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LONDON
CAMRA
DRINKER

Volume 48 No. 1

February/March 2026



The Windmill, Mitcham - See page 18

wetherspoon

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Firstly, may I wish you all a Happy New Year. Sadly, it is not looking that good for the pub trade and brewing industry. The situation regarding business rates has attracted a large amount of attention which, in its way, is positive. There has however been a lot of what looks to me to be 'bandwagon jumping'. One national newspaper started a 'save pubs' campaign but then paid most attention to the changes to the drink driving laws. I have covered the situation regarding business rates in a separate article elsewhere in this edition.

The problems leading to pub closures have not arisen only in the last year. There are a number of long term issues that need attention. Also, I really do not believe that there is a calculated campaign to eradicate the pubs of Britain, as some are claiming. At the risk of stating the obvious, not all pubs are in the same situation. The majority of pubs are owned and operated by large pub owning companies (pubcos) and, on the whole, they are not doing too badly. Even debt-laden Stonegate report that their Craft Union semi-franchises are doing well. Fuller's and Young's, now both simply pub companies, are doing well. There are still enough people prepared to pay their prices. For those who won't, Wetherspoons are prospering.

From what I see in the trade press, those pubs most at risk are the ones owned and/or operated as tenancies by individuals who do not have the resources of a large company behind them. Many have simply become unviable through the 'double whammy' of ever increasing costs and falling custom. Village pubs are seeing the return of the fashion for conversion into one large dwelling while, in small towns, pubs are being converted to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) as the demand for these is booming. The more of these pubs we permanently lose, the more we are left with pubco and chain pubs with their restricted and monotonous beer ranges.

So, what else needs attention? The tied house system, as operated by the non-brewing pubcos in particular, is acknowledged to be anti-competitive. It skews the market. It has been in the power of the UK Government to do away with it ever since the legislation that supports it passed into UK law when we left the EU. CAMRA's Campaigns Team have repeatedly made this point to both the previous and current governments. Then there is taxation in the form of alcohol duty and VAT. UK duty is far above the levels in force elsewhere in Europe. Duty on alcohol and tobacco used to be called 'sin taxes' and this is, I suspect, an echo of our Puritan past. Many in the hospitality industry, including Sir Tim Martin, are campaigning for a reduction in VAT and many agree with his argument for parity with supermarket chains. Indeed, in an interview with the Telegraph after the Budget, Sir Tim commented, "Prices will definitely rise across the industry, profits will be under pressure, and investment will be curtailed. I should have opened a small supermarket in 1979, not a pub." Perhaps those who have recently become supporters of our pubs might like to join CAMRA in campaigning on these issues.

Finally, I would also like to comment on the use of pub numbers. Many people have used an assortment of numbers when discussing pub closures. It seems that these have been calculated simply to support their particular standpoint. One national newspaper claimed that its numbers came from a Government source and CAMRA has queried this with the Office of National Statistics. I saw one list of closures in London that included pubs closed by BrewDog and Wetherspoons that were almost immediately taken on by other pub companies, something that was actually acknowledged in a footnote! I also suspect that they are not netting off pubs that reopen after long closures, such as the Blue Maid, or new conversions, such as the Black Eel. Similarly, there is a considerable 'churn' with pubco tenancies and franchises, where incumbents often do not renew their agreements and there is, it appears, no shortage of people who want to replace them. CAMRA produces its own pub closure statistics, which are based on local knowledge gathered by volunteers with no axe to grind. Those are the ones that I trust.

Tony Hedger

A complete collection of all issues of *London Drinker*, going back to the first edition in 1979, is available on-line. Go to <https://londondrinker.camra.org.uk/wordpress/> for editions from August/September 2020 onwards or www.london.camra.org.uk before that. These are all scalable to read in larger print.

CAMRA volunteers distribute copies of *London Drinker* to some 1,200 pubs and clubs in and around Greater London. Wetherspoons deliver them to all of their outlets in the area and Fuller's supply them to over 100 of their managed houses. *London Drinker* has the largest print distribution of any CAMRA local magazine. It is also available online at www.london.camra.org.uk and a link is emailed to all CAMRA members living in London who have opted to receive electronic communications.

Branch diaries

This is a list of CAMRA Greater London regional and branch events for February and March 2026, as notified at the date of production. **For full details of the events listed below and where no events are shown, please consult the branch website as listed.** If no events are listed, it does not mean that there are none taking place.

Meetings, visits and socials are open to all; everyone is welcome to come along. To check on the areas covered by the branches shown below, please go to www.london.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=20208.

LONDON REGION

March

- Mon 23 (7.30) **Greater London AGM** and regional meeting; Trinity (upstairs) SE1 1JX

LONDON PUBS GROUP

Jane Jephcote, jane.jephcote@googlegmail.com, 07813 739856

February

- Sat 21 Kingston and New Malden tour: meet (12pm) Duke of Buckingham, KT1 3BB

March

- Mon 1 (7.30) Meeting; Trinity (upstairs) SE1 1JX. All CAMRA members interested in pub research and preservation welcome. www.londonpubsgroup.camra.org.uk

CIDER

Ian White, whiteik@talk21.com

YOUNG MEMBERS' GROUP

Dario Bertero, dbertero.w@gmail.com

February

- Fri 20 (6.30) Quiz night; Feed the Yak, Elephant Yard, 2 Sayer St, SE17 1FG. Come and socialise and join one of our quiz teams. For more info please contact Joseph: pubs@sel.camra.org.uk
Facebook: Greater London CAMRA Young Members

BEXLEY

Rob Archer, branch.contact@bexley.camra.org.uk

February

- Wed 11 (7.30) Meeting; Tailor's Chalk, Sidcup DA14 6ED
- Wed 25 (7pm) Social; Park Tavern, Eltham SE9 5DA

March

- Wed 11 (7pm) Meeting; Bird & Barrel, Barnehurst DA7 6HG
- Wed 25 Belvedere social: meet (7.30) Prince of Wales DA17 5EE www.bexley.camra.org.uk

BROMLEY

Social Sec: Barry Phillips, social.secretary@bromley.camra.org.uk

February

- Sat 7 Visit to Tonbridge Judians RFC Beer Fest: meet (10.50) Orpington Stn for 11:09 train to Tonbridge. Walk to Tonbridge Judians RFC, The Slade, TN9 1HR. Local pub opportunities afterwards
- Thu 12 Bromley BR2 social: (7.30) Hit or Miss 9QN, (8.30) Bricklayers Arms 9HW, (9.30) Cork n Cask 9HW
- Wed 25 Beckenham BR3 social and committee meeting: (6.30) Jolly Woodman 6NR, (7.30) Chancery 5NP

March

- Mon 2 Locksbottom BR6 social: (7.30) Whyte Lyon 8NE, (8.45) Black Horse 8NW
- Sat 14 **Branch AGM** (2.30 for prompt 3pm start) Orpington Liberal Club BR6 0RZ

- Thu 19 Biggin Hill and Downe social: (6.30) Black Horse TN16 3DX, (7.50) Queen's Head BR6 7US
- Tue 24 Hayes BR2 social: (7.30) Royal British Legion Hayes (Kent) Club 7DJ, (8.30) Real Ale Way 7EB <http://bromley.camra.org.uk/calendar/>

CROYDON & SUTTON

Social Sec: Roger Ford, 07977 984219, social@croydon.camra.org.uk

February

- Wed 4 (1pm) Social; Shinner & Sudtone SM1 1DT
- Wed 11 (8pm) Meeting; Green Dragon (upstairs) CR0 1NA
- Wed 18 (8pm) Croydon social; Dark Horse CR0 2DW
- Wed 25 (8pm) Cheam social; Railway SM3 8SQ

March

- Thu 5 (8pm) Addiscombe social; Claret & Ale CR0 7AA
- Thu 12 (8pm) Croydon social; Oval CR0 6BR
- Wed 18 (8.30) Meeting; Cryer Arts (Watercress Suite) SM5 3BB
- Thu 25 (8pm) Carshalton social and *London Drinker* pick up; Hope SM5 2PR www.croydon.camra.org.uk

EAST LONDON & CITY

Branch Sec: Andy Kinch, 07757 772564, elacbranch@mail.com

February

- Wed 4 (8pm) GBG 2027 and PotY meeting; Ye Olde Mitre EC1N 6SJ

March

- Thu 5 (6pm) Social; Leyton Orient Supporters Club E10 5NF. Ale night, 4-10pm
- Wed 11 (8pm) Meeting; Boleyn Tavern E6 1PW
- Sun 22 (2pm) Pig's Ear Wash up meeting; Olde Rose & Crown E17 4SA www.pigsear.org.uk

ENFIELD & BARNET

Peter Graham, 07946 383498, contact@enfieldandbarnet.camra.org.uk

February

- Thu 5 Enfield EN2 social: (7pm) Wonder OJG, (8pm) Old Wheatsheaf 6SE
- Tue 10 Enfield EN4 social: (7pm) Prince of Wales 8TB, (8pm) Railway Tavern 8RR
- Wed 18 High Barnet High St EN5 social: (7pm) Butchers Arms 5XP, (8pm) Ye Olde Monken Holt 5SU
- Thu 26 (8pm) Final GBG selection meeting; East Finchley Constitutional Club N2 8DE

March

- Thu 5 Edmonton N9 social: (7.30) Rising Sun 9EF, (8.30) Beehive 9JZ
- Wed 11 Southgate social: (7pm) Woodman N13 4BD, (8pm) New Crown N14 5PH
- Sat 21 Mill Hill NW7 social: (12pm) Three Hammers 4EA, (2pm) Adam & Eve 1RL
- Fri 27 (12pm) Social; Moon Under Water EN2 6NN
- Tue 31 Whetstone N20 social: (7pm) Three Horseshoes ORA, (8pm) Griffin 9HH <https://enfieldandbarnet.camra.org.uk>



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Branch diaries

KINGSTON & LEATHERHEAD

John Burns, jburnsklc@gmail.com

February

- Thu 12 Hampton Wick stroll: (1pm) White Hart, (2pm) Swan, (3pm) Foresters, (4pm) Lion
- Thu 19 (7.30) GBG selection meeting; Kingston Workmen's Club
- Sat 28 Esher and Claygate tour: (12pm) Wheatsheaf, (12.45) Albert Arms, (1.30) Bear, (2.30) Swan, (3.30) Hare & Hounds, (4.15) Griffin

March

- Wed 18 (2pm) Quiet pint; Watchman, New Malden
 - Thu 26 (7.30) **Branch AGM**; Kingston Workmen's Club
- <https://kandl.camra.org.uk/>

NORTH LONDON

Contact John Cryne, treasurer@northlondon.camra.org.uk.

February

- Tue 3 (7.30) Meeting; Snooty Fox (upstairs), Canonbury N5 2NN
- Tue 10 (from 2pm) Leisure social; Lamb WC1N 3LZ
- Tue 24 Camden East tour: meet (7.30) Golden Lion NW1 0TH

March

- Wed 4 Wetherspoon Beer Festival: meet (7pm) Penderel's Oak WC1V 7HJ
 - Tue 17 Angel tour: meet (7.30) Old Red Lion EC1V 4NJ
 - Wed 25 (from 2pm) Leisure social; Crown & Anchor NW1 2HL
 - Tue 31 Kings Cross tour: meet (4.30) Mabel's Tavern WC1H 9AZ
- www.northlondon.camra.org.uk/diary

RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW

George Gimber, 020 8977 8104, contact@rh.camra.org.uk

February

- Mon 2 (7pm) Meeting; Beehive, Brentford TW8 0JG
- Tue 17 Social: (7.30) Lion, (south) Teddington TW11 9DN; then White Hart, Hampton Wick KT1 4DA

March

- Tue 3 (7pm) Meeting; Star, Hampton Hill TW12 1PD
 - Tue 24 (7pm) Beer knowledge quiz; Black Dog Beer House, Brentford TW8 0NF. Entry fee £5 per head. Please enter early; contact.social@rh.camra.org or call Bruce Blackman (07879 412332).
- rh.camra.org.uk

SOUTH EAST LONDON

Andrew Large, 07794 350930, contact@sel.camra.org.uk

February

- Tue 3 202 Bus social (Part 1): meet (7pm) Westow House, Crystal Palace SE19 1TX
- Wed 11 New Cross and Deptford social: meet (7pm) Shirker's Rest SE14 6PP

March

- Tue 3 (7.30) Branch meeting and social; venue tbc
 - Wed 11 202 Bus social (Part 2); meet (7pm) Catford House SE6 4SP
 - Sat 21 Maidenhead trip: meet (12pm) Bear, Maidenhead SL6 1QJ
 - Wed 25 (7pm) Lee Green social; meet Old Tigers Head SE12 8RU
- <https://sel.camra.org.uk>

SOUTH WEST LONDON

Mike Flynn, 07751 231191, info@swl.camra.org.uk
Cycling: Geoff Strawbridge, geoff.camra@gmail.com

February

- Wed 4 (7.30) Meeting; Old Sergeant SW18 4DJ

- Tue 10 Northcote Road SW11 social: meet (7pm) London & South Western, 276-288 Lavender Hill 1LJ, ending at Eagle Ale House 104 Chatham Rd, 6HG

March

- Sun 1 (12.15) GBG selection meeting; Sultan SW19 1BT
 - Mon 9 (7.30) Meeting; Surprise SW8 2PP
 - Tue 31 Wimbledon Common social: meet (7pm) Fox & Grapes SW19 4UN
- <https://swl.camra.org.uk>

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Andrew Vaughan, 07854 988152, branch@watford.camra.org.uk

February

- Fri 13 Watford social: (8.30) Prince George WD24 5BB, (9.15) Nascot Arms WD17 4QS, (10pm) White Lion WD17 1SJ
- Tue 24 (8pm) Committee meeting; Oxhey Conservative Club WD19 4DS

March

- Fri 6 Rickmansworth WD3 social: (8.30) Coach & Horses 1ER, (9.15) Fox & Hounds 1AY, (10pm) Wishful Drinking 1AB.
 - Tue 31 (8pm) **Branch AGM**, Two Trees Micro, Watford WD18 0EH
- www.watford.camra.org.uk

WEST LONDON

Paul Charlton, 07591 125486, contact@westlondon.camra.org.uk;
Social Sec: Paul Young, 07591 125486, pyoung3114@aol.com

February

- Wed 4 Kensington social: meet (2pm) Blue Stoops W8 7LP
- Mon 16 Aldwych social: meet (7pm) George WC2R 1AP
- Mon 23 (7/7.30) Meeting; Bear (downstairs), W2 1JA

March

- Wed 4 Soho social: meet (2pm) Coach & Horses, Old Compton St, W1D 4TQ (Shepherd Neame, NOT the nearby Fuller's pub).
 - Thu 19 Westminster social: meet (2pm) Two Chairmen SW1H 9BP
- www.westlondon.camra.org.uk

WEST MIDDLESEX

Branch contact: Ben Hart, ben@westmiddx.camra.org.uk
Social Sec: Bob O'Brien, 01895 673266

February

- Mon 9 (2pm onwards) Social; Red Lion & Pineapple, Acton W3 9BP
- Thu 19 (8pm) Social; J.J. Moons, Wembley HA9 7DS
- Sat 28 (1pm) Social; Chiltern, Beaconsfield HP9 1NL

March

- Mon 2 (8pm) GBG selection meeting; venue tbc
 - Mon 9 (8pm) Branch meeting; Windermere, South Kenton HA9 8QT
 - Thu 19 (8pm) Social; Coach & Horses, Ickenham UB10 8LJ
 - Thu 26 (8pm) North Ealing W5 social: (8pm) Greystoke 3HU, (9.15) Sir Michael Balcon 3TJ
- <https://westmiddx.camra.org.uk>

The electronic copy deadline for the April/May 2026 edition is no later than Friday 6 March.

Please send entries to ldnews.hedger@gmail.com.



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REGIONAL CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR

In November the Greater London Cider Pub of the Year award was presented to the Owl & The Pussycat in Northfields. The photo shows Ian Parker and Paul Nock from the pub (centre) with their award, with CAMRA's Regional Cider Co-ordinator Ian White (left) and Stephen Gilmour, West Middlesex branch cider representative, (right).



The pub is also home to Marko Paulo and Ealing Brewing beers. The full address is 106 Northfields Avenue W13 9RT, near to Northfields station on the Piccadilly Line.

CIDER FESTIVAL – ADVANCE NOTICE

It is hoped to run this year's London Regional one day cider festival on Saturday 25 April. The venue will, as before, be the Rocket Van Studios in Brandon Street, just south of the Elephant and Castle. It will be open from 12pm until 9pm. We hope to have around 30 ciders and perries on offer, plus food and refreshments.

NATIONAL CLUB OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

Congratulations to the Orpington Liberal Club on reaching the final four of CAMRA's national Club of the Year competition. This is their fourth time as a finalist, following 2014, 2016 and 2019. The club is run by a committee of cask beer enthusiasts and features local brewers and micros. Up to five cask beers are usually available, including a stout or porter, plus a changing range of real ciders and perries. The club runs beer festivals twice a year and holds 'Meet the Brewer' evenings. It often has live music and hosts the Orpington Jazz Club. A current CAMRA or National Union of Liberal Clubs membership card will allow you entry. The full address is 7 Station Road, Orpington BR6 0RZ.

TOP POCKET!

A pub that was opened by its current management last spring has won North London's Winter Pub of the Season award, ahead of hundreds of real ale pubs in the branch area. The pub in question is the Pocket in Canonbury (N1 2AS). John Cryne from the branch said, "The pub closed in 2021 and we thought that might be the last time we saw it

operating as a pub, so we were delighted when we heard that Peter Holt was going to take it over. Peter owns the multi-award winning Southampton Arms in Kentish Town and this pub follows the same ethos. No televisions or piped music but there is a piano!" John added, "Like the Southampton, the Pocket has an emphasis on good beer and cider, with eight handpumps for cask beer and six ciders; all from independent producers. Similarly, it also has a small but select food range of pies, sausage rolls and cheese. Since opening in March, the feedback we have had from people has been amazing and I suspect that none of them will be surprised that the Pocket has been given this award."

Joao Neves, the Pocket's manager, is no stranger to pubs. He managed the Chesham Arms in Homerton before coming to the Pocket a month before it opened. "The development and fitting out was practically completed and my role was to do the bureaucracy!" said Joao. The Chesham Arms is lauded for its welcoming neighbourhood feel and it was clear that Joao will mirror this atmosphere at the Pocket. When asked where the new pub name originated, he said, "Various people have different ideas as to where the name came from. I think it's because it's small and attracts people from all walks of life. I've been impressed as to how many people who visit us get it." Joao was clearly delighted to receive this award; he commented, "This was all what we were aiming for from the beginning. We are doing this because of real ale and our passion for it".



Joao (left) receives the award from John

The building dates from 1874. It acquired the name of Four Sisters after the four Misses Vincent who kept a coffee and confectionery shop there as early as 1905. By the 1930s it was a Courage Brewery pub and there are rumours that there was a brothel out at the back. It became a style bar called 25 Canonbury Lane before reverting to the Four Sisters in 2013. The full address is 25 Canonbury Lane N1 2AS. Opening hours are currently 12pm to 11pm Monday to Thursday, midnight Friday and Saturday and 10.30pm on Sunday. The nearest station is Highbury & Islington (350 metres).

John Cryne

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A MEMORABLE EVENING AT THE BLACK DOG BEER HOUSE

On the evening of 17 November, Richmond & Hounslow members celebrated the Black Dog winning the branch's Pub of the Year award. The photo shows branch chairman Bob Gordon (right) presenting the certificate to Pete Brew, the landlord. Among a range of beers available were two brewed by Pete himself at the tiny in-house Fearless Nomad brewery: Fools Gold, a 4.7% ABV golden ale and Midnight Express, a Cascadian dark ale at an awe-inspiring 6.6% ABV, which delighted members (and many others!). It is rare for the two to be seen together.



Pete and Ash acquired what was, in 2018, a basic back street boozer then called the Albany Arms and they have transformed it into a beacon of a community pub with excellent beers, food, and events, often organised by or with CAMRA. Once a Royal Brewery house and possibly the work of T H Nowell Parr, the pub is well worth visiting. The address is 17 Albany Road, Brentford TW8 0NF.

John Austin (who also took the photo)

TWICKENHAM TASTING

On Tuesday 16 December, a record turnout of 18 Richmond & Hounslow members thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated a Christmas beers tasting event at the William Webb Ellis in Twickenham (TW1 3RR), courtesy of operators JD Wetherspoon. The pub is a conversion of the former main Post Office and is named after the creator of the game of rugby football, although the story may be apocryphal.



The event was facilitated by Clive Donaldson, the pub's ale manager who is standing on the right in the photo. Eleven hand-picked Christmas ales were tasted and voted on, and all participants got a free pint of their favourite of the night. By a big margin, the winning beer was Sambrook's Fireside, a smooth 5.2% ABV smoky porter. With thanks to John Austin for the photograph.

Damian Smeaton

GREENWICH BOROUGH PUB OF THE YEAR

In November, South East London branch presented the last of their four 2025 Area Pub of Year awards, this time to the Park Tavern at 45 Passey Place, Eltham (SE9 5DA), the winner for the Greenwich area. This former Truman's pub, with its beautifully preserved exterior tiling and signage, has been run in a traditional style by the same family for many years, most recently by Kim James.



In 2021 the family bought it from Stonegate, allowing the pub to become a free house, offering six changing cask beers. After fifteen years at the helm, Kim took a well earned retirement last year and left the pub in the capable hands of her two sons, Mitchell and Wilson. The certificate was presented by branch chair Andy Large to Mitchell James. The pub is an Asset of Community Value.

Steve Silcock

RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW BEER KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

Following the success of the inaugural event last year, Richmond & Hounslow branch will be holding a second Beer Knowledge Quiz on Tuesday 24 March. Last time, there were teams from CAMRA branches, breweries, pubs and private individuals, some 70 people in all. The deserving winners were Kingston & Leatherhead CAMRA Branch, who have vowed to defend their title! The event is open to all and don't worry if you can't field a complete team (maximum four people). We can help make up teams on the day.

The quiz will include questions on all things beer related, from brewing to pubs and even a music round featuring theme tunes from famous beer adverts! The winning team will receive an engraved trophy, signed copies of Jeff Evans' book 'So You Want to be a Beer Expert' and a case of The Naked Ladies beer from our sponsors, Twickenham Fine Ales. The venue, as before, is the Black Dog Beer House as above. The pub is not usually open on Tuesdays but is opening just for our quiz, with a selection of beer-themed

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John Austin

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Stan Tompkins

On the occasion of his 80th birthday on 12 January, I would like to salute my good friend and colleague Stan. Stan has dealt with our postal subscriptions ever since the eighth edition in November 1979.



Consequently, his name has probably appeared in the magazine more than anyone else's. Stan has also made many other contributions to CAMRA over the years, not least working at beer festivals. The description 'stalwart' is more than appropriate. The other members of the editorial team send him their very best wishes and our thanks for his sterling service.

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Champion Winter Beer of Britain

With there being no Winter Great British Beer Festival this year, the task of holding the final judging for CAMRA's 2026 Champion Winter Beer of Britain has been taken on by the Liverpool Beer Festival, to be held from Thursday 19 to Saturday 21 February.

Festival visitors will be able to try around 50 examples of the very best in UK cask brewing. The beers involved are selected from recommendations by CAMRA's Tasting Panel and votes from CAMRA members. They will have been through a regional level judging panel before arriving at this final judging.

The beers will include session and strong porters, plus stouts, brown, red and black ales, old ales, strong milds and specialities. The latter can be anything from lagers, rye beers, wheat beers, beers brewed with different yeasts (such as Kviek) to flavoured beers (think plums, coffee, ginger and honey); a cornucopia of tastes!

The Liverpool Beer Festival has been held since 1974 and for several years now in the crypt of the Metropolitan Cathedral on Brownlow Hill (L3 5TQ). It is about ten minutes' walk from Liverpool Lime Street station. There are not many places where you can drink in a building designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, architect of the Cenotaph. It's an easy day trip from London Euston, taking about two and a half hours. There are ciders and perries as well as beers. Entry is free for CAMRA members but it is still necessary to book a ticket for whichever of the five separate sessions you wish to

attend. The tickets include £10 worth of beer tokens, plus a programme and a glass. Entry for non-members starts at £4.00. For further information and to book tickets, go to <https://www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk/index.php/lbf>.

Christine Cryne



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The budget and business rates

The new arrangements for business rates were duly announced and the Government attracted a great deal of abuse as a result. Some publicans even barred all Labour MPs from their pubs. Up went the usual cry: 'the Government isn't listening' and it was quite remarkable how the campaign against the changes gathered momentum. The reform of business rates has long been promised and the Government deserves some credit for actually making the change; it is just disappointing that they didn't spot that it was flawed. When they were eventually persuaded of this, they announced that they would review the situation, even at the risk of being accused of making a U-turn. Such is political life. As we go to print, the changes have yet to be announced. Hopefully I will be able to report them in the next edition. The announcement has, at least, avoided a proposed 'day of action' on 30 January with publicans marching on Westminster.

Readers may recall that, since COVID, the hospitality industry had received relief (a discount) on its business rates to help them through the crisis. Originally this was 75%; it was reduced to 40% from 1 April 2024 and comes to an end on 31 March this year. Full business rates under the old scheme would have then become payable had the new arrangements not been introduced. The multiplier, the number used to calculate the actual

amount payable, has been reduced and so, consequently, the rates payable under the new system would, in most cases, be less than under the old system at full value. That is the problem. Publicans are not comparing what they have to pay now with what they might have had to pay under the old system. They are comparing it to the actual amount that they paid for 2025/2026, which was 60% of the old system amount.

At the same time as the budget, however, there was a revaluation that has seen the rateable value (RV) of most pubs increase, making some rural pubs liable for business rates for the first time. This was a scheduled event and not directly linked to the new system. The RV of pubs is calculated differently from that for other businesses, so that comparisons with changes in the RV of other premises are not valid. I will expand on this next time.

As regards other measures, alcohol duty will increase on 1 February by inflation (3.66% Retail Price Index), which will, of course, add to pub running costs. No change to VAT was included. Employers' National Insurance also remains unchanged while there may yet be some action on energy bills. The latter points, of course, affect most businesses.

Tony Hedger



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MENUS



EVENTS



- * **Cover photo:** the **Windmill** in Mitcham (CR4 4HA) is a friendly community local facing Mitcham Common, featuring stained glass windmills in its attractive bow-windows. It is owned by the same company as the nearby Burn Bullock (CR4 4BE0). The Burn Bullock, an imposing Grade II-listed building, closed as a pub in 2009 and was badly damaged by fire in April 2024. Local residents have been agitating for Merton Council to take action because they are concerned that the structure will seriously deteriorate in the winter weather. The council say that, along with Historic England, they 'continue to push the owner to take action'. This has however been the situation for some years now. This could yet be south west London's version of the Crooked House saga.
- * **Baxter's Court** in Mare Street, Hackney (E8 1HE) is a distinctive red brick pub built into an infill site. It was originally a J D Wetherspoon pub, opened in 2003, but it changed hands last November. It is now called the D C Lion, which is the name of the pub and hotel company that owns it. It is still serving cask beer.
- * Once the Catford Conservative Club then a pub called the Catford Constitutional, the premises have now reopened as **Catford House** (SE6 4HW). The site has been renovated by a community organisation, the Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency (GCDA), and is now a pub and community hub. It has six handpumps, offering beer from Portobello Brewery plus guests. Portobello also helped with the restoration work, having been chosen from a shortlist of ten breweries in a tendering process. Parts of the building are of Georgian origin, dating back to the 1700s.
- * Dorset brewers Hall & Woodhouse have announced that they are to open a new café bar and restaurant in Brentford called the **Dock House**. It will be part of the Workhouse Dock development (TW8 8BD) near to the marina and will open late spring/early summer.
- * In the last edition I mentioned that there were new developers working on the **Hero of Switzerland** in Loughborough Junction (SW9 7LL). This was a misunderstanding and I apologise for any confusion caused. That said, the main point, that the pub has been closed for five years with no apparently activity, stands.
- * Shepherd Neame have completed a £1.8 million refurbishment of the historic **Hoop & Grapes** in Farringdon Street (EC4A 4BL). The pub will reopen in February. This is the latest in a programme of refurbishments to their London estate. The Grade II-listed building was originally a five-storey house, built around 1720 for a vintner, but was converted into a pub in 1832. It closed in 2019 to allow for the area around it, once the St Bride's burial ground, to be totally redeveloped.



The photograph (which may be enhanced) gives a good idea of how the site has changed. The pub has drinking areas on the ground and first floors, with a private 'piano room' available on the third floor. The new pub sign shows a wedding scene from the 17th century, alluding to the time when the pub was used for illicit 'Fleet Marriages'. With thanks to Shep's for the photograph.

- * An interesting situation is developing with the mock Tudor **Pensbury Arms** in South Lambeth (SW8 4TJ). It was being used as a motorcycle shop without the necessary permission. Lambeth Council refused a retrospective application for a change of use and the Planning Inspectorate has now dismissed the owners' appeal against their refusal. It now remains to be seen what enforcement action the Council takes. The local CAMRA branch is monitoring the situation.
- * Very sadly, the operator of the **Queen of the South** in Tulse Hill (SE27 9BQ), the Village People pub company, has not been able to raise the required £500,000 to buy the freehold from Young's and the pub ceased trading in December. The pub had become known for its music, food and community events. It remains to be seen what Young's will do with the premises, which came into their ownership when they acquired the City Pub Company in 2024.
- * Twickenham Fine Ales have decided to end their involvement with the **Rifleman**, a late-Victorian former beer house in Twickenham (TW2 5EL). A meeting of local residents was held in December and they are hoping to put together a plan to run the pub. Watch this space.
- * Devotees were shocked when, just before the New Year, it was announced that **Ryan's Bar** in Stoke Newington Church Street (N16 0UL) was to close. No explanation was given and there was concern locally as to what would happen to this Grade II-listed former draper's shop dating from the 19th century. A pub since the 1980s, it had operated as Ryan's for 32 years. Happily, all looks well. It is to be reopened by new owners as the **Mary Wollstonecraft Freehouse**. The name honours the writer, philosopher and women's rights activist, best known for her seminal work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. She lived nearby in Newington Green.
- * A clarification. What was formerly **Simpsons Tavern** (EC3V 9DR) will be known as **Cloth Cornhill** when it reopens later this year. They cannot continue the use of the Simpsons name for legal reasons.
- * The ACV moratorium in respect of the sale of the **Olde Swiss Cottage** (NW3 5EL) expires on 8 February. Despite making considerable efforts, it looks as if the Belsize Society will not be able to raise the funds to buy the property or find anyone willing to operate it as a community local. It has been valued at between £3.6 and £4.2 million. London property prices are always going to be a problem for projects like this. We wait to see what will happen now.
- * There have been promising developments in the long running story of the **White Swan** in Charlton Village (SE7 8UD). The pub closed in 2020, having been acquired by developers Mendoza Ltd. Several attempts to convert it to residential use and/or a supermarket happily came to nothing, although the pub has fallen into disrepair. Now a local group, White Swan Music and Arts (WSMA), is attempting to raise the funds to buy the pub, refurbish it and return it to community use, with arts and music spaces on the upper floors. Any profits would be used to sponsor young musicians. To begin with, WSMA have launched a Crowdfunder campaign to raise the deposit of £360,000. One prominent supporter of the campaign is Glenn Tilbrook of the band Squeeze who still lives in the area. He remembers the importance of performing in pubs when he and one time bandmate Jools Holland were starting out. We wish them every success.



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My Goodness, what a journey!

Some way from the Bermondsey Beer Mile perhaps, but the Goodness Brewing Company has a dedicated following. Based in Wood Green (N22), the brewery is on a small parade of business units surrounded by flats with more going up around them. This has however brought both positive and negative consequences. Firstly, the flats provide a source of regular drinkers but, on the negative side, their future has been uncertain for some time. James, from their logistics team, explained, "This site is earmarked for more housing but they haven't confirmed the date. This means we are on a rolling lease that keeps getting extended. We were due to close in the New Year so that we couldn't take any bookings, which means we have lost income. Last thing we heard, it could now be April." The uncertainty has impacted in other ways. "We had to build up our beer stock so that we could supply our customers, thinking that we wouldn't be brewing in January. We have been trying to find a bar and had a couple come close but they have fallen through", said James.



If they can't brew on the current site and can't find suitable alternative premises, they may consider contract brewing, at least for a while. James thought that finding somewhere suitable could take up to a year. Whatever happens, it's apparent that Goodness wants to keep going. The brewery was set up in 2018 by three friends: Joe Louis Sheasgreen, Mike Stirling and Damien Legg. They quickly realised that they needed more help and drafted in Zack Ahmed and Oliver Newbery. In 2019, they moved into their Wood Green premises to establish their brewery and taproom.

Despite Covid, the brewery has done well and in 2023 they brought in Josh Billington as head brewer. Josh was originally a chef but moved to London in 2017 and started a new career in brewing at Old Street Brewery. He became head brewer there before moving to Goodness. Old Street, based in Hackney Wick, closed in 2024.

Unlike at many small breweries, the tap room at Goodness contributes only a small proportion of their sales. They do most of the beer deliveries themselves and James admitted to having picked up a number of parking tickets, particularly when he has had to leave the vehicle for a while to haul kegs upstairs and along corridors. "A lot of our customers are not traditional pubs. We pride ourselves in our customer service and won't just dump beer on a step."



James fully understands what this means, having run pubs before joining the brewery.

Goodness use the Eebria and Tap'in agencies and will supply anywhere within the M25. In addition, James does fortnightly delivery runs to Reading and Cambridge, areas that Tap'in, doesn't cover. The beers are on Metropolitan Pub Company and Greene King's approved beer list and their canned lager, Sunshine, has been listed by Sainsburys. "It was a lot of work and effort to fulfil the order but it was worth it", said James.



The Tasting Panel

The cask beer on sale when the London Tasting Panel visited was Wood Green Hopping City. This is a limited edition beer made with hops grown by locals from hop seeds supplied by Goodness. James is a real ale fan and he would like the tap room to have a cask beer on permanently but it is currently available only during the winter months. As he explained, "We can't sell enough in the summer." However, James reckons that their keg, Sunset, is probably the closest to a cask beer that they have and it is on sale all the time. It is a lightly carbonated, well balanced premium bitter, which the brewery describes as a Red IPA.

You can find the tasting notes of the beers sampled by the Tasting Panel on CAMRA's regional website: www.london.camra.org.uk. If you want to visit the tap room while you still can, you can be sure of a warm welcome. The address is 5a Clarendon Yard, Coburg Road, Wood Green N22 6TZ. For further information, go to <https://thegoodnessbrew.co/pages/taproom>.

Christine Cryne

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The threatened pubs of Heathrow (part one)

Pubs are under threat on many fronts these days, particularly economically. There are however at least three London pubs which face a danger that is so existential that it will not only destroy them but also obliterate the villages that they serve. They face being replaced by vast stretches of concrete and asphalt and building work on a massive scale.

These are the pubs and communities that lie in the way of the proposed third runway for Heathrow Airport. Following the planning process for this huge piece of infrastructure over the last couple of decades has felt like watching the hokey cokey: 'in out, in out, shake it all about', for this curious corner of north-west London. The government recently announced this was a national infrastructure priority for which planning processes would be 'streamlined' in the pursuit of growth, so I thought that I would take a tour of the threatened pubs.

My tour started just over the London boundary into Berkshire to the Ostrich Inn in Colnbrook (SL3 0JZ). This half-timbered coaching inn stands on the old Bath Road, one of the busiest routes west out of London until the middle of the last century when it was superseded by the M4. The old road runs right through the planned airport redevelopment and has much associated history.

Dating from 1106, the Ostrich claims to be England's third oldest pub. It was originally called the Hospice but the name became corrupted over the years. The Grade II*-listed building has a dark reputation; the parish council's website tells of a legend that, in the 17th century, landlord John Jarman murdered over 60 travellers by tipping them through a hinged trapdoor bed into boiling liquid below.



Fortunately, I enjoyed my pint of Windsor Knot from Windsor and Eton Brewery without being boiled alive. It's now an upmarket Shepherd Neame pub (unusual for the area) but it also caters for bona fide drinkers. The ground floor is a series of atmospheric connected rooms with fireplaces and low beams. Staff will reportedly conduct short historical tours of the building if time allows. The beer garden is somewhat more modern with tables set out on artificial grass. It's a splendid place for plane spotting. From slightly north-west of Heathrow's current northerly runway, aircraft can be seen either on final approach or straining to take off (depending on the wind direction).

Although already close, the planes will come much closer to the Ostrich under the plans for the third runway. While the pub itself may be spared, the end of the runway will be just a few hundred metres away and Colnbrook will be all but consumed by the airport perimeter, with airliners passing at low altitude almost directly above the pub.



From Colnbrook I took the bus along a road that will cease to exist and crossed the M25 back into Greater London to a village that will be erased from the map entirely. Longford stands between the existing Terminal Five and the new runway and its planned terminal buildings. There's no greater contrast between the White Horse (UB7 0EE), the village pub, and the enormous modern aircraft that are planned to taxi across its site. Such is the scale of the plans, demolishing a village and its pub will be small beer. Just west of Longford, it is proposed that the M25 will be moved a few hundred metres to the left.



The Grade II-listed White Horse dates back to 1534, although it wears its history lightly, perhaps due to its isolated location, being stuck between motorways and the airport perimeter. Built as a smokehouse for curing meat, it was converted into an inn in 1601 to serve travellers on the Bath Road. Note the bricked-up windows that recall the window tax that was in force from 1696 to 1851. Another



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The threatened pubs of Heathrow (part one)

pub on the old coaching route, it's whitewashed with a half-timbered façade and low ceilings. Inside there are two snug, carpeted bars, separated by an open fireplace. Now surrounded by suburban development, it's a classic hidden gem of a pub. Three real ales were available when I visited: Rebellion IPA, Greene King Abbot Ale and Doom Bar. Sitting at the outdoor benches with a pint, I sense an odd juxtaposition of living history against the constant take-offs and landings of the twenty-first century aviation industry next door.

Slightly under a mile to the north and two buses away is Harmondsworth, the other village faced with obliteration. The village centre, gathered around a small green, is remarkably tranquil and unspoilt. Behind the medieval parish church is one of England's most outstanding timber-framed buildings, the Harmondsworth Barn. It dates back to the early 15th century and is now owned by English Heritage.



The village's two pubs can be found on the green, the Five Bells (UB7 0AQ) and the Crown (UB7 0AJ). Both are Grade II listed and date from the 17th century. The Five Bells seems very much a locals' pub, with an extensive seating area outside. On my visit, real ale wasn't available. The Crown is unusual in having a frontage built at right angles on to a row of cottages behind. Inside, it has timber beams and exposed wooden floorboards with a fireplace unusually situated at the corner of the island bar. I contemplated my pint of J W Lees Bitter, the only real ale on offer, in a cosy spot on the solid wooden furniture by the window.

While most of Harmondsworth will be wiped off the face of the earth, it's unclear whether the centre will be bulldozed or left within metres of the new perimeter because publicly available maps of the proposals lack vital detail. Adjoining land will however be required for car parks, hotels and the like, meaning that Longford and Harmondsworth will be changed forever.

There's a paradox about these villages. Because there's been the threat of a potential northern runway for decades, they haven't been subsumed into modern developments. The pubs have a timeless appeal of English ordinariness that's remarkable so close to London. It's virtually certain that English Heritage-owned buildings such as Harmondsworth Barn will be preserved and potentially relocated, probably at the expense of the developers. But what of the pubs? Even if they're dismantled brick-by-brick, where would they be relocated to? Where in the new landscape of an expanded Heathrow hinterland would a rebuilt 17th century pub be welcome?

Should the bulldozers move in, then this will be a test of how much present-day economic expansion respects the traditions of the past. Meanwhile, please do visit these pubs while they're still standing.

A second article in the next edition will feature pubs to the north and east of the airport that could also be lost or changed forever.

Mike Clarke

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ALLSOPP'S TO GROW

Jamie Allsopp's venture goes from strength to strength, with strong trading over the Christmas period at their pub, the Blue Stoops in Kensington (W8 7LP). A second pub is now a possibility. Meanwhile, their association with the Kirkstall Brewing Co in Leeds, where the Allsopp's beers are brewed, has been strengthened with the setting up of a London based joint sales team. Sales in the free trade have increased accordingly.

BR3WERY EXPAND

The Beckenham based brewers have announced that they are to open a third taproom, this time some way from their home territory. It is in Moyser Road, Furzedown (Tooting SW16 6SJ) and replaces an Italian restaurant called Belgiardino. It is due to open in late February. Pizzas will be available. Their two existing premises are more local in Kelsey Park Road (BR3 6LH) and Beckenham Road (BR3 4RP).

FULLER'S ORIGINAL

The organisation World Origin Site seeks to record *'the place, people and moment when something truly ground-breaking was invented, discovered or first used'*. Although it is a private body, it is approved by the Government's Intellectual Property Office. WOS have recognised the Griffin Brewery as one of their sites and a plaque was recently unveiled there to mark the event. It coincides with the brewery's 180th anniversary. There is, incidentally, still a shop at the site in Chiswick Lane South, W4 2QB.

LONDON BEER FACTORY IN THE HOLE

The London Beer Factory has also opened a third outlet. This time however it is a well known existing pub. The Hole in the Wall just outside Waterloo Station (Mephem Street SE1 8SQ) was a pioneering cask beer outlet in the 1970s, selling the likes of Everards and King & Barnes, beers rarely then seen in London. Ed and Sim Cotton, the founders of LBF, said, *"We're thrilled to be taking on such a legendary London boozier. Our plan is to give it a more modern, premium feel, introduce a kitchen serving some of the best burgers in town, and of course, keep the incredible beer selection the pub is famous for."* LBF also operates the Barrel Project in Druid Street, Bermondsey (SE1 2HQ) and the Grade II-listed Ten Bells in Spitalfields (E1 6LY).

AWARD FOR SAMBROOK'S

Sambrook's Heritage Centre, lovingly curated by the legendary John Hatch, has won another award. This time it was for 'The Best Told Story', presented by tourist body Visit England. This follows the Heritage Centre winning their 'Hidden Gem' award last year. John said, *"I really enjoy conducting tours of the Heritage Centre and to get these awards for doing something I love is very exciting."* Sambrook's occupy part of the site in Wandsworth once used by Young's and it is the longest continuous brewing site in the UK, something to which John made a significant contribution. As well as tours, John also offers 'Brewer for

the Day' events. For more information, please visit www.sambrooksbrewery.co.uk/pages/tours.

BIG BREWERY NEWS

The latest major national brand to have its ABV reduced is Foster's, going from 3.7% ABV to 3.4% ABV. Curiously, the brand is actually owned by the Japanese multi-national Asahi, who also own Fuller's, but production is mostly licensed out. In the UK, which is its biggest market, it is licensed to Heineken and produced at the Royal Brewery in Manchester.

Heineken also own the Murphy's stout brand, which is still brewed in its home town of Cork, and have recently been promoting it in the wake of the rise in popularity of draught Guinness. It is said to be lighter and less bitter than the 'black stuff'. There are now over 1,500 pubs in the UK that stock it. Heineken also own the Beamish and Crawford stout brand, which similarly hails from Cork and is now produced alongside Murphy's. However, they choose not to promote it, with most of its sales being local.

Meanwhile, in Magor, Wales, AB InBev, in the guise of the Budweiser Brewing Group, are concentrating on alcohol free beers. They have opened a new £3.9 million de-alcoholisation plant that will be used to produce brands such as Corona Cero and Stella Artois 0.0 instead of importing them from Belgium. The process to be used is called vacuum distillation. The beer is placed under a low pressure to reduce its boiling point. This causes the alcohol to evaporate but does not affect the flavour. AB InBev say that this is the only method that produces completely non-alcoholic beer.

WELCOME TO WOLVERHAMPTON

This may not be directly connected to London but I think readers will be happy to learn of this promising news. The closure of Banks's Park Brewery hit Wolverhampton hard, both economically and spiritually. The mood has however been lightened by the opening of a new brewery, Springbanks. The company aims to put *'Wolverhampton beer back where it belongs: front and centre'*. It is based in a listed building dating from 1870 that was originally built for a firm of safe and lock-makers. As may be guessed from the name, as well as replacing, if not necessarily replicating, Banks's beers, Springbanks intend also to reflect the heritage of the former Mitchell & Butler's Springfield Brewery, which closed in 1991. To this end they have asked local residents to donate memorabilia from both breweries. Springbanks plan to brew a range of cask ales, craft beers, stouts and lagers, plus zero-alcohol beers. The first beers should be available at the end of March.

Readers may recall that, as well as the set of Burton Union equipment that Thornbridge Brewery are successfully using, Carlsberg Britvic donated another set to a brewery in Edinburgh. Unfortunately, that brewery has closed and the landlords of their former premises want the site cleared. There was a danger that the set would go for scrap but Springbanks have stepped in to rescue it. It may be some time before they can put it to use but at least it is now safe.



LOTS ROAD
ALE



THE SPORTING PAGE



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Honey and the Peckham Unicorn

Gosnell is the only mead producer in London. It produces a range of carbonated meads, both draught and can and with approachable ABVs, although they still do a more traditional mead known as Bochet at 11.3% ABV. Gosnell was set up by Tom Gosnell in 2014 in an arch in Peckham. They opened on the Bermondsey Mile in 2022 and, in November 2025, took the plunge and leased their first pub in Peckham Rye.

The pub, named John the Unicorn, has had an unusual history. It started as a DIY store before it was converted into a pub by the Antic Collective in 2016. Its name comes from the then manager's daughter's favourite soft toy. It passed into the ownership of Portobello Pubs in 2020 and they still own the freehold. It might be a curious name for a pub but there is a link; mead is generally known for its purity, as are unicorns, so that keeping the unusual name does make a little sense!

For Gosnell it turned out that taking on the pub was an easier operation than many pub ventures. Tom said, "Portobello had looked after the pub and the cellar is in good condition and the music system was also fine. This meant we were able to move in and open within weeks." It's a big pub. There are three floors, although only two are in use currently; both have bars with three different seating areas that prevent the pub becoming soulless. It is likely that each floor will develop a different identity. The ground floor has soft lighting and, although both have music, the first floor is quieter, with artwork for sale around the walls. It is also where the toilets are



One of the upstairs bars

The drink offering is a couple of Gosnell meads on draft, along with a few craft kegs and some international kegs. Wine and cocktails are also prominent. Tom explained this approach, "It's early days but we are hoping to cater for a wide range of local people with different tastes, hence the range."

It is clear that what is on offer now may well change depending on local demands but, with a late-night licence and a long lease, they have plenty of time to test. For more information go to www.johntheunicorn.co.uk.

Christine Cryne

Pub heritage

CAMRA is running its Pub Design Awards competition again this year. The deadline was 17 November for projects that were completed between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025. Details were issued only after the previous edition had been published. The categories, as before, are New Build, Community Local, Historic England Conservation, Conversion to Pub Use and Refurbishment.

Last year there was a London winner, with the Forester in West Ealing (W13 9EP) taking the Community Local Award. CAMRA's London Pubs Group has identified a number of projects that look to be likely candidates and has encouraged the owners to enter the competition. More details can be found at https://camra.org.uk/awards/pub-design?selected_year=2025.

Red Bull, Peckham (SE15 5ED). Having been used as a shop and then a restaurant in recent years, the Red Bull returned to being a pub last year. The interior has been modernised but it has retained some marvellous tiling, believed to date from 1875, which forms a mural depicting the trial of Catherine of Aragon, a scene from the Shakespeare play, Henry VIII. The trial took place in 1529 in Blackfriars and was part of Henry's campaign to annul his marriage. The tiling was the work of W B Simpson & Sons. Consequently, the pub has now been added to CAMRA's National Inventory, rated one star. The full address is 116 Peckham High Street. The pub does not however sell cask beer.

London, Capital of Brewing

At the last count, there were over 100 independent breweries in Greater London.

They are listed on CAMRA's Greater London Region website: www.london.camra.org.uk.

Please support them by buying their beer, preferably from pubs or otherwise direct or from permitted stockists.

REDUCING RED TAPE

Somewhat lost in the furore over the budget, the Government has announced plans to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs). They intend amending the planning rules to make it quicker and easier to redevelop small sites, especially 'brownfield' ones. This could be generally useful, so long as the site in question isn't a former pub.

There are also plans for leasehold reform, in particular the banning of 'upward only' rent reviews. If this is applied to the operations of the large pub owning businesses, it might reduce the high turnover of tenants and franchisees who often give up at the end of their first leases when faced with a 'take it or leave it' rent increase.

A new National Licensing Policy Framework is to be introduced. The intention is to make it easier and quicker to open new bars and cafes, especially in unused shops. This builds on the existing High Street Rental Auction scheme. The use of outside spaces for drinking and dining will be made easier with the creation of 'hospitality zones' where the licensing arrangements will be simplified.

There will also be protection for existing pubs and clubs from noise complaints arising from new developments with the 'agent of change' principle being introduced into national planning and licensing regulations. This means that in the event of sound-proofing being required in a new development, it will be down to the developer to foot the bill.

It is planned to make extensions to licensing hours for special events, especially regular ones, easier to arrange by limiting the requirement for Temporary Event Notices (TENs). A six-week consultation began on 6 December as regards extended opening hours for the men's football World Cup (11 June to 19 July).

One item that received a mixed reception is the decision to end the requirement for statutory notices of new alcohol licence applications to be published in a local newspaper. Some felt that this would be unfair to those who wished to raise objections.

KEEPING US SAFE

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 is now in force. Readers may know it better as 'Martyr's Law', named after Martyr Hett, a victim of the Manchester Arena outrage. It will affect larger pubs and clubs. Those with a capacity in excess of 200 will need to set up clear arrangements for lockdown, evacuation (moving people into a safe place inside when the threat is external), evacuation and communication. The rules for those venues with a capacity of over 800 are more demanding, requiring a security plan. This work needs to be done within two years of April 2025 when the Act took effect. Staff training is seen to be the most important element.

PUB IS THE HUB GRANT FUNDING

The Government's early termination of the Community Ownership Fund caused a lot of bad feeling, especially with several projects falling through when almost completed. Although it is not by any means a replacement (or intended to be), some funding is now being made available by the Pub is the Hub (PitH), a not-for-profit organisation founded by King Charles III when he was Prince of Wales. They will make grants of up to £6,000 to publicans in rural, remote or deprived areas to enable them to develop the services that they provide to their communities. These could include adding the likes of cafes, village stores or craft workshops to the pub. Rural pubs are particularly under threat and so such diversification could be a lifeline.

DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME

The implementation of the Deposit Return Scheme (DRS), which requires a fee to be paid to cover the recycling costs for single-use drinks containers made from PET plastic, steel or aluminium (although not glass), has been postponed again, this time until October 2027.

The 135 Club

In the Editor's note to my letter 'Memories of Mortlake in the December/January edition, he mentioned the 135 Association, an organisation of drinkers who had drunk, but not necessarily been drunk, in every Young's pub. Back in the early 1960s when most breweries, including Fuller's, were switching to keg beer, Young's made a deliberate policy decision to stick with real ale or real draught beer as they referred to it. A public relations consultant suggested that if they were going to do things differently from other breweries then they should publicise the fact so that drinkers would become aware of the differences between Young's and other brewers.

Young's therefore brought out a threefold leaflet called 'Real Draught Beer and Where to Find It' for display and distribution in their pubs. The leaflet explained their beers and the difference between them and keg beers. It also listed all of Young's tied houses, so anyone finding one Young's pub would be able to find the lot. This led to Young's achieving a cult following among real ale drinkers. In 1967 someone wrote to the brewery saying they had drunk in all of the pubs and enclosed a copy of the leaflet signed by the publicans to prove it. The chairman, John Young, was so impressed by this that he invited him in for a VIP tour of the Ram Brewery, a slap-

up feed, as much beer as he could drink in the sample room and a pint of beer to take home.

The tour was never publicised or organised on a formal basis as are some breweries' passport schemes but it just grew organically and was spread by word of mouth, possibly largely through the Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood (SPBW). In the years that followed more people made the same pilgrimage. Eventually, the slap-up feed was dropped but they still got a visit to the brewery and some free beer.

By 1972, 29 people had done the tour and Young's decided to commission a special tie for them. This was the standard Young's tie of yellow rams on a dark background to which the Roman numerals CXXXII for 132 were added beneath each ram. At the time Young's had 132 pubs, most of which were in Greater London with a handful in Surrey plus the Fountain in Plumpton, Sussex. The tie was mentioned in the *Morning Advertiser*, leading to the word spreading around the pubs and in CAMRA and SPBW circles, and in itself advertised the tour because anyone wearing it was likely to be asked about its significance. It also meant that people who had done the tour could identify each other.

Some of the people who had done the tour drank

regularly in the Buckingham Arms in Petty France (SW1H 9EU) and they discussed the idea of setting up some kind of club or organisation. This became the 135 Association, which was formally constituted on 23 April 1975. No-one appears to remember if the date was deliberately chosen to be on St George's Day or if it was just a coincidence. By 1975 Young's had 135 pubs and the tie was upgraded to 135 (CXXXV in Roman numerals) accordingly. Despite more pubs being added to their estate over the years, both the tie and the association remained on 135.

The association functioned rather like an SPBW branch or the social side of a CAMRA branch. It put on pub visits and crawls, brewery and beer festival visits, held a Christmas charity draw and an annual dinner, all themed around Young's pubs. At its peak in 1985, the Association had about 100 members, a lot of whom were also members of CAMRA and/or SPBW.

By the late 1990s, interest in the Association was declining. Young's were acquiring more and more pubs spread over a wider area, which made the tour more difficult and the wider availability of real ale meant that Young's had

lost the cachet of real ale being available in all its pubs. Fewer people were doing the tour and coming forward to replace members who were dropping out owing to old age or moving away from London. Furthermore, some of the more traditional members were unhappy with the direction Young's were taking. By 2000 there were not enough people willing to be on the committee and so the Association was formally wound up. The remaining funds were used to pay for a farewell social and the balance was donated to a charity of which John Young was a trustee.

These days, thanks to the internet, there is no longer a need for groups of people to form organisations to stay in touch with each other and the remaining members now meet on an informal basis three times a year.

Young's are now just a pubco with about 280 pubs spread all over the South of England and South Wales. As far as I am aware they no longer have a printed list of all their pubs nor award anything to anyone drinking in all of them.

Colin Price

Trade news

Stonegate sell-off

I mentioned in the previous edition that Stonegate, the country's largest pub company, were selling off a relatively small tranche of pubs. Just after we went to print reports started coming through that subsequently they were considering the sale of a much larger part of their estate. This is the so-called Premium portfolio of 1,034 leased and tenanted pubs, valued at £1 billion. This group of pubs is ring-fenced as security for a £638 million loan from the private equity firm Apollo. They are spread across England and Wales and are all freehold. Financial consultants have been called in to advise not only on possible sale but also on a restructuring of the company which, following its various acquisitions, has become very complicated. The company has promised to involve its publicans in what happens, saying that it is committed 'to a constructive and consensual approach with our landlord community'.

Stonegate is itself owned by a private equity firm, TDR Capital. In their financial year ended 29 September 2024, the company had a turnover of £1,747 million (up from £1,719 million the previous year), yet it reported a pre-tax loss of £216 million. It has debts of £3.2 billion. It may not be a coincidence that it paid £3 billion for the Ei Group in 2020.

Here is an interesting point from the sales brochure for the earlier tranche of pubs. For pubs where the freehold is subject to an existing lease, it says, 'This lease requires the tenant to purchase all drinks from the landlord. The purchaser can set up a supply agreement with a supplier, such as Molson Coors, who will supply to the tenant. This will then provide an income from the sale of drinks'. In other words, Stonegate are transferring the benefit of the tie with the freehold. This cannot be right.

Young's news

Young's had a prosperous summer, with the 26 weeks ended 29 September bringing in revenue of £263.6 million, an increase of 5.4% on the previous half-year. Sales volume increased by 3.9%. In addition, Christmas bookings were up by 25% from 21% last year, although, on bookings generally, chief executive Simon Dodd said, "we will always drive spontaneity first; the importance of just walking into a pub for a pint with your newspaper," He added that Thursdays are still 'the big night out' in London and the City but, now that workers are mostly back in the office four days a week, they could see growth returning to London pubs.

Mr Dodd also gave an interesting geographic analysis to the Propel business newsletter, "We're really pleased that every geographic region we trade in was in growth at the half year and tracking way ahead of the CGA Tracker (a market analyst). Central London was in 5.2% growth but you move to the West Country and that was up 6.6%. The Home Counties are up 4.6% and Thameside, which is our pubs by the river, was up 10.4%. North London was up 10.6%, so we are growing in every region." Their programme of pub refurbishments continues, with five reopening in the run-up to Christmas.

As regards the budget, Mr Dodd said that what he had wanted to see most of all was certainty. He had hoped for meaningful business rates reform for the whole of the hospitality industry and a freeze on alcohol duty. He also thought that it was 'really time to look at VAT'. Sadly, he was as disappointed as most of us.

Guinness Open Gate Brewery

Further to the report in the previous edition, Diageo's £73 million tourist venture in Old Brewer's Yard, Covent Garden (WC2H 9FA) did finally open on 11 December. It has a

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microbrewery producing limited edition beers but the stout itself is the regular product imported from Ireland. There are two restaurants plus a pie van and two merchandise shops. There is also an event space for hire. They run tours and the 'Guinness Experience' for which you have to book and pay.

Meanwhile, further afield, Diageo have sold their 65% stake in East African Breweries Ltd (EABL), the brewery that produces Guinness in Kenya, to Japanese multi-national Asahi. The deal, worth \$2.3 million, includes associated distilling and import companies. EABL will continue to brew draught Guinness, a rare example of Diageo allowing the brewing of the 'black stuff' out of their control.

Wetherspoons news

JDW's policy of 'churning' pubs continues. The latest closure Readers may recall that JDW had applied to the City of Westminster for planning permission to open a pub at 11 Strand (WC2N 5HR), close to Charing Cross mainline station. This was refused. JDW then appealed to the Planning Inspectorate who overruled the decision. The council had argued that the type and size of the pub was 'inappropriate to its location' but the inspector said that there were no 'material considerations' that prevented the site being used as a pub. The council granted JDW a premises licence in December. The pub will trade on two floors. I bet I know on which floor the toilets will be. There is no word yet as to its name or opening date.

The Coombe Lodge in Lloyd Park (CR0 5RB), reported in the last edition, is being operated as a franchise by the Paps

Group. This is believed to be the first franchise in the south of the country.

The latest report on the Barking Dog (IG11 8TU) is that the rebuilding of Trocoll House should be completed in early 2027. I'm sure that JDW will then reopen the pub as soon as they can but fitting out what will be an empty shell will take some time.

Urban Pubs & Bars – further acquisitions

UPB continue to grow. Before Christmas they acquired four sites from Brunning & Price, the pubs arm of the Restaurant Group. There are two in Chiswick: the Roebuck (W4 1PU) and the Steam Packet (W4 3PU) plus the fabulous Grade II*-listed Queens in Crouch End (N8 9DE) and a café-bar, Coco Momo, in South Kensington (SW7 4PL). In addition, they have acquired the lease of the Prince Regent in Herne Hill (SE24 0NJ) from an independent operator and, as we go to print, they have announced the purchase of the Birdcage in Bethnal Green (E2 7QB) from BrewDog. This brings their estate to 66 and they now claim to be 'the capital's leading independent pub operator'. Chris Hill, their managing director, told the Propel newsletter, "Well-run, well-positioned businesses are thriving in the capital. We're seeing robust demand across our estate and strong like-for-like growth which gives us the confidence to keep investing. These latest acquisitions are exactly the kind of sites we look for and we're excited about the opportunities they present as we continue to grow our London estate." It's encouraging that they take this view.

Pubs of the Edgware Road

In his 1968 documentary 'From Marble Arch to Edgware' the poet John Betjeman travelled along the entire length of the Edgware Road, mournfully reminiscing about the past and criticising the clean lines of modernist architecture. The road follows the course of Watling Street, a Roman road that stretched from Dover to Wroxeter. The current route dates from 1811 when Thomas Telford updated it, forming the basis of the current A5 trunk road. During filming in late 1967 there was still a hefty cluster of around 35 pubs along the route but, since then, a vast number have closed or have been demolished. Fortunately, there are still 22 pubs in business, although some have opened since 1968. As Betjeman noted, "Come on, let's make a dash and meet it where we enter, the road that no one looks upon except as birds of passage. Oh Edgware Road, be our abode, and let us hear your message."

On its southern reaches, there were formerly seven pubs; none now exist south of the Marylebone Flyover. The **Green Man** (W2 1DY) is currently the southernmost pub still in business. Situated next to Edgware Road station, it dates back to 1720 although the current marble fronted corner building was constructed in 1867. It is now part of the Pubs Love chain who run seven combined pubs/hostels across London. Then comes Kilburn, which Betjeman described as, "Ho for Kilburn High Road, Ho for a sumptuous feast, it's your road and my road, and Ireland meets the East." It has notably the highest Irish

born/descended population anywhere in London, as well as the highest number of pubs anywhere along the route. The **Old Bell** (NW6 5UA) dates from c.1600 and was originally a coaching inn built on the site of a former mansion. It was popular with tourists visiting neighbouring Kilburn Wells. Rebuilt in 1863 and constructed in stock brick, among its prominent features are the two turrets that extend from its roof. The interior was renovated by owners Stonegate several years ago, although it retains some of its historic furnishings. The **Cooper's Arms** (NW6 4JD) was originally a beer house dating from the 1860s. It was rebuilt by Charringtons in 1926. Designed by Sidney Clark in a mock tudor theme with a stucco frontage, it features exposed timber framing, coat of arms, art deco stained-glass windows with Charringtons insignia, wood panelled walls and a bar counter with pilasters and fielded panelling. This pub is popular with the local Irish community for televised sports and live music events. It is also one of five pubs in Kilburn listed on CAMRA's inventory of pubs with historic interiors. The Grade II-listed **Black Lion** (NW6 2BY) is another notable example, built in 1898 by R A Lewcock on commission by local brewers Michell and Aldous. It is an imposing corner building with a richly decorated interior featuring an ornate ceiling and copper relief panels by F A Callcott that depict 18th century folk at leisure. There are also partitions with etched glass windows, a long bar-counter with fielded panelling and pilasters, backed up with a grandiose bar-



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Pubs of the Edgware Road

back with decorative cornices and plasterwork friezes. In 2022 after a long absence, cask beer returned when the pub was leased to London Village Inns.

Going towards Cricklewood, Betjeman makes a reference to its landmark pub, the **Crown** (NW2 3ED), *"I like a memory to trace the red electric trams. However far their journeys made, they always waited here and, in this terracotta shade, their passengers drank beer."* Originally a coaching inn dating from 1750, it was rebuilt by the Cannon Brewery in 1899. Designed by Henry Whiteman Rising in the Jacobean revival style, it stands four storeys high, faced in sandstone with rusticated arched columns above the entrance flanked with pilasters. The first-floor projection boasts a gargantuan 16-light bay window and the upper two dormer storeys are recessed into its elaborate Mansard roof structure. Some original interior bar fittings remain including three carved fireplaces, parquet flooring and a multi-paned bar-back with square pillars and capitals. It is Grade II listed and continues to be run as a hotel, currently under the AG Hotels Group.

Heading into the former county of Middlesex, many of the pubs north of Cricklewood have since either been closed and demolished or converted to other uses. The **Moon Under Water** in Colindale (NW9 6RR) is a rare outpost, opened in 1990 by Wetherspoons on the site of a former Woolworth's store. It is a large pub dedicated to live sports and dining, although it stocks a good number of cask ales from various London breweries. Most of Burnt Oak's historic pubs, such as the

Lansdowne and the Bald Faced Stag have ceased to be. Only **Atmosphere** (HA8 0AP) (formerly the Prince of Wales) remains. It was originally built as a Michell & Aldous beer house in 1867 and was rebuilt in 1930 by then owners Trumans. It is in the mock-tudor style with exposed timber framing, asymmetrical sash windows, a trio of steeply pitched roofs and florid patterns on the gables. In 2013 it was renovated with the upper floors turned into apartments and in the following year it reopened as a desi pub.

At the end of the route, Edgware used to boast a sizeable collection of pubs. Inevitably, many have closed over the years. Some have been demolished while others, such as the Masons Arms, the Beehive and the Corner House have been turned into restaurants. Sadly, the Grade II-listed Change of Hart (HA8 7EE) remains vacant and has deteriorated since its closure. Towards the northern end of the high street is the **Three Wishes** (HA8 7EL). Currently the northernmost pub on Edgware Road, it was opened in 1993 by Wetherspoons (as the Blacking Bottle) in a former freezer supply store. It has a vintage interior with wood-panelled walls, stained glass windows and a bar area with fielded panelling and pilasters, supporting an overhead gantry interspersed with coloured-glass inserts. It was sold to Upper Deck in 2006 who subsequently renamed it; weekly live music performances are often popular, though cask options have gradually dwindled since its Wetherspoons days.

Mike Goldwater

Nuns and Lords!

The newly reopened Three Lords makes a welcome addition to the pubs on Minories, near Aldgate in East London (EC3N 1DE). The pub's name has an interesting history to add to the unusual street name, so let's start there. The road is named after a 13th century convent for the Order of St Claire, officially called the 'Abbey of the Minorettes of St Clare without Aldgate'. The nuns were known as the Minorettes, which is Latin for little sisters.

The explanation for the pub's name comes from some centuries later and relates to four lords rather than three. Following the failed Jacobite rebellion in 1745, four Scottish noblemen, the Earl of Cromartie and the Lords Lovat, Balmarino and Kilmarnark, were found guilty of high treason and sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered. Cromartie, thanks to his wife's petition, had his sentence commuted to life in exile in Devonshire while Balmarino, Kilmarnark and Lovat had their sentences commuted to beheading. Simon Fraser, the 11th Lord Lovat became, on 9 April 1747, the last man to be publicly beheaded in England. The executions took place on Tower Hill. The link to the pub is that it is rumoured that at least two of these three lords spent the night before their execution in a pub on this site. In its hallway, the pub has portraits of the four and a poster to commemorate the story.

The London Brewing Company (LBC), which brews its beers at the Bohemia, North Finchley, took over the pub

last summer. It has undertaken a sympathetic refurbishment which included installing new handpumps, for them to sell four of their cask beers. Senan Sexton, one of LBC's owners said, *"We had been looking for a second pub for six years. It's a great setting and, with an independent landlord, it's free of tie enabling us to stock our own beers."*

There are two bars on two floors, with cask beer only on the ground floor. LBC's keg beers are available in both bars. The basement is cosy with a hidden snug in the right-hand corner. Both bars have framed posters but look out for the splendid glass to the right of the bar on the ground floor, advertising Upright and Beer Street.

They have only a small kitchen and so the menu is simple, comprising snacks, salads, burgers and flat breads. Food is served 12pm to 9pm Monday to Saturday; the pub does not open on Sundays.

As well as being close to Aldgate tube station, it's only a ten-minute walk from the Tower of London. As a consequence, Senan is hoping to attract tourists, particularly those with the taste for independent London beer. It certainly offers something different when compared to the usual large brewery offerings in other pubs nearby. For more details, see <https://camra.org.uk/pubs/three-lords-london-156583>.

Christine Cryne

Is your local pub under threat?

CAMRA has the tools
to help you save it



Photo credit: Stop Press Media/ Alarmy Stock Photo

camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal



Despite the turmoil in the licensed trade over recent years, Britain remains blessed with many pubs that retain traditional and often beautiful, historic interiors. Over thirty years ago, a body of CAMRA members began compiling a National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. Initially, they aimed to identify and record the most intact pre-war pub interiors, regardless of their architectural distinction. Before long, it was decided also to include pubs with special features or rooms of national significance. By then, around 270 pubs had inventory status.

The next step was to develop regional inventories, capturing interiors that fell short of the criteria for the national list but were nonetheless of significant historic interest. Around the same time, early post-war pubs built on traditional lines and still intact also became eligible for inclusion.

A few years ago, CAMRA's Pub Heritage Group (PHG) agreed to move to a single inventory, based around a grading system using star ratings. Interiors are eligible for consideration if they have remained essentially unaltered for at least fifty years. There are three key aspects for assessments:

- Layout - survival of historic layout and internal divisions, either intact or readily discernible.
- Historic fittings and decor - particularly old or original bar counters, bar-backs (gantries), fixed seating, fireplaces, plasterwork, vestibules, panelling, tiling and other ceramics.
- Notable rooms and features - such as partitioned snugs; counter-less pubs; tiled paintings; snob screens etc.
- The rarity of both historic layouts and historic fittings counts very high in the selection process.

The current grading system is simple and easy to understand. Within the single National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors are three grades:

Three Star pubs are of outstanding historic importance. They will have stayed wholly or largely intact, in terms of layout and fittings, and/or retain rooms or features that are truly rare or exceptional. Only limited loss of such components is allowable before an interior fails this standard. Currently 303 pubs are in this category.

Two Star pubs are of very special historic interest. They are highly important but fall just short of Three Star levels of overall intactness and/or rarity. Lost elements, often of layout, are clearly in evidence. There are presently 270 such pubs.

One Star pubs, by far the most numerous category (740), are of special historic interest. They have either readily identifiable historic layouts or retain rooms or features of special interest. More significant changes are allowable in this category than for the first two categories.

PHG keeps gradings under continual review and makes changes where appropriate. Generally, this is because alterations to an interior have impacted on the pub's historic importance. In other cases, members will re-assess current gradings, especially where a pub has not been surveyed for a long time or where a wider range of views is felt to be beneficial.

PHG also campaigns hard to protect and promote these precious heritage assets. Over the years, we've been able to get many of them statutorily listed so that they enjoy an extra layer of protection from unwanted alterations. Where inventory pubs come under threat of closure or unsympathetic change, we'll do what we can to save them. On a positive note, we seek to raise awareness of the delights these pubs provide, through our website and a range of publications.

You can find much more information about the National Inventory, and heritage pubs generally, at camra.org.uk/heritage-pubs. A complete list of inventory pubs is at camra.org.uk/heritage-pubs/national-inventory. We also issue a monthly bulletin featuring news about heritage pubs. To subscribe, email bulletin@pubheritage.camra.org.uk with 'Subscribe' as the subject.

We are always keen to hear from visitors to the listed pubs, especially where there have been changes that we might not know about. Thank you.

Paul Ainsworth

Chair, Pub Heritage Group

Sign up!

A number of CAMRA branches send newsletters to their members by e-mail.

To receive these, CAMRA members need to consent to the receipt of e-mails from their branch.

To do this, log in to the CAMRA website (<https://www1.camra.org.uk/>)

then click on the disc on the left showing your initials.

Select 'Dashboard', then 'Account' and then 'Marketing Preferences'.

Set Branch to 'yes'.

(This is for the new version of the website).

The *WhatPub?* pub database is no more. However the data remains available for all to use, not just CAMRA members, as part of the main CAMRA website; just go to <https://camra.org.uk/pubs>. It continues to feature over 31,000 pubs that currently serve cask beer plus records of pubs that do not sell cask beer or are closed.

All of the information used has been compiled by CAMRA members and no fee is charged, or sought, for inclusion. You will find opening times, descriptions, facilities, maps and, of course, details of the cask beer and cider on offer. You can search by specific pub name or general location.

This update is based on news items collated by CAMRA's branches in Greater London. We aim to report all openings and closures of pubs and clubs, those that add or remove cask beer; and changes of name, ownership or beer policy. Readers are encouraged to 'suggest an edit' using the website when they find incomplete or out-of-date information (but not customer reviews, please). Members can also 'spot a beer', allowing others to see what beers are currently available.

Available on the Greater London CAMRA website under Pub Updates, a longer version of this schedule includes changes to Cask Marque status, cider policy, LocAle, CAMRA discounts and pub operating model.

NEW & REOPENED PUBS & CLUBS – INCLUDING THOSE CONVERTED TO CASK BEER

INNER LONDON

EC1, EXMOUTH ARMS (Urban Pubs & Bars), 23 Exmouth Market. Cask beer reinstated, a guest beer such as Twickenham Grandstand.

EC4, PINEAPPLE CLUB (Heineken), Rolls Passage, Chancery La. Reopened in January as **AZUKI ROOM**, a Japanese restaurant and sake bar.

WC1, SIMMONS EUSTON SQUARE (Simmons), 31 University St. Reverted to **JEREMY BENTHAM** and now operated by the 202 Pub Co Ltd (ex-Aldrich Inns). Timothy Taylor Landlord.

WC2, BAR CICORIA, Royal Opera House, Bow St. All-day rooftop bar on the fifth floor of the ROH. Open to all, drinks including Italian aperitifs and beers and cider. Cashless and 12.5% discretionary service charge.

WC2, GUINNESS OPEN GATE BREWERY, 1 Mercer Walk. New tourist destination from global drinks giant Diageo containing a microbrewing facility with changing limited edition brews (but not including Guinness!)

WC2, MARKET PLACE, 20-21 Leicester Sq. A few yards north of the Odeon cinema, this is promoted as London's largest food hall spanning five floors, and with sixteen street-food kitchens, three dessert counters and three bars. Keg beers only. Market Place is a small chain with half-a-dozen other London sites.

E1, CITY BAR & KITCHEN, 9 Stoney La. Reopened as games bar **HIT KING** in November 2025 with games derived from baseball and whippet racing.

E4, GARDENERS ARMS, 18 Burnside Ave. Having closed in 2010, refurbished and reopened in November 2025. Claims also to be a brewery.

E8, BAXTERS COURT (ex-Wetherspoon), 282-284 Mare St. Reopened as **DC LION** in December. Four changing beers such as Lacons.

E8, HOAX BAR & RESTAURANT, 390 Kingsland Rd. Converted from a chicken shop, this is a family-run modern Italian restaurant with a downstairs cocktail bar called the Devil You Know.

E14, AMAZING GRACE, 12 Bank St.

Live music bar/restaurant with four keg beers plus bottles. Booking will be essential for some events.

N1, MACBETH, 70 Hoxton St. Draught Bass.

N2, EAST FINCHLEY CONSTITUTIONAL CLUB, 9 The Walks. Added to the database. Fuller's London Pride.

N4, STROUD GREEN BARREL, Stroud Green School, Perth Rd. A market stall at the Stroud Green Market near Finsbury Park. They serve only cask beer (from three rotating English breweries every week) and traditional cider from handpumps, along with pies and sausage rolls. The stall is there every Sunday from 10am to 2.30pm.

N7, OWL & HITCHHIKER (Laine), 471 Holloway Rd. Cask beer reinstated, Timothy Taylor Landlord.

N16, RED LION (Stonegate), 132 Stoke Newington Church St. Cask beer reinstated, Fuller's London Pride. Now tenanted.

SE6, CATFORD CONSTITUTIONAL (ex-Antic), 108-110 Rushey Green. Reopened as **GRAND EMPIRE** but cask beer is no longer available.

SE6, CATFORD CONSTITUTIONAL CLUB Catford Bdy. Reopened once again in mid-November 2025 as **CATFORD HOUSE**, a pub and community hub. The main bar area is spacious and open plan, with exposed brickwork and an eclectic mix of tables and seating. Additional rooms/areas on the ground and upper floors include the adjoining former Georgian farmhouse with its new internal wooden support structure. Six handpumps on the bar, intended to offer a regular beer from Portobello and guest beers.

SE6, LONDON & RYE (ex-Wetherspoon), 109 Rushey Green. Reopened as a sports orientated bar in December 2025. Greene King IPA and Abbot plus two guests such as Otter Bitter and Timothy Taylor Boltmaker.

SE8, AAJA BAR, Basement, Comet Pl. Following the closure of their bar in Deptford Market Yard in 2022, AAJA relocated to a basement space just off Deptford High Street in 2024. Home to a bar, events space, record label and community radio.

SE15, ANGEL OAK (Greene King/Metropolitan), 31 Peckham Rye. Cask beer reinstated, a changing beer such as Deuchars IPA. Card only.

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SE15, BREW BY NUMBERS BARREL STORE & TAPROOM, Arch 1 Bellenden Business Park, Bellenden Rd. Reopened as **GOSNELLS MEADERY**. Open Saturday afternoons for on- and off-sales.

SE15, PECKHAM ARCHES, Unit 6, Dovedale Business Centre. Bar under the arches close to Peckham Rye station, owned by the Bird House Brewery. Outdoor terrace has capacity for 150 people. Draught beers include a range of Bird House local beers. No cask beer currently available.

SE17, HUNTSMAN & HOUNDS (Market Taverns), 70 Elsted St. Cask beer reinstated, a changing beer such as Landlord.

SE19, 56 WESTOW, 56 Westow Hill. Restaurant and bar, with keg beers on tap but no cask beer. The venue is card-only, and opening hours may vary.

SE27, PAXTON (Greene King), 255 Gipsy Rd. Reopened in November as **HOUSE OF MOBO** in partnership between the MOBO Group and GK after closure for almost 3 years. Comprehensively refurbished in a vibrant, contemporary style, it aims to create an inclusive community and cultural hub celebrating black culture.

SW4, RATTLIN' BOG (Stonegate/North Tavern Ltd), 4 Clapham Common South Side. Irish pub opened in the former Be at One in December. No cask beer.

SW6, BROOK & BADGER, 224 Munster Rd. On the site of the old Fulham Tavern, Eamonn Manson, a 30-year veteran of the pub and restaurant scene, has joined forces with his friend, pop art dealer Adrian Palengat, to create this new gastropub venture. Manson already operates Brook House in New Kings Road and Brooke in Clapham. St Austell Tribute was available from one of three handpumps during soft launch.

W1, PURL, Basement, 50-54 Blandford St. Reopened as **DIVE**.

W4, CHISWICK CINEMA, 94-96 Chiswick High Rd. Opened in June 2021, it has two bars and a sun terrace. No cask beer.

W9, FRANKFORT ARMS (Stonegate/Craft Union), 518 Harrow Rd. Reopened as the **ASHMORE**.

W11, LOCK & LANTERN (202 Pub Co), 60 Great Western Rd. Cask beer reinstated; a changing beer from Hogs Back has been available.

W12, BREWD OG SHEPHERDS BUSH, 15-19 Goldhawk Rd. Reopened as the **BUSH TAVERN** and now operated by Bird House Brewery of Herne Hill, along with the nearby **HAWK'S NEST** at Goldhawk Road tube station. Cask beers are Pale and Amber from Bird House and food is provided by west London burger operator No Drama. The interior has a pleasant open feel with pine decor and some modern prints on the walls. Chalkboards behind the bar give the drinks range.

OUTER LONDON

CROYDON, COOMBE LODGE (Whitbread), 104 Coombe Rd. Opened as a Wetherspoon in December. Up to three guest ales may be available in addition to the regular Wetherspoon standards.

HARMONDSWORTH, FIVE BELLS (Wellington), High St. Real ale reinstated, St Austell Tribute.

ILFORD, CAULIFLOWER (Revensdale Ltd), 553 High Rd. Classic 'Gin Palace' pub reopened November as **553 LONDON**.

KINGSTON, BRICKLAYERS ARMS (Greene King), 53 Hawks Rd. Cask beer now available such as Timothy Taylor Boltmaker or Landlord and real cider.

RUISLIP MANOR, PUNA BAR, 68 Victoria Rd. Sports bar reopened Summer 2025 after a couple of years closure. Now **CROWN MANOR PUB**. Keg beers.

SOUTHALL, UNDERGROUND BAR, 34A King St. Reopened as **CHANDNI**.

TEDDINGTON, LION, 27 Wick Rd. Reopened by a local community group after three years of closure. Twickenham The Naked Ladies regularly available plus two guests such as Doom Bar and Twickenham Grandstand. Card only.

WELLING, PLOUGH & HARROW (Trust Inns), 143 Bellegrave Rd. One of two handpumps is currently in use, serving Adnams Ghost Ship.

PUBS & CLUBS CLOSED, CONVERTED, OR CEASED SELLING CASK BEER

INNER LONDON

EC2, FOUNTAIN TAP. Closed, lease on market.

EC3, PATCH (Swizzlestick Bars). Closed, future uncertain.

EC4, LITTLE FABLE (Drake & Morgan). Closed, future uncertain.

WC1, QUEEN'S HEAD (Stonegate/Pub Love), 22 Easton St. No longer sells cask beer.

WC2, CRUSTING PIPE (Davy's). Closed, lease on the market

E10, SIGNATURE BREWERY TAP. No longer sells cask beer.

E14, SODA & FRIENDS. Closed, future uncertain.

E15, KING EDWARD VII (Stonegate). Repossessed by Stonegate. Lease advertised.

N1, SMOKEHOUSE (Heineken/Noble Inns). No longer sells cask beer.

N3, CATCHER IN THE RYE (Stonegate). Closed, future uncertain.

N16, RYAN'S N16. Reported to have closed permanently.

NW1, GOOD COMPANY. Closed December 2024.

SE1, ST CHRISTOPHER'S INN (Beds & Bars). Handpumps unused.

SE1, SHEAF (Red Car Pubs). Closed along with other pubs in the building. Unclear if this will reopen.

SE8, JAM CIRCUS (Antic). Closed in January.

SE16, PITCHER & CRAFT. Closed, lease on the market.

SE16, WHELAN'S. Cask beer not usually available.

SE25, SHELVERDINE GOATHOUSE (Antic). Closed early December.

SE27, QUEEN OF THE SOUTH (Agentcraft Ltd). Closed in December after failure of owners' attempt to raise money to buy the freehold.

SW1, HOUSE BELGRAVIA (Grosvenor Estate).

Closed, future uncertain.

SW1, LOOSE BOX (Market Taverns).

No longer sells cask beer.

SW1, STOKE HOUSE. Closed, to become a Brother Marcus mediterranean restaurant in early 2026.

SW5, BOTTLERY. Closed, lease under offer as Use Class E.

SW6, SIXES CRICKET CLUB.

Reported closed, Sixes are in administration.

SW11, CANDLEMAKER (Smok'd) Closed in January after briefly offering brewery-conditioned beer on handpump.

W7, DUKE OF YORK (Heineken).

Closed. Looking for new operator.

W14, ALBION (Heineken).

This once great cask beer pub now no longer sells any.

OUTER LONDON

BARKING, FACTORY 15. Closed at the end of November. Will probably revert to offices.

BECKENHAM, O'NEILL'S (M&B). By late 2025 handpumps had been removed and replaced with Guinness fonts.

BLACKFEN, BROKEN DRUM.

Closed while ownership changes.

CHELSEFIELD, CHELSEFIELD LAKES GOLF CENTRE.

No longer sells cask beer.

HAMPTON, HAMPTON ALE HOUSE

(Stonegate/Newline Pub Co). No longer sells cask beer.

ROMFORD, TOP MEADOW GOLF CLUB & HOTEL

(individual/no lease/independent).

No longer sells cask beer, handpumps removed.

SURBITON, GORDON BENNETT.

Closed, Wellington looking for new tenant.

SUTTON, THROWLEY YARD (Really Local Group).

Closed in November as operator is in administration.

WEST DRAYTON, CAT & FIDDLE (Wellington).

No longer sells cask beer, handpump removed.

OTHER CHANGES

INNER LONDON

EC2, HOXTON GRILL (Soho House).

Renamed **IL BAMBINI CLUB**.

E8, FARR'S DALSTON (Portobello).

Pub became independent early in 2025.

Ringwood Razorback and Wychwood Hobgoblin IPA recently featured as guest ales.

N1, CELLAR TAPS (Stonegate).

Renamed **EDINBURGH PUB** and run by the same people as the Myddleton Arms in Canonbury,

N1, DUKE OF WELLINGTON (Stonegate), 119 Balls Pond Rd.

Was closed for major refurb autumn 2025, now operated by Stanley Inns with up to four cask beers available from brewers such as Adnams, Butcombe, Otter, Purity, Wadsworth and Wye Valley.

NW1, CORNER POST. Has become **BRUNCH & GRAPES**.

NW1, SPORTS BAR & GRILL (Network Rail/Stonegate).

Renamed **STATION MASTER**.

NW6, BAROON LOUNGE. (M&B).

Renamed **GOAT**, now a Mongolian bar with food.

NW8, DUKE OF YORK (Stonegate).

Formerly one of the small London Frontier Pubs chain but as of January 2026 this has morphed into a new venture, Highpress, with currently five London sites.

NW10, TIFFTY TOMS. Renamed again: TÍR NA NÓG.

SE1, HOLE IN THE WALL (Network Rail).

Formerly a family-run independent pub, taken over by London Beer Factory in December 2025. It is now card only.

SE8, FEED THE YAK. Now LITTLE YAK.

SE15, JOHN THE UNICORN (Portobello).

Taken over in 2025 by Gosnell's Drinks.

SE19, BEULAH SPA (M&B/Harvester).

Reopened as **ORLEANS SMOKEHOUSE**, with a separate bar area with seating for non-diners. A range of keg beers is available.

SW5, PRINCE OF TECK (Stonegate).

Operated since the end of 2025 by the small south-east Whelans chain of Irish pubs. London Pride was the only cask beer on offer from the solitary handpump when last checked.

SW10, GOAT (Stonegate).

Reopened as **GOAT IN BOOTS** after major refurbishment.

Now run by 202 Pub Co, and describing itself as a 'coaching inn, public house, neighbourhood restaurant, martini & oyster bar, and boutique hotel'

Cask beer on visit: Boddingtons brewed at JW Lees.

W6, OLD CITY ARMS.

Now within the Stonegate Craft Union model.

W12, O'DONOGHUES (Stonegate).

Renamed **SWAKELEY'S** in the summer.

OUTER LONDON.

BEXLEYHEATH, ROSE.

Rotating regular cask beers have replaced guest beers since late 2025 change of management.

BEXLEYHEATH, KENTISH BELLE. Cash back in favour!

OSTERLEY, TERMINAL 6 LOUNGE.

Hotel bar renamed **CURRY'S COCKTAIL CLUB** (aka C3).

ROMFORD, BUNKERS ROMFORD.

Renamed **MULLIGANS ROMFORD**.

RUISLIP, ARTH (Greene King).

Renamed again, now **INDIAN POET**.

SUDBURY, HIMALAYAN CLUB (BAR & RESTAURANT).

Renamed **HELLO MUMBAI**. Indian/Indo restaurant with a bar serving cocktails, wines and six keg beers.

UXBRIDGE, UXBRIDGE & DISTRICT CONSERVATIVE CLUB. Has become 46 CLUB.

Usually two cask beers from Rebellion.

Steve Collins

Steve, who passed away on 2 November, was an active campaigner for CAMRA for many years, having been a member of the Croydon & Sutton branch since its inception. His roles included branch chair, festival organiser and committee member. In the 1990s, Steve edited the branch's local newsletter, the 'Croydon Crawler & Sutton Staggerer'. He was also at one time involved in ordering beer for the Great British Beer Festival. Latterly he looked after the casks for our own festivals at Wallington and he ensured that good quality ales were always served.



Steve was also an enthusiastic and talented home brewer; the annual invitation to his home was a highlight of the year, as he would brew up to ten ales of different types and strengths, all, of course, excellent. One of his brews was developed by local brewers Clarence & Fredericks and sold as Cascadian Black.

Steve is survived by his wife, Maureen, to whom we send our condolences.

Croydon & Sutton branch

Brian Sheridan – the finale

We paid tribute to Brian, one of our founding editors, in our June/July edition. There was one final chapter. In his will, Brian stipulated that his ashes should be scattered at his three favourite pubs in the German city of Düsseldorf. The task was performed by his friends and executors, Gordon Massey and Mostyn Lewis, along with another old friend, Andrew Cunningham. There was a specific bequest to 'fund the travel and accommodation, together with as much Düsseldorf Altbiere as they feel inclined to drink'. The party travelled out on 25 November by Eurostar. The first port of call was Brian's favourite, the BrauhoF of Hausbrauerei Schumacher zum Ueerge in the Bergerstrasse. When we explained our mission to the management they invited us to the brewery at the back of the pub where, having been provided with another round of beers, we scattered Brian's ashes and toasted both his memory and good taste. We were grateful for the pub's hospitality and empathy and

especially to the manager, who was happy to take a photograph to record the moment.

The mission was completed the next day with visits to the Hausbrauerei Ferdinand Schumacher in the Oststrasse and the Brauerei Im Fuchschen in the Ratinger Strasse. Once again, ashes were scattered but this time discreetly. Excellent as these establishments were, the party agreed that the BrauhoF was also their favourite and returned there for our farewell meal and, of course, as Brian had wanted, more Schumacher Altbiere.



We had not been able to scatter all of the ashes in the pubs and so the remainder were, appropriately for a devoted Wagnerian, consigned to the river to join the Rheinmädchen. Altogether a successful mission in fulfilment of Brian's wishes and how he wished to be remembered.

Mostyn Lewis

John Hanscomb

John, who died on New Year's Eve aged 88, was an active campaigner and influential voice in the early days of the Campaign. Some sources also credit John with inventing the term 'real ale'. He will however be remembered chiefly as the editor, in 1974, of the first edition of the *Good Beer Guide*. He secured a place in the annals of CAMRA with his description 'Avoid like the plague' for Watney's beers. Alas, it was changed when the GBG was reprinted to 'Avoid at all costs' at, I am told, the insistence of the publishers. John's particular distaste for Watneys was because of their closure of two out of three breweries in Norwich, along many pubs throughout the county. His funeral took place in Watford, close to his home, on 23 January.

LETTERS

All readers – not just CAMRA members – are invited to submit letters for publication to *London Drinker* but please remember that the letters column is intended for debate and constructive criticism. The editor reserves the right not to print any contributions that are otherwise. Please e-mail letters to: ldnews.hedger@gmail.com.

If you do not have e-mail, hard-copy letters may be sent to the same address given for subscriptions on page 3, addressed to *London Drinker Letters*.

In both cases, please state 'letter for publication' so as to avoid any misunderstandings.

Pubs, Pints, People.



Death or Glory?

Just a pint please, actually.

CAMRA membership expands your choice of beer, pubs and festivals. Find the best pints, and the places you want to drink them.

Get £30 of beer vouchers, discounts on real ale, save on entry to 160+ beer festivals around the UK and more with membership.



Join and save on beer.
camra.org.uk/join



Are you a CAMRA member?

If not, why not join? See below for details



CAMRA essentially remains a campaigning organisation and, with the threats currently faced by our independent pubs and breweries, there is still a lot to be done. Lobbying politicians (both national and local), objecting to planning applications and even delivering magazines such as *London Drinker* all contribute to the cause. Volunteering is a great way to learn new skills and meet like-minded people who share your love of all things to do with beer, cider and pubs. To find out more about volunteering opportunities go to <https://ow.ly/SB3H50V0KGf>.

In addition, as a CAMRA member, you will have access to lots of beer-related benefits. You can take advantage of these at home, at events, and in pubs. Here are some of the options for you to explore:

- * **The campaign:** keep up with the campaign that your membership is supporting with our *What's Brewing* online publication, available online here <https://wb.camra.org.uk/>.
- * **Beer discounts:** your membership card and vouchers get you discounts on your beer at pubs up and down the country. Check out whatpub.com, search for locations and use the filters to find great pubs near you with features you like.
- * **Beer festivals:** as a member of CAMRA, as from 1 January, you get free entry to our 160 beer festivals up and down the country. Search for a festival near you on our website, get out and try new beers!
- * **The CAMRA shop:** did you know that CAMRA is also an award-winning book publisher? As a CAMRA member, you have access to preferential rates at our shop for books, merchandise and more. Take a look on our website today. <https://shop1.camra.org.uk/>.
- * **Member benefits:** your membership should allow you to save money on the things that matter to you, which is why we work with partners to bring you great discounts. We're adding more to our website all the time; see <https://camra.org.uk/join/membership-benefits/partner-benefits/>.
- * **Keep in touch:** whether you're on our website, in the pub or at a beer festival, having a voice and getting involved will allow you to get more out of your membership. *BEER Magazine* and our CAMRA YouTube channel are a great way to keep up to date with CAMRA news and beer, cider and perry in general. The website contains a lot of very useful reference information on all aspects of beer and cider.

Annual subscriptions (from 1 July 2025) are as follows:

- Single membership, paid by Direct Debit, £34.00;
- Joint membership (partner at same address) £42.00.

Add £2 if not paying by Direct Debit. Some concessions are available.

You can find out more at <https://join.camra.org.uk> or search 'join CAMRA'.

Idle Moments

Hello and a (somewhat belated) Happy New Year to you all. I am feeling at one with the world having spent a quiet Christmas, notable for the fact that (unlike the previous two) I was not confined to a hospital ward and clad in only an open back frock and bright red non-slip socks.

So how to start Idle Moments for a new year? I decided on 'FIVEbyFOUR' and, in a fit of self indulgence, rummaged

through my vinyl collection to challenge you to pair up a few albums with their performers. You might recognise a little bit of bias (not as much as I might have inserted) towards the realms of folk music; I make no apology for that. So can you match these up (and how many names do you recognise)? I have included the years in which the albums were released in case it offers some assistance.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Alison Moyet | A. A King at Nightfall (1975) |
| 2. The Watsons | B. If You Could Read My Mind (1970) |
| 3. Pete Atkin | C. Gorilla (1967) |
| 4. Joni Mitchell | D. The Rout of the Blues (1970) |
| 5. Fleetwood Mac | E. A Song for All Seasons (1978) |
| 6. Bonzo Dog Doo/Dah Band | F. Poems, Prayers & Promises (1971) |
| 7. John Denver | G. Blue (1971) |
| 8. Gordon Lightfoot | H. Rainsong (1987) |
| 9. Robin & Barry Dransfield | I. For Pence & Spicy Ale (1975) |
| 10. Renaissance | J. Rumours (1977) |

Up next is a third dip into my collection of BAZY Celebrities, whose initials are consecutive letters of the alphabet but reversed:

- GF: American female tennis player
- NM: Eldest 'bright young things' sister
- SR: Jazz saxophonist
- CB: Celebrity snapper
- IH: Composer daughter of Gustav
- GF: Archbishop of Canterbury
- BA: Comedy partner of Lou
- JL: Learned the Truth at Seventeen
- ON: Brazilian architect
- ML: Beach Boy

When it comes to the Trivial Knowledge bit, you may have noticed that I like to select (at least some) questions that have a common theme. I was thinking of trying to base this month's on years ending in 26 but failed dismally to find any that I found interesting. Instead I went for the other stock solution of picking events during the circulation months of the magazine and here are some of those:

- HMS Thunderer, the last battleship to be built on the River Thames, was launched at Silvertown on 1 February; in what year?
- On 7 February 1974, which British colony of the Windward Islands became an independent Commonwealth country under its first Prime Minister, Eric Gairy?
- The actress Maureen O'Sullivan gave birth on 9 February 1945 to a daughter who subsequently also became a famous actress. Who was that child?
- Lady Jane Grey, the Nine Days Queen, was executed for high treason on 12 February of what year?
- On 19 February 1878, Thomas Edison was granted US patent No. 200251 for which of his many inventions?
- Charlie Chaplin was knighted by HM Queen Elizabeth II on 4 March – in what year?
- On 7 February, the Victoria Line of the London Underground was opened to regular passenger traffic; in what year?
- The composer Sir William Walton died (at the age of 80) on 8 March 1983 at his home on what Italian island where he had lived since 1956?
- On 20 March 1980, the ship *Mi Amigo* ran aground and sank, thus terminating the broadcasting of what pirate radio station (and after how many years of operation)?
- Mark Brunel's Thames Tunnel, between Wapping and Rotherhithe, was formally opened on 25 March in what year?

So, there we are; another Idle Moment comes to an end. I do hope you will find something much more interesting to do until the April/May London Drinker arrives.

All the best
Andy Pirson

Here are the solutions to the puzzles set in the **December/January** Idle Moments column.

Cryptic Stations:

- Boggy portal – Moorgate
- Miners' plantation – Colliers Wood
- Skint boy in the woods – Ladbroke Grove
- Captures a stream – Snaresbrook
- Bottom included? – Arsenal
- This way to Scotland? – Caledonian Road
- Where the rabbits live – Warren Street
- Incinerated tree – Burnt Oak
- Alpine retreat – Swiss Cottage
- Perfect square of trees – Nine Elms

5BY4: (Arrondissements de Paris)

- 1st – Louvre
- 2nd – Bourse
- 3rd – Temple
- 4th – L'Hotel de Ville
- 5th – Pantheon
- 6th – Luxembourg
- 7th – Palais Bourbon
- 8th – L'Elysee
- 9th – L'Opera
- 10th – L'Entrepot

General knowledge: (Twelve Questions of Christmas)

- The scientist born on 25 December 1642 at Woolsthorpe near Grantham was Isaac Newton.
- Radium was discovered and isolated by Pierre and Marie Curie on 26 December in 1898.
- HMS Beagle (carrying Charles Darwin) departed from Plymouth Sound, on its five-year circumnavigation of the world, on 27 December of 1831.
- The area designated as Britain's first national park, on 28 December 1950, was the Peak District.
- Britain's first 'Ironclad' battleship, HMS Warrior, was launched at Blackwall on 29 December in 1860.
- Rudyard Kipling, the English writer and poet was born on 30 December 1865 in Bombay (as it was then known).
- The chimes of the Great Clock (Big Ben) were first broadcast on 31 December in 1923.
- The Commonwealth of Australia was created by the amalgamation of the six states and two territories on 1 January 1901.
- The first municipal crematorium in England, opened on 2 January 1901 (by the Lord Mayor), was in Hull.
- The leader of the first overland expedition to reach the South Pole (on 3 January 1958), since that of Captain Robert Falcon Scott in 1912, was Sir Edmund Hillary.
- The first pop music chart, based on record sales, was published on 4 January in New York in *The Billboard* magazine on 4 January in 1936.
- The first automatic ticket barrier on the London Underground (which came into operation on 5 January 1964) was at Stamford Brook station.

[Sorry about the 'overland land' in question 10]

Compiled by DAVE QUINTON - £20 prize to be won!



Name

Address

Telephone

E-mail

All correct entries received by first post on 18 March will be entered into a draw for the prize. The prize winner will be announced in the June/July edition. The solution will be given in the April/May edition.

All entries should be submitted to:
London Drinker Crossword, 25 Valens House, Upper Tulse Hill, London SW2 2RX

Please note: Entries on oversize copies of the grid will not be entered into the prize draw.

DECEMBER/JANUARY SOLUTION



ACROSS

1. Send off for a job. [4]
4. Mine's the best place for a car. [3,4]
8. Upset as old fellows died. [8]
9. Everyone turned up in Llandudno. [3]
11. Organ Edward made. [6]
13. Come up for some Paris entertainment. [6]
14. Almost misses dilapidated houses. [5]
15. Brass article added to bath. [4]
17. Turmoil in prison. [4]
18. Warning signal when evil overcomes religion. [5]
20. Call in the Spanish for cover. [6]
21. Unusually strange jewel seen at the fair. [6]
24. Farewell run. [3]
25. Trump decapitated local inhabitant. [8]
26. Gets rid of initial drug cravings. [7]
27. Starts to envy any rich landed aristocrat. [4]

DOWN

2. Bid for a chest with no lid. [5]
3. Very nearly the finest old city. [6]
4. Initially puppies and dogs should get protection [4]
5. Ancient family from Stroud maybe. [6]
6. Tory abandoning constraint disturbed movement. [7]
7. Friend in city accepting daughter and mum, for example. [10]
10. Spoil Basil perhaps after achievement with journalist. [10]
12. D... wicked creature. [5]
13. Together with another, quietly abandoned broadcast. [5]
16. Two items of underwear are the most daring. [7]
18. Seek to burn church. [6]
19. Fool may be taken in. [6]
22. One found in outskirts of Gloucester. A hopeless case [5]
23. Goddess seeing no credit in sudden change [4]

Winner of the prize for the October Crossword:

Nick Goodwin, Tonbridge.

Other correct entries were received from:

Tony Alpe, Mrs L Bamford, Hugh Breach, K Breach, Kelvin Brewster, John Butler, John Clark, Owen Cunningham, Michael Davis, Mike Dewar, Anthony Dixon, John Dodd, E Evans, Bill Fullick, Richard Garton, Roger Grant, Paul Gray, J E Green, Alan Greer, 'Shropshire' Dave Hardy, John Howarth, Alan Humphrey, Eric Johnstone, R L P Keys, Pete Large, Terry Lavell, Aidan Laverty, Tony Lennon, Ken MacKenzie, Jan Mondrzejewski, Ruth Moreton, Al Mountain, Dave Murphy, Sue Narmey, Mick Norman, Gerald Notley, Michael Oliver, Nigel Parsons, James Rawle, David Renwick, Robert Ripley, Richard Rogers, John Ryan, Bill Stewart, Liam Thompson, Mark Thompson, Jeff Tucker, Martin Weedon, Jerry Wiggins, K Zemek.

There were also four incorrect and one incomplete entries.



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