

FREE

LONDON CAMRA DRINKER

Volume 48 No. 5

October/November 2026



Coach & Horses, Mayfair - See page 14

Wetherspoon supports brewers
of all sizes, across the UK and Ireland,
so that our customers can
enjoy a diverse range of real ales.

GUEST ALES AT WETHERSPOON



Our tasting notes detail year-round and seasonal real ales.
Not all of the ales will be available at all times; so, if
there is an ale on the list in the pub which you would like
us to stock, please suggest it to the manager.

Subject to local licensing restrictions and availability at participating free houses. Photography/illustration is for guidance only. See food menu for symbol explanations. J D Wetherspoon plc reserves the right to withdraw/change offers (without notice), at any time. See website for full details: jdwetherspoon.com

for the facts
drinkaware.co.uk jdwetherspoon.com

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At the end of August, readers may have seen articles about CAMRA in the *Times* and the *Guardian*. They highlighted the Campaign's reduced membership and loss for the 2024/2025 financial year. The *Times* did forewarn CAMRA of their article and they were sent a detailed briefing explaining the situation but only one part of it, a quote from finance director Ian Hill, was used.

Most of the financial loss related to the move of offices from St Albans to Luton because the purchase and sale fell in different financial years. That move was not 'downsizing'; it saw us achieve a long-standing plan to combine our office and warehouse operations on the same site. The financial forecast for 2025/2026 looks much healthier. We most certainly have not reached our 'nadir' as the *Guardian* claimed. CAMRA is not going out of business!

As regards membership, Ian Hill explained, "We are no different from many other membership organisations that have seen a sustained reduction in membership since the pandemic. We still have more than 140,000 members and a high retention rate, dedicated to campaigning to protect our beloved pubs and pints." I understand that over 400 new members were recruited at the recent Peterborough Beer Festival.

What was disappointing with both newspaper articles is that they clearly failed to grasp how CAMRA operates. Its strength lies in its members at local level, however many of them there might be. The *Good Beer Guide* is probably the most objective pub guide that there is. You cannot buy your way in; a pub is included only if local CAMRA members think that it meets the standard. Similarly, the GBG's brewery section is unique, with information provided direct from the source by CAMRA's brewery liaison officers. Our pub of the year awards, again judged by local members, are highly prized for precisely that reason and, similarly, brewers regard the Champion Beer of Britain award as one of the highest accolades available.

That said, led by its expert staff, CAMRA is actively involved with lobbying on a number of national issues. In particular, we have for some time been pushing the Competition and Markets Authority to hold an 'access to market' investigation into the restrictions being placed on small brewers by the large pubcos. This culminated in the launch of our 'Beer in the UK' report which I recommend everyone to read. To be fair to the *Guardian*, in their article they did allow Tom Stainer, CAMRA's chief executive, to expound on this issue at length.

In its early years, CAMRA built up a reputation as one of the most effective consumer protection bodies in Europe. Essentially, this has not changed. Ignore the doubters, keep campaigning!
Tony Hedger

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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 October and November 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

October

- Thu 1 (from 7pm) John Young Memorial Award presentation evening; Bohemia, North Finchley N12 9QH
- Wed 7 (from 7pm) Greater London CAMRA Pub of the Year presentation evening; Cockpit, Chislehurst BR7 6NR

November

- Wed 11 (7.30) Brewery Liaison Officers' meeting; venue tba
- Thu 12 (from 7pm) Greater London CAMRA Club of the Year presentation evening; Orpington Liberal Club BR6 0RZ
- Mon 30 (7.30) Regional meeting; Chamberlain Hotel, 132-135 Minories, EC3N 1NU

LONDON PUBS GROUP

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

October

- Sat 17 Bromley, Petts Wood and Orpington tour: (12pm) Partridge BR1 1HE, (1.30) Royal Bell BR1 1NN, (2.15) Star & Garter BR1 1NZ, (3.30) Daylight Inn BR5 1LZ, (4.15) One Inn the Wood BR5 1LA, (5.15) Orpington Liberal Club BR6 0RZ

November

- Mon 16 (7.30) Meeting; Trinity (upstairs) SE1 1JX. All CAMRA members interested in pub research and preservation welcome
<https://londonpubsgroup.camra.org.uk>

CIDER

Ian White, ikwcider@icloud.com

YOUNG MEMBERS' GROUP

Dario Bertero, dbertero.w@gmail.com

October

- Wed 28 (7pm) Meet the Brewer; WeBrew Kingston, 5 Ram Passage, KT1 1HH. An informal evening with Paddy Johnson, who will be giving us some background/insight to his career, the latest updates from the brewery and a Q&A session.
Facebook: Greater London CAMRA Young Members

BEXLEY

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

October

- Sat 10 (9am) Festival staff trip; details coming
- Wed 14 (7pm) **Branch AGM**; Dartfordians, War Memorial Clubhouse, Bexley DA5 1LW (tbc but 95% certain)
- Fri 16 (12.30) Spa Valley Railway Beer Festival social; details tba
- Wed 28 (7pm) Dartford social; start venue tba

November

- Wed 11 (7pm) Meeting; Bird & Barrel, Barnhurst DA7 6HG
- Wed 25 Eltham social: meet (7pm) Park Tavern SE9 5DA
www.bexley.camra.org.uk

BROMLEY

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

October

- Wed 7 Cockpit, Chislehurst; see London Region diary
- Thu 8 (7.30) Beer Festival social; Orpington Liberal Club BR6 0RZ
- Sat 17 Bromley, Petts Wood and Orpington; see London Pubs Group diary
- Sat 24 Marden Village Social Club Beer Festival; meet (11am) Orpington Stn for 11:22 train, changing at Sevenoaks to arrive Marden 11:59
- Thu 29 (12pm) Redhill Beer Festival social; Merstham Village Hall RH1 3ED. Take either 11:14 or 11:23 train from East Croydon to Merstham

November

- Tue 3 West Wickham & Hayes social: (7pm) Hoptics BR4 0PX, (8.30) Real Ale Way BR2 7EB
- Thu 12 Orpington Liberal Club; see London Region diary
- Tue 17 Chislehurst BR7 social: (7pm) Rambler's Rest 5ND, (7.40) Imperial Arms 5LZ, (8.50) Crown Inn 5PQ
- Tue 24 (7.30) Committee meeting; Sydney Arms, Chislehurst BR7 6PL
- Thu 26 (from 5pm) Dark Beers Festival social; Hope, Carshalton SM5 2PR
<http://bromley.camra.org.uk/calendar/>

CROYDON & SUTTON

Social Sec: Roger Ford, 07977 984219,

social@croydon.camra.org.uk

October

Branch meeting at Cryer Arts to be arranged; see website for update

- Thu 1 (8pm) Carshalton social and London Drinker pick-up; Hope SM5 2PR
- Wed 14 (8pm) Croydon social; Dark Horse CR0 2DW
- Sat 24 Cheam SM3 pub tour: approximate timings (12pm) Nonsuch Inn 9AA, (1.30) Prince of Wales 8QF, (2.30) Olde Red Lion 8QB, (3.30) Halfway Inn 8BL, (4.30) Railway 8SQ
- Thu 29 (8pm) Coudsdon social; Smugglers Inn CR5 3BE

November

- Wed 4 (1pm) Croydon social; Oval CR0 6BR
- Wed 11 (8.30) Open committee meeting; Green Dragon CR0 1NA
- Thu 19 (8pm) Beddington CR0 social: (8pm) Dog House 4QR, then Harvest Home 4TG and Plough 4QR
- Thu 26 (8pm) Carshalton social and London Drinker pickup; Hope SM5 2PR
www.croydon.camra.org.uk

EAST LONDON & CITY

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

October

- Sat 3 Roberts Ramble: meet (12pm) St Albans City Stn, Town Centre exit; first pub is Great Northern, 172 London Rd, AL1 1PQ. Walk is 5 miles and we will have the branch phone with us.
- Mon 5 (7.30) Pig's Ear planning meeting; Olde Rose & Crown, Walthamstow E17 4SA
- Tue 20 (7.30) Pig's Ear planning meeting; Black Lion, Plaistow E13 0AD
- Thu 22 (6pm) Ale Night social; Leyton Orient Supporters Club E10 5NF
- Thu 29 Pig's Ear Bar Trek: (6.30) European E10 7EQ, (7.30) William IV E10 6AE; three others

November

- Tue 3 (7.30) Pig's Ear planning meeting; Black Lion E13 0AD
- Wed 4 (7.30) Branch meeting; Ye Olde Mitre EC1N 6SJ
- Wed 11 7pm Pig's Ear Bar Trek: (7pm) Wild Swan EC4A 1AN, (8pm) Ye Olde Mitre EC1N 6SJ; two others
- Sat 14 Pig's Ear Bar Trek: (1pm) Tapping the Admiral NW1 8SU, (2pm) Pocket N1 2AS; five others.
- Mon 16 (7.30) Pig's Ear planning meeting; Olde Rose & Crown E17 4SA
- Thu 19 Pig's Ear Bar Trek: (6.30) Ye Three Lords EC3N 1YE, (7.30) Pride of Spitalfields E1 5LJ; three others
www.pigsear.org.uk

ENFIELD & BARNET

Peter Graham, 07946 383498,

contact@enfieldandbarnet.camra.org.uk

October

- Sat 3 Roberts Ramble; see East London & City diary
- Sat 10 Hendon & Colindale social: (12pm) Greyhound NW4 4JT, (1pm) Moon Under Water NW9 6RR
- Tue 13 Enfield EN2 social: (7pm) Cricketers 6QA, (8pm) Moon Under Water 6NN
- Fri 23 (12pm) Ye Olde Mitre, High Barnet EN5 5SJ
- Wed 28 Lower Edmonton N9 social: (7pm) Rising Sun 9EF, (8pm) Beehive 9JZ

17TH WANDSWORTH COMMON

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October 28th October 31st



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November

- Sat 7 Hampstead to Highgate social: (12pm) Spaniards Inn NW3 7JJ, (2pm) Crown N6 5HX
- Wed 11 Barnet social: (7pm) Prince of Wales EN4 8TB, (8pm) Queens Arms EN5 1AB
- Thu 19 Enfield EN2 social: (7pm) Jolly Farmers 7QS, (8pm) Old Wheatsheaf 6SE
- Sun 29 (2pm) Club social, jointly with North London; Mildmay Club, Newington Green N16 9PR
<https://enfieldandbarnet.camra.org.uk>

KINGSTON & LEATHERHEAD

John Burns, contact@kandl.camra.org.uk

October

- Sat 3 Trip to Broolly Brewery, Horsham Brewery Tap and GBG pubs. Meet (2pm) at Horsham Stn (trains from Epsom or via Clapham Junction should arrive at about the same time)
- Wed 7 (2pm) Quiet pint; William Webb Ellis, Twickenham TW1 3RR
- Sun 11 (2pm) Open Mic afternoon, Thames Side Brewery, Staines TW18 4UW. Come and enjoy some of Staines's finest beers as well as K&L's Steve Burt with his band Dry Rot
- Thu 15 Fleet Street & Holborn tour: (3pm) Cheshire Cheese, (3.45) Edgar Wallace, (4.30) George, (5.15) Old Bank of England, (6.15) Wild Swan
- Wed 28 (7pm) Meet the Brewer at WeBrew Kingston; see Young Members' Group diary

November

- Thu 5 (7.30) Meeting; Albion (Old Distillery room), Kingston KT1 2PY
- Thu 12 (7pm) Beer Festival visit; Egham United Services Club, 111 Spring Rise, TW20 9PE
<https://kandl.camra.org.uk/>

NORTH LONDON

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

October

- Tue 6 (from 4pm) GBG launch; Pocket N1 2AS
- Tue 13 (2pm) Wetherspoon Festival social; J.J. Moon's, Kingsbury NW9 9EL
- Tue 20 (7.30) Meeting; Pineapple, Kentish Town NW5 2NX. Long listing for 2027 GBG pubs and Pub of the Season

November

- Tue 3 Early Tufnell Park social: (4pm) Tufnell Park Tavern N7 0EE, (5.45) Cap & Taps Bottle Shop NW5 2HR
- Tue 10 (5pm) Antwerp Arms, Tottenham N17 8AS. Laurie Gordon's 90th birthday
- Sat 14 (1pm) Pig's Ear Bar Trek; see East London & City diary
- Tue 17 North Kilburn NW6 tour: (7pm) Coopers 4JD, then North London Tavern 7QB
- Sun 29 (2pm) Mildmay Club social; see Enfield & Barnet diary
<https://northlondon.camra.org.uk>

RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW

Damian Smeaton, 020 8898 1356 (leave message), contact@rh.camra.org.uk

October

- Tue 6 (7.30) Meeting; Cabbage Patch, Twickenham TW1 3SZ
- Wed 14 (8pm) Moon Under Water, Hounslow TW3 3LF; presentation to Peter Johnson for 25 years' consecutive GBG entries
- Tue 27 St Margarets social: (7.30) Rising Sun TW1 2NP, then Crown, St Margarets Tavern, Turk's Head

November

- Tue 3 (7.30) Meeting; Lion, Teddington TW11 9DN
- Tue 24 Kew Green social: (7.30) Coach & Horses TW9 3BH, then Greyhound, Rose & Crown
rh.camra.org.uk

SOUTH EAST LONDON

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

October

- Wed 7 Bermondsey Beer Mile social: meet (7pm) Kernel Brewery Taproom SE16 3AE
- Sat 31 (12pm) Visit to Norwich Beer Festival

November

- Tue 3 (7.30) Meeting and social; tba
- Wed 11 Rotherhithe social: meet (7pm) Old Justice SE16 4TY
- Tue 17 Tower Bridge social: meet (7pm) Kings Arms, Tooley St SE1 2JX
- Wed 25 Camberwell social: meet (7pm) Stormbird SE5 8TR
<https://sel.camra.org.uk>

SOUTH WEST LONDON

Social Sec: Mark Bravery, info@swl.camra.org.uk

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

October

- Tue 13 Stockwell social: meet (7pm) Fentiman Arms SW8 1LA
- Tue 27 (7pm) Research social prior to GBG shortlisting; pubs and timings tba

November

- Tue 10 (7.30) Meeting; Horse & Groom SW19 1DE
- Tue 24 Balham & Clapham Junction social: meet (7pm) Nightingale SW12 8NX, finish at Eagle Ale House SW11 6HG
<https://swl.camra.org.uk>

WATFORD & DISTRICT

Andrew Vaughan, 07854 988152,

branch@watford.camra.org.uk

October

- Thu 15 Watford Heath WD19 social: (8.30) Load of Hay 4ET, (9.15) Royal Oak 4EU

November

- Mon 30 (8pm) Meeting. West Herts Sports Club, Watford WD18 7HP
www.watford.camra.org.uk

WEST LONDON

Social Sec: Paul Young, 07591 125486, pyoung3114@aol.com

Paul Charlton, 07835 927357, contact@westlondon.camra.org.uk

October

- Wed 7 (3pm) Wetherspoon Festival social; Walham Green, Fulham SW6 1BY
- Mon 12 North Soho social: (7pm) Flying Horse W1D 1AN; three others
- Tue 27 (2pm) Social; Queen's Arms SW7 5QL

November

- Wed 11 Belgravia social: (7pm) Horse & Groom SW1X 7BA; two others
- Tue 17 (7pm for 7.30) Meeting; Speaker (upstairs) SW1P 2HA
- Wed 25 Paddington social: (2pm) Monkey Puzzle W2 1JQ; two others
www.westlondon.camra.org.uk

WEST MIDDLESEX

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

October

- Thu 8 (8pm) Ealing beer festival wash-up meeting; Forester W13 9EP
- Sat 10 Outer limits tour: (12pm) Good Yarn, Uxbridge UB8 1JX; (1.30) Falcon, Denham UB9 5BE; (2.45) Old Orchard, Harefield UB9 6HJ; (4pm) Kings Arms UB9 6BJ; (5.15) Woodman, Ruislip HA4 7SE; (6.20) Hop & Vine, Ruislip HA4 7AN
- Fri 16 Met Line Spoons tour: (7.30) J.J. Moon's, Ruislip Manor HA4 0AA; (9pm) Village Inn, Rayners Lane HA5 5DY; (10pm) Moon on the Hill, Harrow on the Hill HA1 2AW
- Thu 29 Hanwell W7 social: (7.30) Dodo 3TR, 9pm) Duke of York 3SP

November

- Mon 9 (2pm) Social; Moon & Sixpence, Hatch End HA5 4HS
- Wed 18 (8pm) Social; Greystoke, Hanger Lane W5 3HU
- Thu 26 (8pm) Meeting; Windermere, Wembley HA9 8QT
<https://westmiddx.camra.org.uk>

The electronic copy deadline for the December 2026/January 2027 edition is no later than Friday 6 November 2026.

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



COVENT GARDEN

The Harp is not only an award-winning pub, it's in the Evening Standard's top five pubs to visit in London – and for good reason. The Harp is a blissfully traditional place with great cask ale and good old conversation – it's also well known for its traditional ciders and perries from all around the country. Located in London's famous Covent Garden, The Harp is a great example of a traditional British ale house.

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CHAMPION BEER OF BRITAIN 2028

It's time again for CAMRA members to make their contribution to the Champion Beer of Britain competition (CBoB). On-line nominations opened on 1 September but, unfortunately, this was not notified until after our August/September edition had been published. The competition runs on a two-year cycle, so these nominations will be for the 2028 competition. A full explanation is included on the website. Go to <https://camra.org.uk/cbob>. Nominations close on 31 October.

WINS FOR LONDON

In the meantime, the 2027 competition is in full swing. The regional judging round for the Premium Pale, Golden and Blond Ales category for London and the South East was held recently during Wimbledon Brewery's beer festival. We thank them for their hospitality. This category has produced two recent National Supreme Champions, Bristol Beer Factory's Independence earlier this year and Crouch Vale's Amarillo in 2024.



The tasting panel

It was a close call but the Gold went to Five Points for their Pale, the Silver to London Brewing Co for Top Pocket and the Bronze to Burning Sky for Aurora. The other finalists were Surrey Hills (Collusion), Firebird (Parody) and Kent (Prohibition). Five Points Pale goes through to the final judging next year. The venue for next year's CBoB final judging has yet to be chosen.



Another regional winner was Twickenham Fine Ales for their Honey Dark. Their award was presented to managing director Steve Brown by their Brewery Liaison Officer, John Austin. With thanks to George Gimber for the photo.

NATIONAL CLUB OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to our Greater London Club of the Year, the Orpington Liberal Club, which made it through to the Regional Winners round of the National Club of the Year competition, jointly organised by CAMRA and *Club Mirror*. The overall winner will be announced at the Club Awards dinner on 25 November. The club recently held a very successful cider festival.

REGIONAL CIDER ROUND-UP

The Greater London Cider Pub of the Year is the Cock Tavern in Hackney (E8 1EJ), a worthy winner with a good range of ciders on handpump and an enthusiastic landlord. The presentation took place on 20 July.

The London one day cider festival, held at Rocket Van on 25 April, was a success. We started with 22 ciders, seven perries and a mead. This initial stock ran out at 6pm but a restock had arrived at 5.55 and so we were able to continue into the evening. The good weather certainly helped!

The Dulwich Hamlet Festival, held over the bank holiday weekend in May, offered 16 ciders (including five London products), seven perries and four sparkling ciders. With excellent weather and attendance up by a third, we sold out. The winner was Gregg's Pit Perry from Herefordshire. This entailed the cider bar manager travelling to Much Marcle in Herefordshire to make a presentation.

The Miller, just round the back of Guys Hospital (SE1 3SS) recently held a one-day festival with 100 boxes of cider. It was a lively event with a good age demographic. Also there is a major development in prospect in the area and the Miller, a good example of a 1960s pub, will be demolished; this was probably its last event. A replacement pub is promised.

Ian White.

GOING BOLDLY...

Captain's log, Stardate 1-5122026 - the Enterprise has received a distress signal from a planet where the population is desperately short of beer. At maximum warp, we will enter orbit over Hackney's Round Chapel from 1 to 5 December 2026. Away teams are ready to beam down over 200 cask ales and ciders, along with a range of keg, bottled and international beers. Replicators will be online, serving food every day, and the planet's inhabitants will be welcomed from midday to 10.30 Tuesday to Thursday, 11pm on Friday and 9pm on Saturday. Starfleet officers and CAMRA members enter free while non-members must pay £5 on the door (£2 on Saturday). Glasses are free but please don't Klingon to them when you leave. So, set your phasers to fun, and come join us at the fine ale frontier. To miss it would be highly illogical.

Alex Wall

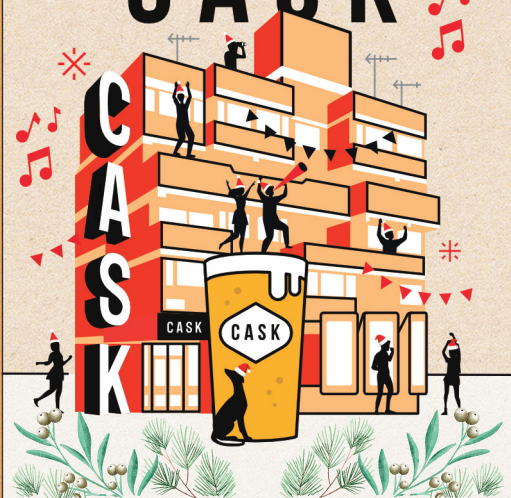
WATFORD BEER FESTIVAL

Sadly, we have to announce that there will not be a Watford Beer Festival in 2026. As you can imagine, such an event takes quite a bit of planning and managing and the same volunteers have been on the organising team for many years. Basically, some of us need a break. We do however recognise that many members will want to see the festival continue in some form, even if on a smaller scale. We are working on it.

Christmas

AT

CASK



WEST LONDON CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR 2025

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BURGERS**

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SPECIALS

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EVERY SUNDAY**

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CAMRA 2026

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WITH GOOD PINTS**

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RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW NEWS

The branch Cider Pub of the Year is the Black Dog Beer House in Brentford (TW8 0NF). The photo shows Bob Gordon, the branch chairman, presenting the award to delighted staff. With thanks to Damian Smeaton for the photo.



SOUTH EAST LONDON PRESENTATIONS

Readers will recall that the branch selects area pubs of the year in SE1, Greenwich, Lewisham and Southwark & Lambeth (excluding SE1). The SE1 winner, and overall branch Pub of the Year, the Hand & Marigold, was featured in our previous edition. Further presentations have since been made



The Greenwich area winner was the Green Goddess in Blackheath (SE3 7AA) and the above photo shows branch chair, Andy Large, presenting Stephen and Maryann with their certificate. With thanks to Joseph Paul for the photo. The Mayflower in Rotherhithe (SE16 4NF) was the Southwark and Lambeth (excluding SE1) winner. Andy did the honours once again, presenting the certificate to Ed, the landlord in the company of a number of branch members. With thanks to Maria Freeman for the photo.



DESIGN AWARD PRESENTATIONS

As mentioned in the last edition, the Blue Stoops in Kensington (W8 7LP) was a winner in CAMRA's Pub Design awards.



The photo above shows Ellie Eames, Greater London CAMRA Regional Director, presenting the award to Jamie Allsopp, with Jane Jephcote of the London Pubs Group looking on. With thanks to Wanda Piontek for the photo.

The Community Local award was won by the Lord Southampton in Kentish Town (NW5 4HX). Once again, Ellie and Jane did the honours, presenting the award to Phil and Aimee. With thanks to Joanne Scott for the photo below.



Taste the Very Best Bottled & Canned Beers in East Anglia

2.15pm Saturday 7th November

Bohemia, North Finchley, N12 9QH

Come and experience the incredible East Anglian beers shortlisted in CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain Competition.

You'll have the chance to sample at least ten beers, score the beers and see how your views measure up against the judges' expert opinions!



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National Pub of the Year

CAMRA branches around the country have chosen their pubs of the year and these have now gone through the judging process at regional level. Below are the final 16, in order of the CAMRA region in which they are located. All are good; give them a try if you happen to be in the area.

The Regional Pub of the Year for Greater London is the Cockpit in Royal Parade, Chislehurst (BR7 6NR). This is their fourth consecutive year as Bromley branch's pub of the year (2023 to 2026) but is their first regional award. The Cockpit is the area's first micropub and is shared, most unusually, with a florist's shop. It features a regularly changing selection of cask ale and ciders, mostly from small brewers around the country.

Bromley branch is also home to this year's Greater London Regional Club of the Year, with the Orpington Liberal Club winning the award for the third year running. They are maintaining their standards against increasing competition. Congratulations to them both. There will be more about them in the next edition.

- East Anglia: **Railway Arms**, Saffron Walden (CB11 3HQ) – a lovingly restored Victorian street-corner pub saved by its local community in 2020;
- East Central: **Malt Shovel Tavern**, Northampton (NN1 1QF) – opposite the Carlsberg brewery!
- East Midlands: **Railway**, Ketton (PE9 3RD) – Grade II-listed village gem;
- Merseyside and Cheshire: **Turks Head**, St. Helens (WA10 2DQ) – a Tudor-style pub dating back to the 1870s;
- North East: **Olde Cross**, Old Ryton Village (NE40 3QP) – attractive Edwardian, half-timbered community-owned pub;

- North West: **Northumberland Arms**, Marple Bridge (SK6 5HD) – restored and run by its community;
- Northern Ireland: **Dog and Duck Inn**, Lisbellaw (BT94 5ER) – a family run, dog-friendly country pub;
- Scotland: **Steam Packet Inn**, Isle of Whithorn (DG8 8LL) – overlooks the harbour and is home to the Five Kingdoms brewery;
- South Central: **Bell**, Waltham St Lawrence (RG10 0JJ) – classic, half-timbered, 14th-century pub;
- South East: **Nelson Arms**, Tonbridge (TN9 1UP) – beautifully refurbished side street local with a nautical theme;
- South West: **Fallen Tree**, Clevedon (BS21 7PD) – the first micropub in North Somerset;
- Wales: **Mold Alehouse**, Mold (CH7 1AL) – micropub in a Grade II-listed building;
- West Central: **Alma Inn**, Linton (HR9 7RY) – multi-room pub that is home to the Linton Music Festival;
- West Midlands: **Tamworth Tap**, Tamworth (B79 7LR) – now legendary three times winner of this competition (2022, 2023 and 2025) that is clearly maintaining its standards;
- Yorkshire: **Countryman's Inn**, Hunton (DL8 1PY) – welcoming community-owned free house, serving Yorkshire beers.

It is encouraging to see the number of community owned pubs included, along with historic pubs and micropubs. These 16 will be whittled down to a final four to be announced in October. The overall winner will be announced in January. Watch this space...

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Coach & Horses reopens

Cover photo: this edition's cover photo is of the Coach & Horses in Hill Street, Mayfair (W1J 5LD), which reopened after refurbishment on 25 August. It is said to be the oldest surviving pub in Mayfair.

You have to admire Shepherd Neame. Not only have they spent a significant amount of money on refurbishing this pub but, on its reopening, they made use of the pub's name in a way I had not expected. As I turned into Hill Street there were two large black horses hitched to a coach, with a well dressed team ready to take attendees on a short trip around the block. Yours truly did not take advantage of this but I did enjoy a pint or two of Shep's beer, in my case Whitstable Bay Pale Ale.



Close to Berkeley Square, the Coach & Horses dates from 1744 and is Grade II listed. It also rates one star on CAMRA's inventory of historic pub interiors. It is by no means a large pub but Sheps have refreshed both the interior and the exterior, with new decor and furniture along with a lovely new handcrafted swing pub sign plus a very smart new traditional red Lantern. There's a small, heated and covered outside area for food and drink; the new food offering features as a speciality flatbreads and charcuterie boards. As you enter the pub and turn left, go past the bar and you will find a snug area with plenty of seating.

I also salute Shepherd Neame for the money that they have spent recently on their London pubs (as well as others outside London) and their continuing support of cask beer. I recommend that you head to Mayfair to see what's been done to the Coach & Horses. It's well worthwhile doing so. For more details, go to <https://camra.org.uk/pubs/coach-horses-london-128690>. With thanks to Sheps for the photos.

NB. There is another Coach & Horses in Mayfair at 5 Bruton Street (W1J 6PT); that one is a Greene King house.
John Cryne



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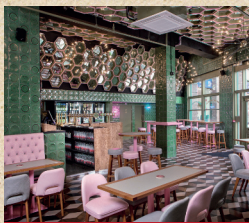
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Most of our pub news is given in brief in the pub information update column. In this column I highlight some cases that hopefully give a deeper insight into what is happening with our pubs.

* Following speculation in the local press, the **Alliance** in West Hampstead (NW6 1NR), a popular community hub as well as a fine looking building, closed in July. There were reports on social media that it had been sold. This coincided with the expiry of the pub's Asset of Community Value listing, which the West Hampstead Neighbourhood Development Forum (NDF) are now hoping to renew. It was squatted for a while but was cleared in August and the site was robustly secured. It is still not clear what is to happen to the pub. It is owned by a property company.

* I'm pleased to report that the **Black Horse** in High Barnet (EN5 4BW) has reopened. Originally a coaching inn, dating from the 1720s, the pub closed in September 2025 because of financial difficulties. Until 2021 it had been the home of the Barnet Brewery. Three former regulars, who all live nearby, have set up a company called Barnet Community Pubs and have taken a lease on the pub from Star Pubs & Bars. It took some effort to get it into a fit state to open but they were helped by locals who wanted their pub back. Some 4,000 of them had previously signed a petition to save the pub.

Sadly however, Brendan Moore, who had been the brewer at the Barnet Brewery, passed away around the same time. He had originally been involved with the Icen Brewery in Norfolk and was chair of SIBA's East Region for some years.

* The **Boot & Flogger** in Borough, London (SE1 1TA) has been added to CAMRA's National Inventory of historic pub interiors with one star in recognition of its timber interior, unchanged since the early 1970s. This includes a manager's office, a long panelled main room divided by three partial partitions, snugs, display cabinets and a custom-made bar counter and bar-back. A wine bar operated by Davy's since 1965, it does not sell either beer or spirits.

* I haven't reported on the **China Hall** in Rotherhithe (SE16 2XL) in a while. The pub is owned by Hama Wakaf Limited (HWL), a name not unknown on these pages. The upper storeys have long been converted into flats but the ground floor was to remain a pub. In 2022 however, HWL started work on converting the ground floor into two further flats. They did not have planning permission. Southwark Council became aware of this activity and ordered a halt. HWL then sought retrospective planning permission for the conversion, which Southwark's Planning Committee refused. HWL appealed to the Planning Inspectorate in 2024 but this was also refused and the company was again ordered to reinstate the pub. The ground floor was vacated but nothing has since been done as regards the reinstatement. Southwark's planning enforcement team are now looking to prosecute HWL for non-compliance. We may yet be some way from seeing the pub reopen but this is a vital step forward. In case you are wondering if it is worth the effort, it worked with the same owner in the case of the Old Justice nearby (SE16 2NQ).

* I mentioned in our April/May edition that the **Coronet** in Holloway (N7 7JY), the former Wetherspoon's converted cinema, had closed. It reopened without any publicity in the middle of August. The new operator, Florin Bogdan, told the Islington Tribune, "We've got a long-term vision to keep it for the local people. Ultimately, I believe that pubs are community hubs and that is what they have been forever. The baseline of these spaces is the community function that they offer." The pub's cask beer offering may be limited but, at least, it is open. Mr Bogdan also

promised to maintain the pub's fine interior.

* Dorset based Hall & Woodhouse (Badger beers) have opened a new bar/café called the **Dockhouse** in the Brentford Project development (TW8 8GP) at a reported cost of £1.8 million. It will serve food ('seasonal dining') all day and features outdoor seating for 80 people overlooking the Grand Union canal where it joins the River Thames.

* Once renowned as the first of David Bruce's chain of Firkin pubs, the **Duke of York** near the Borough (SE1 1DR) has been refurbished by current owners, Shepherd Neame. The work on the pub, which dates from around 1800, 'emphasises the character and traditional features of the building'. Sheps are looking to run it as a traditional local where everyone is welcome. It serves both Thai and British food.

* In another investment in their portfolio of London pubs, Shepherd Neame are converting the former Todd's Wine Bar in the basement of the **Jamaica Wine House** in the City (EC3V 9DS) into an 'events-led clubhouse'. Among the events planned are live acoustic music, beer and wine tasting sessions and cocktail-making workshops. The space will also be available to hire for private events. The pub has a long history. One of London's first coffee houses was established there in 1652, although that building perished in the Great Fire of London with the current one being built in 1885. It is Grade II listed.

* Further to the report in our June/July edition, the application for retrospective planning permission at the **Magdala** in Hampstead (NW3 2SB) was refused and so the owner must now return the first-floor function room, which he had illegally turned into accommodation, to its original use. Camden Council have said that they are prepared to take enforcement action if this does not happen. The operators, the Morgan Pub Company, have however said that use of the function room will be subject to staff and running costs. Meanwhile, the pub has had to shut because of an infestation. It should be open again by the end of September.

* What was previously Simpsons Tavern in the City of London (EC3 9DR) will reopen in October, with bookings being taken from September. The traditional chophouse, dating from 1757 and Grade II listed, has been closed since 2022. It is now called **Cloth Cornhill** because the new owners, the proprietors of the nearby Cloth restaurant in Farringdon, do not have the rights to the Simpsons name. The extensively refurbished site will open for lunch and dinner, Monday to Friday. The ground floor grill remains, along with a pub, Amy's Bar, which interestingly, given recent controversy, will be standing-room only. There will be cask beer. The main restaurant is on the first floor and two private dining rooms have been added.

* Many readers will remember the Water Poet in Spitalfields, which closed in 2019. Its replacement, as part of the Norton Folgate development (E1 6BX), is a pub called **Kong** that will specialise in all-day Chinese food. It is being run by two well known restaurateurs, including a co-founder of the Dishoom group. It is scheduled to open in the autumn.

* I know that Manchester is a popular drinking destination for many London drinkers and so many of you will be sad to learn that Nancy Swanick, the legendary landlady of the iconic Peveril of the Peak (M1 5JQ), has passed away. Nancy, who had run the pub since 1971, was 96. Threatened with demolition in the 1980s for road widening, the pub has a striking green tiled exterior, is Grade II listed and rates three stars on CAMRA's National Inventory. Nancy's family have been helping out in recent years and it is hoped that they will continue to run the pub.



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Ruction at the Ram

The Hammersmith Ram in King Street (W6 9HW) closed its doors on 27 July, a decision taken by owners Young's based on falling sales. It's a pub with a long history: in the 18th century it was a coaching inn, the Great Angel, serving travellers heading in and out of London from the west. By 1786, it had been renamed the Angel Inn. It was rebuilt in its current form in 1930, then morphed into the Builders when Young's took it over in 1966, adopting the name of another nearby pub which had just closed with the building of Hammersmith Bridge Road. In 1996, after a substantial refurbishment, Young's renamed it the Hammersmith Ram, after the brewery's logo. On 31 July, the freehold sale was registered to Hammersmith Realty Ltd, an arm of the Ealing-based real estate company Arora Family. Shortly after, the building was taken over by squatters and it then became a discount hardware store! As CAMRA West London branch's pub protection officer, I was on the case fairly quickly and reported the situation to Hammersmith & Fulham Council's Planning Department, with an urgent plea for enforcement action. This was based on both their own and Greater London pub protection policies because any change of use for a pub requires full planning permission. I was amazed to receive a response within four hours, with them promising to investigate.

Arora Family have since said that they intend that the premises will remain a pub and that they are in the process of identifying a new hospitality provider. They explained that the current occupier was introduced on a temporary basis after the squatters had moved in but, in turning it into

a commercial shop, they may have acted outside the terms of the agreement.



They added, "We are urgently reviewing the situation with our professional advisers, including the appropriate steps to bring the temporary occupation to an end." Watch this space...

With thanks to Colin Towns for the photo.

Paul Charlton

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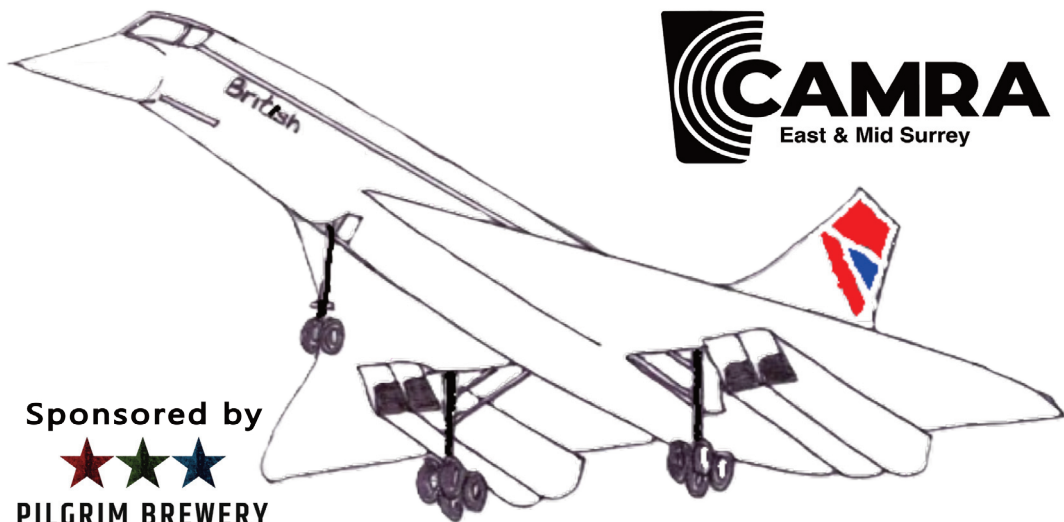
The next edition, December 2026/January 2027, will be available from Wednesday 25 November.

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

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Bexley and the next generation

Bexley Brewery in Erith started up in 2014 and it's great to see how hard work, commitment and community have seen them since develop and thrive.

Cliff is another brewer who came from the world of IT but wife and partner Jane was a primary school teacher and so both brought different skills to setting up and running a brewery. These days, they are joined by the next generation, son Cameron and his partner, Becky. Cliff said, "After completing his A levels, Cameron didn't know what he wanted to do, so he joined us at the brewery and is still here ten years later. He does our sales and takes charge of our graphic design, such as producing our labels and posters."



Cliff and Jane

Becky too contributes additional skills. Cameron met Becky just before Covid. She was an events manager but lost her job because of the pandemic. Jane and Cliff offered her a role at the brewery and with her planning skills she takes the lead running their micropub, among other roles.

Becky's recruitment wasn't the only change that Bexley made during Covid. As Cliff explained, the brewery had to adapt; fortunately, Bexley had their own bottling line. "At our peak, we were delivering to 150 people, many were just pleased to see someone and not just for the beer!" Cliff reminisced about 'circular' drinking, "When we could open the brewery, we had people standing in a big circle with beer at their feet and having much needed conversations."

There was also an upside to Covid. Bexley were able to get a grant that they used to pay for a cooling system for their tanks. This enabled them to produce their lager, Arnsberg (4.5% ABV). This is lagered for four to six weeks, and, after being in production for over two years, it is now their biggest seller. Bexley are also one of the very few London brewers who regularly produce bottle-conditioned beer. Cliff explained that they supply a lot of outlets where he suspects that bottle-conditioned beer would not be poured correctly, so that keg lager is safer for those outlets.

All of Bexley's beers are gluten free, being produced using an enzyme at the start of the fermentation. To ensure the beers are compliant, they get them tested every six months. Cliff explained, "It costs £100 per test but we want to be safe." They brew two to three times a week on the same kit they started with (1,000 litres) but the number of fermenters has now increased to six.

Besides the lager, the beer range is a mix of regulars: Golden Acre, Red House, Bexley's Own Beer (4.2% ABV), Burstard (3.4% ABV) and Anchor Bay. These are complemented by seasonals, including May Place, Black Prince (porter) and Spike Island Stout. There are also specials, including a green hopped beer and one-off batch beers under the Howbury range. The beers are named after local landmarks or have links with the area. For example, Red House, their red ale, is named after the house in Bexley where William Morris lived while Anchor Bay, their golden ale, is a bay on the Thames at Erith. The lager, Arnsberg, gets its name from the German town with which Bexleyheath is twinned.



Inside the Bird & Barrel

Bexley sell their beers predominantly in the local area through farmers' markets, pubs, bars and restaurants. They also have an on-line shop. Although the brewery does have a small tasting area (alongside the brewery) that is open on a Saturday morning, their primary outlet is their micropub, the Bird & Barrel (DA7 6HG). Opened in 2018, it is very close to Barnehurst station. Over the years, Bexley have invested in this small but light and airy bar, adding an outside seating area and renovating a room at the back. The pub has helped embed the brewery in the community; the back room is used for a number of regular events from life drawing and a camera club to quarterly pub quizzes and beer festivals.

Although Bexley has a future with Cameron and Becky, neither Jane nor Cliff have any intention of retiring soon and they are still thinking about future developments. Cliff wants to improve the efficiency of the brewery, including reducing the brewing time, "making the brewing day a bit more accessible". Bexley might also consider a second pub but their ethos is 'focus on what you need to do and be consistent; stick to your guns'. Visit the Bird & Barrel and you can see why micropubs, and this one in particular, are so popular but, if you can't get there, try visiting their on-line shop for probably the best range of bottle-conditioned beer in the capital. Go to www.bexleybrewery.co.uk. For tasting notes from London's Tasting Panel, go to the regional website, www.london.camra.org.uk.

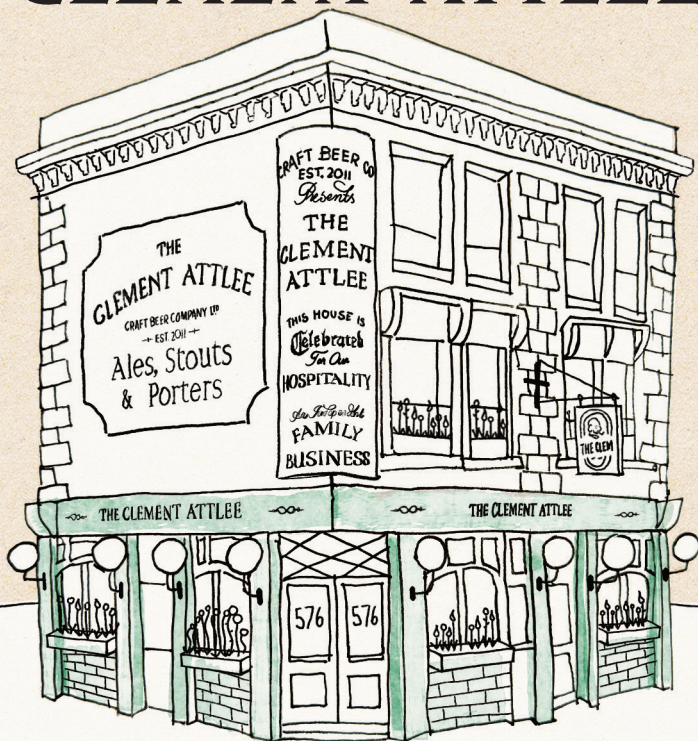
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Midsummer Merton

On 20 June, the CAMRA London Pubs Group visited five pubs in Tooting and Merton to see if they met the criteria for inclusion in CAMRA's inventory of pubs with local historic interest. Just off Merton High Street once stood Merton Place, a country estate in what was then rural Surrey. It was bought in 1802 by Emma, Lady Hamilton and she lived there with Vice-Admiral of the White Horatio Nelson, the 1st Viscount Nelson. It was from here that he travelled to Portsmouth to join HMS Victory and sail to Cape Trafalgar. This history subsequently influenced many pub names in the area, as will be seen.



The tour started at the **Trafalgar Arms** in Tooting High Street (SW17 0RT). This inter-war pub is of interest due to the wonderful surviving Hodgson's Kingston Brewery frontage. It was built by Joseph Hill in 1930 with an unusual art deco frontage featuring an egg-shell glazed faience. On the central pediment is a stone scrolled shield with the brewery's trade mark of a 'K', a cask and three fishes (the

emblem of Kingston also seen on the Duke of Buckingham in Berrylands). High on the front elevation on each side is relief lettering reading 'HODGSON'S KINGSTON ALES' and 'HODGSON'S KINGSTON STOUT', though sadly now obscured by modern signs. A non-original feature of note inside is a green Southern Region 'running in board' sign from Tooting BR station. The pub became part of the Courage estate following their takeover of Hodgson's in 1943. Locally listed, it is now owned by Young's who bought it in 2013 when it was closed and under threat of conversion to residential use. Timothy Taylor Landlord and Young's London Original are normally served here.

Next came the **Royal Standard** in High Street, Colliers Wood (SW19 2BN). This is a former Charrington house whose main point of interest is the splendid façade with its elaborate pediment over the entrance, depicting the heraldry of the Royal Standard. The pub is locally listed and is in the Wandle Valley Conservation Area.



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Midsummer Merton

It is a continuation of the neighbouring building, forming a short terrace. The current Royal Standard of the United Kingdom dates from 1837 when Queen Victoria, being female, could not accede to Hanover under Salic law and thus the inescutcheon of the Electorate of Hanover was removed from the banner. Two Greene King cask ales are normally served here. On leaving, the tour passed what is now the Holden, originally the Victory, another Nelson connection, but the current owners changed the name (first to the Charles Holden) because of the reputation of its previous clientele.

The third stop was the **Sultan** in Norman Road (SW19 1BT). This is not a candidate for inclusion in the local inventory because it already has two stars on CAMRA's National Inventory (NI), indicating an interior of very special national historic interest. It was included on the tour as an example of a NI pub. The original Sultan was destroyed in an air raid in February 1944 and the present pub, built predominantly of brick in the 1950s, is a remarkably intact survivor of that period. Originally a Friary Meux house, later Ind Coope Allied, it was rescued from likely permanent closure and redevelopment in 1994 by the Hop Back Brewery. The indications are that it was always just two rooms: public bar on the left and saloon bar on the right. A conservatory was added relatively recently. The public bar retains its original distinctive counter, although the front is now painted a deep pink, along with an original bar-back of shelves on ply panelling with some mirrored panels. Fridges have however replaced the lower shelves. Around the small room is a dado of 1950s ribbed hardboard, now painted a deep pink, and there are two small 1950s brick fireplaces.



The public bar in the Sultan

The saloon bar on the right similarly retains its original counter and bar-back with some mirrored panels. Within the back fittings there is a dumb waiter that would have been used for moving bottled beers to and from the cellar. Above the servery is a very characteristic c.1960 canopy of pegboard tiles with a 1950s ribbed hardboard edging now painted a deep pink. There are three small 1950s brick fireplaces and the room has two types of panelling. There are tall ply panels reaching to picture-frame height either side of the servery and around the rear right fireplace; elsewhere, there is a dado of 1950s ribbed hardboard now

painted a deep pink. The pub's inn sign from 1994 is on display. This suggests that the pub is named after a horse but old photos show signs bearing the visage of a stereotypical middle-eastern potentate, an image that might perhaps prove problematic today. The pub is in the *Good Beer Guide 2026*. Hop Back GFB, Summer Lightning, Citra and Entire Stout are regular beers, along with Hop Back seasonal beers and a changing Downton beer. Two ciders are usually available on handpump.

Next, continuing the Nelsonian theme, was the eponymous **Nelson Arms** in Merton High Street (SW19 1DF), already on the local inventory and boasting probably the most intact and spectacular Charrington's Brewery pub exterior in London. This corner pub features a turret and there is trademark Charrington brown tiling on the ground floor, with bowed windows on two sides.



Set within the tiling above the bowed window on the Merton High Street side is the name of the pub and elsewhere the tiling includes 'CHARRINGTONS' and 'ALES AND STOUT'. However, the most striking external feature is the trio of painted tiled panels. All three are signed 'Carters, Poole 1910', a well known tile manufacturers who lasted until 1964.



The large one on the first floor of the Abbey Road side depicts HMS Victory while the pair on the ground floor on the Merton High Street side are of HMS Victory and Lord Nelson himself. Cask ale is not available here.





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The afternoon finished in the **Trafalgar** in High Path (SW19 2JY). Although this pub is neither a statutorily or locally listed building, nor in a conservation area, it was included on the tour as a good place to finish, being CAMRA South West London Branch's Pub of the Year. Last year it was also the branch's Cider Pub of the Year. One of the last remaining buildings of any character in the area and now documented as a non-designated heritage asset. It has been under threat of redevelopment but there are plans to preserve it for the community. The pub retains a small

fragment of typical green and orange Charrington stained window glass, along with, over the door, a very rare 1970s exterior name sign using white serified lettering on a black rectangular plastic box



The pub is in the Good Beer Guide 2026. A range of changing cask ales from small breweries and four ciders are normally served here.

Jane Jephcote and Kim Rennie

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.

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DATE CONFIRMED



The crowd fills St John the Divine Church, Merton, for the campaign launch, Wednesday 9th September 2026



THE TRAF NOVEMBER FESTIVAL

Developers wanted to demolish The Trafalgar. So now we're going to buy it.

*Around 140 people turned out this month as the fight to save
Wimbledon's oldest freehouse became a £500,000 community buyout.*

The Trafalgar's new ten-year lease has brought welcome stability – but it's still held by the same developer that once sought to demolish the building, with a five-year break clause leaving its long-term future at risk. Having spent years fighting to keep the pub standing, the community began looking for something more permanent: ownership.

On the 25th of August, Cabo Trafalgar Ltd – a Community Benefit Society (CBS) formed by locals – signed an option to buy the freehold for £500,000. The agreement expires on Christmas Eve.

Around 140 people attended the launch meeting, hosted by Peter Fellows of The Lost Pint Project, where members of the CBS and tenant Oli Carter-Esdale set out the task: raising **£250,000** through community shares, the rest through loans.

The CBS would acquire the freehold and inherit the existing lease – Oli keeps running The Traf exactly as before.

Whether you are a regular, a local resident, a CAMRA member or simply someone who believes that good independent pubs are worth protecting, this is a chance to play a part.

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£500,000

TO BUY THE
FREEHOLD

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OUR SHARE
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MINIMUM
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17th Nov

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SATURDAY 14TH
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ASPIRATIONS FOR THE BUDGET

The autumn budget, Chancellor John Healey's first, will be announced on 28 October. CAMRA, along with most of the hospitality industry, wants to see a reduction in the rate of VAT for the industry. 10% is the figure usually quoted. Reports in the press however suggest that this is unlikely.

Other items on the wish list are:

- lower beer and cider draught duty in pubs;
- a fairer business rates system;
- the reversal of increased Employer National Insurance contributions;
- assistance with pubs' energy bills.

The Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA) are putting pressure on the Chancellor to reduce the duty payable on beer sold 'over the counter' in pubs by adjusting the Draught Relief system. Pubgoers are invited to join the 'Drop the Tap Tax' campaign by signing their petition at www.droptaptax.com. Andy Slee, SIBA's chief executive, said, "We're encouraging pubgoers, beer drinkers and others to show their support by signing the petition and contacting their MP to urge the chancellor to Drop the Tap Tax in October." Draught Relief is currently set at 13.9% and the campaign wants this extended to 30%. I suspect that the best that we will see is a freeze.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement of a 20% reduction in business rates on pubs, it has been announced that there will be an independent review into the methodology for their calculation. This, hopefully, will completely replace the current system, based on the pubs' profitability.

AN END TO THE LEVY?

Financial impositions on pubs have been under a great deal of scrutiny but I've seen no recent mention of the late night levy. For those who have forgotten the details (as I had), any business that wishes to sell alcohol at any time between midnight and 6am must pay an annual fee of between £299 and £4,400. Newcastle City Council's licensing committee recently decided to discontinue the levy and this is expected to take effect on 31 October. I'm sure that the hospitality trade would like to see this spread. At present, seven councils in Greater London operate the levy: the City of London, Camden, Hackney, Islington, Redbridge, Southwark and Tower Hamlets. The hours involved mean that relatively few pubs pay the levy but a number did cut back their hours to midnight to avoid payment when it was introduced..

LAST STAND?

Early in August a row broke out over Westminster City Council's rules for so-called vertical drinking. I've waded through a great deal of press coverage and it all seems somewhat confused. As far as I can work out, the rules have existed for many years and are simply being brought forward into the latest iteration of Westminster's licensing policy. They have been applying them for some time to any new venues seeking a licence in what is called the 'Soho cumulative impact zone'. Nowhere else. Any new venue has to agree that all of their customers will be seated, that there will only be table service (no ordering at the bar) and no 'vertical drinking' outside. Some reports say that this is being done largely at the behest of the Soho Society, described as 'an influential group of local residents and some local businesses'. Others see Soho as a crucial part of London's wider hospitality offer and believe that these restrictions make it virtually impossible for a venue to be financially viable and, as such, are effectively a ban on new pubs and bars. The situation has led to a serious rift with the Mayor

of London, Lord Khan of Tooting (as he is now). A forthcoming change in the Mayor's powers may however see the argument swinging his way.

THREAT REDUCED

Pubs make a tempting target for those who wish to find premises for what some regard as dubious uses. With the passing of the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026, the threat of pubs being turned into 'adult gaming centres' or vape shops has diminished. Vape shops are to be removed from the planning use class for shops etc (Class E) and placed in a class of their own so that each opening will require planning permission. For 'adult gaming centres' and betting shops, there has until now been a rule, the 'aim to permit', under which local authorities must agree to an opening if licensing requirements have been met. Full planning permission will now be required and planning authorities will be able to take a wider view.

BROWNE OFF

Readers might like to note that in Flanders, between 2010 and 2024, 4,174 cafés – that's four in ten – disappeared. The very existence of Belgian traditional cafés is under threat. Politicians are currently formulating a 'Café Plan' with the aim of having the 'brown pub' designated as a Flemish Heritage asset. I am pleased to say that Podge's Belgian Beer Tours, one of our regular advertisers, have been doing their bit, taking travellers to these marvellous little places, for 30 years.

John Cryne

St John the Divine festival returns!

In partnership with the much loved Trafalgar pub, the beautiful church of St John the Divine in High Path, South Wimbledon SW19 2JY will be holding their tenth beer and cider festival on Friday 30 October. Funds raised on this occasion will be going to support the 'Save the Traf' campaign for a Community Benefit Society to purchase its freehold, as explained on the previous pages.

The festival will be open from 5pm to 10pm. As well as quality beer and cider, there will be morris dancing and tours of the bell tower. Food will also be available.

Tickets cost £5

You can buy them at the Trafalgar, on line at <https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/event/parish-ale-2026> or on the door, subject to availability.

Beer tokens can also be bought in advance on line, or with cash or card on the night.

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Down with the alcohol, but add something extra!

Since I last wrote about low alcohol beers two years ago, the market has continued to grow significantly. Latest figures show that the overall no/low alcohol market is now worth £541 million, with beer accounting for around 78%. This is now circa 3% of the UK beer market, up from the 1.4% reported by Peter J Sutcliffe in the August/September edition of *London Drinker*. The British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) estimate that 64 million pints of low/no alcohol will be sold this summer, an increase of 8 million from 2025.

This growing interest has led to 85% of pubs stocking at least one, if not two or more, no/low alcohol beers and the on-trade (pubs, restaurants etc) accounts for 84% of the market. This is thought to be driven by consumers' desire for a 'social experience' without alcohol. With this split however, it is probably not surprising that, as with full strength alcohol beers, the market is dominated by the international brewers. In the UK, the key players are Heineken (Heineken Zero and Birra Moretti Zero), Guinness, Peroni and Asahi. Lucky Saint is another prominent brand, as is Athletic, the largest selling low alcohol beer in the USA. Lucky Saint's beer, previously imported from Germany, is now being brewed by Camerons in Hartlepool, a sign of their clear intention to grow in the UK.

London's brewery tap rooms are following this trend by stocking low alcohol beers but they mostly offer one of their own or select one from another independent brewer, most often as a draught keg.

There are now quite a few no/low alcohol only brewers although many, unlike London's Nirvana, contract out their brewing. Some are using British brewers while others are going overseas, often to Germany, where there is a long history of brewing low alcohol beers.

Despite the dominance of the big brewers, the market growth continues to encourage new entrants. At the recent Craft Beer Festival in Southwark Park, there were seven 'dedicated' low alcohol brands, a few of which have been around a while, such as Day's, Brulo and Brew Below. Some of the new entrants offer something different from what is already in the market but most are following the general trend of either hoppy beers or lagers.

Here are three no/low alcohol companies (all using third parties to brew their beers) which have an 'added extra' or two.

High & Dry, set up in autumn 2025, offer a lager brewed at Attic. There are two owners; one who has alcoholism in the family and wanted something different and the other the senior brewer at Hawkstone. Their beer contains two types of mushroom: Lion's Mane (to reduce 'brain fog') and Cordyceps (to promote energy).

Collider has been going for about 18 months and also uses Lion's Mane but the second ingredient is ashwagandha, used to promote 'unwinding'. They say that their 'blend promotes GABA production, which is the same molecule that alcohol imitates to give you that euphoric feeling'. Their founder came from the wine trade and their beers are brewed at Wiper & True. Collider produce three beers: a lager, a session IPA and a peach lager, which is made from peach juice rather than flavour, creating a sweet, fruity drink.

The third company is Hello Lager, set up by husband and wife team, Alex and Liz Greig. Alex has worked in the drinks industry for 25 years and Liz was a primary school teacher, who fancied doing something different! They produce one 'plain' lager, a Hëlles, and three flavoured lagers: peach, grapefruit and Lager Top (lemon). The grapefruit was particularly refreshing. All of their beers are produced by Adnams and contain Opus hops, complemented by added magnesium, L-Theanine and vitamin C. These give the beers a slightly salty character. L-Theanine is mainly found in green and black tea and is reported to promote calm, reduce stress and improve sleep quality.



Hello Lager's emblem

Given the number of brewers at the festival showcasing low alcohol beers, it is clear that it is not just the specialists who see a future for the low alcohol sector. We just now need to persuade pubs to experiment a little.

Christine Cryne

Editor's note: in the UK, an alcohol-free beer is defined as having an alcohol by volume (ABV) of 0.05% or less. In many European countries, the limit is 0.5% or less, ten times more than the UK. The BBPA and some producers are lobbying the Government to revise the UK definition to 0.5% because, they say, the 0.05% limit is affecting the growth of the sector and restricting overseas sales. At 0.5% however, a beer has a significant alcohol content and this would be misleading and unwelcome to many drinkers.

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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Fuller's buy more pubs

In a £35.25 million deal with pubco Stonegate, Fuller's have acquired a further ten pubs. Nine of them are in London. Four of them are freehold and so changed hands immediately while the others are leaseholds that require their freeholder's consent. Some of the pubs are well known, such as the Blue Anchor on the river at Hammersmith (W6 9DJ) and the Shipwrights Arms in Tooley Street (SE1 2TF). The others are the Argyle (EC1N 8PQ), Bonds (W1S 1AR), the Lillie Langtry (SW6 1EU), the Duchess (W1U 1LP), the Duke of Sussex (SE1 7AY), the Two Brewers (EC1Y 8JH) and the Earl Spencer (SW18 5JL). The tenth pub is in Bath, the Lamb & Lion (BA1 1QU). Most of these were part of Stonegate's up-market Chapter Collection brand. Simon Emery, Fuller's executive chairman commented, "We have always maintained a disciplined policy of only acquiring the right assets at the right price. This transaction certainly meets these criteria."

Prior to this, Fuller's had also exchanged contracts on the Bull & Hide (EC2M 4RH), which has ten bedrooms, and St Barts (EC1A 9DY).

Meanwhile, Asahi have sold their UK wholesale business and their distribution operation to C&C Group. This will include the distribution of beer to Fuller's pubs.

Stonegate strengthens Craft Union

Stonegate Group, the UK's largest pub company, is looking to transfer a further 100 sites to its leased and tenanted division. This is part of the company's transformation strategy. It is understood that these will become Craft Union outlets which are 'operator-led'. This will leave Stonegate with around 200 managed pubs. The sale of around 1,000 pubs which Stonegate placed on the market earlier this year is still a possibility.

Other sales

The Morgan Pub Collective has added to their estate with the acquisition of the Canbury Arms in Kingston (KT2 6LQ) from Young's. The distinctive Victorian pub dates from 1891.

The Fire Station bar and restaurant at Waterloo (SE1 8SB) has been taken over by Urban Pubs & Bars. It is being refurbished and is expected to reopen by the end of September.

More Whitbread disposals

By the time that you read this, there will be no more Beefeater or Brewers Fayre carveries. It is, in its way, the end of an era. What once was seen as a big night out no longer attracts customers as it used to. Some 4,000 jobs may be lost. Whitbread are also closing their Bar + Block, Cookhouse and Table sites, which are usually associated with Premier Inn hotels. Some of these will be converted to a new format, the Social. While some of the former carveries are being absorbed into adjoining hotels, around 100 are being sold. As mentioned in the previous edition, Wetherspoon's have bought five of them and Mitchells & Butlers six, presumably to expand their Miller & Carter and Harvester chains. Most interestingly however, a company called the Queensway Hospitality Group has acquired 53 sites in order to set up a

new 'value' pub chain. Up to now they have only operated hotels and restaurants.

Wren Pubs

This small chain operates the Surprise in Chelsea (SW3 4AJ) and the Walmer Castle in Notting Hill (W11 2AJ) and has recently acquired the former Botanist site in Sloane Square. They have however recently sold the Carpenter's Arms in Hammersmith (W6 9BG), which Wren acquired in 2024 and substantially refurbished. Founder Jack Greenall told the Propel newsletter that the company was 'exploring further opportunities, ideally with bedrooms in London'. Wren Pubs has Rupert Clevely, the founder of Geronimo Inns and Hippo Inns, as its non-executive chairman. The company's turnover for last year reportedly exceeded £10 million.

The new owner of the Carpenter's Arms, which dates from 1871, is the singer-songwriter James Blunt, who already owns the Fox & Pheasant in Chelsea (SW10 9UJ). Blunt said, "It's an honour to be the custodian of this beautiful and important local landmark. I know how much it means to the residents and I hope we can serve them as well as they have been by Jack and his team." The pub is currently closed while the kitchen is rebuilt and the and first floor converted to a dining area. It is scheduled to reopen next summer.

End of an era at Harvey's

After 40 years as head brewer, the renowned Miles Jenner is 'moving upstairs' to become production director at Harvey's of Lewes. He will continue as joint managing director. In line with the company's succession plan, Peter Yarlett, who joined the company in 1995, succeeds him as head brewer. Mr Yarlett holds a master's degree in brewing and distilling from Heriot Watt University and has previously worked at Meantime and Hogs Back breweries. Mr Jenner commented, "Our aim was to ensure continuity, while encouraging innovation and it is exciting to see this long-term objective come to fruition. I could not wish for a more capable or enthusiastic brewing team."

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Sad Days
and
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Norwich - A fine city!

All that some London folk may know about Norfolk is that it is flat and the home of the Broads. It is, but the fine city of Norwich is highly recommended for a city break, not least because it is an excellent place for cask beer! For a month, over May and June, the Norwich City of Ale Festival features a well-planned series of 'ale trails'. It's been going since 2011 (can't believe I haven't been before!) and this year the ale trails were named after local breweries. You collect your booklet, get it stamped with a pint at every participating pub and, at the end of each completed trail, collect a metal pin badge. There's also an 'app' for those who like that kind of thing. Who doesn't love a beer related quest?

We managed three trails over a long weekend, taking in a few of my favourite Norwich pubs along the way (the Fat Cat, the Murderers, the Fat Cat & Canary, the Coach & Horses (both of them!) and the Kings Head (Magdalen Street). The Malt and Mardle (Norwich's first micropub) is also worth the walk. Other wonderful pubs are available – well over 100 in the *Good Beer Guide*! The Vine also has a Thai menu but is the smallest pub in the city and so a visit off-peak is advised (not open Sundays). A shout out to Sir Toby's on the Market for their craft beer shop (excellent cherry beer on tap when I visited) and, if you want more Belgian beers, then pop along to the Belgian Monk just a few minutes' walk away. The advantage of taking up an ale trail is that you try out different pubs that you might not normally visit and it's all planned for you. A new discovery was the Jubilee, a backstreet corner pub and a hidden gem! Fair to say that there was a warm welcome everywhere we went. So, look out for the City of Ale Festival in Spring 2027 and add it to your diaries.

You can, of course, sample splendid beers in Norwich at any time of year and, with both the 2025 and 2026 City of Ale trails being available online, you can plan your own adventure! However, Norwich is particularly attractive to beer and cider lovers at the end of October (half term week) when you can

also visit the fantastic Norwich Beer Festival! It's finally back in its spiritual home of the St Andrew's and Blackfriars Halls, Grade I-listed medieval buildings that have recently been refurbished. I'm very excited to be visiting again this autumn.

Norwich Beer Festival is a big event. There are over 300 real ales and 60 perries/ciders. Happily, it is on for a week. It starts on Monday 26 October, from 4pm for CAMRA members; Tuesday 27 is an all-day session, as is Saturday 31 (but with an earlier finish of 9.30). Wednesday 28 to Friday 30 October have both lunchtime and evening sessions, which give you ample opportunity to visit the pubs and restaurants. If shopping is your thing, have a mooch around Norwich Market or browse in Jarrolds (an excellent independent department store). You can also explore the old cobbled streets, such as Elm Hill and a plethora of churches (St Peter Mancroft by the Market is interesting), not forgetting Norwich Cathedral and Norwich Castle. For green spaces (perhaps a Sunday stroll?), consider the Plantation Garden, or a Riverside walk (plenty of pubs to stop off for refreshments!).

There'll be music at the beer festival Wednesday to Saturday, food stalls and, of course, beery merchandise. Entry is, of course, free if you are a CAMRA member. If you're not, well, you'll have to pay to get in. That said, joining CAMRA at the festival itself is usually a good bet for a special offer on membership should you want to leave it to the last minute (and queue!). Advance tickets are available. See <https://norwich.camra.org.uk/festival/advance-tickets/>.

Travelling to Norwich itself is easy from Liverpool Street or Stratford and there are good price train tickets to be had if you travel off peak and book in advance. It's less than 15 minutes' walk from the railway station to the Halls. Although this trip can be done in a day, I'd recommend staying overnight to make the most of your stay and get more than a taste of this fine city. Maybe see you at the bar. Cheers!

Maria Freeman



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Better news

The Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA) has a Brewery Tracker database that monitors the number of independent breweries in Britain. The numbers for the first six months of this year are encouraging. The rate of closures has fallen and, as at 30 June, there were 1,550 breweries, a reduction of 16. This compares to an overall loss of 137 in 2025. The south-east, the north-west and Wales each saw an increase of three while Scotland lost nine, the north-east eight and the midlands and Northern Ireland each lost four.

As explained in CAMRA's recent report, *Beer in the UK*, while help with running costs would be more than welcome, the best way forward for these breweries is for them to be able to sell their beers more widely. At present they are denied access to 62% of the country's pubs because of the tied house system. The Government needs to give priority to its 'access to market' review. Also, we consumers deserve the much wider choice that this would bring. For more information, read the report at <https://camra.org.uk/beer-report>.

Bohem Brewery

Bohem was founded in early 2017 by Czech expatriates Petr Skocek and Zdenek Kudr. They brew traditional Bohemian lagers using the decoction method on bespoke brewing equipment. This was specifically designed for the style and manufactured for them in the Czech Republic. They soon outgrew their original site and so, in 2018, moved into larger premises on an industrial estate in Tottenham. They have recently added a fourth pub, the Packington Arms in Islington (N1 7EA), to their estate. It joins the Nicholas Nickleby in Finsbury Park (N4 4ED), the Queens Arms in Battersea (SW8 3SS) and their original tap room in Myddleton Road in Bounds Green (N22 8NQ).

Brakspears make a move

These days, Brakspears are a pub company rather than a brewery but, as with Young's and Fuller's, they still have their own branded beers, brewed under contract. Up until recently, Brakspears beers have been brewed by Carlsberg Britvic (formerly Carlsberg Marston) in Burton-on-Trent. This came about following Carlsberg Marston's takeover and closure of the Wychwood Brewery in 2023. This arrangement has now ended. In September, it was announced that brewing had transferred to the Hogs Back Brewery in Tongham, Surrey.

There is some history here. The owner of Hogs Back, Rupert Thompson, previous owned the Wychwood Brewery and in 2004 invested around £300,000 on moving Brakspears' vital double drop fermenters from the original Henley on Thames site across Oxfordshire to Wychwood in Witney. Those original fermenters were lost in the Carlsberg Marston takeover but they are now being recreated at Tongham.

There will be two beers. Brakspear Original Gravity (3.4% ABV) is a recreation of the classic Brakspear's bitter and is being brewed at its original strength. Michael Jackson, the Beer Hunter, thought it the best ordinary bitter in England. It is joined by Noble Nectar (4% ABV), described as a modern, hop-forward pale ale. Interestingly, it is brewed with Farnham White Bine hops, a variety rescued by Hogs Back and grown on the hop farm next to brewery. Both beers are brewed using the original Brakspear yeast strain.

Most Brakspear pubs are in their traditional areas of Berkshire and Oxfordshire but there are some 12 of them in London. The beers will also be available in the free trade.

Greene King

Further to the report in our June/July edition, as part of their new estate strategy GK have put a further 65 pubs on the market. These are reported to be good performing, wet-led pubs, spread across the UK. A number of pubs may also be transferred from their managed estate to being leased, tenanted or franchised. GK currently have an estate of around 2,500 pubs.

Meanwhile, GK have announced a 'multimillion-pound' investment in 39 pubs in London which they describe as 'the core of the core'. Some £6 million has already been spent on 20 pubs, with a spend of £9 million planned for the other 19. Speaking to the *Times*, GK's chief executive, Nick Mackenzie, made it clear that they were aiming for the tourist trade. He said, "People still want to come into pubs as tourists and they want a London pub experience. They want a cold pint of beer; they want fish and chips."

GK are also planning a new brand of community-based pubs called Cornerstone Pubs, offering 'everyday great value'. They will replace some of GK's carvery style outlets.

Awards for Hammerton

Hammerton have a long history. The brewery was founded in its modern form in 2014 by Lee Hammerton and Karina Benavente, though it revives a historic London family brewing legacy that began in 1868 before closing in the 1950s. They have recently won two awards. The company's Philip Kescevec is pictured receiving them.



The CAMRA award on the left is a Bronze for their N1 pale ale (4.1% ABV) in the Champion Beer of Britain London & South East regional round for session pale, blonde and golden ales. The award on the right is for winning the speciality category (for cask beers) in the regional SIBA competition with their peanut butter milk stout, Crunch



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(5.4% ABV). Crunch now goes forward to SIBA's national judging at their exhibition in Liverpool next year. Christine Cryne was the chair of the final judging panel.

John Cryne

Park Brewery to close

Kingston on Thames based Park Brewery, set up in 2014, have announced that they are closing down. Despite their very best efforts, owners Josh and Frankie Kearns do not believe that it is right to continue in the current financial climate. Both the brewery and Park Brew & Kitchen have been placed into creditors' voluntary liquidation. This means that they are closing down on their own terms and not under pressure from creditors. The sites and equipment are to be sold and may reappear in new guises. We thank Frankie and Josh for their efforts over the years and wish them the very best for the future.

The band plays on

When I was a tad younger and living in Blackpool, going to see a gig in a pub was *de rigueur*. We'd stand in line before being admitted to the basement area at a costly 50p a head, or was it £1? It was worth it; bands I saw in their early stages included, among others, Genesis and Van der Graaf Generator. Bands often started their careers in pubs and late-night venues. That's why the decline in such venues is a serious threat to the future of music in this country. Fortunately, with Signature Brew, we have a brewery whose passion is live music. The beers they produce often reflect this. In this case it is 'Do It Right', described as a crisp, refreshing Czech-style

pale lager. I do not disagree. Signature have teamed up with electronic music icons Groove Armada and regenerative farming pioneers Wildfarmed to produce the beer, which is brewed using their regeneratively farmed malted barley. You can find the canned beer in Waitrose stores and no doubt at the brewery itself. Signature hopes the brew is helping to bring nature back to fields and support British farmers while also continuing their passion for live music.

We should be supportive of a brewery that itself supports live music and British farmers and brews good beer. Find out more at <https://www.signaturebrew.co.uk/>. And should you be interested, both of the bands that I mention were formed in 1967.

John Cryne

Wimbledon Brewery

Wimbledon Brewery held a beer festival at their tap room from Friday 4 to Sunday 6 September. It was very well attended, with a great mix of customers. They had a choice of 22 cask beers, 19 keg beers, four draught ciders and eight 750ml sharing bottles, including Brasserie Cantillon and Brasserie Rodenbach. In addition, two new Wimbledon beers were available. These were Cascadia, a 4.8% ABV West Coast pale ale with Cascade as the lead hop. It is hoppy, with citrus and tropical fruit notes and some bitterness. The other was Kaiser, a 5% ABV Vienna style Lager. It is malty with fruit and bitterness in the taste, leading to a malty, bitter somewhat dry finish. They are available in cask, keg and cans but are only one-off brews at present, so drink them if you see them.

Martin Butler

A poster for the Teddington Beer Festival 2026. The background is dark purple with a repeating pattern of hops and leaves. At the top, five categories are listed in yellow and white: CASK BEER, LIVE MUSIC, CRAFT BEER, CIDER BAR, and WINES & GIN. In the center is a large, dark beer glass with a white head. The head has the text 'LANDMARK ARTS CENTRE' in purple. The glass features a yellow silhouette of a castle, with 'TEDDINGTON BEER FESTIVAL' written in yellow below it. To the left of the glass, a green speech bubble contains the text 'OVER 100 BEERS' in white. To the right, the dates '5-8 NOV 2026' are written in white and yellow. At the bottom right, the venue 'LANDMARK ARTS CENTRE' and address 'FERRY ROAD, TEDDINGTON TW11 9NN SOUTH WEST LONDON' are listed in white. At the bottom left, a note states 'Every ticket supports the Landmark Arts Centre, keeping arts and culture thriving' with the charity number 'CHARITY NO. 1047080' below it. At the very bottom, the website 'FOR TIMES & TICKETS VISIT TEDDINGTONBEERFESTIVAL.CO.UK' is written in yellow and white.

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A Wandsworth wander

On 31 July, some members of CAMRA's Kingston & Leatherhead branch decided to have a Wandsworth Wander or, possibly, it was a Putney Pootle or even a Fulham Fling.

Our first stop was Sambrook's Brewery Tap to which a number of us arrived early! David Bunyan asked if Duncan, the brewery's managing director, was around and indeed he was. To our delight, he popped down for a quick chat. As others arrived, we also met Derek Prentice, who brewed with distinction for Truman's, Young's and, more recently, Wimbledon Brewery. As it was a Friday, Derek was one of a group of former Young's employees having their monthly 'last Friday of the month' get-together. On the beer front, the cask lager, Back Heel, went down well.



In Sambrook's

The next planned port of call was the Cat's Back, a Harvey's pub but, zut alors, it wasn't going to open until 4pm. A bit of a surprise on a Friday but maybe it reflects the struggles some pubs are having. As we were passing the Hop Pole, a Shepherd Neame pub, a few of us stopped for a pint of

Master Brew while the rest took a bus to the Rocket, just off Putney High Street. This is a riverside Wetherspoons where the Surrey Hills Three Peaks scored 'excellent' under the new CAMRA beer scoring system. It was also the start of Spoons' cider festival and the Farmer Jim Prickly Pear perry was very quaffable.



Meeting Derek

Next stop was a perennial favourite, the Bricklayer's Arms. Five beers were on offer with Kent brewery's The Quiet American proving popular.

Across Putney Bridge and into Fulham, we entered the King's Arms, the only Wandsworth pub in London. Only the Golden Horizon was on, but it was of 'very good' quality. It's a large pub and it was very pleasant on a warm day to sit in the inner courtyard area.

Finally, it was a brief stumble to the Eight Bells, just outside Putney Bridge station. Of the fine selection at this traditional pub, which offers CAMRA discount, our beer of choice was Lacons Legacy, again in great condition.

All in all, it was a great day: not a bad beer and sparkling conversation among convivial company!

Keith Richardson

Get out of the group chat and into the round

Notifications off

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Apart from a six-year stint with Domino's Pizza, Georgina Wald has been with Fuller's for almost 25 years, although she has been in the licensed retail sector far longer. She began her love affair with the sector in 1995 when she started as a journalist on the *Publican* newspaper, followed by a role at the BII (British Institute of Innkeeping) before joining Fuller's in 2002.

George, as she is usually called, took time out of her busy schedule to do a question and answer session at CAMRA North London Branch's AGM on 21 July. The questions covered a whole range of topics, not least why the family sold Fuller's Griffin Brewery to Asahi. George explained that this was a tough decision, and one that the board agonised over, but the reason was to safeguard Fuller's future. The board chose to approach Asahi as they believed that the Japanese brewers had the commitment to continue brewing in Chiswick. George added, "the Fuller's pub company have a long-term supply agreement with Asahi and London Pride is still a highly popular brand across Fuller's pubs."



George (right) celebrating winning
Champion Beer of London 2017

Whether a pub sells only Fuller's beers varies from pub to pub. "In total, in 2025, the pub company sold 125 different cask beers. We have a particularly strong relationship with *Tiny Rebel and Siren*," said George. What is perhaps not obvious is that the balance of the pub estate is only slightly biased towards managed pubs; of their 332 pubs, 45% are tenanted.

This individuality also applies to discounts for CAMRA members. George explained, "The managers have autonomy to decide and around a quarter of our managed pubs offer a discount."

George loves her beer; she has been an active supporter of CAMRA over the years and is passionate about the quality of the ale sold in their pubs. At the Q&A, she was making notes on the comments made by people about pubs where people thought the cask beer wasn't 100% and she promised to investigate. And knowing George, she will stick to her word.

Christine Cryne



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Borough Market's beer entrepreneurs

Readers may well have heard of (and perhaps visited) the iconic Rake pub in Borough Market but did you know that it was the site of a pub dating from 1830s? This year, the Rake is celebrating its 20th anniversary and so it seemed a good time to delve into its history.



Welcome to the Rake.

It began when Richard and Mike were running a drinks wholesale business called Utobeer and they had opened a stall in Borough Market. Richard said, "We kept getting asked if we knew of a nearby bar where they could buy the beer and so the thought was raised." The next piece in the puzzle was a greasy spoon café located at the edge of the market. "We used to use it sometimes. It had two car parking spaces and we used to park our van there. One day

we found out the lease was up and we thought maybe we should consider this. Later that day, after four pints in the Market Porter, we decided to go for it."

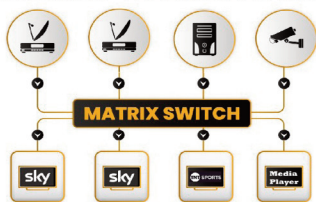
They started making plans, including turning the car parking places into an outside drinking area. Then, on looking through the plans of the building, they found out that there was a cellar and more research identified that the site had originally been tenements that included a lost pub called the King's Arms. Richard added, "That was to help us with the licence. We played on the fact that we were bringing a historic pub back to life: local lads opening a historic local pub."



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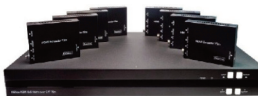
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Borough Market's beer entrepreneurs

The name of the new pub, the Rake, was a bit of a fortunate mistake. Richard looked at some old local maps and mistook the name of another nearby old pub. *"I thought it was called the Rake (after the Rake's Progress) but it later turned out it was actually called the Ram!"* explained Richard.

The Rake opened in 2006, alongside the Utobeer business, but in due course another opportunity raised its head. When the Westfield Stratford City shopping centre was opening in 2011, the owners were looking for artisan food suppliers and they approached Utobeer. Remarkably, a pub was created in eight weeks with a brewery following soon after and so Tap East was born (E20 1EE).

The Tap East brewery has won numerous awards over the years from both CAMRA and SIBA and both the Rake and Tap East pub have been regular entries in the Good Beer Guide. You might think that Richard and Mike would now like to rest on their laurels but this seems far from the truth. A new joint venture is currently being planned with Neckstamper Brewery, so watch this space!

You can find the Rake at 14 Winchester Walk, Borough Market, SE1 9AG.

Christine Cryne

Muswell Hillbillys celebrate ten years

On Saturday 5 September, the Muswell Hillbilly Brewers celebrated their tenth anniversary with a day-long celebration under the guise of Mewsfest. Over a mammoth eleven-hour session, lasting from 1pm to midnight, the staff threw open the taproom and outdoor beer garden to throngs of customers. In addition to their regular beers, there were specials on tap. These included Cherry Bomb (5.5% ABV), a cherry sour produced through a collaboration between the brewery and Tart Beer Co. Only one batch was produced, specifically for the event, so servings were limited to half a pint per person. Also available was a rare cask version of Broader than Broadway (3.4% ABV) which is normally produced specifically for the Little Green Dragon micropub in Winchmore Hill. Moreover, to cater for visitors' food needs, there was a selection of street food, including tacos and hot dogs.



The day started quietly with only a trickle of customers while a DJ was playing an eclectic range of classic hits. It seemed like an average quiet Saturday afternoon. Soon things livened up! The floodgates opened and by 4pm the beer garden was full to capacity, while dozens of people were lining Avenue Mews and a continual flow of customers was gushing into the taproom. It was all hands on deck for

the brewery staff who worked tirelessly over the course of the long day. In order to release pressure on the taproom, the brewing facilities were opened up, acting as a second impromptu bar. This helped ease the queues somewhat. As day flowed into night, the upstairs area above the brewery's neighbour's, Cha Cha Cha Vintage, was transformed into a small stage and a number of live bands played to the assembled throng below, now in the hundreds. This culminated with a barnstorming set by headliners Jabo. By the end of the evening, the brewers had run out of beer.



It was an enjoyable day as both visitors and long-term regulars celebrated a decade of brewing. For ten years the brewery has been a communal hub for the locality and over time the taproom has established a reputation for its varied roster of Hillbilly Social events. As much as being a celebration, it was also a service of thanksgiving towards a brewery that has become a figurehead in the area, inspired by the words (almost) of famous local band the Kinks, 'god save the Muswell Hillbilly Brewers'.

The full address of the taproom is 14 Avenue Mews, Muswell Hill, N10 3NP. Check their website for details <https://www.muswellhillbillybrewers.co.uk/>.

Mike Goldwater

An evening along the Mildmay line

For her birthday on 19 August, London Pubs Group regular Albina suggested that we visit five new or resurrected pubs along the Mildmay line of the London Overground. It was a long, warm Wednesday evening and the trains were frequent, contrary to an unhelpful earlier warning that none would be running.

At 6pm the main party convened at the modern **Tap East** bar on the outside of the Westfield Shopping Centre (E20 1EE), across the square facing Stratford International station. A cool pint of Pretty Decent's Employee of the Month on tap was my choice, and pretty decent it was!



Inside Tap East

Separate groups then made their way back through the shopping mall to catch the train to the next Mildmay line stop, Hackney Wick. It was my first visit there: converted warehouses, cobbled squares and brightly coloured murals. The one Good Beer Guide pub, the Beer Merchants Tap, was serving no cask beer – understandably, perhaps, given the heat – but a few of us sampled the Howling Hops Brewery & Tank Bar and Crate Bar & Pizzeria. I enjoyed halves of Motueka pale ale in the former and Mango and Salted Lime sour on the canal-side terrace outside the latter before we retraced our steps to the **Lord Napier & Star** in White Post Lane (E9 5EN), our next scheduled meeting point.



Originally opened in 1868, this Truman's pub had been closed from 1995 until reopening in 2021, splendidly restored.

The Five Points Best had suffered from the heat but upstairs on the spacious roof terrace we were treated to a free almond liqueur cocktail promotion.

Arriving next at Hackney Central, some of us walked across the churchyard and alongside the railway back to the **Chesham Arms** in Mehetabel Road (E9 6DU). A celebrated success in pub protection, not least for CAMRA, this pub had been gutted and closed for three years (2012 to 2015) by a developer who had illegally converted its upstairs rooms for residential use. You would never imagine that now. From an attractive choice of beers and ciders, I enjoyed a half of Burton Bridge Brewer's Gold down in the bustling sun-trap garden.

We walked back under and along the other side of the railway to rejoin the main party at the **Cock Tavern** in Mare Street (E8 1EJ), the current East London & City CAMRA branch Pub and Cider Pub of the Year. Another former Truman's pub, built in 1930, it was lovingly restored and reopened in 2012 after several years of neglect. I chose the Sureshot Lazin' on a Sunny Afternoon from the huge range of beers and ciders available.



Taking the next train, a dozen of us alighted at the next stop, Dalston Kingsland, to visit the **Black Eel** in Kingsland High Street (E8 2JS) once an eel & pie shop but recently reopened by Exale Brewery as a sprawling, multi-roomed pub featuring a boat among the seating in the beer garden at the back. We enjoyed the one cask ale, Exale Bitter, before heading back to the station and onward via Highbury and Islington. Time did not allow another off-piste Canonbury stop for the Snooty Fox. Walking down Compton Terrace from Highbury Garden brought us straight to the **Pocket** in Canonbury Lane (N1 2AS), a very small pub that most of the group had conveniently just left. This former Courage pub opened in March 2025 as a sister to the Southampton Arms in Kentish Town, as well as the Cock Tavern. Locally listed, its description is as follows: 'Timber frontage. Stone pilasters with ornate brackets above (lights fixed to brackets). Small timber fascia with dentil cornice riding above. Paned leaded, stained blue glass in centre.'

An evening along the Mildmay line

I chose the Green Jack Lurcher stout, possibly my tastiest cask ale of the evening.

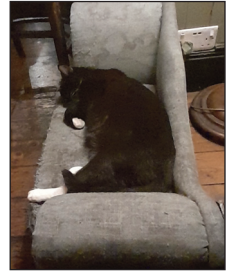


Inside the Pocket

Kentish Town West was our final Mildmay line destination, and our reassembled group constituted at least half of the late evening clientele at **Tapping the Admiral** in Castle Road (NW1 8SU), a frequent North London CAMRA award-winner.



An early Victorian building at the junction of Castle Road and Hadley Street, formerly Tavern Inn the Town, Fuzzcock & Firkin and originally the Trafalgar Tavern, this locally listed pub closed in the early 2000s but was restored and reopened in 2011. I enjoyed the Kent Golding Bitter and the relaxing feline company of Nelson before leaving at closing time.



Finding no trains running beyond Willesden Junction, I was lucky to board a southbound bus to its terminus, then another to Camden Town for the last Northern Line train to South Wimbledon and another two buses home soon after 1.30am. What a wonderful evening we'd had, and thank you, Albina. (Your walk from Twyford to Wokingham on the Saturday was another story!) My thanks to Rex Ward for the photos of the pubs.

Geoff Strawbridge

Editor's note: there is a link here to the other LPG article in this edition, not just in the name of the pub's cat but in the name of the pub itself. Following his death at Trafalgar, there was no question of burying a noble hero at sea, especially as he had already planned his own state funeral! Legend has it that Viscount Nelson's body was temporarily preserved onboard HMS Victory in a cask of brandy. The Victory's surgeon considered brandy to be more suitable than rum for this purpose. The body was to be placed in a more fitting container once the ship reached Gibraltar but, during the passage however, some of the ship's crew surreptitiously drilled a hole in the cask and inserted a plug. This allowed them to make sure that the brandy did not go to waste. This somewhat unsavoury practice became known as 'Tapping the Admiral'.

Pub planning

Planning law changes

August saw some significant events on the planning front. Changes are being made to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to strengthen the protection accorded to pubs. The aim is to standardise the approach taken by planning authorities throughout England and the changes take effect immediately. In most cases, those applying for the demolition of or change of use for a pub already need to prove that the pub is not viable but this is often a token gesture. Now they will have to prove that the pub has been marketed without success for at least a year. Some authorities have a shorter period, usually in order to avoid properties standing empty. Planning authorities will also be required to consider a pub's value as a community meeting place. The recent proposal to restrict protection to the last pub in an area has been dropped. The changes very much reflect the provisions of policy HC7 in the current Greater London Plan, something into which CAMRA London Region had a significant input.

Just to clarify, a planning authority is in most cases the local authority. It is possible however for other bodies to have planning responsibilities, either in addition to or instead of the local authority. The Mayor of London's new body covering Oxford Street, the Oxford Street Development Corporation, is an example of this.

Community Right to Buy

With the passing into law of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act, new Community Right to Buy provisions will come into effect once the necessary regulations and guidance are issued. It is also likely that this exercise will include a review of the Asset of Community Value (ACV) process.

The new powers will give community groups first refusal on the purchase of an ACV-listed community asset once it is put up for sale. In the event of any dispute over the purchase price, the local authority will have the power to appoint an independent valuer to set the price based on market value. The moratorium period that starts once the property is placed on sale and gives a community group the time to raise funds has also been extended from six months to a year. For the first time, a group proposing an asset for listing as an ACV will have a right of appeal against a council's refusal. The new rules apply to existing ACVs, not just new ones.

Readers will recall that the previous Community Right to Buy Fund was suddenly curtailed in 2024, leaving several community groups deeply disappointed, given all the work that they had done. A new fund, called the Pride in Place Community Right to Buy Fund, worth £61 million, has now been announced. It will apply in particular to pubs, clubs and community centres, with the aim of reversing the decline in shared public spaces and to help revitalise local high streets.

CAMRA pub information update 76

As part of the main CAMRA website the CAMRA pub database is available for all to use, not just CAMRA members; 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.

If you spot any errors below, please email the compiler Roy Tunstall via roy@london.camra.org.uk

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

INNER LONDON

EC1, EBI WINES, 5a Rosebery Ave.
Wine bar and shop. Japanese nibbles.

EC1, PEASANT (Wellington/Barworks), 240 St John St.
Reopened and reverted to **GEORGE & DRAGON**.
No cask beer.

EC2, BROWNS (Ex M&B), 8 Old Jewry. Reopened as **ALBATROSS** by the Wild Group, who operate the Goodman's steakhouses. This one specialises in seafood. Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter, Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Three Swords Extra Pale Ale are listed on the menu.

WC1, QUEEN'S HEAD (Stonegate/Pub Love), 22 Easton St.
Cask beer reinstated, Timothy Taylor Landlord.

WC2, CATO, 17 Mercer St. 2,200 sq ft, cocktails on tap and beer.

WC2, CONDESA, 15 Maiden La. Tapas, wines, cocktails, and other drinks including beers. Drinkers welcome until 10pm under the licence.

E2, MOLLY'S CAFE (The Geffrye Museum), 1 Geffrye St.
Reopened as **CREMER**, mainly a cafe/bakery with some wine and bottled beers.

E2, WATERHOUSE, 7A Ezra St. Modern restaurant with a wine bar and courtyard. Reservations are essential for dining. Small batch British beer and cider.

E8, JOINERS HEART, 18 Bohemia Pl. New bar in a railway arch for the LGBTQIA+ community. Community-run by the Friends of Joiners Arms, which closed in 2015. Keg beers.

E8, NIGHT TALES, 13 Bohemia Pl. Part bar, part night club/event space. The Terrace is usually free to enter but charges may apply for the night club and events. Food is pizza from Sons of Slice. Beer is keg & cans.

E9, MARRIONS, 177 Morning La. Neighbourhood bar with one keg beer, Victoria Malaga from Spain.

E9, PLAY LDN LOUNGE, 97 Wick Rd. Based in the building that used to house the Prince Edward pub and was redeveloped in 2024. Modern lounge/club/bistro bar. Keg beer; food is Lebanese.

E14, 640 EAST, 110 Water St. Second branch of the café-bar chain at Canary Wharf in a new development. A keg beer from Five Points.

E15, BRITANNIA (Fallheath Ltd), 2 Plaistow Gro.
Reopened as **BUCCANEER** after redevelopment.

E15, KING EDWARD VII (Stonegate), 47 The Bdy.
Refurbished and reopened in September 2026.
Sharp's Doom Bar but no pump clips.

E20, COSY CLUB, 303 The Loft, The Gallery, Westfield Shopping Ctre. Part of a restaurant/bar chain.
All day dining; keg and bottled beer.

E22, LOCKDOWN ROOM, 1 West La. Modern bar in a new development. Keg beer.

N1, ZENITH, 125 Packington St. Reopened after long closure and reverted to **PACKINGTON ARMS** from Bohem Brewery with two cask beers available.

N5, Highbury Barn (Urban Pubs & Bars), 26 Highbury Pk. Cask beer reinstated, East London Cowcatcher.

N7, CORONET, 338-346 Holloway Rd.
Reopened with Doom Bar on cask

N15, K K McCOOLS, 265 West Green Rd. Reopened as **GREEN HOUSE** after refurbishment. Cask beer reinstated after several decades; six handpumps with some reserved for cider. Local beers.

N18, LT'S, 58 Fore St. Closure update was an error.
Lively sports bar. No cask beer.

SE1, DEJA VAULTY VU, 127-128 Lower Marsh. Opened in 2026, a sister pub to the nearby Vaulty Towers. A quirky and stylish pub and restaurant. Craft beer but no cask ale. Card payments only.

SE26, CRAFT METROPOLIS, 26B Sydenham Rd.
The third so named bar, alongside sister sites at Penge and Loughborough Junction. Two handpumps, alongside 11 taps for craft keg beer.

SW6, STUBBY'S, 28 Parsons Green La. Australian run; draught beers on tap include Carlton, Pacifico lager, Kona Golden Ale, Crown lager and Victoria bitter.

SW18, EARL SPENCER (Stonegate/Craft Union), 260-262 Merton Rd. South African themed sports bar under new management since August and with two handpumps reinstated for Wimbledon beers.

W1, ARBER GARDEN, 1 Pearson Sq. Reopened as **BAR MOTORINO**. Seven draught beers on tap.

W1, BEEHIVE, 126 Crawford St. Patrick Frawley, founder of East London Pub Co, secured the premises in 2025 as his first pub for a new venture via the West London Pub Co. Irish themed with various keg beers and there a Guinness installation.

W1, FORZA, Unit 1, Basement & Ground Floor, Ilona Rose House, Manette St. 'Italianish' restaurant and wine bar. Mainly wines and cocktails but a few draught beers. Card payments only and no casual drinkers after 9pm.

W1, HOPE (Jada Properties Ltd/Stonegate), 15 Tottenham St. Cask beer reinstated, Timothy Taylor Golden Best.

W8, LACAGE, 201-203 Kensington High St. Canadian themed with multiple keg beers on draught.

W12, OAK, 243 Goldhawk Rd. Reopened as **BLACK RABBIT**, self-described as a 'restaurant and listening bar', with modern furnishings. The drinks list includes a few draught beers.

OUTER LONDON

BARKING, BOATHOUSE CAFE & BAR (Lewisham Works Ltd), The Granary, Ice House Quarter, 80 Abbey Rd. Reopened as **ICE HOUSE** in August.

BRENTFORD, DOCKHOUSE (Hall & Woodhouse), 4 Kingham Ave. A riverside café-bar and restaurant near the Grand Union Canal, opened in July 2026, with two or three Badger cask beers.

BROMLEY, ROYAL BELL (TRB Property Holdings Ltd), 175 High St. Reopened as a private members' club in January 2026. Ground floor open to the public: the Bar & Grill, The Garden, Aldo's Pizza and Zilli Caffè.

HAMPTON, RAILWAY BELL (Stonegate), Station Rd. Cask beer reinstated such as Fuller's London Pride, Twickenham El Dorado Pale and The Naked Ladies.

HEATHROW AIRPORT, BIG SMOKE TAPHOUSE & KITCHEN, Terminal 2 Airside. Reopened by Wetherspoons as **SIR FRANK WHITTLE**. Greene King IPA, Abbot; Sharp's Doom Bar and at least two guest beers.

KINGSTON, 7000 JARS OF BEER, 1 Crown Passage/Unit H Crown Arcade. To correct the information in the last issue, cask ale available only occasionally (check website for availability beforehand), but bottle and can conditioned beers all year round.

RICHMOND, BRITANNIA (Stonegate lease), 5 Brewers La. Cask beer reinstated, Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter.

SIDCUP, TAPROOM, 1 Marechal Niel Parade, Main Rd. New venture early 2026. Bexley Chatter (keg) recently available.

THORNTON HEATH, ELGON VIEW, 61 High St. Reopened as **M'ZURI**, a restaurant and bar with Afro-Caribbean roots.

UXBRIDGE, RIVERWALK CAFE, 58 St Johns Rd. Reopened as **CAVE LOUNGE** run by the same operators as the Escape pool bar on Uxbridge High Street. No cask beer.

WEST WICKHAM, REAL ALE WAY, 75 Station Rd. Reopened in August as **HOPTICS**. Six cask beers on gravity dispense.

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

INNER LONDON

EC1, BRITANNIA (Stonegate). No longer sells cask beer.

EC1, ROUNABOUT OLD STREET (Stonegate). Closed suddenly in August, future uncertain.

EC3, BODEANS, 16 Byward St.

Closed like the rest of the chain, future uncertain.

EC3, CORN EXCHANGE (Stonegate/Whelans). Closed, future uncertain.

EC4, 26 FURNIVAL STREET. No cask beer.

EC4, JAMIES (Tudor Street), 36 Tudor St. Closed, future uncertain

WC2, HUNGERFORD HOUSE BAR & KITCHEN (London Underground Ltd/Baby Bull). Closed, future uncertain.

E1, BAR & BLOCK (Whitbread). Hotel bar and restaurant closed with the rest of the chain including those in N1, SE1, SW19, W2, W6 and in Sutton.

E2, COUPETTE. Closed, future uncertain.

E6, WINSOR HOUSE (Whitbread/Brewers Fayre). Closed along with all other Whitbread bars. For sale, as is the one in Dagenham.

E8, HACKNEY CHURCH BREW COMPANY (The Arch Company), 16 & 17 Bohemia Pl. No longer sells cask beer.

E9, GLOBE (Stonegate/Craft Union). No longer sells cask beer.

E10, LEYTON CALLING. Closed, future uncertain.

E10, PATCHWORKS (Pelkap Properties Ltd). Café-bar closed but still operates as an event space.

E10, QUEER BREWING TAPROOM. Closed at the end of July.

E11, SIR ALFRED HITCHCOCK HOTEL. No longer sells cask beer.

E14, LINA STORES. Closed, future uncertain.

N1, COFFEE2COCKTAILS. Closed and converted to Sushi restaurant.

N1, NORTHWOOD (Sports London). Closed over a year ago;

N1, ODYSSEY. Closed, future uncertain.

N1, SIMMONS ANGEL. Essex Road branch closed, future uncertain.

N1, TWO MORE BEERS. Closed in July, future uncertain.

N1C, BABEL BEERHOUSE. Closed and completely stripped.

N4, T.BIRD. No long sells cask beer.

N4, WORLDS END (Greene King/Metropolitan). No longer sells cask beer.

N5, GUNNERS. Cask beer no longer served, handpumps removed.

N16, WHITE HART (Rose Two Ltd/Stonegate/Antic). Repossessed by Stonegate after the winding up of the operating company.

N22, NAG'S HEAD (Stonegate). No longer sells cask beer.

NW1, BE AT ONE (Stratis Investments Ltd/Stonegate). Closed with lease on the market.

NW1, BRUNCH & GRAPES (Stonegate). Closed again!

NW3, OLD OAK (Stonegate/Craft Union). No longer sells cask beer.

NW3, SOCIAL (Whitbread).

Closed along with other Whitbread establishments.

NW5, GIPSY QUEEN TAVERN. Cask beer not available.

NW5, OLD FARMHOUSE (First Restaurant Group). No longer sells cask beer.

CAMRA pub information update 76

NW6, QUEENS ARMS (Punch).

No cask beer. Freehold was on the market.

SE1, FOUR QUARTERS. Closed mid-2026.

SE1, HOP KINGDOM. Closed. Landlord (The Arch Co) was seeking to recover COVID-era rent arrears.

SE5, TIGER (Heineken/Antic).

Closed in August as operating company wound up.

SE9, ELTHAM HILL CLUB (Greenwich Council).

Closed, future uncertain.

SE9, RISING SUN (Greene King). No longer sells cask beer.

SE10, DAVY'S WINE VAULTS (Davy's).

No longer sells cask beer.

SE10, THYME. Closed along with other Whitbread establishments.

SE14, STAR & GARTER. Reported closed on 28th May 2026, saying they were hoping to reopen soon.

SE15, KENTISH DROVERS (Wetherspoon). Pub closed in September. In August a planning application was raised with Southwark Council to convert to a bingo venue/hall.

SE16, GREGORIAN (Heineken/Gregarious Ltd/Antic).

With the Antic company Gregarious wound up, Star have repossessed the pub.

SE18, BEEFEATER (Whitbread). Closed along with all the others in early September. These include Fountain (Twickenham), Liberty Bell (Romford), and Travellers Rest (Kenton)

SOUTHALL, TERRACE. No long sells cask beer.

SW1, BAY & BRACKET (Stonegate/Whelans).

Closed and boarded up.

SW6, BROOK HOUSE. No longer sells cask beer.

SW8, GRIFFIN BELLE (Heineken/ Belle Pubs & Restaurants). Cask beer discontinued in 2025, two handpumps unused.

SW9, KRAFT BRIXTON. Closed, future uncertain.

SW17, TAP 13 (DSC Group). Closed.

SW18, STRIKE. Closed at the turn of the year, future uncertain.

SW19, PRINCE OF WALES (Ram G Pubs).

After reinstatement late April, cask beer discontinued in July owing to lack of demand.

W1, GEORGE & DRAGON. No cask beer.

W1, NQ64 (NQ64). Closed and moved to a new site in Manette Street. The Berwick St site is being developed for a spin-off project by the operator.

W2, DUKE OF KENDAL. Closed at the end of June, future uncertain.

W2, GREEN MAN (Macneil Ltd/Stonegate).

Closed, for sale or lease.

W6, BE AT ONE. Closed September, future uncertain.

W6, CARPENTER'S ARMS (Stonegate/Wren Pubs).

Acquired from Wren Pubs by singer-songwriter James Blunt who also operates the Fox & Pheasant in Chelsea. It is understood that plans are to rebuild the kitchen and open up the first floor as a dining area. Stated on website to be reopening in summer 2027.

W6, DUCHESS (Havenlight Property Investments Ltd/Stonegate/True Pubs). Closed for extended refurbishment and due to reopen in December as the **QUEEN**. No longer leased through Stonegate.

W6, HAMMERSMITH RAM. Closed by Young's in July 2026 after a business review. Sold to Hammersmith Realty Ltd. Reported mid-Aug 2026, briefly occupied by squatters, then occupied by a discount store. Council investigating.

W9, ASHMORE (Stonegate/Craft Union).

Closed, freehold on the market.

W14, CROWN & SCEPTRE (Heineken).

Apparently closed (again).

OUTER LONDON

CHESSINGTON, CRICKETERS (Admiral Taverns).

No longer sells cask beer.

CROYDON, SLUG & LETTUCE (Stonegate).

Closed on 12 September 2026, now available as a tenancy.

ENFIELD, INN ON THE PARK COOKHOUSE (Whitbread).

Closed September 2026 as part of Whitbread's overall pub withdrawal plans.

HAROLD WOOD, HAROLD. No longer sells cask beer.

KEW, BOTANIST (M&B/Castle). No long sells cask beer.

LOCKSBOTTOM, WHYTE LYON (YE OLDE)

(Shepherd Neame). Became **PIGLET AT YE OLDE WHYTE LYON** and sister pub to the Pig's Head in Clapham Old Town. No longer sells cask beer.

MITCHAM, WHITE LION OF MORTIMER.

Cask beer abandoned in the summer heat, possibly to return later in the year; handpumps remain.

NORTHOLT, TYME ON THE WATERFRONT.

Closed, lease on the market.

NORWOOD GREEN, LAMB.

OTHER CHANGES

INNER LONDON

EC1, BALFOUR AT ST BARTS (Featherbay Ltd).

Renamed **ST BARTS** and now operated by Fuller's.

EC1, CLERKENWELL TAVERN (Mosaic Pub & Dining).

Mosaic rebranded as Premium Pubs 1 Ltd. Also the Depot (N7), Victoria Stakes (N10), and Burlington Arms (W1).

EC2, BULL. To be operated by Fuller's following refurbishment.

WC2, DRAM BAR. Now **MOONRAYS**.

Three keg beers including Guinness and Asahi.

WC2, KERRIDGE'S BAR & GRILL. Renamed **GEORGIE'S BAR** after chef Tom Kerridge's old boxer dog.

WC2, SQUARES. Renamed **BAR & KITCHEN AT THISTLE TRAFALGAR SQUARE**.

E1W, DOCKERS INN (Stonegate).

Freehold sold to VJPATH Ltd.

E2, CAV (Arch Company).

Renamed **KADA LONDON**, a Filipino restaurant and bar.

E3, VICTORIA (Wells & Co/Yummy Pub Co).

Yummy have rebranded as Hoste.

E9, PLOUGH (Euromile Investments Ltd/Tiny Dancer Group). Now leased by Kusmetliya Ltd (connected to the Dog & Bell in Deptford).

N1, COUNTER 71. Renamed **APPALACHIA**.

N16, CROSSROADS. Now trading as **BAR ETNA**, a pizza restaurant with a couple of the few draught beers from microbreweries like Lost & Grounded and Beak.

N16, PUBB (Escape Bars). Renamed **COMMON PRESS** in August.

NW1, BELUSHI'S (Stonegate). Renamed **HOT TODDY'S** in January after change of tenant.

NW1, SOMERS TOWN COFFEE HOUSE (Wells & Co/The Yummy Collection). Yummy has rebranded as Hoste.

NW2, BEER & BURGER STORE (Perritt & Perritt). Rebranded as **LITTLE BROTHER**, a neighbourhood bakery, coffee and lunch spot by day, before shifting gear to become a bistro and bar at night.

NW9, ROISIN DUBH. Renamed **J. REILLY'S** in October 2024

SE1, FIRE STATION (Marston's). Operator changing to Urban Pubs & Bars following refurbishment.

SE1, GREEN ROOM. Renamed **BOULEBAR SOUTH BANK**.

SE8, BROOKMILL (City Glen Pub Co). Freehold sold to Brookmill Pub Holdings Ltd.

SE12, DUTCH HOUSE. Renamed **TAVA LONDON**.

SE13, LADYWELL TAVERN (Stonegate/Laine). Bought by Punch who already operate it through Laine.

SE15, MAN OF KENT (Stonegate). Sold by Stonegate to Man of Kent Holdings Ltd.

SE22, FRANKLINS. Reverted to **VICTORY** in May. Two cask beers still available.

SW1, 2 BRIDGE PLACE (Hilton). Renamed **TERMINUS KITCHEN & BAR**.

SW10, CHELSEA GATE (Wellington). Reverted to **CHELSEA PENSIONER**.

SW15, ANGEL (Punch). Extensively refurbished before reopening on 28 July, this drinkers' local, with darts and pool areas leading off the public bar, a separate outside room and a patio is a delight to visit. As a 'Unity Social' venture, the pub offers London Pride @ £3.60 a pint.

SW16, SW16 BAR & KITCHEN (Heineken). Became **HILL** in July, a modern pub, ie cocktail bar and

restaurant. Tuesday steak nights, Wednesday quiz nights, Sunday roasts. Still no cask beer. Card payments only.

SW18, PARK TAVERN (Heineken). By summer 2026, new operators MFM Pub Group Ltd had invested heavily in improving this pub, only to be threatened with eviction by Heineken. As at 2 September, the pub remained open, with two Surrey-brewed Exmoor beers on the handpumps.

W3, GEORGE & DRAGON (Remarkable Pubs). Freehold sold to Acton Capital Ltd and leased to Dragon Pro Ltd.

W9, WARRINGTON HOTEL (Kicking Horse 3 Ltd/Ewe Hospitality Ltd). Freehold purchased by Allsopp Holdings Ltd.

W12, SWAKELEY'S (Stonegate/Bush Bars Limited). Sold by Stonegate to Goldhawk Bars Ltd.

W14, BIDDY MULLIGAN'S (Heineken). Renamed again, this time to **JAMESON**.

OUTER LONDON.

BROMLEY, BRICKLAYERS ARMS (Shepherd Neame). Now leased to Marlowe's who also run the Chequers in Sevenoaks.

HORNCHURCH, CROWN (Stonegate). Freehold sold to Eastway Estates.

KINGSTON, CANBURY ARMS (Young's). No longer Young's and now operating as a Morgan pub.

KINGSTON, CARDINAL (Stonegate/Ha Peppe Restaurant). Now **PEPPE**, primarily an Italian restaurant specializing in authentic Sicilian cuisine with emphasis on pizza and pasta, but drinkers are made welcome.

MORDEN, TOOTING & MITCHAM STADIUM SPORTS BAR. Renamed **BAR 1932**.

RUISLIP, INDIAN POET (Greene King). Renamed again, this time **SPICE KLUB**.

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.

Elephants

Firstly, may I congratulate the LD team for an excellent August/September issue. A great mix of interesting features and the usual informative news content. LD's award at the last CAMRA AGM was well deserved and long overdue, in my opinion.

I particularly liked the articles on John Young and Chiswick Bitter, both sorely missed by your correspondent. I always look forward to Christine Cryne's articles on London's microbreweries but was, as a proud South Londoner, a little surprised to learn that Peter

Jackson of Southwark Brewery thinks that the elephant has no connection with the borough in question.

He may like to take a short trip to the Elephant & Castle where the elephant sign from the pub that gave its name to the district now stands in the new residential development east of the railway viaduct. I believe it was formerly outside the now demolished shopping centre, next to the also now vanished Newington Butts pub. Happily, the current incarnation of the Elephant & Castle (with a smaller golden elephant sign) appears to be alive and well.

Robert Preston

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 24 June 2026) are as follows:

- Single membership, paid by Direct Debit, £35.00;
- Joint membership (partner at same address) £43.00.

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 autumn; well, that's how it's feeling just at the moment. By the time you read this, though, we might be into another heatwave.

Right! SBY4 time. No glimpses into my vinyl collection this time but I'm still on a musical theme. As I sit typing this, we are approaching the Last Night of the Proms and my last prom of the season was last Sunday, so perhaps it's not surprising that I have

decided to match some well-known orchestral works with their composers. In case you are interested, I saw/heard nine of the ten pieces listed here across six of the eight concerts that I attended (as if you cared!). As you might suppose, I have selected pieces and composers to maximise the chances of you mixing up the composers.

Here are the artists:

1. Fountains of Rome and Pines of Rome
2. An American in Paris
3. Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune
4. The Three-Cornered Hat
5. Symphony No. 6 'Pastoral'
6. Symphony No. 9 'From the New World'
7. On the Town
8. The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra
9. Appalachian Spring
10. Concierto de Aranjuez

...and here are the albums:

- A. Joaquín Rodrigo
- B. Ottorino Respighi
- C. Aaron Copland
- D. Benjamin Britten
- E. George Gershwin
- F. Manuel de Falla
- G. Claude Debussy
- H. Antonin Dvořák
- I. Leonard Bernstein
- J. Ludwig van Beethoven

I was trying to think of something for the middle bit when it struck me that I have done brewery anagrams a lot over the years and occasionally done matching tube stations with various locations, lines etc. Then the idea of 'Underground Anagrams' (well, TFL actually, but they're all on the tube map) crept into my mind. Let's run these up the flagpole and see who says, 'No clichés please!'.

In case it helps, I have added a line that each of the chosen stations is on, although not all of them because that might actually help.

1. BOG HOUR (Northern)
2. BLARE MARCH (Central)
3. STEWING ALE (Elizabeth)
4. MENTOR SCENTING CORN (Northern)
5. A RED DOWAGER (Circle)
6. LAD AND SINGERS (DLR)
7. RENEW RASTER (Victoria)
8. NEW SLOW SHOUT (Piccadilly)
9. LOSE DOUG CARTER (Piccadilly)
10. SNARE SPONGER (District)

This time I thought that perhaps I could source my general trivia questions from a book I bought some while ago called *Secret London (an unusual guide)*, a compact but closely printed volume listing 230 places (it says on the cover) that are not on the main tourist maps, though quite a few might be known to you. BUT after an evening of dipping in and selecting a few, I realised that I couldn't really distil the information given into questions that would fit into my space allocation in the *Drinker*. Oh well, back to the book called *Dates* to find anniversaries within the currency of this magazine in years ending in six:

1. On 1 October 1966, Albert Speer and Baldur von Schirach were released from Spandau Prison in Berlin, leaving just one prisoner remaining in custody; who was that man?
2. On 4 October 1966 Lesotho became an independent kingdom. What was it called as a British Protectorate until this date?
3. The Independent newspaper was first published on 6 October, but in what year?
4. On 8 October in what year was the Dow-Jones Index instituted, based upon the average price of selected stocks on the New York Stock Exchange?
5. Who was the British statesman, later to become a Labour Prime Minister, who was born on 12 October 1866 in Lossiemouth, Morayshire?
6. Queen Elizabeth II became the first British monarch to visit China when she arrived on 12 October; in what year?

7. Tennis player Martina Navratilova was born in Prague on 18 October; in what year?
8. London's orbital motorway, the M25, was completed when the last section (between Junctions 22 and 23) was opened by Margaret Thatcher on 29 October; in what year?
9. As a double November entry, who was the trombonist and Big Band leader, born on 19 November 1905 and who died on 26 November 1956?
10. The Crystal Palace was destroyed in a catastrophic fire on 30 November of what year?

And here my inspiration ran out. I hope you have a good autumn. It'll be the Christmas edition next time.

Andy Pirson

The answers

Here are the solutions to the puzzles set in the August/September column:

5BY4 (My Vinyl 3):

1. Albion Country Band - Battle of the Field (1975)
2. Martin Carthy - The Bonny Black Hare and Other Songs (1968)
3. The Copper Family - A Song for Every Season (1971)
4. Charlie Dore - Where To Now (1979)
5. Lesley Duncan - Sing Children Sing (1971)
6. Electric Light Orchestra - Discovery (1979)
7. Don McClean - Homeless Brother (1974)
8. Mike Oldfield - Incantations (1978)
9. The Seekers - Come the Day (1966)
10. June Tabor - Ashes & Diamonds (1977)

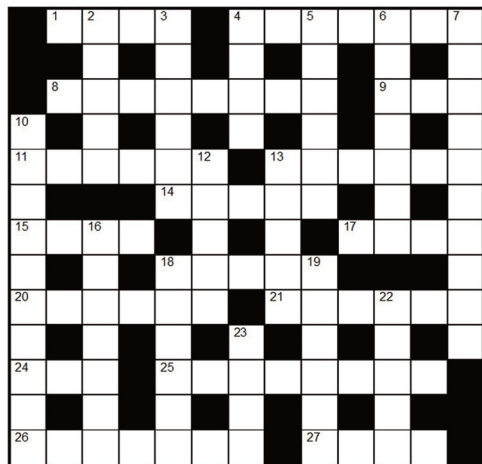
Henry VIII's Wives:

1. Catherine of Aragon: 23 years, 11 months, 12 days
2. Anne Boleyn: 3 years, 6 months, 3 days
3. Jane Seymour: 1 year, 4 months, 24 days
4. Anne of Cleves: 6 months, 6 days
5. Catherine Howard: 1 year, 6 months, 16 days
6. Catherine Parr: 3 years, 6 months, 16 days

General knowledge:

1. The 38th state of the USA, inaugurated as 'The Centennial State' on 1 August 1876, is COLORADO.
2. US film director John Houston and English actress Joan Hickson were both born on 5 August IN 1906.
3. The major group of museums, education and research centres in the USA, founded on 10 August 1846 (named after its founding donor, a British scientist) is THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.
4. The first Astronomer Royal, born on 19 August 1646 and who laid the foundation stone of the Royal Greenwich Observatory, was JOHN FLAMSTEED.
5. Rudolph Valentino, heartthrob of the silent movie era, who died in New York on 23 August 1926, was 31 YEARS OLD.
6. King Edward III's defeat of Philip VI of France, greatly aided by the first use of the English longbow in 1346, was at the BATTLE OF CRECY.
7. The first cricket test match to take place in England (against Australia), starting on 6 September 1880, was held at THE OVAL.
8. The birth of Elizabeth Tudor (later Queen Elizabeth) to Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn on 7 September 1533 took place at GREENWICH PALACE.
9. The much vaunted 'Battle of the Sexes' tennis match, when Billie Jean King beat Bobby Riggs, took place at the Astrodome, Houston, Texas, on 20 September IN 1973.
10. The former Crown Colony, British Honduras, which gained independence from the UK in 1981, is BELIZE

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



Name

Address

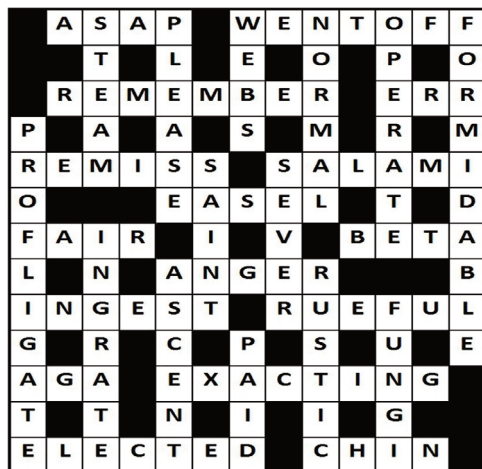
Telephone

E-mail

All correct entries received by 18 November will be entered into a draw for the prize. The prize winner will be announced in the February/March edition. The solution will be given in the December/January edition.

All entries should be submitted to:
London Drinker Crossword
13 Belvedere Close, Teddington, TW11 0NT

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER SOLUTION



ACROSS

1. Give out revolutionary magazine. [4]
4. A flower in Washington may be too camp. [7]
8. Looking around very hungry. [8]
9. He's reducing the volume. [3]
11. Popular enthusiast with time for a child. [6]
13. System of some austere oligarchs. [6]
14. Good beers cause wind. [5]
15. Out of it you lose inspiration. [4]
17. Girl cut off and put right. [4]
18. Caught the French representative in vice. [5]
20. A nude's excited to get dessert. [6]
21. Single man extremely serious. [6]
24. Greek character in Cretan mythology. [3]
25. Secretary, after time, becomes a model. [8]
26. Encourage to follow first smooth operator. [7]
27. Rotten row. [4]

DOWN

2. Test provided a recurrent theme. [5]
3. Code breaker going round, losing direction. [6]
4. Father at home in anguish. [4]
5. Clothes for drunks. [6]
6. Went quickly and parked boat outside Turkey's capital [7]
7. Arriving outside army base is a relief. [10]
10. Get away from search parties in Norfolk town. [10]
12. Bleat about the board. [5]
13. They bind together what may be a mess. [5]
16. It's not right to follow leading float in the carnival. [7]
18. Keep being left in strict social system. [6]
19. You dropped out of well-liked tree. [6]
22. School, apparently, is taken in. [5]
23. Artist included among the miniaturists. [4]

Winner of the prize for the June/July Crossword:
Richard Garton, Surbiton

Other correct entries were received from:

Olly Ander, John Butler, Andy Dadd, John Dodd, Nick Goodwin, Paul Gray, Alan Greer, Matthew Griffiths, John Howarth, Eileen Howey, Mr T C Hull, Alan Humphrey, Tony Lennon, Mike & Nigel, Pam Moger, Dave Murphy, Mark Nichols, Robert Perris, Robert Ripley, Bill Stewart, R Tassi, Mark Thompson, Elizabeth Whale, David Whitlam, Jerry Wiggins, Shez Wright.

There were also nine incorrect entries, one incomplete entry and eleven 'missing clue' victims.



ASCOT



A weekend brewed
to perfection



BETMGM

Autumn Racing Weekend

Friday 2nd - Saturday 3rd October

FEATURING
THE ASCOT BEER FESTIVAL,
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LEWES CASTLE BROWN

A traditional brown ale with a rich, sweet and malty palate. Lush and full-bodied, with subtle notes of burnt sugar leading to a balanced bittersweet finish | 4.8%



WORLD BEER AWARDS

'WORLD'S BEST DARK BEER'



WORLD BEER AWARDS

'WORLD'S BEST ENGLISH
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BEST ALE UP TO 5%

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