

## Beer Scoring - Yesterday's Pubs Mild Appreciation - Pubs in Heanor and Derby

# CAMRA member?

Please score  
your beer in  
this pub

### Scoring your beer helps to

- monitor beer quality in pubs
- identify pubs for the *Good Beer Guide*

- 0** No cask beer available.
- 1 Poor.** Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
- 2 Average.** Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
- 3 Good.** Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.

- 4 Very Good.** Excellent beer in excellent condition.
- 5 Perfect.** Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.





**A warm welcome to our customers, old and new!**

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# Editor's Welcome



The *Good Beer Guide* is out and many of the pubs I use where the beer is excellent do not feature in it. Why? We explore the issue in this edition.

With the industry struggling, advertising is drying up and neighbouring CAMRA branches are reducing the size of their publications or

making them online only. This magazine will only survive if pubs use it. We have no funding other than advertising. The industry needs a White Knight to come riding to the rescue as it occurred to me as I downed one of that name.

It is sometimes said that beers have a **metallic** edge to them, and we do need to **steel** ourselves for a difficult future.

However, steel might end up being a knight in steel armour riding to the rescue. The private equity firm which is normally invested in steel but which bought Black Sheep Brewery when it went

under, is apparently buying other small breweries and outlets in similar circumstances. Long-term, whether it will be craft beers they produce or ale as we love it remains to be seen.

As this edition covers the festive season; a 'season of goodwill to all men', please extend that to women as well and also to the once-a-year drinkers keeping you from the bar when you want a beer.

**Seriously though, we wish all our readers an enjoyable festive season and a better 2024 than this year. Similarly, we hope the real ale outlets have a busy season and a more profitable New Year.**

Roy Denney



## New Tynt Meadow Blonde Ale

### A New Beer from England's Only Trappist Brewery



A visit in August to the home of Tynt Meadow beer in Leicestershire by a group of beer enthusiasts from across Europe not only resulted in an excellent tour, but also news of a new blonde beer.

The visiting group was made up of members of the European Beer Consumers Union (EBCU) who spent ten days visiting the Great British Beer Festival, the West Midlands, Yorkshire and this, their final stop.

Abbey near Coalville, according to the Trappist tradition. It is a 7.4% twice-fermented, bottle conditioned dark and full-bodied ale made with English barley and hops.

The new 5% honey coloured blonde beer which is still being developed is bottle conditioned and well hopped.



More details on Mount Saint Bernard Trappist Brewery from [msbtrappist.co.uk/the-beer](https://msbtrappist.co.uk/the-beer)

Tynt Meadow English Trappist Ale is brewed under the supervision of monks at Mount Saint Bernard

## Leicestershire CAMRA Branches

**Hinckley and Bosworth (HB)** [hinckleyandbosworth.camra.org.uk](http://hinckleyandbosworth.camra.org.uk)  
Email [chairman@hinckleyandbosworth.camra.org.uk](mailto:chairman@hinckleyandbosworth.camra.org.uk)  
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**Loughborough & North Leics (LOU)** [loughboroughcamra.co.uk](http://loughboroughcamra.co.uk)  
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**Melton Mowbray & District (MM)** [meltonmowbray.camra.org.uk](http://meltonmowbray.camra.org.uk)  
Email [chair@meltonmowbray.camra.org.uk](mailto:chair@meltonmowbray.camra.org.uk)

**Vale of Belvoir (VB)** [valeofbelvoir.camra.org.uk](http://valeofbelvoir.camra.org.uk)

### HELP WANTED

The local branches are run entirely by voluntary teams and more help is always welcome. Staffing festivals is a great opportunity to get involved but another is dropping off copies of this publication at pubs you would probably enjoy visiting anyway. Each branch receives an allocation to distribute so if you think you can help please contact your local branch.

## Open Meetings and Events Diary

Pub 'festivals' are organised and publicised at fairly short notice so keep an eye on the branches' websites.

### December

**2nd** Pre-Christmas bus crawl - see website (LEI)

**6th** AGM Hinckley & Bosworth branch, Greyhound, Hinckley (HB)

**16th** Coach trip to Chester (LEI)

### January

**8th** Hinckley branch meeting, Pestle & Mortar, Hinckley (HB)

**29th** Leicester branch meeting, venue tbc (LEI)

### March

**6th** Hinckley branch meeting, Hinckley Rugby Club (HB)

**7th - 9th** Loughborough Beer Festival - Polish Club, Loughborough (LOU)





# Leicestershire Drinker

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If you wish to comment on any article or wish to contribute something for consideration, please use the website or send them to the editor Roy Denney [editor@leicsdrinker.camra.org.uk](mailto:editor@leicsdrinker.camra.org.uk)  
We are happy to tidy up raw material but will not publish anything received which is offensive or contrary to the legal framework within which we live. We reserve the right to edit, hold over, or discard material.

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## Publication Dates

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## HELPLINES

Hygiene / Food Standards - [food.gov.uk](http://food.gov.uk)

Trading Standards - For problems such as consistent short measures, no price lists, pass it to Leicestershire trading standards if considered appropriate - 0116 232 3232 or 0808 223 1133

Citizen's Advice - 0800 144 8848 [citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk)

## PLAN YOUR JOURNEY

Stagecoach [stagecoachbus.com/about/midlands](http://stagecoachbus.com/about/midlands) Centrebus [centrebus.info](http://centrebus.info)

Arriva [arrivabus.co.uk/midlands](http://arrivabus.co.uk/midlands)

Kinchbus/Skylink [kinchbus.co.uk](http://kinchbus.co.uk)

Firstbus [firstbus.co.uk/leicester](http://firstbus.co.uk/leicester)

Traveline - [traveline.info](http://traveline.info)

## Pub Discoveries / Gossip / Comings and Goings

The **Castle** pub in Leicester has reopened with a new format and layout and by the time we go to print the old Manhattan will have become the third **Real Ale Classroom**. The **Salmon** has had a major refurb but still maintains its old traditional feel.

Leicester CAMRA keep being asked about a festival and they are actively looking for a venue.

Despite their considerable efforts, they have not been able to find anywhere but are still searching. Possibilities keep being eliminated for one reason or another. Too small, too expensive, or too innovative for the CAMRA festivals authorisation team. They were in local agreement for what they thought a great opportunity for a 2500-seater venue but the powers that be would not move from the normal format. They were on the cusp with a 450-capacity venue but, being evenings only, they could not make that viable at a reasonable price. They have though found a strong probability for a smaller festival early in July and are costing the possibilities at the moment.

Are you familiar with the terms 'a pint o' heavy' and 'a jar of the black stuff'?

If we think of drinking in Scotland, the term 'a pint o' heavy an' a chaser' comes to mind, a chaser being alternatively called 'a wee dram'. In Ireland, their favourite tittle goes by many nicknames but 'a jar of the black stuff' leaves nobody in doubt of what is being discussed.

Drinking is considered a national pastime in both countries and while excess can have serious consequences, drinking in company can provide solace.

As a consequence of the appetites of the locals, both countries have excelled in producing such

products, and whisky and Guinness are possibly each country's leading export.

The Scottish National Party are trying to reduce drinking by introducing a minimum unit pricing of drinks and Ireland has probably one of the highest excise duties in the world. They are hardly supporting their major exports at home.



*The Salmon*

It could be said that Ireland's biggest export is actually the Irish Bar and such traditional venues are to be found all over the world except it would seem in large parts of Ireland.

In the last 20 years, about a quarter of Irish pubs have closed which will eventually hit their tourist trade. Even that hides the harsh truth. Many rural

areas have lost their only pub and counties largely rural have lost almost a third of their pubs. Of those remaining many are just the back room behind some form of shop.

A couple of years ago your editor spent two weeks on the west coast of Ireland in a village about the size of Thornton with one shop which had a backroom minibar, but the nearest pubs were 40 miles in one direction and 35 in the other.

This lack of local socialising places will destroy a large part of Ireland's culture.

Great swathes of the Highlands have no place for a traveller to take a break either, as he found spending two weeks driving around earlier this year.

England is sharing a similar rate of attrition but as a heavily populated country, there are still pubs within reach of most of us but it is not unusual to hear debates about what pubs have gone.

Pubs are still closing at a rate of knots and the pub companies are desperately trying to be all things to all people to get more in, but that in itself often chases regulars away. Customers more often prefer the comfort of knowing what to expect at their local and perhaps pubs should decide what their best market is and concentrate on being the best around offering that. What people want is a consistent offering which is what the micros give.

In the case of the excellent **Ale Wagon** in Leicester, the name is the giveaway; it is just an ale house. The **Kings Head** and **Salmon** both owned by Black Country Ales are also just ale houses. That 'just' is not a reflection of shortcomings but means only providing what many see as enough. Punters do want something to eat at lunchtime but all that is needed in an alehouse is a supply of cobs or slices or pie. If we had a cob of the year award the **Blue Boar** would win hands down. The wonderful **Mill Hill Cask & Coffee** would win if we had a pub pie of the year prize and to vary the theme, they also have lovely cakes as well.

It is not only pubs that are closing; it is thought in the last 18 months over 60 small brewers have

gone bust or ceased trading including local ones. We touched on small brewery mergers last edition and we must fight to protect the independent sector. Another East Midlands brewery has or is about to close. **Dovedale Brewery** has called it a day. Touching on Dovedale, the Ashbourne, Bakewell, and Buxton area of the White Peak has many great hostleries to try but not as many as there were pre-Covid.

Early October, Shawn Collier, former Chair of Leicester Branch took two of Leicester's Austrian community to Bakewell. Well, what's the 'wurst' that could happen?

First target of the day was the **Tiroler Stüberl** for an Austrian sausage brunch. A pleasant walk followed to see the remains of Bakewell Station before making their way to **Thornbridge Brewery**. This impressive operation is just outside the town and they arrived shortly after its opening. Four beers were available on cask with a good number of others also available. Shawn began with their Kölsch before a flight of cask choices. It didn't take long for the taproom/beer hall to fill up. Pizzas were available and

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*The Peacock*

unobtrusive background music added to the atmosphere. All very nice and reasonably priced. A visit to the shop was made before returning to the centre of Bakewell. Swift halves were enjoyed in the **Joiners Arms**, a micro, before pre-bus Peak Ale sampling in **The Peacock**. Heading towards mid-afternoon it was busy but a free table was found. Two beers on and again very enjoyable.

A quick stop in Matlock, before the train saw them visit the **Remarkable Hare**. Again busy, no complaints with the beers and excellent pizza ordered to be enjoyed on the train to Derby. Their day concluded in the **Alexandra** of which more later, as Roland hadn't visited it before. A very pleasant day, good company and good beers. At the time of writing cheap advance tickets have been introduced between Leicester & Derby, theirs were £2.70 each way.

One way for a pub to stand out from the crowd is to be genuinely different. Your editor knew a pub in the Dales where you entered through an archway which was actually going between the legs of a stuffed dusty old lion. Another in Scotland has a stuffed brown bear beside the bar and not a teddy bear, but an eight-foot specimen. There is a pub just this side of the Trent with more Toby Jugs hanging from the ceiling than you can start to count.

In the Bakewell-Buxton area, the **Cock & Pullet** has so many not-synchronised clocks that it takes nearly five minutes to chime any hour. The **Yew Tree** near Ashbourne is more of a museum than a

pub. It is stuffed to the brim with old antiques, guns, pianos, penny farthings, working pianolas and so much other bric-a-brac that you cannot get into one of the rooms. Hanging from the ceiling is a contraption which is always a talking point and is actually a dead-dog carrier.

Another curiosity in the area is the **Grouse & Claret** at Rowsley. Sounds like a great night out but apparently its name relates to an angler's fly.

Then in Derby, there's the aforementioned **Alexandra**. There is nothing quite like it, with its brewery and railway memorabilia everywhere. There's even a Class 37 locomotive cab in the car park. It has a tall,



*The Grouse and Claret*

handsome frontage and used to be a Shipstone's pub, then Bateman's before being sold to Tynemill Taverns which morphed into Castle Rock. Your editor and friends once made a point of visiting every Tynemill pub and even advertised them in the Himalayas. When they produced the Tynemill Tour T-shirt I don't imagine they intended the tour to include going to Everest.

Closer to home, this year's Melton Mowbray Festival took place in September with over 40 real ales, 20 ciders, craft ales from the onsite Round Corner Brewery and a gin bar. Something for all tastes!

The annual event is run by the Melton Stockyard team, with help from local CAMRA members who help to organise and serve at the event. There was a varied bill of entertainment during the festival, including an Irish folk band, Morris dancing and





*Parish Brewery new owners toast the acquisition with the first brew of the award-winning Baz's Bonce Blower for the first time in 6 years. L-R: Bruce Cooper, Baz Parish and Charlie Gamble*

several live bands. This year's main focus was on Cumbrian ales, well received by all.

Still with pubs that are different, the **Hollybush** near Lutterworth has a large parrot which will have your finger if you go near, and, thinking of the need for medical assistance, what could be more unique than another favourite, the **Pharmacie Arms** in Syston. Themed to reflect the way things were in medical establishments in the '50s, it is festooned and furnished with medical artefacts and equipment, including a skeleton sitting in a dentist's chair.

In the Hinckley area, the ever-popular **Elbow Room** has been able to extend its outside area providing more space for drinkers. In the Edwards

Centre, Regent Street, the **Public Spirit** is a new bar opened in premises that were formerly occupied by a nightclub. The **Clarence** has been revamped and is able to offer more food and the **Railway** has undergone a £250k refurbishment having been closed for a month.

As mentioned in the Autumn issue of *Leicestershire Drinker*, **Parish Brewery** has now officially changed hands. In the coming months, new joint owners Bruce Cooper and Charlie Gamble are planning new brews to expand its cask-conditioned portfolio, plus Parish Brewery will be rolling out a fresh new look and a new website is in development to enable customers to explore the range and buy beers online.

Recently, Parish was awarded Bronze at Peterborough Beer Festival in the Speciality & New Breweries section for Fruits of the Parish.

The new owners are also thrilled to reveal that a new batch of Baz's Bonce Blower (12% ABV) has been brewed, the first brew in six years. This was available at the recent Nottingham Beer Festival along with a brand-new festival special, Fistful of Hops (3.9% ABV), a dry hopped beer using wild hops picked in September. If ambition counts for anything it looks like Parish is in good hands.

**If you know the history of pubs closed in your area and can help compile a register of them please contact the editor either with what you know or your contact details if you are happy to try and assist Charlie Corcoran in putting together this list.**

**editor@leicsdrinker.camra.co.uk**  
**0116 233 8604**



# Speedway Supping

During 2023 I've been lucky to be able to attend four rounds of the Speedway Grand Prix series. This has led to some interesting trips and of course, searching out suitable refreshments along the way.

First off was Warsaw with an extra day added to visit Katowice. Here was **Pod Ożartym Smokiem**, we'd say micropub, and nearby an excellent find that was discovered walking past - **Biała Małpa Multitap**. As the name suggests up to 24 beers are listed, plus bottles. I was able to start with a mild here! Both were close to the station.

Next up was Prague. Those who have been will have their favourites and know of many no doubt. I stayed in the direction of the stadium behind the tram stop at Drinopol. At the stop is the **Hostinec Drinopol**, a street corner, wooden-interior pub. Half-litre beers for around £1.50-1.80 were enjoyed.

Third was Poland again and Gorzów Wielkopolski was the meeting venue. The pre-meeting meal was at a Czech venue, **Hospudka**, with the accompanying Czech brews.

The final trip again headed east before turning north to Vojens, Denmark. A small town an hour or so over the German border. Travel and beers for my lodgings were sourced from Lidl including an excellent porter and there appeared to be a choice of two places for a pre-meeting drink. The **Hotel Vojens** bar or **Østerkroen** (the Oyster Inn). The latter it was and the first surprise



*Østerkroen (the Oyster Inn)*

on entering was ashtrays everywhere. A number of people were sitting around the bar competing for the jukebox, traditional Danish for the seniors and more club-based tunes for the younger.

I was not sure whether the draught tap was active but I started with a bottled Tuborg Grøn (green), a 4.6% pilsner - 33cl at around £2.50. Other bottles were available but after a local had come for a brief conversation, I was bought an Original Odense Classic. From Albani Brewery in Odense, a darker pilsner again 4.6%. As it was nice there was time for a second.

The pub was one main room (maybe once a house?) with a covered side area. At the rear was a games room with around two dozen various slot machine types. A nice hour or so was spent here. Hopefully, 2024 will bring further opportunities.



*Beers from Nordvest and Odense*



*Shawn Collier*



# Good Beer Guide 2024

*You hold in your hands a voyage of discovery not just through a wonderful world of traditional ales and brewers, but also a lens through which to observe the web of history which weaves around the fabric of that almost unique institution-the British Pub.'* – **Bruce Dickinson**

The *Good Beer Guide* is the Campaign for Real Ale's way to keep pubs at the forefront of our campaigning. Recognising the vanguard of serving real ale and doing much more for the community than ever, pubs that get selected for the guide can be confident that they are amongst the best pubs in the country. With 4500 pubs listed in the guide, chosen by independent consumers this has been the best-selling beer and pub guide for over 50 years.

This year's guide is fronted by the legendary rock star Bruce Dickinson of Iron Maiden, whose own personal journey through the world of beer has



also highlighted the importance of pubs, both in providing an early platform for success and as a welcome respite from the huge amount of work and energy that goes into being one of the most successful bands to come out of the UK.

Pubs and clubs are a rite of passage for many bands and musicians starting out in the UK, and Iron Maiden themselves began their career almost 50 years ago playing in London pubs. The conviviality of these venues helps to drive footfall into pubs, especially after a challenging period for them brought on by the pandemic and cuts to

funding.

The cover of *The Good Beer Guide 2024* features Eddie, Iron Maiden's mascot and icon of the band's range of Trooper beers, brewed by Stockport brewery Robinsons.

Available from [shop1.camra.org.uk](http://shop1.camra.org.uk)

## PLOUGH INN

BURROUGHS ROAD, RATBY LE6 0XZ



A warm welcome awaits you here at the Plough Inn. We are a proud village pub tucked away at the start of the picturesque Ratby Burroughs Wood, part of the large national forest.

We love our cask ales and are proud to update our guest ale weekly. If ale is not your thing, we also offer a fantastic selection of other drinks, both on draught and by the bottle. Our kitchen serves up a wide range of food for every appetite, whether you're after a light snack or a three-course meal, we've got you covered.

The Plough Inn is a dog-friendly pub that offers four separate rooms and two outside areas for people to meet up for food and drinks. We welcome locals and tired ramblers alike, so be sure to stop by and say hi!

0116 239 2630 - [ploughinnratby.co.uk](http://ploughinnratby.co.uk)

# Have You Scored Recently?

It is essential that members score beers regularly if the Good Beer Guide (GBG) is to be considered fit for purpose. My personal view is that this is now questionable.

Every year it is published it causes issues. 'Why am I not in?' is the usual cry. If a branch is allowed ten entries it will please ten pubs but probably annoy many more than that. Not finding one's pub in the Guide can be very disappointing and, in many cases, very annoying especially when it has appeared in previous editions.

Also, most purchasers use it as a good pub guide which it patently is not. To be fair it is not intended to be, but that is what most people expect and there is a case to be made that perhaps it should be. We would never class a pub as good without good real ale but there are many other considerations.

When we are trying to help pubs survive and at the same time build bridges with surviving pubs and breweries, it cannot be right that year after year we upset some of our contacts.

To take it to its ridiculous extreme a branch could have a full list of entrants all very good and all of which have improved but three new excellent pubs have opened with first-class beers. People flock to try them and score their beers, so three of the others have to go.

The selection process is probably as good as it can be if based on the basic premise as to what it is for, but it is a heavily slanted process fairly easily manipulated. We try to compare chalk and cheese. A town centre pub, open all hours, is bound to get substantially more footfall than a glorious village pub out in the sticks, nowhere near a bus stop. It is also true that if a landlord works hard at getting people to vote he can influence the outcome.

Only CAMRA members can score the beers and if you are not a member, look at the benefits on offer. The more members we have the more representative the outcomes of any selection process will be.

**So how is it done?**

We start by creating a long list of potential entries. Entries from the previous year's guide are automatically included in the first stage of selection and if a branch has an award scheme such as a 'pub of the month award' they may also be included. On top of this, members can nominate any other pubs that meet certain criteria, first and foremost they must sell real ale. All these pubs are then checked for eligibility. If a pub has changed hands or we know it has a new cellarman, the nomination would have been from a different regime.

**“You don't have to be an 'expert' to begin scoring your beer”**

This reduced list of pubs goes forward to the next stage. Having passed all these barriers, we then look at the scores they have achieved on WhatPub over the year and the nature of the customer base of a pub suggests how many are likely to score a pub's beer. Real ale speciality pubs usually get plenty of votes both from locals and visitors to the area. Family-orientated pubs and those with a large food offering are less likely to receive

scores no matter how good their beers are.

At this point, in order for pubs not to be removed they need to pass the 3/3/3 rule. This means they must have at least three scores, by three different members and have a minimum overall average score of 3.0. The scoring system then works out a 'confidence ranking' producing a more manageable short list of potential entries.

It is at this stage that a fair number of pubs are eliminated. Their scores may be high enough, but there are other pubs with a comparable score but a greater number of scorers and the system can have more confidence in the outcome. This is where remote quiet pubs can fall down because the higher the number of our members scoring beers at a given outlet, the higher the probability that it will stay in the running which can mean that outer villages within the area of a large conurbation have very little chance of inclusion unless that branch allocates a percentage of its permitted entries to rural outlets.

What I think is a pub selling very good beer and which everybody agrees with, counts for nothing if few of us bother to score their beers. At the end of the day, it is largely beer scores submitted by CAMRA members that determine which pubs go in.

So, if you are a CAMRA member and we want to keep the GBG fit for purpose you can send in beer scores to give your favourite pub a chance of being in the Guide. If it isn't, this may well be because you, and others, haven't entered scores rating the quality of beer there.

You don't have to be an 'expert' to begin scoring your beer but it is not about your personal favourite beer receiving the highest scores! You may try a beer that isn't to your normal taste but what you need to consider is the quality of that beer, how well the pub has kept it and served it and score it according to the general guide below.

- 1. Poor** Beer is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
- 2. Average** Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
- 3. Good** Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.
- 4. Very Good** Excellent beer in excellent condition. You stay put!
- 5. Perfect** Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

Is there a better system? Answers to the Editor please.

Some branches may take a different view and add a certain amount of judgement based on the views of the panel deciding finally, but if you asked ten people in any one branch to pick their top ten there may well be very divergent views.

Branches only have so many slots and in Leicester's case for example they can only select 26 and some reserves.

If I were to pick my personal ten best pubs for their beer, six of them are not in the GBG and those excluded include what everybody would consider to be excellent pubs. They are presumably not included in this year's guide, not that their scores were any worse than they used to be but because other pubs on the shortlist had their beers scored more often and received a higher confidence ranking. I personally do not



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FACEBOOK: SHOULDER OF MUTTON - FOXTON

think this is entirely fair but any system involving choices is bound to disappoint many.

I have tried telling pubs that non-inclusion in the GBG does not mean their beers are poor and if they have been in the guide previously, it does not indicate a decline in quality of a pub's beer.

I don't get very far and have probably lost advertisers because of this. I don't suggest pubs should buy their way in by advertising, but it is hard to keep them on board when they and I know they deserve to be in.

Another anomaly to my mind is that the number of real ales offered by a pub or bar is immaterial to GBG – a pub only selling one real ale may keep it very well and get many scores and end up in the guide where a pub with say three regular real ales and a guest which are normally all very good may get the odd guest ale that people don't appreciate and score down and that pub ends up missing out.

# Have You Scored Recently?

Most people vote about how nice they find a beer and do not have the skill set to actually judge its condition and if a branch has a trained tasting panel, they should play a big part in the system.

The best chance to ensure an entry in the Guide is therefore for licencees to encourage as many CAMRA members as possible to keep scoring as many beers per visit as possible.

Awards for best pub are also debatable for similar reasons.

Both in assessing pubs and beers we have to find ways of giving a level playing field to all pubs and where we have large branch areas, we need to give some geographic spread. For the



GBG, all other things being equal, we should ensure every quadrant of our patch has an allocation. In comparing pubs the same applies plus distinguishing between urban, suburban or rural pubs.

I have come to think that as the GBG is not a good pub guide and causes so many difficult issues each year that I fear it has run its course in the present format. Others differ of course and heated debates have ensued in the recent round of AGMs.

Let's give it every chance to remain relevant and score those beers.

Roy Denney

## Drink But Let the Bus Take the Strain

Pubs in Leicester need your support and the recently introduced free inner circle route means you can hop from pub to pub. Leicester CAMRA branch will be discussing public transport at a future meeting.

### SATURDAY DEC 2nd DIY PRE-CHRISTMAS BUS CRAWL BUMP INTO FELLOW MEMBERS FOR A CHRISTMAS DRINK





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Our website [hinckleyandbosworth.camra.org.uk](http://hinckleyandbosworth.camra.org.uk) contains lots of useful information about the branch activities and local news



# In Search of Mild - A View from the Continent

*Back in August a group of beer enthusiasts from the European Beer Consumers Union (EBCU) came over to the UK to visit the Great British Beer Festival in London. As part of that trip they also travelled to The Midlands spending a couple of days in the Black Country and Tynt Meadow Abbey Brewery.*

One of the first British beer types that I learned to appreciate was 'mild', a dark, slightly sweet beer with notes of caramel and little alcohol, it is not bitter at all. Nowadays you rarely encounter it anymore, that's why I was so happy to be able to go on a trip that beer sommelier Markus Raupach organised to the Black Country.

Mild was the beer type of the industrial heart of England. A beer with which miners and steelworkers could quench their thirst after a day of toiling in mines and factories, without immediately falling out of their shoes. A beer that is also nourishing because of its sugars, a beer that you can brew with simple brewing equipment. This gives character and colour to the beer through caramelization. Above all, the beer had to be affordable, that is why local brewers made little use of expensive hops.

The Black Country is still the place where mild is at home. Local breweries such as Bathams make a tasty version with around 3.5% alcohol, but here too the beer loses ground to the golden bitters. Most people no longer toil in factories and the price difference between mild and bitter has now disappeared.

Local brewers are not exactly consistent when it comes to milds. For example, the **Old Swan Inn**, better known as Ma Padoes, brews a blonde mild that is unique in its kind, the beer is only sold in the on-site pub. The same goes for the beer from Sarah Hughes' brewery at the **Beacon Hotel** in Sedley. They do brew a dark mild, but a heavy one. At 6% it is a dream of a beer, the most beautiful mild I have tasted in a long time: a perfect balance of syrup, dried plums, bread, and some earthiness, perhaps more of a Scotch ale than a mild. You also have to time your drinking of this Ruby Mild as well. The Beacon Hotel still maintains Victorian closing times. For example, the bar opens at 12 noon, but closes again at half past two. Half an hour later on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. During the week the pub opens again at half past five (later on weekends) and serves 'last orders' five hours later. The bar closes irrevocably at eleven o'clock in the evening. Literally: "shutters close off the view of the tapers", you're not supposed to drown all weekend. Anyone who wants to take some beer home with them will have it poured into a five-litre white plastic jerry can. A growler, but of the



simplest kind. That is also possible, because Sarah Hughes' beers are hand-pulled cask ales, in which carbon dioxide plays a minor role. This is also a nod to the past, when tapping from flap jugs and pots was the only way to get beer at home. The British honour the past.

The name 'mild' is easy to explain. It is a soft beer, meant to be drunk quickly. This term was once used for the sweet young beer that was mixed in pubs with aged, and fresh beer. A bit like Flemish red and Flemish brown beer is still a mixture of old and young beer. With the rise of hopped beers, mild remained the sweeter beer compared to the bitter pale ales.

*The article and image courtesy of Henri Reuchlin and translated from the original Dutch [www.bierburo.com](http://www.bierburo.com)*



# Extending the Life of Craft Beer

One of the biggest challenges around serving a perfect pint of cask beer is shelf life. So, the ability to extend the life-span of this quintessentially British product could be the silver bullet for this type of beer.

One company is claiming to have found such a solution. Cambridge Scientific Solutions (CSS) has created a piece of technology called the "Beer Saver". This clips over cask (and keg) beer lines and claims to extend the life of cask ales for up to 21 days, significantly extending the current recommended time period of 3-4 days. Although there are alternative systems for keg beer products, such as Heineken's "Smart Dispense" and Carlsberg's "Quality Dispense", this system can be applied to both cask and keg beer.

The product has been in development by CSS since 2002. The system is cellar-based and merely clips over the beer lines without interfering with brewery technology or involving taking lines apart. The system is non-invasive, good value for money and free to trial.

The system uses electromagnetic technology, creating an electromagnetic saw-tooth multi-frequency sine wave, which affects the beer flowing up and down the line. CSS aren't completely sure how the science works, but guess

that it stops the bacteria from forming a biofilm and slowing down its rate of production. Although the actual process may be something of a mystery, it seems to result in an extended lifespan for cask beers. It may also result in the need to

clean beer lines less often. But its real benefit is giving licensees the ability to put more cask beers on the bar because they've got more time to sell it. It also gives the customer more choice and helps to ensure the quality of the end product. Apparently, CSS says that the system has some support from CAMRA, whose members have sampled cask ale 21 days after tapping and reported the quality as satisfactory.

In a separate development, Greene King has recently announced that it intends to roll out smaller "pins" (4.5 gallon casks) to some pubs so that they can help their licensees to ensure

that their cask ales are always in good condition, particularly where perhaps they don't sell too much of this type of beer.

It remains to be seen how successful the product is and whether it actually extends the life of cask beer and ensures a good quality pint after 21 days of tapping the cask.

*Steve James with acknowledgement to CSS and Morning Advertiser*



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# The Bitter Benefits of Beer

Making claims for beer's benefits is an impossible task. The negative effects of alcohol are clearly and extensively documented. The more you drink the more chances you have of getting ill. Even the moderate drinking hypothesis has limited potential to anyone enjoying a regular pint or two, with perhaps a half pint being a limit.

We do, of course, know that as with any food there is a balance between positive and negative impacts. Cake, like beer, is enjoyable providing energy and nutrition but, in excess, diabetes. Beer has its own beneficial nutrients, particularly vitamins and fibre and, in the case of real and bottle-conditioned ale, a potential contribution to the intestinal microbiome.

The balance depends on the amount of intake as well as character and quality. Today, choice of drinks depends strongly on marketing - potentially having a major impact beyond what is often felt to be a beer's inherent quality. A particular example is the promotion of high-alcohol, super strong 8-10% ABV beers which are easily drunk to excess.

As such, can historic beers provide any guidance? After all, these relied on word of mouth not expensive marketing campaigns and may possibly represent a natural evolution more related to health effects.

We don't have many of such beers to test chemically or microbiologically but a few surviving samples do indicate a greater preponderance of bacteria and novel yeast species which could have a probiotic impact. These would reflect a more traditional mixed fermentation and lack of filtration and pasteurisation. Historic barley varieties and

brewing techniques may also have resulted in higher levels of fibre and minerals, also contributing to a greater nutrient content.

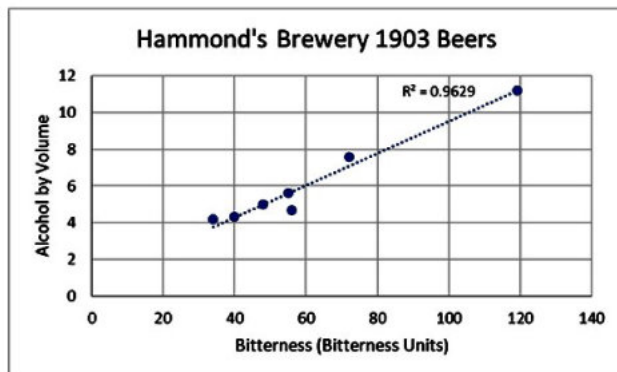


An additional window on historic beers is to look at their recipes. As with surviving samples these are relatively rare and can be difficult to interpret but a number are available in archives. A good example is the 1903 brewing book from Hammond's brewery in Bradford, currently in the Brewery History Museum.

This recorded brewing details of 235 brews of seven beers produced between February and November 1903. The beers used a mix of UK and overseas malts as well as hops from the 1902 harvest but also a high proportion from 1901. Today brewers use fresh hops but ageing can alter the composition of acids providing different characteristics.

Hammond's alcohol levels ranged from a 4.2% ABV bitter to an 11.2% ABV barley wine (Stingo) including a best bitter at 5% ABV and a porter at 4.7% ABV as in the table.

Bitterness levels are interesting and range from 34 to 119 bitterness units (BU) as calculated from hop input and with some assumptions on hop varieties and efficiencies. These are proportionately higher than contemporary levels and it is likely that the 119 was not actually achieved. Nevertheless, particularly interesting is that there was an almost 100% ( $R^2 = 0.963$ ) correlation between the ABV and bitterness levels as shown in figure 1.

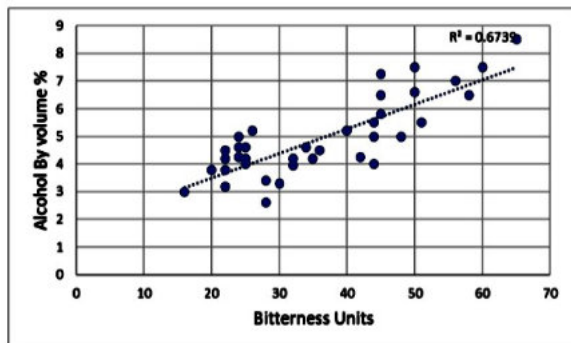


**Figure 1. ABV bitterness correlation of Hammonds Beers 1903.**

This isn't just a peculiarity of Hammonds beers. Analysis of records by brewery historian Edd Mather from translations of Victorian Yorkshire and Lancashire recipes indicates a similar correlation (Fig 2).

**Figure 2. ABV Bitterness correlation of Victorian beers 1879 – 1896.**

Bitterness has strong and often unnoticed impacts on intake reducing speed and volume level due to its



inherent component may lead to over consumption of alcohol (as such strong beers seem to be associated with).

This doesn't absolve beer of its ethanol impact but does suggest that there may be an inherent intake control through the bitterness levels which isn't present today. That said, any effect is likely to be minor compared to encouraging lower alcohol levels in beers and health awareness. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to investigate in taste tests, - if participants could be found for experimentation.

strong flavour impact and associated astringency. Extrapolating this on the basis of bitterness being negatively correlated to alcohol suggests that high alcohol beers would traditionally be consumed more slowly than standard draught beers.

In comparison, analysis of today's strong beers (super strength varieties in particular) indicates their bitterness to be in the range of 18 – 26 BU suggesting that a reduction of bitterness as an

For more details of the Hammond's beers and analysis see the following on the Brewlab archive: Beers of Yesterday. Brewery History, Vol 105, 2001. [brewlabhosting.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Beers-Of-Yesterday.pdf](http://brewlabhosting.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Beers-Of-Yesterday.pdf)

Yeasts of Yesterday. The Brewer International. January 2001. [brewlab.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Yeasts-Of-Yesterday.pdf](http://brewlab.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Yeasts-Of-Yesterday.pdf)

## A Warm Welcome at

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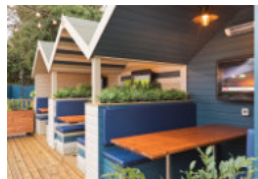


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# Chris Cruises to Heanor via Derby

Chris Greenwood is still cruising from pub to pub and his latest jaunt started by visiting two pubs well-favoured by many of our members. He started at the **Brunswick** in Derby; well located within minutes of the trains and with the bus stop sign screwed to its wall by the door (Skylink every 20 minutes from Leicester, Loughborough and points in between). Chris takes up the story.

One Saturday, I decided to go to the market town of Heanor. You get there via Derby, so I visited some pubs there as well. My first port of call was the Brunswick, a beautiful, multi-roomed pub, with its own brewery, owned by Everards. There's lots of wood panelling, brewery and railway memorabilia on the walls and some attractive fireplaces. There were a lot of Brunswick and Everard's beers, supplemented by six guests. The friendly lad behind the bar served me an Ashover Eureka which had a sweet start, leading to a massive bite of bitterness in the mouth and a sharp, astringent finish. The Chapter 13 Kandata had a fruity nose, with some citrus notes and a stone fruit, bitter ending. CAMRA discount is available here.

My next pub is one of my favourites in the East Midlands, the **Alexandra Hotel**. It's a two-roomed, basic boozer, with a lot of railway artefacts on the walls. There were nine ales on

offer, served by the chatty and friendly landlady, who gave me a CAMRA discount. The Two-by-Two Talus IPA was a juicy, hazy pale with grapefruit notes, plenty of hops in the mouth feel and a lovely citrusy finish. The Top Rope Coast-to-Coast was a mix of malt and hops, with some citrus notes.

Ten minutes' walk away is the **Smithfield**, a tickers' paradise; I really like it too. The L-shaped main bar has lots of brewery memorabilia; there's a comfy back room and a pleasant outside area, overlooking the river. The pub was very busy, but the friendly lady behind the bar served everyone very quickly, again giving me a CAMRA discount. There were ten beers on offer, mainly from microbreweries. I drank a hazy pale by Pentrich, which had a biscuity nose, lemon notes and a bitter, fruity ending. 360° Double Act was a pleasant mix of Simcoe and Equanot and was dry and resinous with some citrus notes.

A pleasant walk along the river and across a bridge gets you to Corporation Street and the bus stop for the H1 bus to

Heanor. It's every twenty minutes at peak times and takes around thirty minutes. The final stop is the marketplace, and very near the **Angry Bee** which is a friendly micropub, there's plenty of banter between the owner and regulars. I had a nice chat with a few locals, whilst drinking my Bottle Brook Mellow Yellow, one of the five locales on offer. The beer was a tangy golden ale, with



Red Lion



Crown

plenty of English hops, with a long bitter, dry, pear-drop ending.

Just around the corner is the large, rambling **Red Lion**. There was Sharp's Doom Bar, but also Marston's Old Empire Ale, which was in good nick and very cheap. It had a decent mix of sweet malt and the bitterness of English hops and a dry, astringent finish.

There are two micropubs on Ray Street. The first one I visited was the **Redemption Ale House**, a popular, busy place, with a pleasant upstairs area and vibrant wallpaper. There was a good choice of seven ales. I tried the Bristol Beer Factory Trail Breaker, which had a nice mix of Citra and Sabro and had a bitter tingle on the tongue and a citrus mouth feel. The Severn Brewing Double Hopped Pale Ale was fruity and bitter, with some marmalade notes and a citrusy, bitter ending.

The second micro was the **Hop Wright Inn**, a simple bar, with friendly owners and staff. There were plenty of locals and there was a pleasant atmosphere. There were four wickets with locales. I drank the Urban Chicken Wrong Fonts, which was a juicy, hoppy pale ale with plenty of English hops in the mouth and finish.

My next pub was the two-roomed, down-to-earth locals' pub, the **New Inn**. The helpful landlord had two Dancing Duck beers on cask. The Abduction had a slightly sulphureous nose, and a hippy mouth feel, with a dry ending and some orange peel notes.

It's quite a long walk to Marlpool on the outskirts of Heanor, but there are two pubs almost next door to each other. The **Queen's Head** is a rambling, attractive pub, with the buzz of chatter from the regulars. There were four ales on offer. I tried the Little Critters Single Batch Chinook, which was a little thin, with a very dry, astringent finish.

Just around the corner is the **Marlpool Alehouse**. It's one of Derbyshire's oldest micropubs and has its own brewery too. There was a lovely atmosphere in this small hostelry. It's a really friendly place, the owner and regulars all chatted with me and made me feel really welcome. I had a conversation with the affable Froth Blowers brewer too. I drank two of the Marlpool beers. The Otter's Pocket was a decent mix of malt and hops and had a bittersweet finish. The Jackdaw had a sweet start, with molasses notes and some bitterness in the finish, to balance it a little.

Around fifteen minutes' walk down Ilkeston Road, back into Heanor, brings you to the **Crown**. It's a large, comfortable place, with lots of sport on the TVs and plenty of fans and customers. There were four locales on offer. The Welbeck Abbey Cathedral Beeches was very sharp, bitter and puckering, with a dry, bitter ending.

After the Crown, I caught the H1 back to Derby. The **Standing Order** is opposite the final stop, so I went there. It has a really impressive, high ceiling and around fifteen beers. It was rammed, but there were a lot of staff and it didn't take long to get served. Two of the regular beers are Oakham Citra and Green Devil; two of my favourites. Interestingly, for a Wetherspoon's pub neither had the sparkler on them. Both beers were in good condition, with plenty of Citra hops in the mouth feel and finish, with a bitter, citrusy finish.

The Alexandra Hotel is very near the train station, so it would have been rude not to revisit the pub and have a pint of Two-by-Two Talus IPA, a great ending to a very enjoyable day. Cheers.

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Campaign For Real Ale



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Leicester CAMRA Branch has a mini-shop on its website [leicester.camra.org.uk](http://leicester.camra.org.uk) with a range of garments to choose from.

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# All Our Yesterdays

An ex-Leicester lad, now living on the Northants/Rutland border, dropped me a line after the Summer edition saying how much he had enjoyed the articles and reminiscing about the days when he took to drink.

There is no such thing as a bad beer but they can be bad at the point of sale if not kept well. Rob Clark pointed out that one man's meat is literally another man's poison, but we all have our preferences.

He was brought up off Scraftoft Lane and in 1977 – the date we featured in our Morrismen article – he was 15 and becoming aware of pubs and ale, but he bemoaned that they weren't served locally with anything decent. He used to frequent the **Humberstone** in Humberstone village and the **Windmill** opposite. They both had Ansells signage, but the beer was totally different in each pub with the Windmill being marginally better. His dad (an ale connoisseur) said that the ale in the Windmill was Ansells but the "Umbo" was Ind Coope which he never liked. The only other local was the **Mayflower** on Gervis Road on the Thurnby Lodge, but the beer there was similarly poor (Ansell's signage again).

Every area has an ale that has the marmite factor. Locals who are used to it love it, but visitors cannot take to it. Growing up in a big city (Manchester) we had 34 different breweries with tied houses so we had plenty of choice but we used to beware Hydes or Holts. We'd rarely see either with the brewery name outside and that in itself was a warning.

Being a Leicester lad, Rob's been asked a few times – by people not from the city – if his favourite beer is Everards. He never took to it so used to find it frustrating with a trip out in the countryside, to a chocolate box-type pub to stop at, then to see the Everards sign! It must be said that Everards has some wonderful pubs but if Tiger is not to your taste, you would have been stuck. Nowadays with their new setup, they brew a range of excellent ales and can give you a choice.

Rob once asked his mum why his dad never drank locally and she said – stating the obvious – that the beer was rubbish. For years, they used to drive down to Sanvey Gate (drink driving wasn't a massive issue then) and enjoy the gorgeous proper Ansells Mild in the **Sanvey Gate Tavern**, the equally good mild in the **Duke of Cumberland**, down the road and (one of his

favourites) the Banks's 'mixed' in the **Joiner's Arms** – bang opposite the Sanvey. They would also drink the excellent Shippo's in the **Bowlturners**, nip in the **Salmon** and the **Prince of Wales** too on occasion.

I used to work near the Bowlturners and don't remember it as Shippo's but the **Royal Oak** next door was. We are both dredging up memories from a long way back.

Before she retired, his mum worked at the old LBM brewery building off Nedham Street (it was a knitwear factory then) and she said you could still see where the brewing vats had stood on the floor. Sadly, Rob was too young to try LBM but the various brewery books he has don't speak that highly of it. **Leicester Brewing & Malting Co Ltd**, of Eagle Brewery, started in 1867, as Carver & Bates, Northampton Square. It became Bates, Son & Bishell and the malting business of Needham & Crick, Leicester. They were acquired by Ansells in 1952 with about 140 public houses and brewing ceased. Bottling continued though, till 1960, the year I started work (and drinking). Rob also remembers the Leicester Clubs brewery building still being there on Syston Street and still has an old green and orange pencil, engraved with the Midlands Club Brewery on it!

When Rob was a lad of 15, he got a job behind the bar in the **Coleman Road Social Club**. They weren't as strict on staff being over 18 then, but they changed the rules not long after and he had to leave. Rob remembers the bar prices then clearly. "Cheapest and most popular on the bar was M&B IPA at 26p per pint. Mild was 27p. Worthington-E was 29p and the dearest on the bar were Carling Black Label lager and Hemmerling (light lager) at 32p. Shots were 25p if I remember correctly and these were club prices, so a bit cheaper than most boozers of the time" he suspects.

Somewhat older than Rob I still recall prices in 1960 in Manchester. They seemed dear on my wage but in my local, the bitter was 11 old pennies (nearly 5p), mild 8d and a pretty rosey cider 7d. I was only earning £6 a week.

Sadly, most of the pubs he frequented are no more and indeed the breweries as well, even if their loss was less lamented.

*Roy Denney*

# But Seriously...

I live on the crest of a hill, surrounded by an area of advanced rewilding and regreening, with a priceless view over two valleys. The downside is the absence of a great local pub.

Friends and family, keen to experience a free break in one of England's tourist heartlands, ask innocently, "What are the pubs like round your new place then, Tim?", to which I say, "Mostly way too big to survive".

## The British dislike of pubs

I was once given a priceless piece of advice, which I pass on whenever possible. It was "Listen carefully to what people say, as it is often a fair reflection of what they think; but watch like a hawk what they do, as that is a far better indicator of what they intend."

We British deceive ourselves about our love of pubs. We say we like them but in truth it is their image that we like. Since the 1980s pub numbers have halved. Where cellars saw casks of 18, 36 and sometimes 54 gallons, now they sell a similar number of 9- or 4.5-gallon containers. We watched as they were rounded up into property chains to become purveyors of the lowest common denominator – and we still praised them.

We like pubs to exist in theory, because they give us a sense of community. They persuade foreign visitors that we have a social side. They offer soap operas a setting for conversations between households.

For decades, in my part of the world, the pub trade has become a branch of the property business, building spiral of expansion. The checklist has grown ever broader – car park (✓) ... garden (✓) ... handpumps (✓) ... branded drinks (✓) ... familiar food (✓) ... kids' area (✓) ... fireplace (✓) ... more branded drinks (✓) – even before catering for the allergic, the principled

and the picky. To have space enough to fit the bill, the village pub must grow larger than can be maintained by its income.

Currently, the UK has roughly one pub for every 1,500 people. Of the 450 or so villages within 40 miles of my home, around 400 have a population of less than that. Is it any wonder therefore that so many villages have no pub – or any other social hub?

## Why rural Britain needs micropubs

The antidote to the sprawling country inn is the micropub.

The first was created in 2005 by Martyn Hillier, at Herne, just inland from Kent's north coast. He named it the Butchers Arms, for its former life as a butcher's shop. His simple idea was to create a wet-led bar, focussed on serving ales direct from the cask, where the noise is chatter, and everybody knows your name. The opening times became those convenient to the customers and the boss.

Although the UK now has more than 750 micropubs, it speaks volumes that it was several years before their number got into double figures, and yet more that they are mostly an urban phenomenon – thus far.

The key features of a micropub are the size of the premises, the simplicity of what is on offer and time taken by its licensee. Size matters because above a certain footprint, different permissions are required. The personal touch matters because it is the point of the place, whichever side of the bar you are.

## Will they work near me?

In 2019 the ten pubs nearest to my new home lay within a five-mile radius. Three have been sold as private houses and two continue to struggle. The



Three Leicestershire micropubs

# Villages Need Micropubs

remainder rely on a model of OK-enough food and lacklustre drinks, plus a sense of community support. Not one feels comfortable, exciting, or bound to survive.

Meanwhile, I can think of half a dozen villages in the area that have empty small business premises and enough community spirit to support a micropub, were it understood that such a thing could exist.

Is it a matter of time, or will someone have to make the first move?

*Tim Webb writes The World Atlas of Beer with Stephen Beaumont, and numerous other books about beer. He is an international beer judge and speaker, and heads up beer on CAMRA's national drinks committee (RACPC).*



## Loughborough Beer Festival



Loughborough and

larger than the Victoria Room, where we were last time, so capacity is larger and we can have an even larger selection of beers.

Tickets will be available to buy on line, so there won't be a queuing problem - unless you all turn up in coach loads!

Please put these dates in your diaries and keep an eye on our Branch website for confirmation and further details

North Leicestershire CAMRA will be holding our annual event at the Polish Club. Subject to approval, the dates are "as usual", 7-9th March 2024.

The big news is that we are close to agreeing a return to Loughborough Town Hall for 2025, although due to the shows already booked there, it will be slightly later. The dates will be 13-15th March 2025.

Please be aware that that the 2025 festival will be bigger and better than the 2023 event, having learnt from the difficulties we encountered. We have secured the main auditorium, so everything will be at ground floor level to aid access. It's



[loughboroughcamra.co.uk](http://loughboroughcamra.co.uk)

# Yesterday's Pubs

A group of elderly drinkers have been collecting the names of pubs they know of which have closed in Leicestershire. We are aware of several attempts at this over the years and are not sure what it achieves other than warn us of the way things are going. They claimed to have 228 in the list so far when your editor lost contact with the one who had shared it with him. Charlie Corcoran, the Leicester CAMRA Treasurer has again been seeking information about lost pubs.

One thing worth noting though is the interest the list attracts when shown to people as they try and remember where they were and see how many they remember visiting. Having scanned the list and cleaned it up we now have it in electronic form but the list did not have any detail, just the names. As a result, we have deleted pubs with the same name but the new list, just of pub names runs to 150, and we daresay readers will come up with more.

Pubs are still vanishing at a rate of about two a day nationwide and we must fight back by all possible means.

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and CAMRA have joined forces to protect historical pubs and to ensure those of value that are at risk

are properly protected. Residents are being encouraged to submit the pubs they believe are of historical significance and all nominated will be examined on a case-by-case basis to see if and how they can be protected. Options include heritage listing, asset of community value listing, or community ownership.

**“Pubs are still vanishing at a rate of about two a day nationwide and we must fight back by all possible means.”**

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands hit it on the head saying “Protecting our local pubs isn't just about preserving bricks and mortar, it's about safeguarding the heart and soul of our communities”.

This is a formula which could be replicated elsewhere and it is badly needed. Developers continue to flout the rules

with pubs routinely converted or demolished without permission, denying people the chance to save their local. Community assets need support if they are to survive and thrive against a backdrop of rising costs.

CAMRA is campaigning for the legislators to give councils more powers to save pubs and reinstate pubs after unauthorised demolition. The financial punishment must also fit the crime such that they cannot net profit even though fined. They, amongst many others, are recommending an extension to the hospitality discount rate. Pubs currently benefit from a 75% discount on their business rate bills, capped at £110,000, but this is due to end in March 2024.

There are two forms of listings which are designed to provide pub protection status – one is under Historic England and the other is the ‘asset of community value’ listing.

Listings managed by Historic England are protected in legislation. Demolition or alteration of listed buildings without planning permission is subject to a two-year prison sentence or unlimited fine.

An asset of community value, allows community organisations to have the first option to purchase the asset if it is put up for sale.



## Leicestershire's Lost Pubs

Abbey	Cricketers	Jollie Colliers	Parcel Yard	Stag & Pheasant
Albion	Criterion	King William IV	Pig & Whistle	Stamford & Warrington
Angel	Crown	Kings Arms	Plough	Star
Balmoral	Crown & Cushion	Kings Head	Polar Bear	Station
Bank	Dog & Gun	Lansdown	Prince of Wales	Swan
Bear Inn	Dominion	Last Plantagenet	Princes Feathers	Swan and Rushes
Bell	Durham Ox	Leicester Inn	Pub	Tap & Mallet
Black Boy	Fat Cat	Lindens	Punch Bowl	Three Crowns
Black Horse	Foresters	Lonsdale	Queens Head	Three Horseshoes
Black Swan	Fountain	Marquis of Granby	Railway	Tom Thumb
Blacksmiths	Fox	Mash Tub	Railway Tavern	Travellers Rest
Blue Bell	Fox & Crane	Mason's Arms	Red House	Triangles
Blue Moon	Framework Brew House	Midland	Red Lion	Tudor
Boot	Frank Whittle	Molly O'Grady's	Reservoir	Union
Boot & Shoe	Gate	Nags Head	Rising Sun	Varsity
Bowl turners	Generous Britan	Nautical William	Robin Hood	Victoria
Bowstring Bridge	George	Navigation	Royal Anglian	Vine
Brant	Good Neighbours	Nelson	Royal George	Wagon & Horses
Brewdog	Greyhound	New Inn	Royal Oak	West End Brewery
British Queen	Griffin	New Ellistown	Rutland Arms	Wheatsheaf
Britannia	Halfway House	New Galaxy	Saddle	White Lion
Bulls Head	Hat & Beaver	New Swan	Saracen's Head	White Swan
Camp	Holly Bush	Northbridge Tavern	Shakespeare	White Peacock
Cap & Stocking	Horse & Jockey	Nut & Squirrel	Shakespeare's Head	Wig & Gavel
Castle	Horse Shoes	Oddfellows	Shakespeare's House	Wig & Pen
Cavalier	Humber Stone	Old Barn	Shambles	Windmill
Charlotte	Hunters Moon	Old English Gentleman	Ship	Woodsman
Cherry Tree	Indian Lantern	Old Horse	Shoulder of Mutton	
Chrystal Palace	Jack O lantern	Olde Flying Horse	Spade Tree	
Clarendon Arms	John O Gaunt		Sports Bar	
Cock Inn	Joiners			
Crafty Fox				



# Dry January

The phenomenon of “Dry January” started in 2013. In 2022 an estimated 130,000 people took part in it. According to the website of Alcohol Change UK, Dry January is “31 days alcohol-free, a break and a total reset for the body and mind”. Citing health benefits such as better sleep, more energy, and improved mental health. All very well but could there be a downside to avoiding alcohol for the month? If you’re the sort of person who buys cans of lager at the supermarket and sits at home drinking them probably not. However if it causes a reduction in the numbers of people going to pubs then this could cause real problems for the industry.

There were an estimated 400 pubs lost for good in the first six months of 2023. Traditionally, January tends to be a lean time for pubs and breweries anyway so more people staying away because of Dry January can make it pretty tough for pubs already struggling with rising costs. Then there is the fundraising campaign for Macmillan cancer support “Go Sober for October” a very worthy cause but I do worry about its effects on the pub and brewery industry. I also wonder how many more spin offs are we going to get: Abstinence August, Sober September, Don’t Drink December etc.

Some reasons you might want to do Dry January:

*“To reduce my alcohol intake and have a break”*  
But that doesn’t mean you have to give up on going to the pub entirely. Most pubs now have a good range of soft drinks and low and no alcohol beers. You can still get the social benefits of going to the pub and help support your local.

*“For health reasons”*

A lot of people seem to do dry January as a health kick, a reaction to over indulgence over the festive period. So here is an idea...how about drinking sensibly, not eating your own body weight in chocolate, mince pies or trifle. If you get to January and feel this hasn’t worked then rather than abandoning the pub entirely, drink sensibly and actually use that gym pass you bought. Or walk to the pub instead of getting the bus or a taxi.

*“To get sponsored and raise money for charity”*

I’m not going to tell you not to raise money for charity but perhaps you could do it in a more fun way? I would also hazard a guess that your local pub raises an awful lot of money for charity so why not get involved in what they are doing?

The pub and brewery industry has its response in the form of “Tryanuary” encouraging people to try new ales in January. However this just seems a bit of a gimmick to me. I’m always game to try a new beer not just in the first month of the year. I think the best response I have seen is the Bay Hop in Colwyn Bay which gave out “Certificates of non-achievement for Dry January” for any alcoholic drink purchased. These were signed and presented by the landlord and a presentation photo went on their Facebook page. Brilliance!

Now a cautionary tale:

Gary decided to do Dry January. He’d been really overdoing it over December and thought he needed a break. Most of his mates felt the same and they made the decision together. As he left the Cross Keys on New Years Eve, he

said to Steve the landlord “Sorry mate you won’t see us for a bit, we’re doing Dry January, see you in a month” Steve inwardly winced. Another one. It seemed like most of his regulars were doing Dry January and he wouldn’t have their custom for a month. This was not good news. The pub business was skating on very thin ice. Although they had done OK over the festive period a huge energy bill had just arrived and the costs of the beer rising had already put a few customers off. Steve was late on the rent to the Pub Co and they weren’t being very understanding of his situation.

On 1st February Gary went down to the Cross Keys. He couldn’t wait, it wasn’t just the beer he missed, he had barely seen his mates the whole month. He missed the atmosphere and seeing people he hadn’t appreciated the social life the pub gave him. He arrived to find the door locked and the pub in darkness. The pub was closed. Gary’s heart sank.

Almost a year later Gary was walking to the church, he passed the closed Cross Keys on the way. There was block and mesh fencing around it

**“There were an estimated 400 pubs lost for good in the first six months of 2023”**



and a digger had just arrived. Unable to find a new tenant, the Pub Co owners had sold it to a developer and it was to become flats. A few people had objected but the council found in favour of the planning permission from the developer on the grounds that the pub was not a viable business.

Gary thought of all the bad stuff that had happened in the year since the pub had closed. It was like the heart of the community had been ripped out. There was no meeting place, no hub or meeting place. The stress and money problems from the pub business failing did for Steve and Brenda's marriage and Steve found himself living in a B&B on housing benefit. Carly the barmaid who had worked weekends to help fund her university course found herself without a job and short on the rent. She had to drop out of the course and move back home to Mum and Dad. The old ladies who met up every Tuesday afternoon, lost their meeting place. They had started using the pub after the library closed and it was cheaper sitting in the pub than heating their living rooms but now that wasn't an option. For "Old Stan" the pub had been his social life for more than 40 years. Without his regular trip to have a pint and conversation his memory soon seemed to deteriorate. He'd lost his routine and became lonely and more forgetful and ended up in a care home. At Grist Stone Brewery a few miles

away the loss of yet another pub customer was a blow they didn't need. Within a few months of the Cross Keys closing Sam the young assistant brewer was made redundant, it was either that or the whole brewery was going under. Not that made it any better for Sam, his girlfriend was pregnant. Local band the Dixie Riddlers had decided to call it a day, they had been a regular Saturday night fixture at the pub and there had been plenty of good gigs and good times. Now no more.

Arriving at the church, Gary saw the car with the coffin inside. It was so sad what happened to Stan. He hadn't lasted long after going into the care home. A gaunt looking figure walked up to Gary, it was Steve and he looked terrible. Garry looked at him and just blurted out "Steve, how did this happen? Where did it all go so wrong?" Steve looked at him dismissively and said "Well you lot not coming to the pub for a month didn't exactly help."

Gary woke up with a start, his pulse racing. It had all been a horrible nightmare. He grabbed his mobile phone and sent a message to the group chat saying "Guys I've been thinking, doing this Dry January might not be the best idea after all."

*Rob Carter*



# Manchester's Best Beer, Pubs and Bars

If you cut a Mancunian they would bleed best bitter.

In the North-West, beer is more than something you simply drink; it's part of a lifestyle, a vital part of the region's culture, and forms an important part of the everyday. Whether cherished by those who prefer to give a glass of beer their full attention, or barely a moment of conscious thought as they take large, satisfying sips, there is little difference to its significance. Beer, and the pubs, bars and breweries from which it flows, form the glue that binds this wonderful part of the country together.

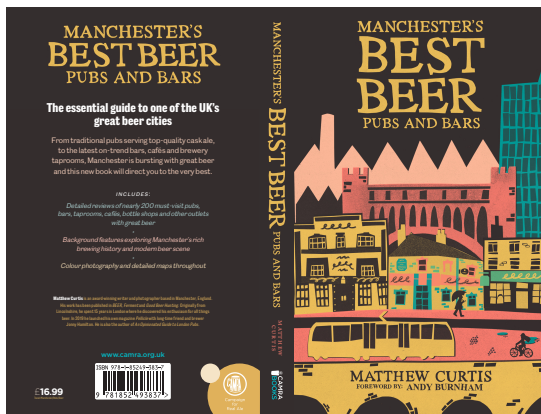
Manchester serves as the gateway to the North-West for most of us in the UK and is where the region's enthusiasm for great beer is at its most concentrated. The city acts as a lightning rod, channelling creativity and enthusiasm in equal amounts. This has resulted in a beer scene that draws inspiration from the city's richly defined history while also being at the cutting edge of brewing innovation. Then there are its pubs: from beautiful old boozers and community locals, to hip, contemporary beer bars and brewery taprooms.

As a beer scene, it's got everything. If you love beer, then Manchester is the place you've been looking for, and its people will welcome you and show you exactly how good the city and its beer culture really is.

This guide will introduce you to Manchester's beer scene and guide you around the long-established as well as new, exciting pubs, bars, breweries, and more.

With an introduction by the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham this book will set a marker for any beer enthusiast's exploration of the North-West.

From traditional pubs serving top-quality cask ale, to the latest on-trend bottle shop bars and funky brewery taprooms, Manchester is bursting with great beer and this new book will direct you to the very best.



Detailed reviews of nearly 200 must-visit pubs, bars, taprooms, cafés, bottleshops and other outlets with great beer.

Background features exploring Manchester's rich brewing history and modern beer scene.

Colour photography and detailed maps throughout.

**Manchester's Best Beer, Pubs and Bars**, Author: Matthew Curtis, £16.99  
192pp and available from [shop1.camra.org.uk](http://shop1.camra.org.uk)



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# EAT



# DRINK



# EXPERIENCE



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