. Investigations found a link to drinking cider, however, the truth was it was poisoning from lead used to repair mills and presses.

**1650-1700:** Cider’s zenith is reached at a time when Britain is at war with Europe, with no wine imports leading to a thirsty aristocracy. A movement is born to push forward cider as England’s indigenous wine, with the development of new, flavoursome varieties, such as the Herefordshire Redstreak.

**1763:** Lord Bute’s government introduces a tax on cider in a bid to

reduce the national debt, which was spiralling as a result of Britain’s role in the Seven Years War.

**1887:** Truck, the practice of part payment of wages for farm labourers with cider, is deemed illegal. Up to eight pints a day were on offer for the best workers.

**1887-1950:** The beginning of true commercial cider production in Britain begins with HP Bulmer of Hereford, founded in 1887. Rather than cider being a by-product of the agricultural cycle and process, commercial production centred on the purchasing of apples from farmers, then making a clean cider and presenting it in a modern way through the use of filtration and carbonation.

**1950s-1990s:** Cider continues to grow in volume and becomes a mainstay on the bar in pubs, thanks to emerging

keg technology, and in supermarkets and other retail outlets. However, associated with these commercial ciders is a low price point and a frequent view of them being cheap drinks, to be consumed in formative teenage years on a park bench (with the inevitable consequences).

**1976:** Cider duty is reintroduced by the Treasury. There is an exemption for producers making less than 7,000 litres per year, which is crucial for upholding the heritage and tradition of cider making by enabling smaller farm producers to use fruit from old orchards.

**1988:** CAMRA forms the APPLE Committee and formally begins championing real cider.

**2006-2020:** A hot summer, the football world

cup and the advent of drinking cider over ice precipitates the Magners Effect. Cider is instantly transformed into something modern, cool and contemporary with mixed sex appeal. This simultaneously (and paradoxically) catalyses the development over the next decade, of the alcopop-inspired flavoured category and the emergence of a modern band of smaller makers that experiment with heritage to create a new wave of production.

**2021:** CAMRA publishes *Modern British Cider* by Gabe Cook, who shines a light on the contemporary story of the drink and its modern renaissance. Cook highlights how the industry is throwing off negative preconceptions to showcase a drink, and a community, filled with high value and deep roots.

**For more on cider, visit [camra.org.uk/learn-discover](http://camra.org.uk/learn-discover); *Modern British Cider* is £15.99 from CAMRA Books.**



# Which festival do you like best of all?

CAMRA has relaunched its national programme of beer festivals, after an almost two-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic. Will you be going to one? What is your favourite and why?

**Yes, I will be going to as many as possible.**

**My favourites are, in no particular order: Peterborough, Nottingham, York, Sheffield, Derby Winter BF at the Roundhouse and maybe Burton upon Trent. All for various reasons, but all great venues. All have great choices of different styles of ale. Nottingham and Peterborough also have really good entertainment.**

**Colin Camidge**

Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival is my favourite because it is one of the few festivals that serves only winter beers. I agree with some of the previous responders that pubs deserve our support, but not many of them serve winter ales in the 6 per cent ABV to 10 per cent ABV range.

If it wasn't for festivals like the Tewkesbury event, these beers would surely die out.

**Steven Kisby**

**I think all CAMRA beer festivals are the tops. To single one out is difficult, but Gainsborough Beer Festival at the magnificent Grade I listed Old Hall is a wonderful, atmospheric experience to enjoy a beer or three.**

**Graham Larn**



**For me, it has to be the Liverpool Beer Festival.**

**I just love the event, so popular and the customers, the camaraderie, the organisation, the venue – it is all put together so well. Hats off to the Liverpool branch.**

**You just know they will be the hottest tickets in town.**

**Linda Harris**

I am definitely looking forward to getting back to the festivals, I have really missed them and believe they are a key part of CAMRA and its scope to engage with new members. Luckily, we have my home festival in Northampton, which I will look to attend, but my other favourite is Norwich. It is in a fantastic location with a great atmosphere and large selection of beers and ciders, but is also a fantastic city where you can visit great pubs. For sure I will be looking for a few more to get to!

**Ben Brown**

**I don't have any planned, but thinking about Nottingham. My favourites have been Burton and Derby with the sense of atmosphere you get from the fantastic locations, plus they're a chance to meet up with friends and family from back home.**

**Ash Corbett-Collins**

All comments are taken from a discussion on CAMRA's online forum at [discourse.camra.org.uk](https://discourse.camra.org.uk)



British beer festivals are back!

WIN  
BEER!

# Get Quizzic-ale

Does real ale improve your general knowledge? Find out by tackling our quiz

**The first five correct entries to be drawn will win a month's membership to Beer52.com\***

● Send entries to Quizzic-ale, BEER, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 4LW, by 30 November 2021.

● Your details will be passed on to Beer52.com, but if you would prefer this not to happen, state so clearly on your entry.



Name:

Membership number:

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## Enter online

To enter online, follow this link:

[surveymonkey.co.uk/r/survey/2021](https://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/survey/2021)

### Autumn answers

- 1 Fear of frogs 2 Vermeer  
3 Ted Cruz, Texas 4 All characters from Charles Dickens' novel *Nicholas Nickleby* 5 Crouch Vale 6 Humphrey Bogart - his last words 7 Diana 8 Forge brewery, Bude 9 Knight of the Thistle 10 *When Harry Met Sally* 11 Canines, incisors and molars 12 Simon Mayo 13 'Summertime' - The Sundays 14 Fixed Wheel brewery 15 Sikhism 16 Nicholas Lyndhurst 17 Paradoxical or REM 18 A jellyfish 19 King of Hearts 20 Green

**Autumn winners:** Adrian Bland, Barnet; Ben Clough, Penzance; Mark Howarth, Leyland; Heather Turner, Birmingham; Colin Wright, North Walsham

1 Who was sent to prison in 2001 for perjury and perverting the course of justice?

A:

2 Cnidophobia is what?

A:

3 Which Chester brewery produces ales Thirst Quencher and Old Wavertonian?

A:

4 In which film does 14-year-old Antoine and his friend René play truant from school and go to the cinema, play pinball and amusements?

A:

5 By what name is Lac Léman known in Britain?

A:

6 What is Joseph Fry's claim to fame?

A:

7 What unfortunate and embarrassing complaint is known as nocturnal enuresis?

A:

8 What's another name for the plant snapdragon?

A:

9 In 2000, Wisden named five cricketers of the 20th century: Don Bradman, Garfield Sobers, Jack Hobbs and Viv Richards were four. Who was the fifth?

A:

10 What's the connection between Henry Cavill, Rupert Friend and Clive Owen?

A:

11 In which century was calculus introduced into mathematical study?

A:

12 Who was known as the Grand Old Man of India?

A:

13 Which brew won CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain in 2007?

A:

14 Which song has the lines: "When every answer's wrong / you're fighting with lost confidence / all expectations gone"?

A:

15 What is the Mercalli scale used to measure?

A:

16 Whose autobiography is called *Bossypants*?

A:

17 Which Hampshire brewery produces ales Invincible and Illustrious?

A:

18 Which writer collapsed and died while mixing a mayonnaise?

A:

19 Which team has won the Stanley Cup the most times?

A:

20 What was the name of the UN law enforcement organisation in the 1968-69 TV programme *The Champions*?

A:

# Seasonal exceptions

**Des de Moor** seeks out beers for drinkers looking for something extraordinary

## Thoughts turn to beers

beyond the ordinary at this time of year, and one of the most extraordinary British brews I've encountered is Burning Sky's **Coolship** (around 7.2 per cent ABV). The brewery, set up in rural East Sussex in 2013 by former Dark Star brewer Mark Tranter, has surely reached a new peak of artisanal expression with this wild-fermented brew.

It's made by a similar method to Belgian lambic, using a complex turbid mash with a sizeable proportion of unmalted wheat to produce a wort that is exposed overnight in a shallow coolship to ambient microorganisms. It is then fermented and matured in wood, blended and bottle-conditioned.

The third annual release in 2020 was a milestone, as it was the first to blend beers from the previous three brewing seasons, just like an authentic oude geuze. I'd enjoyed the previous releases, but this was the best yet, a heavenly golden liquid offering a complex mix

of fruity, cidery farmhouse flavours, with pear, grapefruit, pungent gunpowder tea notes and a lactic sourness.

The lambic comparison is tempting, but the beer has a character of its own, with more muscular flavours than you'd expect from Belgian examples, and a kick of white pepper hops among the oaky notes on the finish. Limited stocks of the 2021 release should be around by the time you read this.

**It's big stout weather, too,** and one of the most smoothly accomplished I've tried recently is Newbarns' **Plain Dark Beer** (unfiltered can, 11 per cent), from a brewery opened in Edinburgh in 2019 by veterans of the Kernel, Siren and Beavertown breweries.

A curious suggestion of lavender adds interest to a dark chocolate and herby coffee aroma, with raspberry tart notes on a sweet but



balanced toffee roast palate, with spicy tobacco on a moderately roasty finish.

**Also in Scotland, in the** picturesque East Neuk of Fife, is the delightfully named Fettle, making intriguing beers with expressive yeasts and foraged ingredients since 2018.

Fettle's **Saison with Hogweed Seeds** (can-conditioned, 5.4 per cent) is a fine example, with a lively head exuding grassy vanilla, pear and orange notes, herbs on the palate suggesting a Belgian wheat beer, and peppery-bitter and tangy citric notes over a pillow of soothing grain on the finish.

**A few years back, everyone** seemed to be brewing a Black IPA, prompting some fellow beer writers to fulminate over



the seeming contradiction in the style name.

They're much rarer today, though the best still offer a teasing balance of roast malt and resinous hops, as achieved by Dogs Grandad's **Black IPA** (unfiltered can, 5.2 per cent), from a small brewery in a Brixton railway arch set up by hardcore metal singer Alex Hill earlier this year. Hops add floral tones, suggesting chocolate-coated Turkish delight and dried apricots, with a coffee-tinged finish.

## An even tinier new

London brewery is Macintosh, working in 200-litre batches in Stamford Brook. So the quality of its traditional-leaning products is particularly impressive, notably **Best Bitter** (bottle-conditioned, 4.6 per cent), using English ingredients to

yield a light amber beer with an orange-tinged aroma, notes of stewed fruit over chewy malt and a pithy bitterness on the finish.

Sometimes the ordinary can be the most extraordinary.



**Des de Moor** is one of the country's leading writers on bottled beer, and author of *The CAMRA Guide to London's Best Beer, Pubs & Bars*. Follow Des at [@desdemoor](https://twitter.com/desdemoor) and read more of his reviews at [desdemoor.co.uk](https://www.desdemoor.co.uk)

# Pubs and the people's music

Rising singer-songwriter **Hamish Hawk** speaks of his passion for folk pubs and being an unwanted referee for children at a brewery wedding

## I'm a singer who has managed to almost

completely avoid the 'pub gig' circuit – open mikes and things like that. When I was a bit of a jumped-up, yuppie teenager, I knew I wasn't going to do any covers: "I'm not playing 'Wonderwall'!" My songs are also quite wordy. It's one thing strumming away in the pub, but singing quite highly verbose, pompous pseudo-literate songs – no one wants that. I'm probably going to anger people saying this, but I feel sometimes with the pub gigs that the audience doesn't want you there.

That said, there are real hidden gems where music is just part of that pub's experience. In Edinburgh, there are several folk pubs where music is a stronghold. There are three in particular: the Captain's Bar, Sandy Bells and Royal Oak. Those have the kind of pub gigs that I would pay quite a lot of money to see.

Some of the best musicians I've ever seen have been in pubs: pianists, fiddlers, guitarists and folk balladeers. It's probably one of the reasons I'm quite frightened of pub singing, because I know that people might be able to see through what I do.

## The relationship between music and pub culture

is real popular music. It's music for the people. When you see how people respond to certain songs and certain kinds of music in pubs, that's the music people really love. It flows in their veins, it's unique.

It's music entirely without ego. It's the tradition of song, it's something that the charts will never have. If there's a hierarchy in music, they're further up from pop music in the history of song.

I have to confess, I'm a lager drinker. I'm also an IPA drinker. Increasingly, these days, I'm really into sour beer. The beers that I don't get on with so well

**"There are real hidden gems where music is just part of that pub's experience"**



● Hamish Hawk's new album, *Heavy Elevator*, is out now



are stouts and porters (I know how that comes across). They make me feel like I've just eaten a steak pie. They're too much for me. Once beer gets into the American pale ale style, that's where it starts getting a little bit dark for me.

I was at a wedding a couple of weekends ago. The reception was held at Beak brewery, a lovely microbrewery in Lewes. Its beer is immaculate.

I got extremely drunk and ended up becoming a bit of an entertainer for some of the kids at the wedding. There's a parlour game in that part of Sussex called Toads, where you throw a heavy coin onto a wooden box with a hole in it; you try to get the coin in the hole. The free beer was going down very smoothly indeed, and I was being quite brutal with the kids – I was basically mocking them every time they missed.

I think the kids just went along with it because I'm just being this weird guy. But my friends said you're really good with the kids, but maybe take it a bit easy on them? So that's my recent drinking story: being emboldened enough to become an unwanted referee to six-year-olds.

INSIDE  
THIS  
ISSUE

James Blunt to write top guide foreword  
Search for next champion beer starts  
Pub Design Award winners announced  
Inside pubs and the pandemic inquiry

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with all the What's Brewing news,  
events and campaigns on our  
website, [wb.camra.org.uk](http://wb.camra.org.uk)



# WHAT'S BREWING

WINTER 2021

CAMPAIGNS, NEWS AND VIEWS



## Golden winners revealed

CAMRA has given 18 breweries and cider makers Golden Awards to mark a half century of the organisation's campaigns.

Nominations were made by CAMRA members and others, with more than 80 submitted. Awards director Gary Timmins praised the winners for their dedication and legacies.

The recipients are:  
Adnams; Batemans; Brains; Coach House; Durham; Fuller's; Harvey's; Hop Back; Moor; Oliver's Cider & Perry; Orkney; Robinsons; Shepherd Neame; Thwaites; Timothy Taylor; West Berkshire; West Croft Cider; Wye Valley.

CAMRA is celebrating its 50th anniversary throughout 2021. Learn more at: <https://camra.org.uk/50-years/>

## Festivals are go!

### ● Beer festivals make long-awaited return

CAMRA is relaunching its national programme of beer festivals after an almost two-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Campaign's official events have been suspended since March 2020 in line with government regulations. As restrictions have now lifted, branch beer festivals that have been 18 months in the making can go ahead.

The organisation's flagship Great British Beer Festival is also hoped to return in August 2022, with updates coming in

the forthcoming months.

Festivals will be launching with rigorous new safety measures to ensure the comfort of volunteers, members and other attendees.

The updates to festival health and safety documents include a coronavirus risk assessment to be completed during planning, as well as ensuring all volunteers receive additional induction, information, training and supervision in light of the pandemic.

Other measures include:  
● cleaning and sanitisation plans and glass guidelines  
● contactless payments

wherever it is possible

- tickets sold in advance of all sessions
- use of track and trace
- guidance for volunteers and third-party vendors
- social distancing where possible
- windows and doors open to provide ventilation at indoor festivals.

If you have concerns or would like to learn more about CAMRA's Covid regulations, you can find more information and FAQs at [camra.org.uk/beer-festivals-events/our-events/beer-festival-covid-faqs/](http://camra.org.uk/beer-festivals-events/our-events/beer-festival-covid-faqs/)

Find beer festivals at: [camra.org.uk/festivals](http://camra.org.uk/festivals)



Shepherd Neame brewery



## Hogs Back's hoppy harvest

### ● Biggest crop expected as hop garden matures

HOGS Back brewery in Tongham, Surrey, has started the annual hop harvest and is predicting its best crop from the 8.5-acre garden adjoining the brewery.

Last year was Hogs Back's first full harvest from its larger garden, but the plants are now more mature and weather conditions have been more favourable this summer.

Brewery owner Rupert Thompson said: "Growing

and harvesting our own hops has been a journey for us, and we learn new things every year about how to cultivate those that enhance the flavour of our beers.

"And by transporting them just a matter of yards – from field to firkin in a furlong – we're keeping our carbon footprint at virtually zero, which is part of our drive to become a more sustainable brewer.

"Hogs Back is firmly rooted in the community around Farnham, and our hop garden has revived an industry that was once

important for the region. We look forward to celebrating with all our local friends at the hop harvest festival and TEA party soon."

Hogs Back is harvesting three varieties with the help of 20 volunteer pickers and a Suffolk Punch horse called Sovereign (pictured) – Fuggles, used in its flagship TEA (Traditional English Ale); English Cascade, used in its Surrey Nirvana Session IPA and Farnham White Bine, a local variety the brewer saved from near-



## Sponsors return for top guide

CASK Marque and its sister organisation Stay In A Pub have signed up as 2022 *Good Beer Guide* sponsors and James Blunt is writing the foreword.

Cask Marque founder Paul Nunny said: "CAMRA identifies some of the best pubs in the UK and those in the guide which are in Cask Marque will have our symbol by the side of their entry. We work together to ensure consumers enjoy a great pint of cask ale.

"Regarding accommodation, it is becoming an important third income stream for pubs and links on the *Good Beer Guide* app to the Stay In A Pub website makes it easy for consumers to book."

CAMRA chief executive Tom Stainer said: "Cask ale fans want to know where they can get their pints in the best condition, Cask Marque shows pubs how to do this, and the *Good Beer Guide* lets you know where to find them."

The guide is due to be launched on 11 November.

## Small brewers in duty limbo

THE UK's small independent brewers have been left in limbo a year on from the Treasury's planned changes to Small Brewers Relief (SBR).

Tax changes could see more than 150 small brewers paying up to

£44,000 more a year to the Treasury. The changes could come within months leaving little time to prepare.

The Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) has asked the chancellor for clarification.

Now research commissioned by SIBA shows the plans could weaken small brewers' ability to compete with larger producers.

CAMRA says government plans could restrict consumer choice

**KEEP UP TO DATE**

Sign up to our monthly email: [camra.org.uk/about/publications/whats-brewing/](http://camra.org.uk/about/publications/whats-brewing/)



Simon Jones, left, and Ross Hunter from 2019 winner Surrey Hills

## Time to vote for your favourite beer

### ● Voting opens to find our next beer champion

VOTING has opened to find the next Champion Beer of Britain. You have until 1 November to vote for your favourite beer and put it in the running to be crowned our next champion using CAMRA's member's voting portal at <https://cbob.camra.org.uk/>

After a hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic, the

Campaign is looking for the next top beer from a revised range of categories.

The beer styles have undergone a review, definitions have been updated, and two categories introduced. The updates reflect the growth in the different styles of beers that are brewed, and help ensure our premier competition remains relevant.

Categories now cover: Milds: up to and including 4

per cent  
 Session Bitters: up to and including 4.3 per cent  
 Premium Bitters: 4.4-6.4 per cent  
 Session Pale, Blond and Golden Ales: up to and including 4.3 per cent  
 Premium Pale, Blond and Golden Ales: 4.4-6.4 per cent  
 British & New World IPAs: 5.5 per cent and above  
 Brown and Red Ales, Old Ales and Strong Milds: up to 6.4 per cent

Session Stouts and Porters: up to and including 4.9 per cent  
 Strong Stouts and Porters including Imperial Stouts and Baltic Porters: 5.0 per cent and above  
 Barley Wines and Strong Ales: 6.5 per cent and above  
 Speciality Beers – differently produced  
 Speciality Beers – flavoured .

For details see [tinyurl.com/dj39jctz](https://tinyurl.com/dj39jctz) or tune in to the podcast [camra.org.uk/podcast](http://camra.org.uk/podcast)

## MPs urged to back cider makers

CAMRA is calling on the chancellor and MPs to support UK cider makers following the launch of its latest title *Modern British Cider* by Gabe Cook.

All 70 MPs with featured cider makers in their constituencies have been sent a copy to highlight the

issues facing small and independent producers.

Cook has solutions to the problems facing cider businesses that should be pursued by government: – a progressive duty system for small producers as part of the current wider alcohol tax review

– raising the minimum juice content for cider to 50 per cent  
 – ingredient labelling to ensure consumers are better informed to make the best choices.

*Modern British Cider* is £15.99. To buy go to [shop1.camra.org.uk](http://shop1.camra.org.uk)



## AWARDS

# Clever design brings closed locals back from the dead

Inspired owners and designers are recognised in the 2020 CAMRA Pub Design Awards, which rewards sensitive restoration of historic features

CAMRA has unveiled the winners of its 2020 Pub Design Awards, which aim to recognise the most impressive architecture, design and conservation in British pubs.

There were seven winners across the categories. Here is what the judges found.

## Refurbishment Award

The range of the entries made selection of the winner difficult, a fact we

recognise by the selection of not one but two winners.

The **Blind Bull**, Little Hucklow, Derbys was a regular entry in CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide* in the 1970s and 1980s, but it fell upon hard times and closed, apparently for good, in 2005. After failed attempts to convert it to other uses, a very extensive refurbishment began in 2018. Using local craftspeople, and retaining



original features and materials, the refurbishment was planned to be as eco-friendly as possible. A conservatory extension provides

additional space in the pub itself, while a separate accommodation block should provide additional income to support the business.

The **Green Dragon**, Flaunden, Herts, was also in poor condition when the new owner, Mike Ghazarian, set about refurbishing the pub in 2019. A historic building it featured in CAMRA's *Britain's Best Real Heritage Pubs* for its Tap Room. The work that has been carried out is well-designed without being showy, and is raised above the ordinary by the unusually high quality of the workmanship and finishes.

A Highly Commended certificate went to the **Air Hostess**, Tollerton near Nottingham.





**Clockwise from left:** Thornbridge brewery's Colmore Tap; Blind Bull, Hucklow; Bridge Inn, Horwich near Bolton; Brickmaker's Alehouse, Bexhill-on-Sea; Swan and Railway, Wigan retains its fine tiles and wood panels



**'The work carried out is well-designed without being showy, and is raised above the ordinary by the high quality of the workmanship'**

### Conversion to Pub Use Award

THERE was also strong competition for this category, and again, we have elected joint winners.

The **Brickmaker's Alehouse**, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex, occupies premises which at various times have been occupied as a shop, café, and, during the 1930s, office and showroom for a local brick manufacturer – hence the name. It retains some fireplaces built from its products, as well as an attractive mosaic threshold featuring its name. The owners, have conserved the surviving historic features while ensuring essential

new ones are of high-quality design. The same principle has been applied at the **Colmore Tap**, Birmingham. The premises, previously a bank, retained the extensive wood panelling and the conversion has made extensive use of wood, marble and glass to turn a quality interior into an upmarket bar.

### Historic England Conservation Award

THIS recognises projects which combine the retention and conservation of the features which give a building its historic and architectural significance.

The **Swan and Railway**, Wigan is a listed

building of 1898, opposite Wigan rail station. It had been closed for some time and was in poor condition when purchased in 2018. The building has been put into weatherproof and the interior has been restored, in all its tiled and wood-panelled glory.

### Community Local Award

OUR final award is the Community Local Award, given in memory of Joe Goodwin, a former CAMRA chairman who was a champion of the street-corner local. The winner this year is the **Bridge Inn**, Horwich, near Bolton, perhaps on the large side to be described as a street-

corner local, but an important community amenity nevertheless.

Run-down under pubco ownership, the building was in poor condition when purchased by the current owners, Bridge Inn Horwich. The building has been fully refurbished, the shades adopted for walls and woodwork allowing the fine original tilework to be appreciated.

The function room on the first floor is now back in commission, with guest accommodation on the second floor.

Images of the pubs are available at: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/bimh9djfv3ucqyd/>

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**WHO WILL FOLLOW PUZZLE HALL?**

● **NOMINATIONS** are now open for CAMRA's Pub Saving Award, which recognises communities or groups which have come together to save a pub that would have otherwise been demolished or converted to another use.

To enter and to learn more visit: [camra.org.uk/pubs-and-clubs/awards/pub-saving-award/](http://camra.org.uk/pubs-and-clubs/awards/pub-saving-award/)

**LOCKDOWN HERO REWARDED**

● **THE Antwerp Arms Association** in Tottenham has won CAMRA's Greater London Hero of Heroes Award for all it has done during lockdown for its community. North London branch chair Colin Coyne said: "A community association runs the pub and became part of the Tottenham Foodbank and Felix Project initiatives helping the most needy during the pandemic."

**MUSEUM MARKS CAMPAIGN'S 50TH**

● **CAMRA memorabilia** has gone on show at St Albans Museum. For the next few months, the St Peter's Street venue is hosting a display coordinated by South Herts member Iain Loe marking the Campaign's 50th anniversary.

**HISTORIC COW BACK IN BUSINESS**

● **THE Grade II-listed Dun Cow** in Sunderland city centre has reopened after being closed since the start of the pandemic. Just

before the shutdown last year, a project began to refurbish the outside of the building, Taking advantage of the closure, some internal refurbishment was also completed.

**NEW RIVER SELLS PUB BUSINESS**

● **NEW River** has sold its pub property business, Hawthorn Leisure, to Admiral Taverns for £222m. The estate comprises 674 leased, tenanted and operator-managed pubs. Admiral said it was one of its **biggest acquisitions and part of its strategy to build its estate to 1,500 sustainable pubs.**

**BREW PUB'S AIRPORT EXCLUSIVE BEER**

● **ONE Manchester brewer** is hoping its beer will be flying high with the opening of a brewpub at the city's airport. Built in collaboration with Joseph Holt, the T2 brewery is built behind bomb-proof glass with the huge steel brewing barrels in full view of the bar. The brewery is will brew a signature beer – Bridgewater Ale, a pale gold IPA available exclusively at the pub.

**CAN YOU SOLVE NAME MYSTERY?**

● **MANCHESTER brewer Joseph Holt** is asking for help to discover how one of its pubs got its name.

If you know how recently refurbished Lower Turk's Head in the city's Northern Quarter got its name, email [info@joseph-holt.com](mailto:info@joseph-holt.com)



Puzzle Hall, Sowerby Bridge took the 2019 Pub Saving title

**SCOTS' FURY OVER VACCINE RULE**

● **BREWERS** in Scotland have reacted angrily to the news people will need proof they have been fully vaccinated before they can enter nightclubs and many large events. The Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) said the scheme will hit pubs, clubs and beer festivals at a time when the industry was trying to repair the damage caused by the lockdown.

**LOCALS' KEY ROLE IN LGBTQ+ LIVES**

● **CAMRA's Learn & Discover platform** marked Pride Month with a new three-part audio series exploring the role of pubs in LGBTQ+ lives.

The audio series *Passion, Pride & Protest* has been curated and hosted by award-winning writer and audio maker Emma Inch. From the first gay pubs that sprang up at a time when homosexuality was

still illegal, through to the era of HIV/AIDS, Section 28, the growth of Pride, up to the modern day, with the struggles many of the community's venues are currently going through, the series explores the vital role the pub has played for LGBTQ+ communities.

All three episodes in the series are available on the CAMRA Learn & Discover platform.

**REFORM VITAL FOR SECTOR RECOVERY**

● **PUBS** are open and the sun is shining but beer sales are floundering.

According to the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) reform of business rates, VAT and beer duty are essential to bridge the gap in pubs' recovery and enable the sector to help build back better.

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## CAMPAIGN

# Inside the pubs and pandemic MPs' inquiry

CAMRA now provides secretariat services to the All-Party Parliamentary Pub Group, and it's been a busy time as senior campaigns manager **Ellie Hudspith** reports

FOR those that are not familiar with the concept, the secretariat service means acting as the administrative powerhouse behind the group.

At the start of the year, Campaigns assistant Camilla Weddell and I sat with new chair Charlotte Nichols MP who set us a challenge. She wanted the group to run an inquiry into the impact of the pandemic on pubs, the people that work in them, and the communities that use them.

We drafted the call for evidence, surveys and communications plus set up a Twitter account and website. We got everything signed off by the MPs on the group's steering committee. This comprises the chair and vice chairs, who are from different political parties.

We also had to get to grips with the sometimes complicated and archaic rules that govern all-party parliamentary groups. This involves a lot of notifying clerks, filling in forms and meeting many deadlines.

We launched the inquiry and, earlier in the year,

thousands of CAMRA members, more than 1,000 licensees and various industry trade associations and campaigning groups responded to our call.

We followed the standard format used by all party parliamentary groups – small panels of witnesses with industry and campaigning groups coming along too.

We heard everything about the challenges of running a pub over the last 16 months. We covered furlough, bounce-back loans, business rates, rent, pub companies (including the differences between a small brewer and a large pubco), table service, looking after regulars, and even the challenges of trying to implement a remote ordering system when there's no mobile internet service at the pub.

Next, we heard from academics and industry organisations including the Plunkett Foundation's Georgina Edwards and British Institute of Innkeeping (BII) chief executive Steve Alton.

This panel covered



APPG chair  
Charlotte Nichols

community pubs, research into the social and cultural aspects of pub-going including their impact on loneliness and social isolation, the Pubs Code and rateable value of pubs, plus survey data from BII members.

Other trade associations and campaigning groups came along as observers and asked panellists questions. These included: Licensees Association; Campaign for Pubs; Forum of British Pubs; British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA); Pubs Advisory Service; Budweiser/ABInBev; Pub is the Hub.

And we also got a decent turnout from MPs. These attended or sent representatives: Charlotte Nichols; Rachel Hopkins; Sarah Champion; James Daly; Sir Greg Knight; Steve Baker; Kate Griffiths.

We live-tweeted the session from the Pubs Group Twitter account. If you are interested in the full session, it's on the Pubs Group website.

Our next task is pulling the evidence together into a report with findings from the inquiry and recommendations to government on how it can help pubs thrive. Once signed off we can plan a launch.

**'We also had to get to grips with the sometimes complicated and archaic rules that govern all-party parliamentary groups'**

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Having missed out on draught beer since the first lockdown, Simon Stabler enjoys a pre-Christmas party for one

**Fighting Spirit**  
A year after the last remaining pub in a village closed, Simon Stabler remembers the days of the pub in his village.

**Your Memories**  
**Pasties for Pudling**  
Dear Tom,  
I'm writing to you because I've been thinking about you and your pasties. I've been thinking about you and your pasties. I've been thinking about you and your pasties.

**Simon Stabler**

**FINE BRITISH FAIR**

### FOOD & DRINK

TASTES GONE BY AND THE FLAVOURS OF TODAY

#### Ask Again for Allsopp's

Simon Stabler witnesses the return of the Red Hand Gang

**Popping Yorks**  
As a fan of Yorkshire pudding, Simon Stabler remembers the days of the Yorkshire pudding.

**Boozy Bangers**  
A year after the last remaining pub in a village closed, Simon Stabler remembers the days of the pub in his village.

**Simon Stabler**

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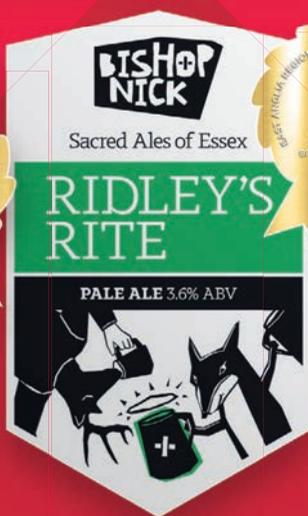
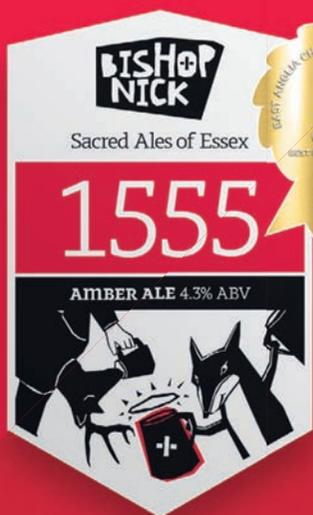
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