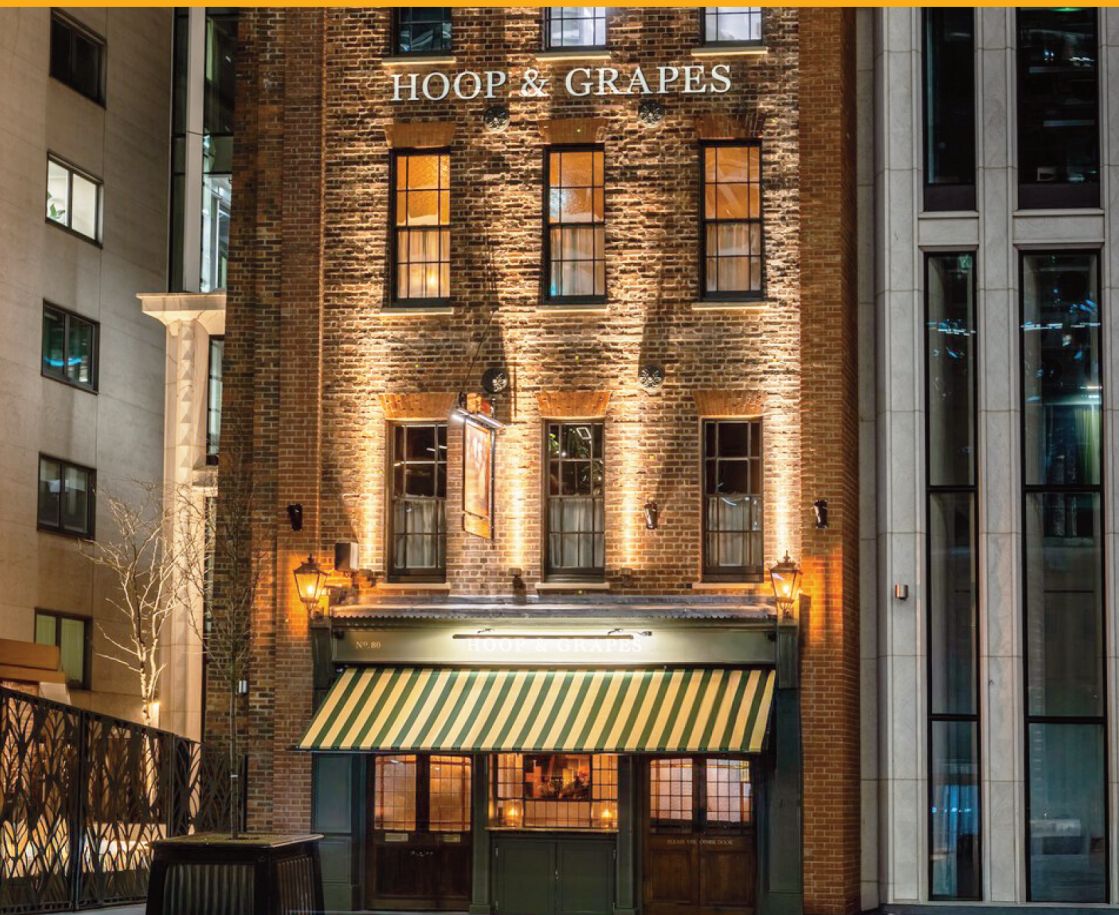


FREE

LONDON
CAMRA
DRINKER

Volume 48 No. 2

April/May 2026



The Hoop & Grapes - See page 20

wetherspoon



London pubs included in The Good Beer Guide 2026

London (inner)

J.J. Moon's, Tooting
Shakespeare's Head, Holborn
The Brockley Barge, Brockley
The Crosse Keys, City of London
The Holland Tringham, Streatham
The Metropolitan Bar, Marylebone
The Rockingham Arms, Elephant and Castle
The Surrey Docks, Rotherhithe
The William Morris, Hammersmith
The Willow Walk, Victoria
Wetherspoons, Victoria station

London (outer)

J.J. Moon's, Hornchurch
J.J. Moon's, Kingsbury
J.J. Moon's, Ruislip Manor
Spouter's Corner, Wood Green
The Beaten Docket, Cricklewood
The Colley Rowe Inn, Collier Row
The Coronation Hall, Surbiton
The Eva Hart, Chadwell Heath
The Furze Wren, Bexleyheath
The George, Croydon

The Good Yarn, Uxbridge
The Great Spoon of Ilford, Ilford
The Greenwood Hotel, Northolt
The Moon and Stars, Romford
The Moon on the Hill, Harrow
The Moon on the Hill, Sutton
The Moon on the Square, Feltham
The Moon Under Water, Colindale
The Moon Under Water, Enfield
The Moon Under Water, Hounslow
The Mossy Well, Muswell Hill
The New Crown, Southgate
The New Fairlop Oak, Fairlop
The Nonsuch Inn, North Cheam
The Railway Bell, Barnet
The Red Lion & Pineapple, Acton
The Sir Julian Huxley, Selsdon
The Sir Michael Balcon, Ealing
The Village Inn, Rayners Lane
The Watchman, New Malden
The Whispering Moon, Wallington
The Wibbas Down Inn, Wimbledon
The William Webb Ellis, Twickenham
The Wrong 'Un, Bexleyheath

OPEN NOW

The Sir Alexander Fleming, 5 Merchant Square, Paddington Basin, W2 1AS
Walham Green, 472 Fulham Road, Fulham, SW6 1BY
The Sun Wharf, 50 Tooley Street, London Bridge, Southwark, SE1 2TF
Coombe Lodge, 104 Coombe Rd, Croydon, CR0 5RB
The Lion & The Unicorn, The Sidings, Waterloo station, Lambeth, SE1 7BH
The Captain Flinders, 34–38 Eversholt Street, Euston, Camden, NW1 1DA

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London Drinker is published on behalf of the Greater London branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, and is edited by Tony Hedger. It is printed by Buxton Press Ltd, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 6AE.

CAMRA is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and registered in England; company no. 1270286.

The next edition, June/July 2026, will be published on Wednesday 27 May. The editorial deadline for this issue is no later than Friday 8 May. Material for publication, including press releases, should preferably be sent by e-mail to ldnews.hedger@gmail.com. Please also use this e-mail address to contact the editor.

All contributions to this magazine are accepted on a voluntary basis only. All articles are compiled or written by the editor unless otherwise credited. Artificial Intelligence is not used. The views expressed in this magazine are those of their individual authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the editor or CAMRA.

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Subscriptions: please send either £9 for the mailing of six editions or £17 for 12 editions to Stan Tompkins, 52 Rabbs Mill House, Chiltern View Road, Uxbridge, Middx UB8 2PD. Please make cheques payable to CAMRA London Area. If you wish to pay by bank transfer, please contact treasurer@london.camra.org.uk. These prices apply to UK mail addresses only. To arrange for copies to be sent overseas, please contact us.

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Branch diaries	4
News and events	8
Des de Moor	10
A London brewer finally does it!	12
London Pubs Group	14
Brewery Liaison Officers	16
Pub news	18
Hoop & Grapes reopens	20
The threatened pubs of Heathrow (part two)	20
Brewery news	26
Werewolf - keeping Camden creepy!	30
Trade news	32
Pub heritage and planning	34
Gastropub awards	36
Beer in Portugal	36
News and views	40
Taking a look at West London	40
Thirsty diversions	42
Kingston Beer Festival	42
The ghost pubs of Kentish Town	44
Book reviews	46
Beer, buses and (occasional) bells	47
CAMRA pub information update 73	48
Tributes	51
Letters	51
Are you a CAMRA member?	52
Idle Moments	52
Crossword	54

This is the time of year when CAMRA branches up and down the country select their entries for the next year's *Good Beer Guide* (GBG). Quite often I see or hear comments such as 'why do you always choose the same pubs' or 'do you only choose your favourite pubs'. I wish to assure readers that is not how it works. This is CAMRA operating as a consumer organisation. The pubs in the guide are the ones recommended by those who themselves drink cask beer.

Pubs can only achieve a place in the guide through nomination by their CAMRA branch. There are no fees involved. All pubs are visited several over the judging period by several different CAMRA volunteers.

Although CAMRA branches are autonomous when it comes to selecting their pubs, CAMRA has a set of standard judging criteria that are used at all stages of its competitions, from Branch Pub of the Year to the national winner. These are also used for the GBG and therefore all pubs in consideration for listing are judged to the same standard. No pub has a divine right to be in the GBG. Each year we start afresh and a pub needs to re-establish its credentials. That said, while it is always encouraging to see new pubs coming through, it is not fair to exclude a pub that is succeeding in maintaining its standards, especially in these difficult times, just for the sake of 'churn'.

A pub's beer scores play an important part in the process. While they do not determine the final decision, they can help, in particular, to draw attention to up-and-coming pubs that might otherwise slip 'under the radar'. I therefore urge all CAMRA members to enter their beer scores.

Tony Hedger

REAL ALE

CAMRA defines real ale as live beer:

'beer that, when first put into its final container, contains at least 0.1 million cells of live yeast per millilitre, plus enough fermentable sugar to produce a measurable reduction in its gravity while in that container, whatever it may be'. Within this definition comes cask-conditioned beer, which is defined as 'live beer that continues to mature and condition in its cask, any excess of carbon dioxide being vented such that it is served at atmospheric pressure'. It should be left to settle and condition in the cellar, for up to ten days if necessary and served at cellar temperature, which is 11 to 14°C.

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 April and May 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

May

- Wed 20 (7pm for 7.30) London Brewery Liaison Officers' meeting; venue tbc

LONDON PUBS GROUP

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

April

- Wed 15 (7pm) Smithfield and Clerkenwell tour: meet Viaduct Tavern, 126 Newgate St, EC1A 7AA

May

- Sat 16 Trip to Reading; details to follow
 - Mon 18 (7.30) Meeting; Trinity (upstairs) 202-206 Borough High St, SE1 1JX. All CAMRA members interested in pub research and preservation welcome.
- www.londonpubsgroup.camra.org.uk

CIDER

Ian White, ikwcider@icloud.com

April

- Sat 25 (12-9pm) London Cider & Perry Festival; see page 17

YOUNG MEMBERS' GROUP

Dario Bertero, dbertero.w@gmail.com

May

- Sat 23 (2pm) Dulwich Hamlet Beer Festival social; see page 33

Facebook: [Greater London CAMRA Young Members](#)

BEXLEY

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

April

- Wed 8 (7pm) Meeting; Bolthole, Falconwood DA16 2PL
- Wed 22 Bexleyheath social: meet (7pm) Golden Lion DA6 8BE
- Wed 29 (7pm) Staff pre-festival meeting; Dartfordians DA5 1EE

May

- Wed 13 (7pm) Meeting; Halfway House, Sidcup DA15 8DJ
 - Wed 20 (7pm) Festival staff washup meeting; Dartfordians DA5 1EE
 - Wed 27 Joint social with SE London branch: meet (7pm) British Oak, Blackheath SE3 8SU
- www.bexley.camra.org.uk

BROMLEY

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

April

- Thu 2 (7.30) Easter beer festival social; Orpington Liberal Club BR6 0RZ
- Sat 4 (12pm) Beer festival social; Greyhound, Keston BR2 6BP
- Mon 13 Beckenham BR3 social: (7.30) Three Hounds 4PR, (9.30) Bricklayers Arms 1BN
- Sat 25 (12.30) London Cider Festival social; Rocket Van Studio SE17 1AL
- Wed 29 Penge social: (7.30) Goldsmiths Arms 7AA, (8.15) Pawleyne Arms 7AA, (9pm) Southey Brewing 7JD, (10.10) Moon & Stars 7QS

May

- Thu 7 (2pm) Bexley Beer Festival social; Dartfordians Community Sports Club DA5 1LW
 - Fri 15 (6pm) Social; SPBW Woodfest VI, Musical Museum, Brentford TW8 0DU
 - Tue 19 (7.30) Committee meeting; Lord Holmesdale BR1 2QZ
 - Thu 21 (6pm) Dulwich Hamlet Beer Festival social; see page 33
 - Tue 26 Bromley BR1 social: (7.30) Red Lion 3LG, (8.30) Partridge 1HE, (9.30) Star & Garter 1NZ
- <http://bromley.camra.org.uk/calendar/>

CROYDON & SUTTON

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

April

- Wed 1 Crystal Palace SE19 social: (8pm) Royal Albert 1RX, (9.30) Sparrowhawk 1RX
- Thu 9 Croydon CR0 social: (8pm) Surrey Cricketers 1DJ, (9.30) Royal Standard 1SS
- Thu 16 Carshalton SM5 social: (8pm) Palmerston 2JY, (9.30) Sun 2HU
- Wed 22 (8.30) Meeting; Green Dragon (upstairs) CR0 1NA
- Wed 29 Sutton social: meet (8pm) Little Windsor SM1 4BY

May

- Thu 7 Upper Norwood social: meet (8pm) Conquering Hero SE19 3HF
 - Wed 13 (1pm) Shirley social; Crown CR0 8BA
 - Wed 20 (8.30) **Branch AGM**; Cryer Arts (Watercress Suite) SM5 3BB
 - Thu 28 (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

April

- Tue 28 (6.30) Pig's Ear charity cheque presentation; Hackney Town Hall. Please inform branch if you will be there.
- Thu 30 (8pm) Pub of the Year and Cider Pub of the Year presentations; Cock Tavern E8 1EJ

May

- Tue 5 (7.30) First Pig's Ear planning meeting; venue tbc, see website
 - Thu 7 (6pm) Ale night social; Leyton Orient Supporters Club E10 5NF
 - Wed 13 (8pm) **Branch AGM**; Leyton Orient Supporters Club E10 5NF
 - Tue 26 (7.30) Second Pig's Ear planning meeting; venue tbc, see website
- www.pigsear.org.uk

ENFIELD & BARNET

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

April

- Thu 9 Enfield EN2 social: (7pm) Crown & Horseshoes 6PZ, (8pm) Moon Under Water 6NN
- Sat 18 Visit St Albans for tap take over pubs: meet (12pm) Waterend Barn AL1 3LE
- Tue 21 Winchmore Hill N21 social: (7pm) Salisbury Arms 3NP, (8pm) Little Green Dragon 2AD
- Thu 30 Finchley social: (7pm) King of Prussia N3 1DH, (8pm) Bohemia N12 9QH

May

- Wed 6 Crouch social: (7pm) Small Beer N8 8PT, (8pm) Robin N4 4AP
 - Tue 12 Southgate N14 social: (7pm) Walker Sports Ground 7JZ, (8pm) New Crown 5PH
 - Wed 20 Barnet EN5 social: (7pm) Old Fold Manor Golf Club, Hadley Green 4QN, (8pm) Olde Mill Inn 5SJ
 - Fri 29 (12pm) East Barnet social; Railway Bell EN4 8RR
- <https://enfieldandbarnet.camra.org.uk>



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East London
& City Branch
'Pub of the Year'
2025

Branch diaries

KINGSTON & LEATHERHEAD

John Burns, jburnsklc@gmail.com

April

- Wed 1 SE1 London Bridge tour: (12.30) Shipwrights Arms 2TF, (1.30) Old King's Head 1NA, (2.30) Market Porter 9AA, (3.15) Rake 9AG, (4pm) Sun Wharf 2TF
- Thu 9 (7pm) Festival social; Egham United Services Club
- Wed 29 Weybridge tour: (12.30) Flintgate, (1.30) Old Crown, (2.30) Queens Head, (3.15) Waverley, (4pm) Jolly Farmer

May

- Thu 21 (7.30) Meeting; Albert Arms, Esher
 - Sat 30 Rail trip to Winchester: (12pm) Queen Inn, (1.15) Wykeham Arms, (2pm) Westgate, (3pm) Fullford Arms, (4pm) Hyde Tavern, (5pm) Albion
- <https://kandl.camra.org.uk/>

NORTH LONDON

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

April

- Tue 7 (7.30) Pub of the Year presentation; Wenlock Arms N1 7TA
- Wed 15 (2pm) Social; Harrison Pub & Hotel WC1H 8JF
- Tue 21 (7pm) Cider Pub of the Year presentation; Craft Beer Co. Covent Garden WC1V 7AA
- Tue 28 Highgate N6 tour: (4.30) Prince of Wales 5JX, (5.45) Gatehouse 4BD, (7pm) Wrestlers 4AA, (8.30 optional) Bull 4AB

May

- Sat 9 (2.15) Beer & Chocolate Tasting; Pineapple NW5 2NX - tickets required
 - Wed 13 Highbury & Islington: (7pm) Meeting, Brewhouse & Kitchen N5 1JJ; then Pocket N1 2AS
 - Tue 19 (2pm) Social; Queen Charlotte W1T 1AA
 - Tue 26 WC1 & NW1 tour: (4.30) Queens Larder WC1N 3AR, (6pm) Woolf & Whistle Tavistock Hotel WC1H 9EU, (7.15) Euston Tap NW1 2EF, (8.45 optional) Doric Arch NW1 2DN
- <https://northlondon.camra.org.uk>

RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW

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

April

- Tue 7 (7pm) Meeting; George, Twickenham TW1 3SN
- ### May
- Fri 1 (7.30) **Branch AGM**; Express Tavern (upstairs), Brentford TW8 0EW
 - Wed 13 (7pm) Pizza night; Mitre, Richmond TW9 1UY
 - Tue 26 (7.30) Social; White Swan, Twickenham TW1 3DN
- rh.camra.org.uk

SOUTH EAST LONDON

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

April

- Wed 1 (7pm) Borough Market social; meet Barrowboy & Banker SE1 9QQ
- Tue 7 (7pm) Peckham social; meet Clock House SE22 9QA
- Sat 25 (12pm) London CAMRA Cider Festival; Rocket Van Studio SE17 1AL
- Wed 29 (7pm) Brockley social; meet Lawrence Arms SE4 2PH

May

- Tue 5 (7.30) Meeting and social; Shirker's Rest SE14 6PP
 - Fri 8 (7pm) Bexley Beer Festival social; Dartfordians Community Sports Club DA5 1EE
 - Thu 14 (7pm) Social; SPBW Woodfest VI, Musical Museum, Brentford TW8 0DU
 - Thu 21-Sat 23 Dulwich Beer & Cider Festival. Dulwich Hamlet Football Club, Champion Hill Stadium, SE22 8BD
- <https://sel.camra.org.uk>

SOUTH WEST LONDON

Mike Flynn, 07751 231191, info@swl.camra.org.uk

Cycling: Geoff Strawbridge, geoff.camra@gmail.com

April

- Mon 13 (7.30) Meeting; Duke of Cambridge SW11 3AA

- Wed 29 Tooting SW17 social; meet (7pm) Wheatshaf 7TS and finish Antelope 9NG

May

- Tue 5 (7.30) Meeting; Hand in Hand SW19 4RQ
 - Tue 12 Raynes Park social: meet (7pm) Cavern SW20 0AY
- <https://swl.camra.org.uk>

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Andrew Vaughan, 07854 988152,

branch@watford.camra.org.uk

April

- Fri 10 Bushey WD23 social: (8.15) Three Crowns 1EA, (9.15) King Stag 3EH, (10pm) Swan 3EE
- Mon 27 (8pm) Meeting; Essex Arms, Watford WD17 3EG

May

- Fri 1 Watford social: (8.30) Red Lion WD18 0EY, (9.15) Two Trees Micro WD18 0EH, (10.30) Moon Under Water WD17 2BS
 - Mon 18 (8pm) Meeting; Wellington Arms, Watford WD17 1PA
 - Fri 22 Chorleywood and Heronsgate WD3 social: (8.30) Rose & Crown 5LW, (9.15) Old Shepherd 5JH, (10pm) Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty 5BS
- 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

April

- Thu 9 (2pm) Soho social and Pub of the Year presentation; Lyric W1D 7LT
- Tue 21 Brook Green W6 social: (7pm) Queen's Head 7BL, (8.30) Latymers 8BS

May

- Thu 7 W1 social: (2pm) Stag's Head W1W 6XW, (3pm) Jackalope W1G 7EQ, (4pm) King's Head W1G 8PJ
 - Wed 20 W1J social: (2pm) Grapes 7QQ, (3pm) King's Arms 7QA, (4pm) Market Tavern 7HR
 - Tue 26 (7.30 for 8pm) **Branch AGM**; Antelope SW1W 8EZ
- www.westlondon.camra.org.uk

WEST MIDDLESEX

Branch contact: Ben Hart, ben@westmiddx.camra.org.uk

Social Sec: Bob O'Brien, 01895 673266

April

- Mon 6 Rickmansworth WD3 tour (1pm) Coach & Horses 1ER, (2.30) Pennsylvania 1AN, (4pm) Fox & Hounds 1AY
- Thu 16 Harefield UB9 tour; (7.30) Harefield 6BY, (8.30) Kings Arms 6BJ, (10pm) Old Orchard 6HJ
- Mon 20 (1pm) All day social; J.J. Moon's, Ruislip Manor HA4 0AA
- Thu 30 (8pm) Social; General Elliott, Uxbridge UB8 2UR

May

- Thu 7 Ealing W5 social: (7.45) Rose & Crown 4HN, (8.45) Red Lion 5RA, (10pm) Sir Michael Balcon 3TJ
 - Mon 18 (8pm) Social; Swallow, Hillingdon UB10 9N
 - Mon 25 West Ealing W13 social; (1pm) Duke of Kent 8DL, (3pm) Drayton Court Hotel 8PH, (5pm) Forester 9EP
 - Thu 28 (8pm) **Branch AGM**; Forester W13 9EP
 - Sat 30 High Wycombe trip; meet (12pm) Uxbridge station, thence arriving (1.30) Falcon, 9 Cornmarket, HP11 2AX
- <https://westmiddx.camra.org.uk>

The electronic copy deadline for the June/July 2026 edition is no later than Friday 8 May.

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

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REMINDER FOR CAMRA MEMBERS

The Campaign's Members' Weekend, including the national AGM, takes place this year from 17 to 19 April in St Albans. It's not too late to register. Go to <https://camra.org.uk/members-weekend>. If you just want to go for the day, it's less than 30 minutes by Thameslink from St Pancras. The organising branch, South Hertfordshire, have set up a series of guides and events called *St Albans: City of Ale*. This is available not just for the duration of the Members' Weekend and is open to non-members. Go to the website <https://stalbanscityofale.org.uk/>.

NATIONAL CLUB OF THE YEAR

The winner of CAMRA's National Club of the Year award for 2025 is the Billingham Catholic Club on Teesside (TS23 2RU). Housed in a Victorian former Roman Catholic school and run by volunteers, the club has no current direct links with the Catholic church. It is a long running entry in the Good Beer Guide and has a reputation for its live music.

BROMLEY BRANCH AWARDS

The Bromley branch Pub of the Year for 2026 is the Cockpit in Chislehurst (BR7 6NR). This is their fourth successive win and, last year, they were runners-up in the Regional Pub of the Year competition. Bromley's 2026 runner-up was the One Inn The Wood micropub in Petts Wood (BR5 1LA).

The branch's Club of the Year once again is the Orpington Liberal Club (BR6 0RZ). One of the four finalists in the national competition last year, it has won the Greater London Regional competition on a number of occasions.

Congratulations to all concerned.

EAST LONDON & CITY AWARDS

Congratulations to the Cock Tavern in Hackney on achieving the double of being both the Pub of the Year and Cider Pub of the Year for 2026. This is the first time that this has happened while the current committee members have been active. The pub's full address is 315 Mare Street E8 1EJ.

The branch's Club of the Year is, once again, the Leyton Orient Supporters Club. Wasting no time, the presentation was made at one of the club's recent ale nights.



The photograph shows Steve Hall from the branch (left) presenting the certificate to Mark Harrison (right) from the club, alongside several of the club's volunteers. With thanks to Dave Gilchrist for the photograph. The club's full address is Oliver Road E10 5LG

These winners will go forward as our entries in the respective CAMRA Greater London competitions. Many thanks to everyone who took part in the process, whether by nominating pubs or by ranking the finalists.

Steve Hall

KINGSTON & LEATHERHEAD PUB OF THE SEASON

The branch's Winter Pub of the Season is the Barley Mow in Epsom. It is a Fuller's tenanted pub whose beer range has increased over the past few months and they now have access to a selection of guest beers. The presentation was made on 29 January. The pub's full address is 12-14 Pikes Hill KT17 4EA.

SOUTH EAST LONDON PUBS OF THE YEAR

The branch has completed the first stage of its Pub of the Year competition and has chosen its four area winners. The winner for the SE1 area is the uniquely named Hand & Marigold in Bermondsey Street (SE1 3UH). For the Lambeth and Southwark (excluding SE1) area, the winner is the historic Mayflower in Rotherhithe (SE16 4NF). For Greenwich, it is the Green Goddess in Blackheath Standard (SE3 7AA) while for Lewisham it is the Shirker's Rest micropub in New Cross (SE14 6PP). Our congratulations to all four. In due course, each will be presented with a framed certificate. The voting to decide an overall winner is in hand and the result should be announced in the next edition.

WEST LONDON PUB OF THE YEAR

More votes were cast this year than for many years and we are pleased to announce that the outstanding winner was the Bear in Paddington (W2 1JA). The pub is operated by the Craft Beer Company. There were joint runners-up: the Lyric in Soho (W1D 7LT) and the Harp in Charing Cross (WC2N 4HS).

NEWS FROM NORWICH

Here is some good news about a CAMRA beer festival that I know is a favourite among London drinkers. The renovation works to the historic St Andrew's and Blackfriars' Halls, having taken longer than expected, are now complete and the Norwich Beer Festival will return to its traditional home in October. Full details will follow. The train journey is just short of two hours.

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CAMRA activists in London were shocked and saddened to learn of the untimely death of Des de Moor at the age of 64. Many of us knew him, often having worked with him on the various editions of his seminal guide, *London's Best Beer, Pubs and Bars*. He leaves a huge gap. Fellow beer writer Roger Protz wrote a tribute for CAMRA's on-line newspaper *What's Brewing* to celebrate the life and many varied achievements of this talented man. It appears below, courtesy of *What's Brewing's* editor, Tim Hampson.

Des de Moor, who died this month, was a phenomenon. He was a prolific writer about beer and took part in beer judging events in many countries. He delved deep in to the history of beer and its myriad of styles. At the same time he organised tours of breweries, pubs and taprooms and played a leading role in promoting the burgeoning London beer scene in the 21st century.

Des was born in Ipswich. He moved to London and lived in Deptford with his partner Ian Harris. A great believer in walking for health, he was the secretary of the Ramblers' Association until 2015 and edited its magazine. His passion for beer was matched by his love of music. He was a singer and performed in a number of clubs in London. He specialised in cabaret and presented a collection of songs by David Bowie called *Darkness and Disgrace* with pianist Russell Churney. As described by leading beer writer Pete Brown, Des was "a man of many layers." He translated into English songs by the Belgian performer Jacques Brel, founded music nights in the Vortex Club in Stoke Newington and took part in poetry festivals in the Camden People's Theatre.

Des became an accredited beer sommelier, enabling him to take part in judging not only in Britain but in competitions abroad, including the World Beer Cup and the Great American Beer Festival in the United States, the annual Brussels Beer Challenge and competitions in the Netherlands. He made a major impact with his popular *Guide to London's Best Beers, Pubs and Bars*, first published by CAMRA in 2011, followed by new editions in 2015 and 2022. Des said, "I like to think my book made at least a small contribution to the explosion of London brewing." From the

guide's influential reach, I think we can be certain that it did. Champion Beer of Britain (CBoB) competition organiser Christine Cryne said, "Des regularly judged at CBoB and Cask Beer in London and he was willing to share his knowledge and experience. He was of enormous help to CAMRA in London, using his knowledge of London breweries to keep our data up to date."

He combined his love of walking with guided tours of London pubs, breweries and taprooms. The tours highlighted the Bermondsey Beer Mile with its collection of craft breweries that includes Anspach and Hobday and Kernel. Des said of his writing and judging, "What really interests me is how beer is appreciated and received, the culture that surrounds it and how that relates to the wider features of the societies that produce it, consume it and the places where it is made. Beer is an artefact of human society, not a simple intoxicant but capable of being enjoyed and appreciated in the same way as all the other finer things in life and it should be celebrated as such." The impact of his work saw him win the Best Beer and Travel Writing Award from the British Guild of Beer Writers in 2011 and 2015. He wrote a regular bottled beer column for BEER Magazine and contributed to other CAMRA publications.

In 2023 he published his major work with CAMRA, *Cask, the real story of Britain's unique beer culture*, a history of cask beer and Britain's unique contribution to the world of beer. The book traced cask beer brewing over the centuries, detailed how it survived the keg revolution in the 1950s and 60s and the rise of CAMRA in the 1970s. He recorded the hammering of sales cask beer took during the Covid pandemic and the subsequent lockdown of pubs, but he was upbeat about its resilience, saying it had overcome many other challenges over the centuries. In my review of the book, I described it as "superbly written and deeply researched".

Des's untimely death has led to an outpouring of comments on social media, all stressing his warmth, humanity and generosity. His enormous contribution to the appreciation of beer will not be forgotten.

Roger Protz

CAMRA Events

A list of CAMRA events taking place throughout the country is available at https://events.camra.org.uk/events?event_view=list or through this QR code.



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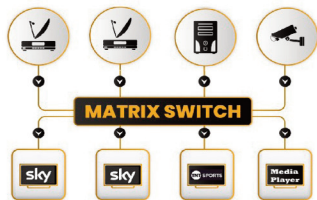
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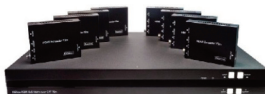


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A London brewer finally does it!

Ever since CAMRA introduced its Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition in 1997, it has never been won by a London brewery. Until now! London Brewing Co's Beer Street, a rye bitter, won Gold in the 'Speciality - Differently Produced' category. It then went on to come top in the final judging to become CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2026.

To get there, Beer Street was put forward by the London Tasting Panel. It was subsequently judged in the London & South East regional round, very kindly hosted by Wimbledon Brewery last September where it just pipped Langham's Saison to win first place. It then went forward to the national judging which, as mentioned in the previous edition, in the absence of a Great British Beer Festival - Winter this year, took place at the Liverpool Beer Festival.



Brewers Alex and Charlie with their certificates

The director of London Brewing, Senan Sexton, said, "We're absolutely delighted that Beer Street has been named Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2026 by CAMRA. We've been brewing Beer Street since we founded the brewery in 2011 and it's a real testament to the skill and dedication of our head brewer, Alex, that he has continued to refine and elevate the recipe over the years." Senan added, "This accolade means a tremendous amount to a brewery of our size. It's not only a proud moment for our team but also a fantastic boost that celebrates the enduring appeal of high-quality cask ales enjoyed in pubs across the UK."

The judges on the final panel said that it was a tough decision because all of the finalists were excellent beers. In total, 52 beers were judged by 41 judges from a variety of backgrounds: trained CAMRA judges, brewers, publicans, trade suppliers and beer writers.



The final judging panel at work

The full list of all the beers judged can be found at <https://cryneinyourbeer.sitelio.me/cryne-in-your-beer-articles>. The six category winners were:

- Brown Ales, Red Ales, Old Ales and Strong Milds: **Harvey's Old Ale** (4.3% ABV)
- Session Stouts and Porters: **Cairngorm Black Gold** (4.4% ABV)
- Strong Stouts and Porters: **Green Jack Baltic Trader Export Stout** (10.5% ABV)
- Barley Wines and Strong Ales: **Driftwood Spars Alfie's Revenge** (6.5% ABV)
- Speciality, Differently Produced: **London Brewing Beer Street** (4.0% ABV)
- Speciality, Differently Flavoured: **Farm Yard Hoof** (4.3% ABV)

There was one other London beer included in the judging. This was Wimbledon Brewery's XXXX (10% ABV) in the Barley Wine & Strong Ales category, although it was unplaced.

The six category winners now go forward to be judged, along with the summer beers, at CAMRA's Cambridge Beer Festival on Tuesday 19 May. Unusually, this long running tented festival will be open all day from noon (they normally close in the afternoon) and the winners will be announced during the afternoon session, which is open to all. The train journey from London is less than 75 minutes and the festival can be reached by bus from the station, if you don't fancy the walk. For more details see <https://www.cambridgebeerfestival.com/event/cambridge-beer-festival-2026/>.

Christine Cryne



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CAMRA's London Pubs Group was established in the early 1990s to promote the preservation of the city's historic and architecturally important pubs. The group also contributes to CAMRA's *National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors*, as described in our February/March edition.

Meetings are held regularly, six times a year, and are open to any CAMRA member who wishes to attend. We are currently holding our meetings at the Trinity, 202-206 Borough High Street, SE1 1JX, which is almost next door to Borough underground station. Details are listed in the Branch Diary section at the front of the magazine.

The group also organises pub tours around all parts of London and sometimes beyond. These are also held about six times a year and are open to all, whether you are a CAMRA member or not. Some are in the evening, usually on a Wednesday, and others are all day events on a Saturday.

The tours usually concentrate on historic pubs but occasionally we visit new or refurbished pubs in order to assess the quality of the design. Not all pubs visited will be selling cask beer.

Our programme of events for the rest of this year is

- Wednesday 15 April - Smithfield
- Saturday 16 May - 'out of town' trip to Reading
- Saturday 20 June - Midsummer Merton
- Wednesday 19 August - Along the Mildmay Line
- Saturday 17 October - Bromley, Petts Wood and Orpington
- Wednesday 16 December - ex-Watney pubs in E1 and E2

I look forward to seeing you!

Jane Jephcote
Chair, London Pubs Group

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To book go to:

<https://tinyurl.com/beerchoc2026>



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).

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A pale golden juicy IPA, Creekside offers bursts of tropical fruits courtesy of a combination of four hops.

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Brewery Liaison Officers

Do you enjoy drinking beer brewed in London? Do you enjoy drinking in brewery taprooms, even in the cold of winter? Do you take interest in who brews it? CAMRA London Region is looking for CAMRA members to volunteer to become Brewery Liaison Officers (BLOs).

CAMRA keeps a database of breweries and beers, which provides data for many functions such as the brewery section of the *Good Beer Guide*, beer data for the Champion Beer of Britain contest, the CAMRA website and beer scoring etc. The BLO for each brewery is responsible for keeping the data up to date, in line with tasks that are set through the year for that purpose.

As well as these tasks, the BLO has the opportunity to submit brewery news for the regular regional report and, twice a year, London BLOs come together for a meeting, usually at a brewery, which is a great opportunity to meet up with each other and share experiences.

The database is administered through a website and so some IT skills are needed. The website was refreshed a few years ago and there is documentation available to help.


Nearly all of the breweries regularly producing cask beer in London are already accounted for but there are still quite a few craft breweries needing BLOs. You don't have to live in the same CAMRA branch area as the brewery but it helps if you can get there easily. You'd also need to keep the local branch up to date.

If you would like to volunteer as a BLO, would you please send an email to jpa1260@gmail.com and I will forward the role description.

John Adams

Brewery Liaison Co-ordinator, CAMRA London Region

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National Pub of the Year

Just as we went to print with the previous edition, it was announced that the **Tamworth Tap** in Tamworth, Staffordshire (B79 7LR) had been voted CAMRA's National Pub of the Year for 2025. This is the first time since the competition began in 1988 that a pub has won the award for a third time. The building dates from Tudor times and its courtyard beer terrace has views of the town's Norman castle. The pub is also the home of the Tamworth Brewing Company. The runners up were the Blackfriars Tavern in Great Yarmouth (NR30 3BZ), the Pelican Inn in Gloucester (GL1 2QR) and the Volunteer Arms (Staggs) in Musselburgh (EH21 6JE).

- * The **Black Cap** in Camden High Street (NW1 7JY) closed in 2015. Since then, a determined group of campaigners have battled to have this iconic LGBTQ+ venue reopened. I am pleased to report that they have succeeded and, after a £2 million renovation, the venue was due to reopen on 21 March. It will feature a bar, a performance space and B&B rooms. Our congratulations to the campaigners accordingly.
- * Worrying news about the **Coronet** in Holloway (N7 6NJ). Formerly a cinema called the Savoy, it was converted into a pub by Wetherspoons in 1983. CAMRA regarded it as 'an exceptional and sympathetic conversion of an Art Deco cinema, retaining much of its original interior'. JDW disposed of it 2023 and it passed to a company called The Tollgate TPL Ltd. In February the freeholder served notice on them to forfeit the lease and the pub closed. The freeholder now has complete control of the site. Despite its distinction, the building is not statutorily listed, unlike the Coronet cinemas in Eltham and Notting Hill Gate that are. It was registered as an Asset of Community Value by Islington Council on 2 August 2016 but that listing was not renewed. I have seen no reports as to its future.
- * A collaboration between the East London Brewing Company and the pub company Taverns East Ltd sees the reopening of the **Empire Tavern**, formerly the Samuel Pepys, in Mare Street, Hackney (E8 1EJ). The site is next to the Hackney Empire. As well as ELB's own beers, there will be guests from other local independent brewers. Howling Hops and Saint Monday have been mentioned. There will also be a substantial food offering. Taverns East already operate the Leytonstone Tavern (E11 3PX) and the Tavern on the Hill, the former Wild Card pub, in Higham Hill (E17 5RG).
- * Closed since 2018 and still vacant, the **Grapes** in Sutton (SM1 1NR), a former Wetherspoons pub, is reported to be available for lease. An article in a local paper quotes a figure of £55,000 per annum. There is a problem however in that planning permission has been granted to add additional floors to the Victorian building for a residential development. This impinges on the ground floor trading area. Planning permission was originally granted in 2019 and the most recent application was in July 2024. Work must start within three years.
- * There has been an interesting development at the former Paxton in West Norwood (SE27 9QY), which has been closed for over two years. Owners Greene King have joined with the MOBO Group to open this imposing building as the **House of MOBO**. MOBO is the organisation behind the Music of Black Origin awards and their intention is that the pub will become 'a hub for culture, creativity and connection'. This will involve live music, creative showcases and community-led events. There will also be a food offering of African and Caribbean fusion dishes. This is MOBO's first venture of this type.
- * Here is another example of a pub apparently just being abandoned. **L'Affaire**, in Wandsworth (SW18 4JP), at the Putney end of the infamous one-way system, was the original Wetherspoons in Wandsworth. It went through several short-term iterations after that, until it closed in 2019. The freehold is owned by Transport for London. There is hope, however. In a recent press release about their Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Wandsworth Council specifically mention the site and say that they will work with the Wandsworth Town Partnership to bring the pub 'back to life'.

- * Another reopening. **The Store** in Croydon (CR0 1BF), once a branch of Sainsbury's, closed last August. It has however now been acquired by the Brakspear Pub Company and should reopen later this year. Brakspear's beers, incidentally, are currently brewed by Carlsberg Britvic.
- * There have been interesting recent developments at the **White Horse** in Parsons Green (SW6 4UL). The pub has been refurbished by Mitchells & Butlers with some changes to the internal layout and the installation of an outside bar to serve the seating area. What was unusual was that, rather than amend the existing licence, M&B applied for a completely new one. They explained that this procedure was 'cleaner' and allowed for flexibility. Hammersmith & Fulham Council's Licensing Sub-Committee approved the application in full, saying that this was a 'well-established pub of long standing'. This was despite some objections from local residents.
- * As originally announced in 2024, by the time that you read this, London should have its first Thornbridge Brewery outlet. The **Wild Swan** in Fetter Lane, Holborn (EC4A 1ES) is, as are many of their pubs, a joint venture with beer importers Pivovar. Curiously, it is said to be a replacement for the White Swan, which stood nearby, but the Closed Pubs website says that this was the site of the Printers Devil, previously the Vintners Arms, that closed in 2008 and was demolished in 2013. The White Swan, nicknamed the Mucky Duck, stood at 108 Fetter Lane and has disappeared under an office development.
- * Many pubs have resident cats and dogs but the **Royal Oak** in Brockham, Surrey (RH3 7JS) is different. It has a resident family of seven meercats, two adults and five pups. They live in an enclosure in the garden. The nearest station is Dorking, then a walk. Simples, as they say...

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Hoop & Grapes reopens

There is no certainty as to how the name Hoop & Grapes came into use. One possibility is that it came from the pub being used as a venue for unlicensed 'Fleet Marriages'. However, I favour the suggestion that Hoop is a corruption of the word hops and therefore the name simply refers to the availability of both beers and wines within. I have only found one other pub in the UK with this name and it is in nearby Aldgate High Street (EC3N 1AL).

The pub in Farringdon Street was saved from demolition in 1991 after being granted a Grade II listing. It now sits as a building of historic significance very much in contrast to the surrounding modern developments, many of which are offices. Shepherd Neame spent the grand sum of £1.7 million over five years to refurbish the pub and it reopened in February 2026. The investment shows and the pub has a lighter feel than previously, although there are some historic remnants such as the fireplaces. It now extends over several floors, including a cosy games room on the top floor that has a dartboard, in addition to board games. On my visit there were four cask beers on sale in the main bar, all of course from Sheps, and two in the upstairs bar. The use of outside space has been very positive and you will find a comfortable garden at the rear and a small first floor terrace.

A formal reopening took place led by chief executive, Jonathan Neame, who holds the title of High Sheriff of Kent. He introduced the Very Reverend Andrew Tremlett, the Dean of nearby St Paul's Cathedral who, in his speech, told us of the association between pubs, the community and the church. The Hoop itself was built on a graveyard belonging to the nearby St Bride's Church. He was very grateful to receive a donation of £1,000 from Sheps for the Glasshouse charity.



The Dean pulls the first pint

Once again Sheps are to be congratulated for the time and money that they have put into redeveloping this pub without it losing its appeal from the distant past. Mr Neame described it as a classic London pub and it will prove to be the place to go for workers in the nearby offices and visitors to the new London Museum when it opens. The museum will be taking over buildings in the nearby old Smithfield Market.

The food offering looks strong as well. I had the fortune to have some fresh oysters. There is a full range from small plates to mains.

So, there you have it. Four excellent cask beers; if hungry, plenty of eats on the menu and the pleasure of sitting in a lovely, carefully refurbished pub. The full address is 80 Farringdon Street, EC4A 4BL and full details can be found at <https://www.hoopandgrapes.co.uk/>.

The pub is our cover picture for this edition. Our thanks to Sheps for both photographs.

John Cryne

The threatened pubs of Heathrow (part two)

In my article in the previous edition of *London Drinker*, I visited pubs under threat of complete obliteration should the planned third runway at Heathrow Airport be constructed, as is current government policy (but this may be subject to a quicker U-turn than any Airbus A380 is able to execute!).

Those pubs were located to the north-west of the airport, where the tarmac is due to be laid over villages that have buildings dating back to the last millennium and the M25 will be moved sideways. The new runway will also have a knock-on effect on the areas surrounding the airport which may not be in the line of bulldozers but will be under pressure from the supporting infrastructure that will need to be built, like hotels, car parks, maintenance facilities and myriad other airport-related developments.

My tour around the threatened pubs resumes in Sipson, north of the airport. Surprisingly isolated and surrounded by fields sits the **Plough** (UB7 0HW) and its much larger neighbour, the hotel that is now called the Holiday Inn. A landmark long visible from the M4 spur road roundabout, it was for many years the Trust House hotel.



The Plough



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The threatened pubs of Heathrow (part two)

Sadly, cask ale isn't served at the Plough but it merits a mention owing to its extraordinary number of hanging flower baskets on my visit and its excellent Indian-inspired food menu. Guests at the hotel are probably completely unaware they could get a much more authentic dining experience (and pay a lot less) by walking a few yards out of the hotel compound and into the pub that the hotel overshadows.

Continuing towards the airport, the **King William** (UB7 0HT) is a remarkably old pub, although its location on a mini-roundabout, surrounded by modern development, isn't exactly sympathetic. A 16th-century timber-framed building, it's also Grade II listed. Inside it wears its history lightly with the main attraction on my visit being the Sky Sports Saturday afternoon football results show. Cask ale was temporarily unavailable on my visit although the CAMRA website suggests two ales are regularly served.



The King William

The **Three Magpies** (TW6 2AU) epitomises the development of the airport. It is the last remaining building from the hamlet of Heathrow that gave the airport its name. Another of the last surviving pubs on the Bath Road, there's been a hostelry here since the 16th century with the current building being about 150 years old. An old drinking trough, erected by the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association, stands in the car park (currently used as a bench in a smoking shelter) and emphasises the pub's long history on this ancient road into London. From the outside the pub looks like a defiant survivor against the accumulated development of the last seventy years, sitting among and above a tangle of service roads. The northern runway is only a couple of hundred yards away and it's almost on top of the entrance to the tunnel into the Heathrow central terminal area. It is only a ten-minute bus ride away from Terminals 2 and 3 if you fancy a change from the airport Wetherspoon's, although the Three Magpies won't be serving Stella at 5am!



The horse trough at the Three Magpies

While the seating out at the back looks on to a wall topped with barbed wire, the interior of this Greene King pub is surprisingly plush and it is an unexpected haven from the noise and activity on its doorstep. It also served me the best ale of my trip; a good pint of London Glory. Unfortunately, the pub sits right on the margins of the third runway development area and the Bath Road will be diverted northwards at exactly this point. Therefore, like the King William, the Three Magpies could easily face the wrecking ball as the airport's perimeter moves north-westwards.

A pub that will probably be safe – just – is the **Pheasant Inn** in Harlington (UB3 5LX), just north of the Bath Road. It's in an area that might be unique for alternating luxury hotels like the Radisson Blu, Marriott and Sheraton Skyline (all have bars but no real ale) with post-war housing estates.



The Pheasant with its extension

The pub is also phenomenally popular, particularly for its food. It must also be unique for having a pheasant-shaped extension (see photo) with wide wing-like eaves and even a head jutting out above. Another example of the antiquity of the pubs in the area, it's also Grade II listed with the original building (minus pheasant) dating back to the 18th century. Two real ales are available and I enjoyed Sharp's Sea Fury.



The White Hart

The only pub in the area that regularly features in the *Good Beer Guide* is the **White Hart**, further into Harlington village (UB3 5DP) and slightly removed from Heathrow's frenetic activity. It's a Fuller's house, although only London Pride and ESB were available on my visit. It's a spacious pub with a restaurant at one end and comfortable soft furnishings in the bar area. Beneath the Fuller's branding is a deceptively historic building, dating back to the 18th century and, guess what, it's also Grade II listed. The pub

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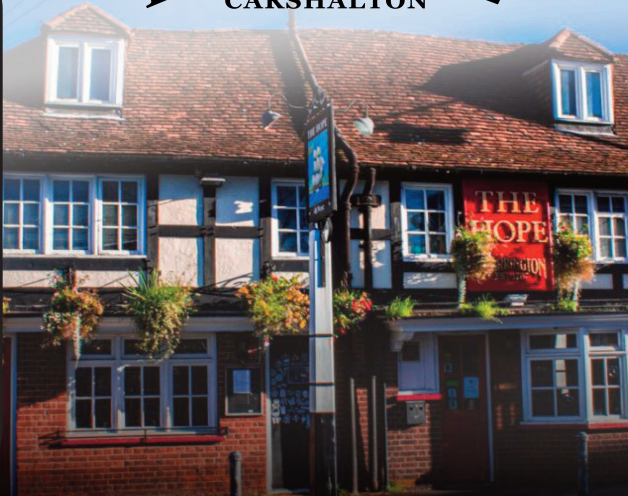
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3 MINUTES FROM: CARSHALTON STATION, MANY LOCAL BUSES.

The threatened pubs of Heathrow (part two)

is decorated with eclectic bric-a-brac. A Nipper-like ceramic dog positioned next to an old gramophone might be a tribute to the record company, HMV, which had a factory in nearby Hayes.

The pubs in Harlington are likely to be almost directly under the flight path of the new runway. This is a familiar experience to drinkers at the **Green Man** at Hatton Cross (TW14 0PZ) to the south-east of the airport, many of whom work at the airport. A five-minute walk from the tube station, this pub is extraordinarily close to the flight path of aircraft making westerly approaches to Heathrow's southern runway (known as 27L). Planes pass only a few hundred feet overhead, enough to create downward air vortices that can make lampposts wobble. When aircraft are taking off in an easterly direction, the largest planes, like Airbus 380s, pass very low over the pub at full power. Built in 1640, the Green Man is even older than the pubs to the north of the airport but curiously it is not listed. Inside it had a genuinely antiquated feel with old wooden beams and watch-your-head doorways and is in effect divided into two separate sections either side of the bar. It's a Greene King pub but stocks guest ales. I had Hazy Day, one of the brewery's seasonal specials.



The Green Man

As with most of the pubs visited in the previous article and despite their age and architectural merits, these airport pubs might have been turned into quaint gastropubs monetising their genuine history were they in more rural areas. Instead, they have the feel of places that primarily serve their local communities. Equal in heritage to 'chocolate box' pubs in, say, the Cotswolds, it would be hard to find a tourist in any of them. This is ironic given the second biggest hub of tourist traffic in the world is on their doorstep, Dubai having overtaken Heathrow. That's a position that building Heathrow's third runway may overturn but we must be vigilant that this is not at the expense of these hidden treasures of London pubs.

Mike Clarke

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London Drinker is published bi-monthly.

The June/July edition will be available from Wednesday 27 May.

It will also be available on-line at <https://londondrinker.camra.org.uk/wordpress>.

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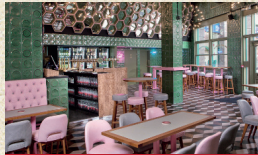
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EVENTS



GONE TO THE DOGS

I'm sure that most readers will be aware of what has happened to BrewDog and no doubt books are already being written about it by better writers than me. That said, I like to think that *London Drinker* is a 'paper of record' and so I shall duly note what happened at the beginning of March and concentrate on what happens next. In fairness, it is quite a story. Founded in Aberdeen in 2007, the one-time 'Punk' brewers, who early on made it clear that they had no time for us crusty old cask beer drinkers, ended up running a multi-national, partly private equity owned global operation.

Readers will know that there had been problems for some time, evidenced by the closure of a number of pubs and their distillery business. This all came to a head when they simply ran out of cash. They have been acquired out of administration in a 'pre-pack' deal by an American company called Tilray Brands who began life as a cannabis producer and moved into consumer goods and brewing. They are currently the fourth-largest craft beer brewer in the USA and operate around 20 brewpubs. They also produce and market Carlsberg beers (including 1664) under licence in the USA.

Tilray are reported to have paid £33 million for BrewDog's worldwide intellectual property, UK brewing operations and eleven 'premier and profitable' brewpubs. They are looking for staff to reopen these and have not ruled out re-employing people laid off in the administration. They may also reopen the distillery. The other 38 bars in the UK have now closed. The closed ones in London are listed in this edition's Pub Information Update.

Tilray have gone on to acquire BrewDog's operations in Australia and are negotiating to acquire its business in the USA. One report said that they have set aside funds to make a 'significant' capital investment. They appear to have every intention of continuing the brand and may use it to make their own beers more widely available.

The surviving sites in London are at Canary Wharf, Paddington, Seven Dials, Tower Hill and Waterloo. The others are Birmingham, Dogtap Ellon (the 'home' brewery), Dublin, Edinburgh DogHouse and Lothian Road, Manchester. Some 733 jobs survived but 484 were lost. The contract that BrewDog had to supply beer at the Lord's cricket ground has been terminated.

Tilray had competition from Dublin-based C&C Group, who own Tennent's and Magners cider, and, at one point, one of BrewDog's founders, James Watt, was said to be prepared to invest £10 million in a rescue bid but this came to nothing. The American private equity firm TSG, who invested £213 million in BrewDog in 2017, are thought to have lost their money. BrewDog's initial funding came from its 'Equity for Punks' scheme. Some 220,000 people are reported to have lost a total of £75 million.

Simon Irwin, Tilray's chief executive, has however said that he intends to reach out to the 'equity punks', saying, "They're important to us. They're important to be ambassadors to the brand and we should not forget them at all." There is, I suspect, more to come with this story.

INNIS & GUNN

Having missed out on BrewDog, C&C Group have made do with another Scottish brewer, Innis & Gunn. Very sadly, this innovative brewery, first known for their Original Oak Aged Ale, went into administration in early March and has since been sold to C&C for £4.5 million. C&C already owned 8% of I&G. Founded in 2003 in Edinburgh, the company acquired the Inveralmond Brewery in Perth in 2016. They also had taprooms in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The breweries and taprooms were not included in the deal, so have closed, with around 100 staff being made redundant. C&C intend to continue production of the I&G brands using their existing resources. Innis & Gunn used crowdfunding to purchase Inveralmond, believed to be around £3 million, and it is unlikely that any of this will be repaid. Ironically, before they had their own brewery in Edinburgh, I&G contract-brewed at Tennent's Wellpark Brewery, which is probably to where the beers will now return.

MCMULLEN'S SELL TENANTED ESTATE

In February, in a move reminiscent of Young's sale of the Ram Pub Company, McMullen's of Hertford sold 30 pubs, comprising the greater part of their tenanted estate, to Punch Pubs & Co. Family-owned McMullen's, who still have some 70 managed houses, said that *'the future stewardship of the pubs and their publicans was central to its decision-making'*. Punch, who are backed by the private equity firm Fortress and operate around 1,300 community pubs, said that the deal represents *'a small but strategically important'* addition to their estate, bolstering its presence across Hertfordshire and Essex. Five London pubs are affected, in Barnet, Enfield and Finchley. Punch have promised that they will be investing in the pubs.

BREWERY NUMBERS

At the end of February, the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA) released the latest update from their UK Brewery Tracker. Sadly, at 1 January 2026, we had 1,578 breweries, compared with 1,715 on 1 January 2025. On 1 January 2023, when the Tracker started, there were 1,828. This is a net closure rate of almost three per week. SIBA's chief executive, Andy Slee pointed out that the fall off is not because of falling demand. It is down to the levels of taxation and the restrictions on access to the market caused by the tied house system, especially with non-brewing pubcos. The Competition and Markets Authority is currently investigating the 'access to market' issue, something for which CAMRA has long been lobbying.

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Werewolf - keeping Camden creepy!

Rich White has been involved with beer for a long while. Originally from the USA, where he worked in bars, he came to London and got a job as second brewer for the London Brewing Company when it was still brewing at the Bull in Highgate. Rich remained with London Brewing Co for a number of years, including overseeing the setting up of the brewery's new kit at the Bohemia in North Finchley in 2016.

The dream of setting up his own brewery and brewing his own take on American style beer was however too strong and so, in 2019, Rich took the plunge and set up Werewolf. It's a play on the film *An American Werewolf in London*, said Rich when asked where the name came from.



Rich

He brewed temporarily on a kit at the Rose & Crown in Kentish Town and spent time refining his recipes before finding his current premises in Camden. As always, things never go to plan (not aided by Covid) but he eventually opened the doors at Halloween in 2021. Even then, the tap room was eclectic, with the fairground cars and décor, inside and out, reflecting a ghoulish approach.

Over the years, the eight-hectolitre brewery has expanded, doubling the capacity and adding two more fermenters. There has also been investment in the outside seating area, which is now covered and has some new scary additions. These include a six foot tall grim reaper, a horned devil and two new tarantula ghost train side cars.



The grim reaper and the seating area

Werewolf run a number of events, from Pies & Pints to live music; they sponsor the Psycho Billy Music Festival and supply beer to a number of 'metal' music bars. However, the majority of the brewery's sales are through their tap room, where their five core beers are on sale: Stray Cat, Moonstomp, Creepster, Psycho Billy and Horrorshow. These are complemented by seasonals, including, an autumn Pumpkin Ale.

Rich continues to plan for the future. He said, "We are looking to do a bit of a refresh in the New Year, inside and out, but still in keeping with what Werewolf is about. We are enhancing our website, including an online shop, plus we have been improving our social media. We are also looking to increase the amount of canning we do; we use the mobile canner, Bevcraft. We don't have the space to have our own canning line."



The banner

Once hidden away, this small brewery, close to Camden Road station, can't be missed these days. The gate that leads into the yard sports a large eye-catching mural, the work of Joni Bellasruque. The message truly reflects Rich's ethos: 'Keeping Camden Creepy'.

The full address of the tap room is Arch 87, Randolph Street, Camden Town, NW1 0SR. For opening times, see www.werewolfbeer.com. Maybe take a silver bullet with you though!

Christine Cryne



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Doom Bar, despite being one of the nation's top selling beers, is not highly regarded by most cask ale drinkers that I know. All the same, it is sad to see it being removed from its origins in Rock, Cornwall, especially at the cost of 50 jobs in an area of high unemployment. The irony is that many people didn't believe that, given the vast quantities produced, it was actually brewed there anyway! The closure is part of a wider restructuring of the company in the UK and Ireland and the Rock site has been judged to be 'no longer financially sustainable as part of our national production network'. There will also be job losses elsewhere. Sharp's were founded in 1994 and were taken over by Molson Coors (MC) in 2011. MC are said to have since invested £20 million in the site. Presumably, MC have spare capacity in their other breweries in Burton-on-Trent, Burtonwood and Tadcaster. Sharp's did, of course, produce other beers than Doom Bar and MC say that they are committed to these brands and will explore 'a number of alternative production routes'. I only hope that MC don't go down the path of changing Doom Bar to a brewery-conditioned 'fresh' beer.

The rescuers rescued

Readers will recall that when the Black Sheep Brewery were previously in difficulties, the Keystone Brewing Group (KBG), backed by Breal Capital, stepped in to save them. KBG also acquired a number of other breweries, including Purity Brewing Co, Brew By Numbers, Brick Brewery, Magic Rock Brewing and Fourpure Brewing Co. However, in January, KBG themselves gave notice that they were going into administration. The family-owned Paramount Retail Group, who already own the Saltire Brewery, then acquired KBG for £4.5 million. There had been suggestions that Black Sheep would be sold separately but that didn't happen. Paramount have set up a separate organisation, the Great British Drinks Company (GBDC), to operate their new acquisitions. The purchase includes an agreement to invest £2 million in Black Sheep in order to 'restore the business back to growth'. The deal has saved around 145 jobs. Encouragingly, one of the co-founders of GBDC said, "We are backing regional craft beer and rebuilding some of the nation's best loved brands. These sites are not just businesses. They are community assets and important drivers of local tourism."

Wetherspoons news

Further to the site at Charing Cross mentioned in the previous edition, JDW have announced a new pub in Paddington, this time next to the station itself, despite having only opened the nearby Sir Alexander Fleming last autumn. A number of observers, including me, are wondering if their plan is to have a site at each of London's railway (not 'train') termini. A new site in the West End, in Shaftesbury Avenue, has also been announced.

There appears to have been another U-turn regarding the site of the former Grape & Grain at Crystal Palace (SE19 2AA). According to a report in the *London Now* newsletter, the site was put up for sale for a second time in February, despite JDW having announced in March of last year that they would, after all, be developing the site themselves. This one-time *Good Beer Guide* entry has been closed since 2017.

JDW have put another leasehold pub up for sale. This is the Kentish Drovers in Peckham (SE15 5RS). I have only recently seen this reported but it may have been on the market for some time. It is a large four-storey pub in a prominent position, not far from Peckham Rye station, and is in the Rye Lane Peckham Conservation Area.

In Kingston, a garden area has now been added to the King's Tun and, further out in Guildford, the Surrey University Students' Union has become a JDW franchise.

In early February, Sir Tim made an interesting comment to the *Sunday Times*, as reported in the *Propel* newsletter. He said, "I'm keeping my nose to the grindstone. I never wanted to build a dynasty. I thought it was unfair on the children and maybe unfair on people who worked for the company and would naturally rise through. But I've got to find people to take over from me."

Star attraction

In February, Star Pubs and Bars, owned by Heineken, reported that the number of applicants to take on pubs in their leased and tenanted sector increased by 10% in January as compared to 2025. They say that this demonstrates that taking on a pub remains an 'attractive proposition'. The report added that some 60% of applicants now find their pubs through company websites and social media and that they are now more knowledgeable about the trade, especially the financial aspects. No doubt then that they can work out how much better off they would be if they could trade 'free of tie'.

M&B splash the cash

Mitchell & Butlers have announced that, this year, they will be spending money on 18 out of the 100 or so pubs in their community-focused Castle Pubs brand. Among the first were the White Horse in Parsons Green (see the Pub News column) and the Crown & Greyhound in Dulwich which was due to reopen on 19 March, following work on the bar and outdoor areas and the creation of an events space upstairs. Its 20 letting rooms are also being given a make-over. The next in line for refurbishment are the Prince Albert in Notting Hill and the Sun in Clapham Old Town.

Meanwhile, M&B are expanding their Orleans Smokehouse brand. The first reported instance in London is the Beulah Spa, a former Harvester in Upper Norwood (SE19 3DS). It has a separate bar area with seating for non-diners although it does not stock cask beer.

At their AGM on 29 January, over 20% of M&B's shareholders voted against the re-election of the chairman, Bob Ivell. The company said that it was 'committed to continuing discussions with shareholders' over the issue.

Morgans expand

The Morgan Pub Collective, who operate some 25 pubs in and around London, have now added the Crane Tap in the new development opposite Twickenham station to their portfolio. This follows their acquisition of the Jolly Fine Pub Company last autumn.

Heartwood Collection's new opening

Marston's closed the Woodman in Palmers Green in July 2024. Happily, the pub, first licensed in 1868 and converted from

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two cottages, has now been acquired and reopened by the Heartwood Collection after refurbishment. This is their 35th pub. The company has reported that, for the year ended 29 June 2025, their turnover increased by 21.7% to £82.6 million, up from £67.9 million in 2024.

Young's news

Young's have closed the Naturalist in Finsbury Park (N4 2GB). Only opened in 2018 and situated in a new development, it appears that the site has not been successful. It is understood to be on the market. Also currently up for sale are the lease

of the Nine Elms Tavern (SW8 5BP), another modern pub at the base of an apartment block, the freehold of the Grade II-listed Kings Head in Roehampton (SW15 4HL) and the lease of the Guard House in Woolwich (SE18 6GH), also Grade II listed.

Given the extent to which the company has grown in both size and performance in recent years, the company intends to apply to the Financial Conduct Authority for its shares to be moved from the AIM market to be traded on the main market of the London Stock Exchange.

Pub heritage and planning

A worrying move

First, some history for context. For some ten years until 2017, there was little in the way of legal powers to protect pubs from redevelopment. Permitted development (PD) rights on properties in planning class A4 (pubs, wine bars and other drinking establishments), allowed their use to be changed or the building demolished without planning permission that would have required consultation. A planning authority could however be asked to issue 'Article 4 directions' under which change of use or demolition would require full planning permission. Some planning authorities, notably Wandsworth Council, therefore imposed blanket Article 4 directions covering the pubs in their area, prompting the removal of PD rights for A4 premises. This was something for which CAMRA had vehemently lobbied. In 2020 the planning classes were then reformed and pubs became '*sui generis*' (in a category of their own) with no PD rights.

Sadly, this regime is now under threat. The government are reviewing the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular policy HC6: Retention of key community facilities and public service infrastructure. The intention is '*designed to avoid unreasonable restrictions being placed on proposals to change the use of existing premises*'. The proposal is that the planning protection for pubs, instead of covering all pubs, will seemingly only apply to the last pub in the area, whatever that area might be deemed to be. CAMRA is deeply concerned about this and has submitted a forceful response to meet the 10 March consultation deadline as well as having the issue raised through written parliamentary questions. The outcome is awaited.

As part of an announced support package for pubs, the government is going to consult in the spring on its proposal to introduce a new permitted development right that will allow pubs to turn rooms into accommodation or to extend the main parts of their premises in order to make businesses more viable.

Pubs and noise

There has been another manifestation of this perennial problem. The pub in question this time is the World's End in Finsbury Park, although the circumstances are not dissimilar to the cases of the Compton Arms in Canonbury and the

Globe in the Marylebone Road. The pub was the subject of complaints about noise from a neighbour who had moved in about a year earlier and who successfully applied to Islington Council for a review of the pub's licence. This was a very worrying development for the World's End's management because it regularly hosts live music, and relies on it. Owners Greene King explained to the committee that various measures had been taken to reduce the noise level but they were not considered adequate. There was no suggestion that noise levels had increased over the period of the complaints. The pub neighbour was supported by the Council's noise team while the pub was well supported by customers. A compromise was reached that the pub would end live music at 11pm while its management worked with Islington's noise team on a long-term solution.

I normally keep to simply reporting the facts but here I would like to make some suggestions because we clearly have a situation that needs regulation. While I fully appreciate a neighbour's legal right to the 'quiet enjoyment' of their property (and here 'quiet' means peaceably and without interference, not necessarily free from noise), the neighbour cannot have been unaware that the next-door building was a pub. Due diligence should have been exercised to establish what the implications of this would be. After all, the pub, as a business, also has rights. No-one should be allowed to challenge a pub's licence in such circumstances. That said, if it can be proved that noise levels have substantially increased at any time to the point where they become a nuisance, a complaint would be justified. I would however expect any complaint only to be accepted if it came from, say, at least five neighbours, not just one. Furthermore, Councils should not be allowed to vary existing licence conditions or impose new conditions following a review where no fault has been found, especially if this involves the pub in substantial additional costs.

I should add that the general adoption of the 'agent of change' principle, as included in the current London Plan, has largely solved this problem for new and converted buildings. For example, if an office block next to a pub or music venue is being converted to residential use, it is the building being converted that must be soundproofed, not the pub, and the developer meets the cost.

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Pub heritage and planning

Whitewebbs Toby Carvery

This is curious. Last April, an oak tree, said to be between 300 and 500 years old, and which stood next to the car park adjoining the Toby Carvery in Whitewebbs Park in Enfield (EN2 9HH), was cut down by contractors hired by the carvery's owners, Mitchells & Butlers. They said that it was dead and a danger to customers. The building and site are owned by Enfield Council and leased to M&B. M&B did not ask Enfield's permission to fell the tree and, according to the Council's deputy leader, the act shocked and angered the entire community. The tree was locally known as the 'Guy Fawkes Oak' as it is close to where the Gunpowder Plot was planned.

The Council has now placed a Tree Protection Order on the stump – perhaps some of the wood could be used to make a stable door – and reported the incident to the police as criminal damage, although the police decided no action was warranted.

The story would probably have ended there until recently when the 'dead' stump started to grow shoots. These shoots need special treatment to grow and M&B, who have yet to apologise, were asked to pay for this, estimated at around £10,000. They refused. In retaliation, the Council have now served M&B with a legal notice for the forfeiture of their lease. There will be more to report on this, I suspect.

Gastropub awards

Despite lean times in the pub trade, London venues did well in this year's Estrella Damm Top Gastropubs competition. The competition, now in its 16th year, is organised by the *Morning Advertiser* and sponsored by Damm, the Spanish family brewery who now, of course, have a British dimension in that they have started brewing at the Eagle Brewery in Bedford.

The much praised Devonshire in Soho (W1D 7HW) topped the list for the first time, which is very good going for a pub that only opened in 2023. The Red Lion and Sun in Highgate (N6 4BE) moved up from 6th to 3rd while the Canton Arms in South Lambeth (SW8 1XP) moved up from 22nd to 11th. There were two notable new entrants. The Hero (formerly the Hero of Maida) in Maida Vale (W9 2JD) featured for the first time at 24th, followed by the Kerfield Arms in Camberwell (SE5 8SY) at 25th.

I don't know if the events are connected but, shortly after the announcement, the owners of the Kerfield put the freehold on the market. There is however no threat to the pub, which is operated by the same people who run the Baring in Hoxton (N1 3DS) which was 17th.

Overall, there were 13 London pubs in the top 50 plus another 11 in the '51 to 100' section. These included old favourites such as the Anchor & Hope in Waterloo (SE1 8LP) at 64th and the Eagle in Clerkenwell (EC1R 3AL) at 77th. The newly opened Allsopps pub, the Blue Stoops in Kensington came in at 88th. There isn't space to list them all but full details can be found on the competition website, <https://www.top50gastropubs.com/>.

Beer in Portugal

When you think of Portugal, wine, particularly port wine, is the drink that usually first comes to mind but the country is actually the seventh largest beer producer in Europe. If you then think of what they produce, no doubt you would assume lager but, like a lot of European countries, they have a fledgling craft beer market. However, as in many places, the market is not helpful to the smaller brewer. History has had a large part to play in this.

Going back to 1933, Portugal was under a dictatorship and only two brewing companies were allowed to operate, both of which were owned by the State. They were Unicer – Bebidas de Portugal, which was founded near Porto in 1890, and Sociedade Central de Cervejas (SCC), set up near Lisbon in 1934. Protectionist policies prevented any foreign breweries establishing themselves in the country and so those two breweries had the market to themselves. This situation continued until the revolution in 1974/1975. This led to the markets opening up and allowed foreign breweries to operate and distribute their products within Portugal.

SCC, now known as Sagres, had signed an agreement with Carlsberg to sell their beer in 1972 but it was Heineken that took control of the brewery in 2008. Carlsberg had taken a share in

Unicer in 1991 and became their biggest shareholder (60%) in 2018, a year after Unicer had rebranded itself as SuperBock, taking its name from their best selling lager. In addition to their lager, SuperBock brew a stout, a malty ruby lager called Abadia and the 1927 range, which is a nod to the craft beer market. This features a Weiss, an amber IPA and a Dunkel. Sagres also has a stout, a standard lager (called Sagres) and a premium range called Bohemia. The brewery also distributes Guinness but it is not very widely found outside tourist areas.



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Beer in Portugal

The Portuguese beer market is estimated to be growing by around 8% a year, driven by tourism and the growing interest in craft beer. However, although exact figures are difficult to verify, it is estimated that Sagres and SuperBock still have around 90% of the market, leaving little scope for the others, mainly smaller craft breweries. This makes distribution a challenge for these smaller breweries.

A conversation with one of the founders of Duque brewery in Lisbon highlighted another problem. Duque is a small batch brewery and taproom and was the first brewpub in Lisbon. Established in 2016, the founders, two friends called Miguel and Tiago, steered the operation through the problems that Covid caused for all breweries and bars. There is however one large issue facing them. *"It's the price point. A drinker can pay double for a craft beer versus a beer from the two giants."* So, while there is plenty of evidence of growing interest in craft beer in Portugal (and beer tourism), it's still very much an uphill struggle.



The Duque brewpub

As in the UK, the exact number of smaller brewers is a movable feast. Not only are there numerous openings and closings but many are very localised. In 2023, the Brewers of Europe organisation reported that there was a total of 110 breweries. Portugal is represented in the Brewers of Europe by Cerejeiros de Portugal. Membership consists currently of only 20 Portuguese breweries. Similarly to the situation in Greece, the organisation has great difficulty in persuading smaller brewers to join.

So, what to look forward to when you go? The website <https://wetravelportugal.com/craft-beer-portugal/> has a list of some of the bigger breweries and some places to drink their beers. Other websites to look at are *where to drink beer* and *portolities*. New websites and online articles are popping up all the time. However, be warned, the bars come and go and so it is worth checking before trying to visit. Also, finding opening times can be interesting, especially for brewery tap rooms. As is often the case, the bars and breweries are concentrated around major cities such as Lisbon or Porto or tourist areas such as the Algarve. All the same, if you are heading over to Portugal this year, it's worthwhile having a search before you go; there is some good beer there.

Christine Cryne

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Business rates

It's sad that, having grasped the nettle of business rates reform, the government has ended up tinkering with the new system almost immediately. The new system did not produce the reductions that were expected and so there will now be an additional 15% discount applied to business rates bills for pubs from April 2026. This is intended to have the effect of freezing the amounts payable for 2027/28 and 2028/29 and is being done to recognise the 'social and cultural value of pubs', presumably in the light of the current rate of closures.

Attention has now shifted to the way that rateable values for pubs are calculated. The method currently in use is the Fair Maintainable Trade (FMT) method. This is an assessment of the level of trade that a pub should be able to achieve, assuming that it is a reasonably efficient business, based on its level and pattern of trade, its design and location and the services that it offers (such as food, sports screenings and accommodation). Only pubs are assessed using this method. As it is in effect the turnover rather than the net profit that is assessed, FMT is not flexible enough to reflect the ever-increasing overheads that pubs are currently experiencing. The government will be reviewing this arrangement with a view to any changes coming into effect for the next scheduled revaluation in 2029. Many in the trade are hoping for a complete change of method.

Rateable values are assessed by the Valuations Office Agency (VOA), which the government has now decided, will

be subsumed later this year into HM Revenue and Customs. It is possible that this may have some effect on the process.

Staying up for the Cup

The government has now confirmed that pubs in England and Wales will be able to open after midnight for any games in this year's FIFA World Cup that feature any team from the home nations. There is also going to be a consultation exercise on allowing pubs to stay open late for other types of cultural event. Additionally, the number of temporary event notices for which pubs can apply may also be increased.

Low alcohol but not low cost

The consumer data firm Circana, as reported in the *Sunday Times*, has found that, despite them not attracting beer duty, the cost of no and low alcohol beers in shops and supermarkets rose by 8.3% during the year ended 31 January. No/low cider prices rose by 15.5%. The British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA) explained, "*Alcohol-free beer is significantly more complex and costly to produce. Brewers need to invest millions in dealcoholisation equipment, often resulting in higher ongoing energy costs. Raw material prices are at record highs and producing great-tasting no-and-low beer frequently requires additional ingredients.*" The value of the trade in shops and supermarkets has nearly doubled over the last five years, from £112 million in 2022 to £213 million currently.

Taking a look at West London

CAMRA is organised into local branches which are, in turn, grouped into regions. Branches across the country have very different characteristics from the rural to the urban but perhaps one of the most unusual ones is here in London, the West London Branch.

I have been involved with the branch committee since around 2009. Our patch covers the three boroughs of Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham, and Kensington & Chelsea. There are about 830 operating pubs and clubs in the area, a small majority of which, around 440, sell cask ale. I would hesitate to say to CAMRA members loyal to their own area that we have the 'best' pubs but around 180 of ours are listed buildings and we certainly have some very interesting pubs and some interesting characters running them.

It is hard to beat the ambience and history of pubs such as the French House in Soho, the Nags Head in Belgravia or the Ship & Shovell near the Embankment. CAMRA members nationally seem to recognise this, as anyone from out of town who gets off the train at Kings Cross or Euston, and has limited time in the capital, tends to make a beeline for the Harp in Covent Garden or one of our other well-known pubs such as the Dog & Duck in Soho. Matching the interest of our pubs is our roster of clubs, ranging from the splendid buildings of the Athenaeum, the Carlton and the Reform, through to the humbler surroundings of the West London Bowling Club!

The top ten most expensive housing streets in London are all in our area. At the time of writing a Belgrave Square townhouse is on the market at £135 million! This may account for us being smallest branch by numbers in Greater London, struggling currently to reach 500 members, with just 15 or 20 of those being active. It is hard to do anything useful with these tiny numbers. We do our bit annually for the *Good Beer Guide* (GBG) and run our annual Pub of the Year competition, although we now only award one certificate for the top prize because we can't scrape together the numbers to run other competitions. Yet, within our area, Hammersmith & Fulham has the largest population of working 25 to 34-year-olds in the capital, a high proportion of whom are non-UK nationals. How can we attract them?

CAMRA members, of course, account for only a tiny proportion of the people drinking in our branch pubs. Many are tourists, flooding into central pubs such as the Admiralty at Trafalgar Square. Beer scores are an issue. Famous pubs like the Harp receive several hundred scores but others, including some really good pubs, never figure in the GBG because there are never enough CAMRA members to score them.

It's not all doom and gloom. Our perception is that pub openings are outweighing closures over the last couple of years and some of these openings have been outstanding. For example, the Devonshire in Soho was arguably the most

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Taking a look at West London

successful London pub launch this century and recently claimed the number one spot in the Top 50 Gastropubs awards. Three other branch pubs were also listed. Later this year we expect to see the opening of three new JD Wetherspoon outlets: one at Charing Cross station, another at Paddington station and the third very close to Piccadilly Circus. Most central licensed sites that fall vacant tend to be snapped up fairly quickly, particularly in already densely licensed areas such as Soho.

Our branch socials now tend to focus on afternoons and centrally located single pubs or small tours, which are quite successful in attracting members from other branches. We have very much reduced our committee meetings over the last few years and now concentrate on 'core business' such

as the *Good Beer Guide* and our Pub of the Year competition. Sadly, like many branches, we are being overtaken by demographics and the grim reaper, with CAMRA membership aging faster than the general population.

If you live - or work - in the London boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea or Westminster and are interested in becoming involved with CAMRA activities, you will be welcome. Why not join us at one of our socials or come to a committee meeting. See our events in the diary section at the front or contact Wanda, our branch chair, at chair@westlondon.camra.org.uk.

Paul Charlton

Thirsty diversions

The CAMRA South West London Cycling Section came into being before the Covid pandemic and we subsequently thrived on cleaner air and quieter roads during the lockdowns and associated restrictions. Several pubs and breweries offered cask beer and real cider or perry in takeaway containers. With very few of us on any particular ride, social distancing was easily observed in single file.

More recently, other keener cyclists have joined us, we've visited more places and covered greater distances. Always taking it gently though, as well as drinking responsibly, we average no more than ten miles per hour and no fewer than 50 miles per gallon. Excursions are recorded and aspirations shared among a *WhatsApp* group that anyone may join.

Starting and finishing near Wimbledon, some of our shorter circular tours have targeted the changing Pub of the Year winners entered for the Greater London regional competition. Other destinations have included:

- The Queen's Head at Downe and Orpington Liberal Club (though Downe would more accurately be named Uppes);
- The annual wassailing and apple pressing events generously organised by our regional cider co-ordinator, Ian White at One Tree Allotments, Honor Oak;
- South East London micropubs out as far as Crayford (any half dozen or so of more than 30, depending on their opening times);
- The Gidea Park Micropub; Hop Inn, Hornchurch; and Uppminster TapRoom;

- The Little Green Dragon, Winchmore Hill; Antwerp Arms, Tottenham; and Chesham Arms, Hackney;
- Walthamstow and the breweries along Blackhorse Lane;
- The Epping Ongar Railway beer festival at North Weald;
- The Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty at Heronsgate, beyond Uxbridge, in dry weather mostly along the Grand Union Canal towpath; then back via the Masons Arms in Teddington;
- Chobham, out across the bosky Surrey Heath;
- Windsor: historic pubs and now three microbreweries;
- Pilgrim, Dorking and DropKick breweries, and the King William IV at Mickleham.

Three of us enjoyed two longer rides during 2025:

- a one-way journey on Good Friday to the Easter beer festival at Downton Brewery, nine hours on the road with one-hour refreshment stops at the Watership Down Inn, Freefolk; the John O'Gaunt, Horsebridge; and the Cuckoo Inn, Hamptworth;
- a leisurely pub tour round Reading in the autumn, then back via the aptly named Elusive Brewery.

Cycling stalwart Robin Wootton has recorded GPS tracks for all thirty of the routes taken by SWL Cycling Section since he joined in 2023. He has compiled a map of these that also shows the refreshment points surveyed along the way. The map can be found on the regional website www.london.camra.org.uk.

Many cheers to cycling and good health!

Geoff Strawbridge

Kingston Beer Festival advance notice

This year's festival will be held on Thursday 11 to Saturday 13 June. The venue, as before, is the Kingston Workmen's Club & Institute, 25 Old London Road KT2 6ND. Entry will be free for CAMRA members. Full details will be given in the next edition and on the website <https://kandl.camra.org.uk/>.

Tickets will be available in due course through <https://tckty.camra.org.uk/>.





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The ghost pubs of Kentish Town

If you walk around Kentish Town today, you'll find a sizeable number of pubs, yet, over twenty-five years ago, there were even more, primarily based around the side streets. Since closure, many of these sites have been converted into residential and commercial uses, yet amazingly the buildings of around fifteen former pubs remain largely intact, offering a reminder into the area's illustrious past.

Until the late 18th century, the town largely centred around a single high street with several inns. One of these was the **Jolly Anglers**, dating back to 1721. Situated beside a lane that led to a popular fishing spot on the River Fleet, it was rebuilt in 1849 and further renovated in the 1880s. During the early 20th century, it was run by Harry Rolles, one of four pubs in the area run by his family. He later became a local councillor, alderman and treasurer for the St. Pancras Charity Fund. The pub closed in 1999 and reopened as a branch of Nandos in 2005. Some architectural features remain, including the green tiling on the ground floor replete with R&B roundels from its owners, Watney, Coombe & Reid.

The Rolles family also ran the **Duke of Cambridge** on Lawford Road, which opened in 1868. During the mid-1930s it was regularly visited by George Orwell when he lived nearby and in 1987 it became the first pub in the area to appear in CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide*. The following year the Doc Theatre company was established, staging their productions in a small L-shaped room on the first floor, ranging from Shakespeare to obscure examples such as 'Yerma' by Spanish playwright Federico Garcia Lorca. The theatre closed in 1998 when Camden Council granted permission for conversion into flats and the pub closed early the following year. The exterior is remarkably preserved with its original signage still visible.

Another well-preserved former pub is the **Falkland Arms** on Falkland Road, established in 1869. For many years an Ansell's house, it was deeply involved in the local community, hosting meetings for the Falkland Darts Club, the Top Hat Club, the Dibbin Angling Society and the Falklands Social Club. This had some 60 members, regularly organising outings to the likes of Marlow, Street and Melbourne (Cambridgeshire). In 1996, planning permission was granted to convert the building into flats and it closed shortly after. The pub's original exterior is relatively intact, with its signage and Ansell lanterns still visible.

The **Mamelon Tower** is a rare Victorian survivor on Grafton Road. Opened c.1850, it was originally known as the Manchester Tavern before it was renamed after a strategic hillock that featured in the siege of Sebastopol in the Crimean War. A Whitbread house in later years, the pub was described as a spacious building with snugs, slot machines, a pool table and an upright piano often in heavy usage.



The former Mamelon Tower

Live music from local bands was also a regular fixture. It was situated close to the weekly market on nearby Queen's Crescent and the pub opened at 7.30 every Thursday and Saturday to serve the market traders. It closed in 2008 and, four years later, planning approval was given to convert the building into maisonettes.

The **Dreghorn Castle**, located near Queen's Crescent Market, was established in c.1861 when the parade was constructed. Named after a 17th century mansion in Colinton (Edinburgh), it was built partly to resemble a medieval castle. One of its neighbours was the second ever branch of Sainsburys, which opened in 1872. For 65 years from 1900 it was run by the Carrington family and was involved in a number of local charitable causes, including the annual fete for the Railways Servants Orphanage held at the Old Welsh Harp. Closed in 2001, it is currently a locally listed building with the upper floors occupied by flats and the ground floor space now a branch of Ladbrokes.

The **Torriano Arms** on Leighton Road was built in a similar period and named after local landowner Joshua Prole Torriano. A Truman's house under the licence of George Streib who helped establish the Torriano Rifle Club, it was used by a number of groups, including the Foresters Lodge and the Torriano Mutual Loan Club..



The former Torriano Arms

The pub had a lively and homely atmosphere and music gigs and comedy nights were a common fixture. When it was threatened with redevelopment into flats in 1996, a young Pete Doherty (who lived in the area at the time) staged an impromptu benefit concert. The pub closed shortly after, while Doherty remains a vocal pub campaigner, throwing his support behind the nearby Bull & Gate when redevelopment plans were proposed.

A more recent loss is the **George IV** on Willes Road. Dating from c.1861, it was a replacement for a former 18th century pub that was once located opposite. An imposing two storey corner pub, it was noted for its distinct foliage covered frontage, replete with hanging baskets, rows of bay and sash windows bordered with stucco flange and pediments with George IV's royal cypher proudly displayed on its central column. Over the years, it was a venue for local clubs including the Almin Old Age Pensioners Club and the local darts league.



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The ghost pubs of Kentish Town



The George IV

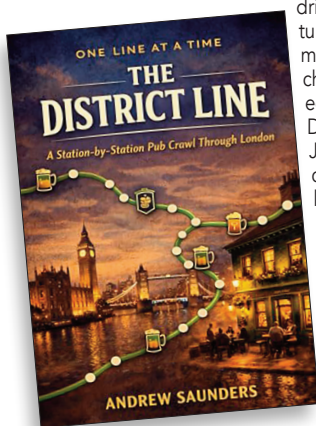
It was also often used for wedding receptions. The pub was described as a traditional back-street boozier with a cosy interior replete with old signs, a gabble of paintings and scores of red lamps. It sold a number of cask ales, while its menu included pies, platters and a range of eclectically named sandwiches including the Casino Special and Florida Melt. The pub closed during lockdown in 2020 and was sold the following year for £2.4 million. Unlike its contemporaries however, it could remain as a pub because it is on the market again via Estate Office Investments Ltd for in excess of £3 million.

Mike Goldwater

Book reviews

One Line at a Time: The District Line

Andrew Saunders has written many books on a number of topics and these include a series of pub crawls along London Underground lines that may be of interest to those London drinkers who measure a tube journey not in minutes but in pints. I chose to review the edition that covers the District Line, published in January, because this line comes close to where I live.



These books have a simple but effective concept: a station-by-station pub crawl. Each station along the line becomes a tactical decision point: linger, skip, or combine stops,

depending on pub density, atmosphere and the practical realities of navigating London's drinking geography. Each chapter explains the character of the area and recommends pubs that still reflect their surroundings. Mr Saunders describes in detail why the District Line feels 'uniquely balanced' for a 'proper crawl' compared to every other line on the Tube.

Mr Saunders, it seems, is less concerned with cataloguing every pump clip than with the analytical rhythm of achieving a 'walking flow' and how or where the end of the tube line might produce an unexpected watering hole. Indeed, the book reads rather like a well-planned pub itinerary; a field manual for urban drinking exploration that may well inspire a Saturday expedition that ends several stations further out than originally intended.

Delightful chapter headings include 'How to drink Putney Bridge' or, something the author continually struggles with, 'When to pause or stop for the day'.

Seasoned ale hunters may occasionally wish for a touch more detail about the beer itself but, quibbles aside, you can't deny that this is a fun guide. Other editions so far cover the Central, Circle, Northern and Victoria Lines.

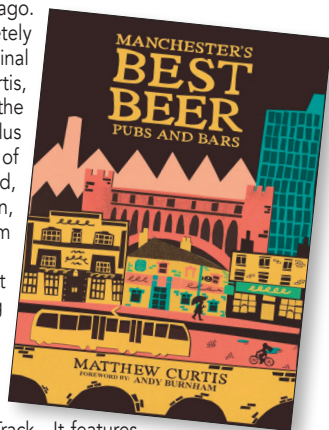
The book is a paperback with 200 pages and the ISBN number is ISBN-13 : 9798242349940. It is available on-line from both Amazon and Waterstones and from some bookshops.

Graeme Boyd

Manchester's Best Beer, Pubs and Bars

I know that a number of readers enjoy the occasional visit to Manchester, so they will wish to know that the second edition of this guide is about to be published. The original came out three years ago. It has been completely revised by its original author, Matthew Curtis, and, as before, covers the city of Manchester plus the boroughs of Stockport, Trafford, Salford, Wigan, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham and Tameside.

The guide looks at the history of brewing in Manchester from the eighteenth century to the arrival of new independent brewers like Cloudwater and Track. It features some 220 venues, 50 of them new additions. There is a special feature on the rise, fall and rise again of the iconic Boddingtons beer. The book is due to be launched on 2 April and is available on-line from the CAMRA bookstore now. Go to <https://shop1.camra.org.uk/>. The cover price is £16.99 but there is a discount for CAMRA members. ISBN-13 : 978-1852493837



Regular pub goers may have noticed that morris dancers like their beer. Indeed, it has been suggested that we dance only as an excuse to go to pubs. Quite wrong: none of us need an excuse. Nevertheless, a morris tour is difficult to distinguish from a pub crawl. As our club, Greensleeves, celebrates its hundredth anniversary this year, we decided on a celebratory tour, using, to quote Messrs Flanders and Swann, that Transport of Delight, 'the big six-wheeler, scarlet-painted, London Transport, diesel-engined, ninety-seven horsepower omnibus', although these days, of course, they are electric powered. We didn't choose just any bus: the number 100 passes some fine and historic pubs as it glides from Shadwell to St Paul's. In case any London drinker might want to follow us (bells not required), we offer reflections on the beer and pubs we enjoyed.



Ready for the off

After a short ride from Shadwell, we debussed for what is literally a star of a pub, Turner's Old Star. The co-owners' daughter Katie once proved a star, insisting that we were photographed with her, to which we gladly consented. The pub once belonged to that randy old painter JMW Turner, who installed one of his mistresses to run it. Reconstructed when the pub was renamed in his honour in 1987, the superb interior was enjoyed along with the most eclectic selection of the day's beers. From Redemption were Victorian Mild, at 6% ABV, stretching the definition of mild, and Big Chief, an American-style IPA with all its hoppiness.

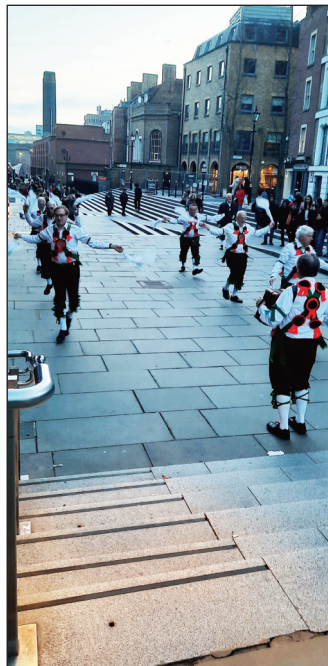
A short walk took us to the Town of Ramsgate, one of the three priceless pubs gracing the Wapping waterfront. A building tracing its origins to 1545, its Grade II listing is due to its interior of ceiling beams, panelling and glass screens. We were delighted to find Harvey's Sussex Best in excellent condition, alongside regulars Doom Bar and Young's Original (still known to south London drinkers as 'Ordinary').

Next came the joker in this pack of pubs: the Dickens Inn, opened as long ago as 1976. OK, its origin as a warehouse gives it some claim to antiquity but it is simply a developer's view of what a tourist might expect of an Olde Englishe Pub. Its saving grace was an excellent paved area to fulfil our mission of dancing at each stop. A range of decent beers was available, although the pub's website is shy of naming them, suggesting that they change often.

There was then a bit of a yomp to the next stop, but every yard was worthwhile to reach the White Swan in Aldgate. A welcome survival amongst the brick and glass obelisks of the modern cityscape, this Shepherd Neame pub serves Master

Brew and Bishop's Finger. Behind the bar, our host waxed lyrical about its multiple previous uses including having been the Half Moon Theatre, while we drank in the darkly panelled decor along with its excellent beer.

The 100 bus terminates at St Paul's and we made a short diversion to dance on St Peter's Steps, rewarded by an exuberant audience of Manchester tourists. Our destination was the Cockpit. A cosy, welcoming pub, it's our favourite watering hole when we busk at the annual Lord Mayor's Show. Its site has seen many uses since the 13th century and it still has tunnels in which Catholic priests hid. The Cockpit itself dates from 'only' the 1840s and was London's last legal cockfighting venue. Harvey's Sussex Best was once again enjoyed.



Dancing on St Peter's Steps

Here a fine day out concluded happily, characterised by all that drew us into the morris: audience appreciation, good fellowship and fine beer, in pubs almost as old as our dances themselves. Today's side sincerely hopes that our successors will enjoy a 200 bus tour in 2126!

Morris dancing is an English tradition that has been performed for at least 500 years. Greensleeves Morris Men were formed in 1926 in Central London and moved to Wimbledon in 1980. We perform dances with hankies, stick and longwords. As well as providing some exercise, morris dancing is a social thing and we have great club camaraderie. If any London drinker feels tempted to explore further, we offer a chance to try a dance and (over a free pint) learn more about the morris at our base in Wimbledon. We practise at the South Wimbledon Community Association Hall, 78 Victory Road SW19 1HN at 8pm on Friday evenings. This is usually followed by a pint or two in the Sultan. If you are interested in joining us for our second century, please contact our Bagman, Tommy Cooling, at greensleevesmorrismen@gmail.com. We also have a website <https://greensleevesmorris.org.uk/>.

Tommy Cooling

CAMRA pub information update 73

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, 411 LONDON, 411 St John Street.

Unreported cocktail bar opened in October 2023.

Keg beer. Previously JAMIES ITALIAN.

EC1, FLIPDOG, 104-122 City Road.

Cocktail bar opened in March.

EC2, LIVERPOOL STREET CHOPHOUSE & TAVERN,

16A New St, Devonshire Sq. Chophouse restaurant with a separate bar area. Keg and bottled beer.

EC4, HOOP & GRAPES (Shepherd Neame), 80 Farringdon St. Reopened in February 2026 after a £1.8 million refurbishment. Modern style pub on four floors. Cask beer available.

EC4, WREN TAVERN (Urban Pubs & Bars),

67-69 Watling St. Cask beer reinstated, two changing beers usually from Gun.

E2, TIELLA TRATTORIA & BAR, 108 Columbia Rd.

Regional Italian restaurant with a separate bar.

E8, BAMBI, 1 Netil House, Westgate St. Restaurant that has added a listening bar to the premises. Keg beers and one in a bottle.

E8, GOOD FRONT ROOM, 1 Thomas Tower, Dalston Sq.

Caribbean restaurant with cocktail bar.

Beer is Red Stripe/Dragon Stout from Jamaica.

Reservation required for dining.

N13, WOODMAN, 128 Bourne Hill. Former Marston's pub reopened by Heartwood Inns following 18 month refurbishment. Fuller's London Pride and Timothy Taylor Landlord available.

NW3, STAG (Young's), 67 Fleet Rd. Reopened following major refurbishment. Cask same as before closure (Young's Bitter, Taylor Landlord, Hammerton N1).

SE9, LAST DROP INN, 279 Eltham High St. Family run shop conversion opened in February. Traditional bar counter with four handpumps and five keg taps. Up to four real bag-in-box ciders. Full wine and spirits menu. Seating is mainly high tables and stools towards the front with several normal height tables and a sofa at the rear.

SE17, ROSY HUE, 6 Ash Ave. Opened in January, this multi-room pub with outdoor terrace is situated in Elephant Park area. Run by Livelthood. No cask beer but a range of craft beers as well as cocktails.

SE20, CRAFT METROPOLIS, 47 High St. A handpump has been installed. Citra: All Four Pale Ale from Floc Brewing was the first beer to appear.

SE24, TULSE HILL HOTEL (Greene King/Metropolitan), 150 Norwood Rd. Cask beer reinstated with the house beer from GK sold regularly and two rotating GK beers.

SW4, RAILWAY (M&B/Castle), 18 Clapham High St. Cask beers reinstated in February after refurbishment, Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter and Timothy Taylor Landlord.

SW11, CANDLEMAKER (Smok'd), 136 Battersea High St. Unity Social, the new Punch operator since February's refurbishment, has reinstated the cask version of Wainwright Gold.

SW16, BR3WERY, 97 Moyser Rd, Furzedown. A third tap bar for the Beckenham microbrewery, opened late February in former Italian restaurant premises. A welcome oasis for local families and their dogs in what had been a beer desert. No cask beer but competitively priced kegs include IPAs, a fruited sour, an oatmeal stout and a Pilsner, with cider and low alcohol guest beer options. There's also a good selection of wines and locally made pizzas can be delivered. Open 4pm-9pm Monday to Thursday, 4pm-10pm Friday, 2pm-10pm Saturday and 2pm-7pm Sunday.

SW16, EARL FERRERS (Stonegate), 22 Ellora Rd. Reopened in February after closure since November 2024 and refurbishment since late 2025. Cask beer is scheduled to be Fuller's.

SW19, OLD FRIZZLE (Livelyhood), 74-78 The Broadway. Cask beer reinstated, Wimbledon Best Bitter.

W1, GAMBIT BAR, 49-57 Newman St. Underground cocktail bar in the Newman, an upmarket boutique hotel. A full cocktail list includes 'low and no' options, plus local craft beers on draught. The bar also serves a small selection of bar snacks

W14, ALBION (Heineken), 121 Hammersmith Rd. Cask beer erroneously reported as unavailable. St Austell Tribute and Timothy Taylor Landlord and a guest during busy times.

OUTER LONDON

GREENFORD, BRIDGE HOTEL (Starboard Hotels), Western Ave. Cask beer reinstated, Rebellion IPA.

HOUNSLOW, COACH & HORSES, 684 London Rd. Recently reopened as a pub/restaurant/banqueting venue. Syon Banqueting is on the signs outside. No cask beer.

RICHMOND, PITCHER & PIANO (ex-Marston's), 11 Bridge St. Reopened in November as **TOWER HOUSE** by the operators of the **GOLD** in Notting Hill. Mainly a modern restaurant, the bar can be used by non-diners.

SURBITON, GORDON BENNETT (Wellington), 75, Maple Rd. Reopened as **CORNERS**.

WALLINGTON, ROSE & CROWN (Greene King), London Rd, Wallington Corner. Cask beer reinstated, Greene King Abbot and Timothy Taylor Landlord.

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

INNER LONDON

EC1, BREWDog CLERKENWELL (BrewDog). Closed following BrewDog sale to Tilray.

EC1, COACH. Closed, future uncertain.

EC1, GOLDEN BEE. Closed since December 2024.

EC1, SLAUGHTERED LAMB (Urban Pubs & Bars). No longer sells cask beer.

EC2, BOOK CLUB. Closed, future uncertain.

EC3, SEETHING LANE TAP (BrewDog). Closed following BrewDog sale to Tilray.

EC4, BREWDog CHANCERY LANE (BrewDog). Closed following BrewDog sale to Tilray.

WC1, JEREMY BENTHAM (202). No cask beer.

WC2, CRUSTING PIPE (Davy's). Closed and reported acquired by Inception Group to trade under their Mr Fogg brand from summer 2026.

E1, BILLY BOOTLEGGERS.

Closed and became a clothes shop.

E1, MATCHBOX. Closed, lease on the market.

E1, RUNNING HORSE (Mosaic). No longer sells cask beer.

E2, MAMASHELTER. Closed, future uncertain.

E7 WANSTEAD TAP. Closed in February, future uncertain

E16 HENLEY ARMS (Heineken). Closed by lessee in October 2025. Star pubs hope to reopen it at some point

E17, LUKE'S CIDER TAP. Closed, future uncertain.

N1, ANGEL SPORTS BAR.

Appears to have closed very soon after opening.

N1, MYDDLETON ARMS (Stonegate).

No longer sells cask beer.

N1, NIKKI'S. Closed in March, future uncertain.

N1, STORES. Became a restaurant in January 2025.

N4, NATURALIST (Young's).

Closed, the pub has been available for lease for some time.

N7, CORONET. Closed, reclaimed by freeholder.

N21, ORANGE TREE (Vizion 360 Ltd).

Closed following retirement of licensees. Future uncertain.

NW1, CAMDEN ROAD ARMS (Heineken/BrewDog).

Closed following BrewDog sale to Tilray.

NW3, SOUTH END GREEN SOCIAL (Heineken).

Closed at the beginning of January.

NW10, LE JUNCTION.

Now Green Ariana Hotel & Restaurant.

SE1, TOWER BRIDGE ARMS (BrewDog).

Closed following BrewDog sale to Tilray.

SE10, CROWN (Stonegate).

No longer selling cask beer following change of management.

SE15, SKYLARKING. Closed since September 2024.

SE20, MAPLE TREE.

Closed end of February. Freehold on the market.

SE25, ALBERT TAVERN (Greene King/Hive).

From early 2026, cask beer is no longer served.

SW1, SLOE BAR & CAFÉ (Network Rail/SSP).

Closed c.2022.

SW1, TATTERSHALL CASTLE (Stonegate).

Cask beer no longer available.

SW3, CAFFE CONCERTO, 52 Kings Road, SW3 4UD.

Closed, now a Mr Marvis clothes shop.

SW4, COACH & HORSES (Stonegate).

No longer selling cask beer following change of management.

SW18, BREWDog WANDSWORTH (Landsec/BrewDog).

Closed following BrewDog sale to Tilray.

W1, BREWDog SOHO (BrewDog).

Closed following BrewDog sale to Tilray.

W2, PRINCE EDWARD (Hall & Woodhouse).

Closed, possible reopening as restaurant & wine bar.

W5, BREWDog EALING (BrewDog).

Closed following BrewDog sale to Tilray.

W5, NO 17 DICKENS YARD (Darwin & Wallace).

Closed, future uncertain.

W6, DUKE OF HAMMERSMITH (Tavern PropCo/BrewDog).

Closed following BrewDog sale to Tilray.

W11, ARCHER STREET. Closed and in administration.

W12, MOONSHOT (Westfield).

Closed due to Sixes going into administration.

W14, CROWN & SCEPTRE (Heineken).

Cask beer no longer available.

OUTER LONDON

BRENTFORD, SIX BELLS (Admiral Taverns). No longer sells cask beer. Both freehold and lease are on the market.

CHEAM, PRINCE OF WALES (Heineken).

No longer sells cask beer.

CAMRA pub information update 73

EAST MOLESEY, SIX RESTAURANT & BAR / KINGS

ARMS HOTEL. Closed, lease on the market.

GREENFORD, HIGH STOOL.

Closed in 2025, lease on the market.

HAM, HAND & FLOWER (Stonegate).

Closed, lease on the market.

HAMPTON HILL, FABIO'S. Closed, future uncertain.

HORNCHURCH, CHEQUERS. Cask beer no longer available.

KESTON, KINGS ARMS (Stonegate).

No longer sells cask beer.

KINGSTON, KINGSTON 1 (Tavern PropCo).

Closed, future uncertain.

SURBITON, MAYPOLE (Stonegate).

No longer sells cask beer.

UXBRIDGE, METROPOLITAN TAVERN (Stonegate/Craft Union). No longer sells cask beer.

UXBRIDGE, RIVERWALK CAFE.

Closed, lease on the market.

WEMBLEY, DG BAR (& RESTAURANT).

Now a café, converted without planning consent.

OTHER CHANGES

INNER LONDON

EC1, HOPE (Stonegate).

Operated by Whelans since late 2025.

EC1, SERATA HALL (Urban Pubs & Bars).

Renamed **OLD STREET TAVERN**.

EC2, COMMONS CLUB (Virgin Hotels).

Renamed **HIDDEN GROOVES**.

EC3, JEWRY. Renamed **TUNNEL VISION CLUB & LOUNGE**.

Now an 'afrobeats' nightclub.

EC3, LEONARDO ROYAL HOTEL BAR & LOUNGE (Jurys Hotel).

Renamed **CORVO BAR & CAFÉ**.

EC4, ANDREA LUDGATE HILL (Breal Group/Andrea Bars).

Renamed **PATERNOSTER TAVERN** in December

WC1, NUMBER 12. Hotel bar renamed **MEMOIR CLUB**.

E1, LIGHT BAR & DINING. Now operated by Electric Star pubs.

E2, BIRDCAGE (BrewDog). Lease taken on by Urban Pubs

& Bars prior to BrewDog takeover.

E5, WING & A PRAYER.

Renamed **MOYLETTES**, an Irish themed bar.

E8, VILLAGE 512. Renamed **OM**. Now a nightclub since

November 2025. You may be charged an entrance fee for certain events.

E11, BIRDS (Laine). Renamed **OLD CROWN**.

Now one of Punch's Unity Social retail agreements.

Wainwright brewery conditioned beer spotted.

N1, SMOKEHOUSE (Heineken). Renamed **BISTRO SABLÁ.**

N1, TALBOT (Stonegate). Operator is C2K Group, same as for Tally Ho, the Arch Wembley and also the Woodman in Eastcote and the White Haus Farringdon.

N8, QUEENS (Brunning & Price).

One of a package of pubs sold to Urban Pubs & Bars.

NW10, PEGGIE'S BAR. Reverted to **GREENES**.

SE1, DUKE OF SUSSEX (Bloxhome Investments Ltd/Stonegate). Freehold has been bought by Fuller's.

SE11, SHIP (Stonegate/Frontier Pubs). One of five former Frontier pubs now operated by Highpress.

SE16, MOOR BEER CO. VAULTS & TAP ROOM. Renamed **BLUE MONK** with two real ales available on opening.

SE17, TANKARD. Closed, future uncertain.

SE22, GREAT EXHIBITION (Laine).

Freehold purchased by McMullen.

SE23, CHANDOS (Stonegate/Frontier Pubs).

Now operated by Highpress.

SE24, PRINCE REGENT (Heineken).

Lease has been taken by Urban Pubs & Bars.

SW1, BAY & BRACKET (Stonegate).

Operated by Whelan's since January 2026.

SW7, COCO MOMO (Brunning & Price).

Sold to Urban Pubs & Bars.

SW11, ASPARAGUS (Portobello).

Renamed **FALCONBROOK** after refurbishment.

SW12, AVALON (Errislannen Ltd/Stonegate/Three Cheers).

Freehold bought by Fuller's.

SW17, ROSE & CROWN (Stonegate/Frontier Pubs).

Now operated by Highpress.

W4, ROEBUCK (Brunning & Price).

Sold to Urban Pubs & Bars.

W4, STEAM PACKET (Brunning & Price).

Sold to Urban Pubs & Bars.

OUTER LONDON.

ENFIELD, GREYHOUND (McMullen).

One of the tenanted pubs sold to Punch.

HIGH BARNET, KING'S HEAD, QUEENS ARMS, and **SEBRIGHT ARMS** also sold by McMullen to Punch.

GREENFORD, DICEY REILLY'S. Renamed **CASEY'S**.

HORNCHURCH, SUTTON ARMS (Stonegate).

Became the first Taptide bar in 2026.

KINGSTON, NORBITON (Stonegate/Frontier Pubs).

Now operated by Highpress.

TEDDINGTON, ADELAIDE (Wellington/Shepherd Neame).

Under Morgan Collective management since August 2025.

Warren West

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of Warren, an all-round great fellow. He passed away peacefully on 3 January at the Princess Royal University Hospital (PRUH). A true connoisseur of real ale, Warren was a stalwart member of CAMRA's Bromley branch for over three



decades and was examiner of our branch accounts jointly with John Horn. His commitment to the cause was legendary, evidenced by his four-digit membership number. He was a familiar face at beer festivals across the country, including the 2025 GBBF in Birmingham. In fact, it would be easier to list those festivals he did not attend. His encyclopaedic knowledge of pubs, beers and breweries all over the UK and Belgium was acclaimed. Locally, he was a regular at several local hosteleries including the Red Lion, the Star & Garter, One Inn the Wood, the Blythe Hill Tavern, the Partridge and the Claret & Ale.

Warren spent his professional life as a chartered quantity surveyor. Most notably his lead on the Liverpool Street Station fire claim was a testament to his skill and

hard work. Among his other passions, he was foremost a Crystal Palace fan. He followed the Eagles through every high and low, supporting the team from the age of nine and did not miss a home or away match for over 35 years.

Warren was a man of loyalty, tradition and good humour who will be sorely missed by all who knew him. His funeral was held at a packed St George's Church, Beckenham, on 5 February and afterwards his family provided refreshments at the Star & Garter, Bromley.

With thanks to Mark Goss-Sampson for the photo.

Norman Warner

Peter Trout

Further to the tribute in the December/January edition, it has been explained to me that the logo for this year's Bexley Beer Festival (see page 21) pays homage to Peter. It features his favourite green jumper (sometimes it was a grey one, both usually with holes!) and his love of vinyl records. The white horse, Invicta, is the symbol of Kent, saluting his service to CAMRA in the county.

Ted Bruning

Ted, who edited CAMRA's newspaper, *What's Brewing*, for eight years, has passed away at the age of 68 after a long illness. Born in Worksop, he was a professional journalist and also worked for the *Morning Advertiser*. He wrote a number of books on pubs, beer and brewing and was a founder of the British Guild of Beer Writers. His book, *Historic Inns of England*, won the Guild's silver tankard award in 2000. We send our condolences to his family.

Letters

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.

Thank you for publishing my article about the 135 Association in the February/March *London Drinker*. A small error crept in. Where my article says that people completing the tour got a pint of beer to take home, it

should have said a pin (36 pints) of beer although, when I did the tour in 1982, Young's preferred you to take the beer as nine four-pint cans.

Colin Price

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, 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 again and welcome to the official spring edition of your bimonthly helping of anguish and irritation. As I sit here typing, the sun is shining and it is quite mild but then I've been drinking an excellent mild on and off in my local for several months now (non-sequitur of the month). In the

absence of complaints about last time's 5BY4, I thought I would do a second selection. Having already pulled out more examples from my vinyl collection than I could use in one issue, I thought it would be a waste of effort not to use some more and so I present 5BY4 My Vinyl 2:

- Ralph McTell
- Bob Dylan
- Judy Tzuke
- Steeleye Span
- Jethro Tull
- Tom Paxton
- Blondie
- Barbara Dickson
- Judy Collins
- Mike Harding
- Heartbeats (1984)
- Welcome to the Cruise
- The Rochdale Cowboy Rides Again
- Parallel Lines (1978)
- Wild Flowers (1967)
- Bringin' It All Back Home (1965)
- You Well Meaning Brought Me Here (1971)
- Parcel of Rogues (1973)
- Songs From the Wood
- Peace Will Come (1972)

I think I shall leave this topic now and move onto something else for the next time I do 5BY4. Hmm! I've got quite a lot of CDs...

Now let's have some more Cryptic Stations. I had a couple of spares from when I inflicted the first batch on you in December so had a close look (tiny print) at my 2022 (post Elizabeth Line) tube map and managed to scrape together enough to make up another ten. It looks like this will be the last of these (don't all cry at once!). There are lots more stations but not many that suggested silly descriptions to me (or maybe I'm getting less silly as I get older – seems unlikely!)

- I met my come-uppance!
- Beehive hair style?
- Especially shallow for moggies
- Big posh home
- Entrance in the trees
- Down by the river
- Mad?
- They've gone a funny colour!
- Senior cleric's picnic spot?
- The route to Kingsholm?

A word of warning. Although all of these stations are on the map which is titled 'Tube Map' and bears the banner 'London Underground', two of these are not Underground stations. Can you spot them? If I remember, I shall include the extra information with the solution next time. In the meantime, award yourself a pat on the back (don't strain anything) if you spot them.

Right! It's General Trivia time. Quite often a thought comes into my head and occasionally it is sensible; on some of those occasions you get regaled with questions on a single topic (or linked ones). At other times I go back to the old out of print Chambers Dates. Guess where these ones come from:

- André Previn was born on 6 April 1929; in what city?
- 'John Palmer' was hanged in York (and was subsequently buried there) for murdering a game 'keeper' (presumably of game) in Epping. What was the real name of this anonymised felon?
- On 9 April 1983, Jenny Pitman became the first female racehorse trainer to have a Grand National winner. What was the name of her winning Horse?
- 18 April 1903 saw the FA Cup won with the greatest ever margin with a score of 6-0. Who were the winning and losing teams? (I'm told that Manchester City did the same to Watford a bit more recently, in 2019.)
- The first ever televised snooker break of 147 points occurred on 23 April 1983 during a World Championship match at the Crucible, Sheffield. Who won this distinction?
- The German airship Hindenburg was destroyed by fire (with 35 fatalities) while attempting to dock on 6 May 1937. Where did this tragedy occur?
- HMS Victory, Nelson's flag ship was launched on 7 May 1765. Where was it built?
- The first flight of Britain's first jet powered bomber took place on 15 May 1949. What model of plane was it?

- Blackwall Tunnel under the Thames in east London was opened on 22 May of what year? And in what year was the second bore opened, allowing separation of the north and south traffic streams?
- 'Captain' William Kidd, the Scottish privateer, was hanged for piracy in London on 23 May 1701. What was the name of the location of this event?

As I type this (on 5 March), it seems a bit early to wish you a Happy Easter, but due to publishing lead times it may well be passed by the time you read this so I shall just say that I hope you have/had a good Easter holiday.

Andy Pirson

The answers

As usual, here are the solutions to the puzzles set in the February/March column.

5BY4 (MY Vinyl):

- Alison Moyet - Rainedancing (1987)
- The Watsons - For Pence & Spicy Ale (1975)
- Pete Atkin - A King at Nightfall (1975)
- Joni Mitchell - Blue (1971)
- Fleetwood Mac - Rumours (1977)
- Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band - Gorilla (1967)
- John Denver - Poems, Prayers & Promises (1971)
- Gordon Lightfoot - If You Could Read My Mind (1970)
- Robin & Barry Dransfield - The Rout of the Blues (1970)
- Renaissance - A Song for All Seasons (1978)

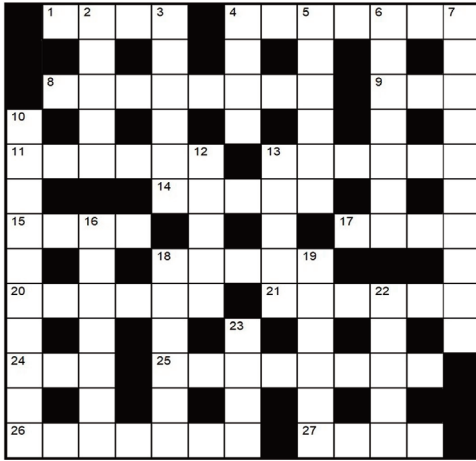
BAZY Celebrities:

- GF: American female tennis player [Gigi Fernandez]
- NM: Eldest 'bright young things' sister [Nancy Mitford]
- SR: Jazz saxophonist [Sonny Rollins]
- CB: Celebrity snapper [Cecil Beaton]
- IH: Composer daughter of Gustav [Imogen Holst]
- GF: Archbishop of Canterbury [Geoffrey Fisher]
- BA: Comedy partner of Lou [Bud Abbott]
- JL: Learned the Truth at Seventeen [Janis Ian]
- ON: Brazilian architect [Oscar Niemeyer]
- ML: Beach Boy [Mike Love]

General knowledge:

- HMS Thunderer, the last battleship to be built on the River Thames, was launched at Silvertown on 1 February in 1911.
- On 7 February 1974, the British colony of the Windward Islands that became an independent Commonwealth country was Grenada.
- The daughter of actress Maureen O'Sullivan, born on 9 February 1945 and who subsequently also became a famous actress, was Mia Farrow.
- Lady Jane Grey, the Nine Days Queen, was executed for high treason on 12 February 1554.
- On 19 February 1878, Thomas Edison was granted US patent No. 200251 for the phonograph.
- Charlie Chaplin was knighted by HM Queen Elizabeth II on 4 March 1975.
- On 7 February, the Victoria Line of the London Underground was opened to regular passenger traffic in 1969.
- The composer Sir William Walton died (at the age of 80) on 8 March 1983 at his home on Ischia.
- On 20 March 1980, the ship Mi Amigo ran aground and sank, thus terminating the broadcasting of Radio Caroline (after sixteen years of operation).
- Mark Brunel's Thames Tunnel, between Wapping and Rotherhithe, was formally opened on 25 March in 1843.

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



Name

Address

Telephone

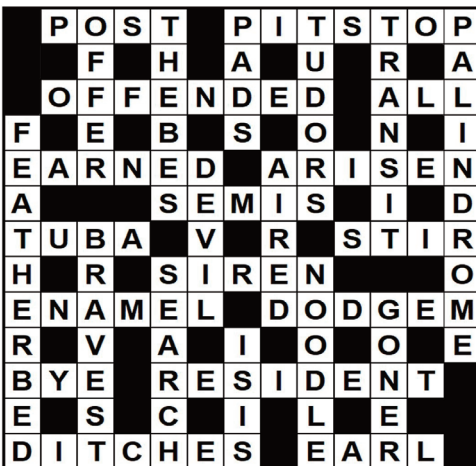
E-mail

All correct entries received by first post on 20 May will be entered into a draw for the prize. The prize winner will be announced in the August/September edition. The solution will be given in the June/July 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.

FEBRUARY/MARCH SOLUTION



ACROSS

1. Dull place to live. [4]
4. Protest mainly pleasant but becoming nasty. [7]
8. Their bites may be painless. [8]
9. You get browned off with it. [3]
11. Skinhead almost completely evil. [6]
13. Orbits around the bar. [6]
14. High flier that's well below par. [5]
15. Piece of jumper knitted first. [4]
17. Silent god? [4]
18. Intends to find resources. [5]
20. I am overwhelmed by unacceptable thought. [6]
21. Mother takes time to cause harm. [6]
24. Fool in stick up. [3]
25. Naive pub taking no money. [8]
26. Meet by accident. [3,4]
27. Quiet support for snooker player. [4]

DOWN

2. Nothing up, up inside flower. [5]
3. Meat provided by a Brighton guest house. [6]
4. Couple expected on time. [4]
5. Food that is supplied for the club. [6]
6. Isn't a rowdy youth marked? [7]
7. Prisoner started to become bewildered. [10]
10. Sky viewer, on stream or off. [10]
12. Left port with a cargo. [5]
13. Final ending in a tie is fair. [5]
16. Shape achieved with endless pain after one short month. [7]
18. Test particle's movement. [6]
19. Wacky races, round the bend, in China perhaps. [6]
22. Workers embracing union relations. [5]
23. Disband a French party. [4]

Winner of the prize for the December/January Crossword:
Stephen Pegum, Barnet

Other correct entries were received from:

Ted Alleway, Tony Alpe, John Armitstead, Roy Atkins, John Barker, C Bloom, Hugh Breach, K Beach, Kelvin Brewster, Jeremy Brinkworth, John Butler, John Clark, Owen Cunningham, Andy Dadd, John Dodds, Lindsay Doyle, Terry Francis, Bill Fullick, Richard Garton, Nick Goodwin, R Gould, Roger Grant, Paul Gray, J E Green, Alan Greer, A Gregg, Matthew Griffiths, 'Shropshire' Dave Hardy, John Howarth, Eileen Howey, Alan Humphrey, Carol Jenkins, Eric Johnstone, D M L Jones, R L P Keys, Mick Lancaster, Pete Large, Terry Lavell, Aidan Laverty, Tony Lennon, Ken McKenzie, Steve Magin, Martin Mason, Ruth Moreton, Dave Murphy, Brian Myhill, Mick Norman, Gerald Notley, Mrs A Ognjenovic, Michael Oliver, Nigel Parsons, D Patterson, Robert Perris, Portrush Annie, Jeanette Powell, Nicholas Priest, James Rawle, David Renwick, Robert Ripley, Nigel Roe, Derek Seeley, Mrs Amanda Shepherd, Paul Skinner, Roy Tassi, Mike Teal, Liam Thompson, Mark Thompson, Otis Timaeus-Sins, Andy Wakefield, Martin Weedon, Alan Welsh, Jerry Wigens, Fred Williams, Shez Wright, K Zemek

There were also three incorrect entries.



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