

# leicestershire drinker

The magazine of the five Leicestershire branches of CAMRA

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**Edition no.10**



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## WELCOME



Welcome to this latest edition of the Drinker.

I hope you are enjoying the return of beer garden weather and are helping publicans to keep their bank manager and the tax man happy.

The industry is still suffering and I am pleased we can help a little. By bringing production in-house we will be able to progressively reduce the cost of advertising with us. If we get more adverts it can come down further.

**Roy Denney, Editor 0116 233 8604**



## PUB AND BREWERY NEWS

Another brewery bites the dust! A big one this time as Marstons has sold its 40 per cent stake in a brewing joint venture with Carlsberg for £206M. The group will now focus entirely on operating pubs.

It ends almost 200 years of brewing heritage, with Banks and Company first starting beer-making at Park Brewery, Wolverhampton in 1875. Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company was created just under four years ago and has its headquarters at Marston's House, Wolverhampton

The stake has been bought by a subsidiary of Carlsberg for cash. Completion is aimed for the end of September.

Marston themselves had bought a dozen or so regional brewers over the years and once again we are seeing mega virtual chemical factories cornering the market, much as when CAMRA was born. This time round though there are a couple of concepts on our side which should help us keep out of their clutches. One is the growth of small independent brewers and micropubs (often a brew house) and the increasing number of community buy outs. More on the micros later.

Two of your editors favourite pubs have been recently taken over by the local community. To date close to 200 have been acquired this way or are in the process and we are not aware of any which have failed. Locally the lovely **Black Horse at Grimston** has opened up again where I used to meet friends from Lincolnshire, and now one of my favourite haunts when hill walking in the Dales has gone down this route. The **Farmers Arms in Swaledale** is looking for a tenant and these freehouses

are less expensive than those in chains giving a good licensee a real chance. In this case the rent is a percentage of net turnover giving time to grow the business and is capped at £40k. The pub does a great trade from Easter through to September but is quiet otherwise which does not suit pubcos or people heavily borrowed to buy a pub. Dales pubs have been amongst the worst hit by the crisis facing the industry and when up there in April I learned of nine casualties since Christmas so it is good to see this one being resurrected. I was in there December 2022 and though quiet with a limited menu the roaring fire was very welcome.



Back to the local scene there is a little known off-license in Mountsorrel which has been converted to allow on sales as well. The "William Pincet & Grandson Ltd" offers a choice of 4 keg beers, alongside a huge selection of bottles and cans both from the UK and Worldwide so lots to choose from and a cask beer will feature occasionally.



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In our spring edition, I reported on a Leicester member, a bearded gentleman by the name of Don, who travels by buses and trains each week to the **8-Sail Brewery Bar** in Lincolnshire and delivers a few copies of the magazine. Asked why an eighty-year-old leaves Wigston by bus, then two train journeys for a pint or two of beer in Heckington near Sleaford, the response from 'Don with a beard' was "Well mainly it gives me a day out, beer I enjoy, and good local company. I found the brewery, situated under the windmill, about 12 years ago and met Tony (owner) and Steve (now retired). We quickly became friends and still are. A few of their beers found their way to the Pub then on New Walk. There was no "tap" then but when they opened one it proved so popular, it was extended but still at times is not big enough. Prices suit my pocket, i.e. 5.5% at £3.50, a range of styles, ABV varying from 3.8% to 10.9% .



Certainly, enough to keep me happy, although I tread carefully due to journey home. I travel on Thursdays as the train going to Skegness can be busy Friday and Saturday. You suggested a bus trip taking in Heckington, a mini bus should cause no problem but a coach full would be welcome with a bit of notice. Plenty of outdoor seating, weather permitting. Windmill open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at the moment, may be more days in school holidays. I hope you make it.”

The magazine ends up all over the place and a reader hailing from Cheshire sympathised with our piece about Lancashire shrinking . They lost such gems as Knutsford, Plumley, Wilmslow, Altringham and Stockport (Robinson's country) and their grand pubs, to Greater Manchester. His home town Winsford, famous for its salt mine, had in the 1960s an excellent selection of town and country pubs and brews. Yes mild and bitter were the main and usual beers but with a varying range of breweries. Chester's beers, classed as fighting ale, not dissimilar to Shipstone's in taste. "My local had Wilson's - a pint of mixed usually comprised of 2 thirds mild and 1 third bitter - but landlord Jim always gave you a free pint at Christmas. **The Gate Inn in Delamere Street** had the sign "This Gate hangs high but hinders none, so stop, refresh, and carry on".

Pubs down the main road were often large, grand buildings and those the other side of the bridge, over the River Weaver stood the **Oak** and the **Ark**, though never visited as it was 'alien country'. Out in the sticks some quirky small hostelrys were a treat to visit; the **Boot and Slipper** and the **Raven** (known as the Crow to locals), with its excellent Burtonwood beers; both sadly no more. **The Old Star** was one of my early visits (pre 18) with mates. We were spotted in the off licence side entrance by my father and his best friend and beckoned across to the bar. Now, said my father, what are you having ! Amazed we ordered pints of Inde Coop. When I arrived home later I was admonished for not offering to buy a round !

One of our out of town haunts was the **Red Lion at Little Budworth**, close to the Oulton Park race circuit. The pub's jovial host had the Robinson's bitter, best bitter, mild and dark mild all had a similar flavour but varied in price by 1d, also cheaper in the bar than the lounge. Happy Days ! My father's best friend lived in Davyhulme and the local was the **Moss Vale**, a Wilson's house. When asked what I would like I answered "Oh a pint of Watney's Red Barrel please" The reply was quick and to the point. "Oh no you won't, you'll have a pint of Wilson's and enjoy it". And I did of course !"

Unfortunately these days we increasingly lament the loss of good pubs, and we must fight against more losses. Hinckley Branch has consistently opposed the loss of the **Oddfellows Arms** and supported the campaign by the local community group to acquire the building for use as a village hub.

The Branch has objected to the previous three applications, which the Borough Council considered to be unacceptable.



These applications were deemed contrary to adopted Local Plan policies, including the loss of a vital community use in an expanding village devoid of such facilities. It keeps getting knocked back but returns with minor adjustments

The applicant argues that there is a surplus of public houses within the immediate locality and that the building is not capable of being a pub now, which totally ignores the fact there is a large, active, local community group wishing to acquire the pub and run it for the benefit of the village and the wider area.

With the assistance of the Plunkett Foundation they have developed a strong business case. A professional valuation of the property has been undertaken which has led to the award of substantial grant from the Government's Community Ownership Fund. All aspects of a successful and long-lasting community venture are in place.

Demand for a pub can only increase given new housing in the area and talking of numerous pubs he probably includes the nearby Dog & Hedgehog, now itself being delicensed and developed.

The Oddfellows is a classic example of an attempt for locals to run their own pub and we await the outcome with interest.

**You don't have to be a member to object to planning applications but if not a member why not join to help campaign to protect our pubs. It is no good having real ale produced if we have very few locations to enjoy it. You get discounts in many pubs and to beer festivals and will meet and socialise with people with similar interests There are branches five throughout the county .Visit their websites to join the one nearest to you (see front cover).**

The sale of beer in pubs and bars has fallen by 35% since 2010. probably from nearly 6 billion pints in 2000 to less than 4 billion earlier this year. Despite mega mergers there are over 2000 brewers now and we explore this changing face of brewing later in the magazine. The big get bigger but more small players join the fight.

The landlords musical chairs continues and we are to lose two of our strong supporters., Steve from the **Railway Glenfield** and previously the **Bowling Green** has taken a pub in Rugby which is where he lives and Kev and Dee from from the **Old Horse** are to retire later this year, after over three decades running that pub winning many awards along the way.

We reported last month that the the Marstons group were to sell keg beers through hand pumps. We know of one pub in the area already doing just that. Apparently the Man at Arms, Bitteswell has two hand pumps offering Hobgoblin IPA and Wainwright Gold, two of three beers so far sold as Carlsberg "Fresh Ale". Keg beers with no indication on the pump clips that they are not cask ale.

If you see these beers or Wainwright Amber being sold by hand pump ask if it is keg as we don't want to see kegs masquerading as cask conditioned beer.

On the subject of festivals Hinckley have just staged their annual one in Market Bosworth and, for the first time in several years, so have Leicester of which more later.



The Bosworth festival was a great success, weather kind , much sunshine with most of the 65 beers & all ciders sold out plenty of steam attractions as always and the steam train running



## Entertainment Miniature traction engine



## LEICESTER FESTIVALS ARE BACK



After four years searching for a venue CAMRA Leicester staged a well-received festival, smaller than in previous years.

It is likely to be repeated subject to some adjustments from lessons learned from this event.



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## **DIARY (SEE WEBSITES FOR MORE DETAILS)**

### Sept

3<sup>rd</sup> Hinckley Branch Earl Shilton Cons Club

5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Burton Ale Trail

6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> Road, Rail & Ale Festival, Notts Transport Heritage Centre

14<sup>th</sup> Vintage bus tour, Leicestershire villages (Leicester Branch)

19<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> Loughborough Ale Trail

20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> Melton Beer Festival

20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> Gt. Central Railway beer festival

26<sup>th</sup> Leicester Branch Ale Wagon - Launch new Good Beer Guide

26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>- Samaritans Beer Festival Oadby British Legion

### Oct

7<sup>th</sup> Hinckley Branch Ashby Tavern, Hinckley

9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Robin Hood beer festival

19<sup>th</sup> **Coach trip to Norwich (Leicester Branch but all welcome)**

31<sup>st</sup> > Leicester AGM Globe their first meeting place 50 years ago  
plus celebrations over several days re 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

### Dec

4<sup>th</sup> Hinckley Branch - Greyhound - Meeting & AGM

# ALL HAIL THE MIGHTY MICRO

As the Leicestershire CAMRA branches announced their various award winners it was very apparent that by far the most successful were free houses and in particular, micropubs.

Back when CAMRA was founded it was to campaign against mega mergers with local brewers being closed all over the place until the big boys had a virtual monopoly and started dropping cask ale. We have again seen mega mergers with volume cask ales dropping away but this time round the mighty micros are fighting back. As fast as the big pubcos are retrenching and closing or selling off many of their pubs, small independent outlets are springing up all over the place in the urban and suburban areas.

Too many perhaps were brewing their own beers although as drinkers we welcomed the variety but there is a proven place in the market for micropubs selling local produced ales. Running a micro is very demanding and many, to make it work and have some sort of life, only open limited hours

How any manage to brew beers as well is beyond me.

Locally we lament the loss of several local producers including the Framework Brewery and Anstey Ales. The latter though did manage to keep the Mash & Press going selling other people's products and now goes from strength to strength with regular comedy nights and quizzes.

Micros vary considerably though some being really minuscule and some larger than some traditional pubs. It is more about the nature of the offering than the size.

Almost all local micros are bigger than one of my favourite pubs, Birch Hall in Becks Hole which comprises the Big Bar, which is tiny, and the Small Bar, which is smaller, and which both sandwich an even smaller and unique traditional sweet shop

We all know how good our micros are but it is good to see outsiders agreeing with us.

The interiors on Page 9 were photographed by Scott Spencer of Micropub Adventures.



He tours the country trying micros and recently visited our patch. Here are a few of his observations.

“Located in Syston is “The Pharmacie Arms”, which opened in December 2018 in a former charity shop. A great warm welcome in here from Dave and Liv in here. A fantastic quirky pub with a 1950s pharmacy theme with lots of instruments, adverts and equipment around the place including a skeleton in a dentists chair. A small outdoor area to the rear. Great chatting to a few locals here.

Next the Sorrel Fox, a small Micropub run by Charnwood Brewery which opened in November 2018. A really cosy homely feel in this one roomed pub, along with a log burner for the colder months. Charnwood Brewery was founded in Loughborough in 2014 by the Reed family. A choice of 4 cask ales from Charnwood Brewery as well as a number of keg options to choose from. I started with “Vixen”, a tasty traditional English Bitter, before moving onto “Blue Fox”, a light and refreshing golden ale that was brewed to celebrate the achievements of Leicester City F.C.

A short walk brings me to “The Swan Inn”, a beautiful and well kept traditional 17th Century, Grade II Listed Coaching house. The entrance to this is via a narrow arch into a courtyard. The interior is lovely and warming with open fires and stone floors. A huge beer garden extending down to the riverside with ample seating. Great chatting to a few of the locals in here, and a discussion about Corned Beef Hash. An on site brewery “Soar” operates here and was set up in 2022 by Helen and Danny (Landlady and Landlord). Tried one of their beers “Four”, that was on the bar today. A 4% Lager. A choice of 5 cask ales on the bar to choose from today, I went with “The Usual” from Derby based Brunswick Brewing Company. A tasty copper coloured English Bitter.



On to Anstey to visit the “Mash & Press”. This was established in 2015, ( formerly being Anstey Ale Brewery) and is located in a lovely two storey former Bakery not far from the town centre. The brewery used a 3 barrel plant on the ground floor and became MonsteX Brewery, later moving to Loughborough and closing.

A great warm welcome here today from Alistair. A great selection of beers on the bar to choose from, including two of the original MonsteX beers “Hellfire” and “Nitro 23” which are brewed for them by Mill Hill Brew Co.

I went with “Plum n Bass” by Leicester based Mill Hill Brew Co. This was brewed in collaboration with the Needle & Pin Micropub in Loughborough. A delicious, tasty and fruity dark mild made with plums.

I went on to to “Mill Hill Cask & Coffee” in Enderby. A great one roomed Micropub with a fantastic modern decor and ample seating, including a small outdoor area to the rear. A really warm welcome from Jay in here, and was great chatting to him. The premises used to be the village corner shop dating back to 1900. They also own “Mill Hill Brew Co”, located further down in the village.



There was a great choice of cask beers, served from temperature controlled cabinets behind the bar. A large selection of keg beers was also available. I started with “Thomas Lift” from Market Harborough based Langton Brewery. a delicious traditional English Bitter. I went onto “Its a Lesta Thing” from their own brewery, Mill Hill Brew Co. A fantastic tasty and refreshing hazy pale ale packed full of flavour.

My next call is in Aylestone which was a bus ride and a 29 minute walk away. “The Ale Stone” opened in July 2017 in a former shop. A lovely traditional feel to this Micropub with wooden benches, tables and floor. A lovely warm welcome from Leighton in here, was great chatting. A line up of 5 cask ales, alongside ciders and keg options to choose from in here. I decided to go with “Rutland Beast” from Oakham based Grainstore Brewery. A strong balanced mild ale, Some great flavours from this beer.

Another short bus journey, this time into the Wigston area of Leicester. Here I visited “The Tap & Barrel”, which opened in January 2017 in a shop occupied by Wigston Bargain Store. A great look to this place with wooden floorboards, exposed ceiling joists and atone walls. A small seating area to the front of the pub as well. A great warm welcome from Rob in here today. A line up today of 5 cask beers alongside 8 keg beers. On top of this 9 different ciders to choose from. I started with “Schluss” from Nottingham based Hollow Stone Brewing Company, a Munich style bitter, hopped using 3 different hops. I went onto a sour beer from Cambridgeshire based Pastore Brewing and Blending. “Crumble”, a fantastic pear, orange, hazelnut and vanilla sour, packed full of flavours.



My next call was to the “Queens Road Tap”. This was opened in December 2017 by Derbyshire based Tollgate Brewery. The brewery opened in 2005, and in 2012 moved to the National Trust Calke Abbey Estate where it operates as a 6-barrel brewery using traditional methods reminiscent of the 1800s. The Queens Road Tap is a one roomed Micropub with a great atmosphere and feel to it, with seating to one side and high seating to the left and looking out of the window. A line up of 4 cask beers, 6 keg beers and a couple of ciders for me to choose from in here. Most from their own brewery alongside some guests. I went with “Billy’s Best Bitter”, a traditional English bitter. The brewery’s description being “Billy was a well know ‘character’ locally and took part in many ploughing competitions. This beer is brewed to celebrate hard work and the rewards of the harvest”



My final call is in Stoneygate to the “Real Ale Classroom”. A fantastic classroom themed Micropub which is housed in a former shop. Run by ex teachers this Micropub has school desks as well as a beer board that’s wrote on a blackboard. A stunning back garden area which is long and has several covered and undercover areas. A line up of 3 cask beers and 4 keg beers were available on the bar today. 2 ciders also on top of these. I went with “Lonely Snake” from Cambridgeshire based Three Blind Mice Brewery. This is a Mosaic and Simcoe edition; a lovely tasty hazy pale ale”



*Editors note - Tollgate Brewery, named after the toll booth between Ashby de la Zouch and Burton-upon-Trent, moved in 2012 to Calke Abbey who wanted to reintroduce brewing. It is in one of the National Trust’s 19thC farm buildings, using traditional methods reminiscent of the 1800s with its tap known as the Milking Parlour. As well as the Queens Road Tap it has micros in Derby and Ashby*



## TIME FOR CHANGE?

### No organisations ever stand still: they either progress or fall away!

One area screaming out for change is the **beer festival**. Craft ale festivals are showing the way and are springing up all over the place, possibly why CAMRA festivals do not attract the numbers they used to. Most craft festivals have brewers on hand often dispensing their own products and fielding questions. People do appreciate some added value at festivals quite apart from sampling beers.

They are social occasions where you have time to chat with like-minded people and surprisingly little beer is actually drunk. At most festivals it's about three pints per person no matter how long they are there. If as is often the case you are drinking thirds that is nine visits to the bar. Nine times you get your vouchers stamped and usually the need to get another card mid-way through. Most craft festivals simplify admission and service by charging a one-off entry fee including what drinks you want.

Bigger festivals can have guest speakers or a panel of experts doing sessions of Question and Answer and given the interest people take in brewery tours perhaps more could be done at festivals by encouraging a brewer to bring hops etc and talk about how he produces his beer.

One thing Leicester tried this year was having split sessions. On Friday and Saturday, half can come during the afternoon, and half in the evening, without having a one-in-one-out queue of people as they have had previously, even with a much bigger venue.

It cannot please everybody but should be able to please more people who otherwise may not be able to get a ticket. Afternoons are good for people travelling far, as public transport in the evenings is very limited but for locals, evenings are fine as to Leicester there are buses well into the night and connections from Leicester along major spines as well

Festivals are our main recruitment tool and revenue stream and without them at every level we will struggle. Commercial and Craft festivals have not got everything right but do some things far better than we do.

Here in Leicester we have tried to set up a festival in a massive venue on a hybrid basis, run by us to CAMRA standards but in partnership with the venue for marketing and modern operational techniques but current CAMRA rules would not authorise it being under their banner.



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# CHRIS TAKES TO THE TRAIN

Forsaking the £2 bus fares Chris Greenwood has been back to old haunts. “Most of my family live near Ormskirk in Lancashire. There's a very good train service to Liverpool from here. I spent a day visiting the sites and pubs in the city. I focused on pubs in the National Inventory (NI) and some new pubs. My train arrived at Central station, it's a short walk to Lime Street station and my first port of call, **The Great Northern**. The Wetherspoon's pub is a grand, multi-roomed building, with impressive columns, wooden latticed ceilings, plenty of wood panelling and railway memorabilia. The friendly barman served me a Roosters YPA from the choice of seven beers. The beer was rather thin, with apple notes and a dry, fruity ending.



Also on Lime Street, is another beautiful pub, **The Crown Hotel** (NI). The attractive Art Nouveau frontage, leads to two beautiful rooms, with ornate plasterwork ceilings, impressive fireplaces and fine wood panels. There were seven wickets at the bar. The pleasant landlord poured me an Oakham Citra which was in very good condition, it kept its lacings despite having the sparkler taken off. The beer had plenty of hop character throughout and a long bitter finish.

An enjoyable walk past the impressive St. George's Hall, Empire, library and law courts took me to Dale Street and the **Ship and Mitre** (NI). The 1930s Art Deco pub has an imposing, white facade, with lots of light coloured wood and a pretty stained glass section in the ceiling in the back room. The friendly landlord had eight ales on offer. The Goff's Jester 27 Biscoff Stout had a chocolate nose, biscuity body, dark chocolate and coffee notes and a slightly bitter finish.

A short walk to St. Johns Lane brings you to another attractive establishment, **Doctor Duncan's** (NI). The Victorian pub has an imposing facade and the right hand side room is really beautiful. There's a riot of light green tiling, a mosaic floor and an impressive fireplace. It's quite Moorish in style. Three of the five beers were dark, including Mallinson's Porter, a rich, dark, tasty ale, with a chocolate malt mouth feel, dark berries and a slightly bitter finish.



Back on Lime Street is the magnificent **Vines (NI)**, the last time I went there was on a date in 1984. It has a really attractive outside and four opulent rooms, with amazing plastered ceilings, including a well crafted signs of the Zodiac one. The backroom is sensational, with a giant fireplace, ornate woodwork and beautiful stained glass dome. The pub has new owners who have reintroduced real ale. There were five cask ales, I had the Rock the Boat Fab Four, a decent mix of Pilot, Cascade, Target and Admiral, which was dry and astringent, with a spikey, bitter ending.



Opposite the Vines is the **Liverpool Brewery Tap**, a small, basic bar with four hand pumps. The friendly guy behind the bar offered me tasters, I started with the Sanctuary Dark North Stout, a well presented black beer, with light brown head, dark chocolate and coffee notes and a bitter finish, very enjoyable. The Craven Brew Company Black Angus Porter was quite sweet, with some balancing bitterness and some coffee notes at the end.

I took a long walk up memory lane, past the attractive red brick part of the university, the Catholic cathedral and the University Bookshop, where I started my first proper job in 1983, then onwards to the Georgian quarter and the **Caledonia** pub on Caledonia Street. There's an impressive frontage, leading to a basic, single roomed interior, with wacky wallpaper and a helpful young woman behind the bar. There were three locales on offer, I had the Republic of Liverpool Cascade. The beer was quite fruity, with a generous amount of Cascade and a hoppy, astringent finish.

Also in the Georgian quarter, on Sugnall Street is the **Belvedere (NI)**. There's a small bar, with some pretty etched glass, attractive upstairs and a downstairs side room, with nice fireplace. There were four beers on, I drank the Chapter Taller Than a House, which had some citrus notes and a gentle, hoppy ending. I got chatting to one of Liverpool's top tickers Stephen and his wife Lesley. They told me about a new pub on nearby Hope Street called the Queen of Hope Street, so, I went there next.

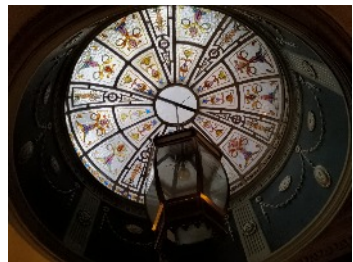
**The Queen** was a really long, spacious pub with lots of memorabilia on the walls. There were five very well priced beers at the long bar. I drank the Carnival Bitter Winter, a traditional best bitter, with a good balance of malt and hops.

I took a ten minutes walk down to Slater Street and the **Red Lion**. This narrow, long pub was very busy with a pleasant atmosphere. The helpful young woman behind the bar let me have a couple of tasters from the five ales on offer. I had the Carnival Never A Frown, which had a sweet, malty start with some balancing bitterness at the end.

My next establishment was the **Denbigh Castle** on Hackin's Hey, a small street off Bold Street. This large place has eye catching wallpaper, some exposed brickwork and an attractive, white patterned ceiling. There were five wickets at the bar. I drank the Salt Suede, an easy drinking stout, with a fair amount of dry bitterness on the palate and dark berry notes in the finish.

Not far away on Tithe barn Street is the **Railway**, a bustling, multi roomed boozery, with pretty ceilings and beams and live music. I chose the Taylor's Boltmaker from the four hand pumps. The beer was in good condition, with a big, sweet malty mouth feel and a little bitter tingle on the tongue at the end.

Just around the corner is the **Lion Tavern** (NI) on Moorfield's. It has a beautiful interior, with lots of tiling, mosaic floors and a lovely stained glass dome in a side room. There were five ales on. I tried the Liverpool Brewing RCLCFPA, with plenty of American hops and a long, dry, bitter finish.



Time was getting on, so I headed back towards the city centre, popping in to the **Excelsior** on Bold Street. It's a regular GBG entry, but, I often pass it by as it seldom seems to have many beers on. However, that night, it had six ales on offer. I drank the Rock The Boat Rum and Raisin Porter. It didn't have much of a hint of either ingredient, being very dry and puckering throughout.

I arrived at Central Station with plenty of time to spare, so went into the **Central** opposite, for a quick half. The pub has an impressive facade and some original features, including two nice stained glass domes. The popular karaoke was in full swing ( there was a long waiting list to perform). There were four real ales on offer. I tried the Lancaster IPA, which was very astringent with a pleasant hoppy, bitter finish.

If you enjoy beautiful pubs and real ale, Liverpool is an enjoyable place to visit."

# PROTECTING OUR PUBS FROM VIOLENCE

Your Editor recently set up a meeting with Sam Haggard of the Forge, Rutland & Derby and Knight and Garter, Matt Crehan of Everards Brewery and Rupert Mathews, Police & Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire. We discussed many aspects of policing but in particular those affecting pubs.



Rupert has provided this message in response:

If we ever ask ourselves what makes a good pub, the quality of the beer has got to be somewhere near the top. We're lucky to be blessed with some wonderful pubs across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, with an excellent choice of beer and ale whether you're looking for the craft variety or familiarity in brand. For me though, safety is also high up on the list of what makes a great pub. Who wants to spend the night looking over their shoulder? For female customers, it is equally important with the risk of unwanted advances, or even sexual violence.



Pubs play a huge part of cultural life in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, creating jobs, attracting visitors and boosting our economy. But traditionally most alcohol-related violence also happens in or around pubs and bars.

Improving the safety of pub goers and staff is high on the list of priorities for me as Commissioner, and I see this as a shared responsibility. Since I was elected, I've worked closely with partners including licensees to ensure we are supporting businesses in the best way possible to keep their customers and livelihoods safe, and I am proud at how readily landlords have embraced our efforts. They're working more effectively with each other and ensuring their staff know how to intervene in situations that could escalate, preventing both men and women from being harmed.

In the last year the work to tackle the potential for trouble has included a new behaviour change campaign in the city centre. "Walk Away" aims to promote the positive actions the public can take to avoid confrontation and prevent unnecessary deaths and injuries by assault.

This is sound advice for all of us, because wherever we drink, we've all seen or been involved in situations that could easily turn nasty without some propriety.

We've looked at the data and although the average age of offenders/victims of these kinds of assaults is not surprising (between 18 and 30), what possibly is an eye-opener is that they don't know each other before the initial interaction. Also, in most of the cases, the offender also has no criminal background. We've worked very hard through the campaign to influence potential offenders by encouraging them to exercise self-control and to walk away from heated situations before they escalate.

Walk Away's social media advertisements have reached nearly 70,000 users (within the target audience) in the first three months – impressive. In fact, it's proved so successful that it has now been rolled out across England and Wales. I was really pleased to learn that around 7,000 people have clicked on from the adverts to visit Walk Away's website in Leicester and Leicestershire alone. These successes demonstrate that the message to 'walk away' is strongly resonating with the target audience and people are identifying with these situations.

We've also made significant progress in responding to the spiking of drinks. A whole wealth of resources is available on the force website to enable people to report suspected spiking incidents more easily and to access help and information if they are a victim. The force is committed to investigating and collecting evidence following such incidents and has effective testing equipment to support the process.

Elsewhere, I have invested significant funding into technology and training to ensure night-time staff have the equipment and knowledge to act to save lives. This includes £20k of funding to deliver first-aid training to staff working in the night-time economy in Leicester; metal detectors to help remove dangerous weapons from the streets, additional CCTV, town centre radios and online bystander training to help bar and door staff safely intervene in the presence of risk. I've also funded an expansion of the Street Doctors initiative which sees young people equipped with the skills they need to become 'street doctors' at the scene of a violent attack.

None of this work stands in isolation. It links to a whole series of activity undertaken by like-minded organisations who are serious about addressing safety and serious violence in our public spaces. There is much more to do but together we will continue to make our pubs a safe place to enjoy a well-deserved pint.

*Rupert Mathews*

## SWEDEN SPEEDWAY SUPPING Shawn Collier

June's trip saw me head to Målilla, Sweden. A different experience in beer terms as Sweden has a different way of doing things. (It's similar in Finland & Norway). Sweden's attitude to alcohol changed dramatically at the end of the 19th century. Influenced by the Independent Order of Good Templars, the growing Swedish temperance movement started campaigning for stricter measures. They no longer accepted wine and beer, and started demanding complete abstinence from alcohol.

These days you can purchase 0-3.5% drinks in a supermarket and above 3.5% in bars, restaurants, night clubs and a Systembolaget (the Swedish national off licence). The age limit is 18 (20 in a Systembolaget). Further information - <https://www.naturetravels.co.uk/blog/systembolaget-buying-alcohol-in-sweden>. From 2025 producers will be allowed to sell from site.

I left the Belin - Stockholm sleeper at Linköping (Lin-shur-ping) mid morning and as it had been re-timed, a planned breakfast at Cirkuscaféet (The Circus Cafe) became an early lunch. Some bottles were spotted and so Mariestad's Bryggeri (Brewery) Export 5.3% was sampled. Very nice but just the one as it wasn't quite noon. After a further train and bus, Målilla was reached. I was self catering and it was off for supplies.



Mariestad's 3.5% Klass II for comparison was joined by D.Carnegie & Co Porter ,3.5%, and Gammeldags Svagdricka (weak drink), a .2% brown beer. The latter was tasty and became a repeat purchase the next day. Not much to the Klass II but the Porter had taste and character at the lower strength. A 2% citrus pale can was saved for Sunday's journey and was refreshing.

All were around £1.50, encouragement towards the lower % as we shall see.

I didn't sample the offer at the race meeting but surmise it was a lower strength offering. The level of alcohol contribution to the vocal support was much lower than at the Danish meeting last year.

Heading home I had a two hour layover in Lund for the return sleeper. When planning, I'd spotted the Hotel Bishops Arms a short walk from the station. The Bishops Arms is a chain of quality gastropubs that stand strong in the British pub tradition with a fantastic range of drinks and food. (<https://www.bishopsarms.com/vara-pubar/>).

Walking in on a Sunday evening the weekly quiz was going strong. Minehost was English, very hospitable and knowledgeable about the beers. Around 30 beers on tap plus bottle fridges. Spitfire, Bombardier, Old Speckled Hen & Bishop's Finger were part of the offer but I opted for Scandinavian offerings. An IPA to accompany the meal, followed by a To Øl unfiltered pale, Oppigårds Bryggeri Sommar APA and an unrecorded dark offering, all north of 5%. As last orders were called I finished on an Overtone Milk Chocolate Stout 6% - all the way from Glasgow. All samples were around half pint or just under pours. Most enjoyable- even if they equated to £15ish a pint.



The following day's refreshment was Schmacher's Altbier with lunch in Düsseldorf, an old favourite.

skål !

### Leicestershire Drinker

Thousands of copies are distributed across Leicestershire, and parts of neighbouring counties. If you wish to comment on any article or wish to contribute something for consideration, please email them to the editor, [roydenney@hotmail.com](mailto:roydenney@hotmail.com). Contributions always welcome. Articles, snippets of news or gossip, photographs, ditties. Anything which might interest readers which is not offensive or illegal

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**We are grateful for contributions in this edition from Scott Spencer of Micropub Adventures. His pictures of pub interiors shown on page 5 were of the Tap & Barrel, Pharmacie Arms, Mill Hill Cask & Coffee, Sorrel Fox, Everards Beer Hall, Mash & Press, Queens Road Tap, Ale Stone, Real Ale Classroom and the Swan**



## A FIRE OF CONVENIENCE ?

As summer draws to an end we look forward to a winter which at times will be cold and what is better than a heart-warming roaring pub fire. Unfortunately nit is not uncommon for the pub itself to be on fire.

It must be said that many pubs have long histories and were constructed of materials meaning they are more prone to fires than modern ones But it is equally true that many old pubs are in prime development areas and were they not protected under planning rules they would be very valuable sites

Strange though that so many have unexplained fires. Coincidence or convenient? It may be just coincidence but it s certainly convenient for the owners.

Much has been made of the Crooked House case recently but CAMRA has been checking old records and has identified dozens of well-loved pubs which have been consumed by fires.

There a lots of cases in Leicester where very convenient fires have destroyed old factories and warehouses where a good number have been proven arson but regardless of obvious motive this crime is hard to prove.

The same is probably even harder to prove with pub premises



Unfortunately if crime is not established and the ruin has been an eyesore for some time planners are more likely to allow development of the site despite any protection order on it. In the case of the Crooked House the planners said 'rebuild' but the appeal against the decision will be decided at a planning inspect meeting and they are well behind organising these

We must hope the inspector upholds that decision as the financial risk of having to rebuild would deter others considering a convenient fire.

# A VISIT TO EVERARD'S BREWERY

**Scott Spencer**

This opened at its current site in June 2021, incorporating a beer hall, shop, brewery and restaurant. It is part of the “Everards Meadows” complex which includes a coffee shop and bike hire . The brewery celebrates 175 years this year. A great warm welcome here and a fantastic venue. A fantastic line up of beers here both cask and keg.

I started off with a tasting tray of 3 1/3s. “Momentum” a delicious red ale, “Infinity” a tasty session IPA and “Hour Glass”, an easy drinking and refreshing pale ale. I went onto one of their tank beers from behind the bar. “Peach Sour” was a light, fruity and tart sour beer packed full of flavour.





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