LONDON CAMRA DRINKER

FREE

Volume 48 No. 6 December 2026/January 2027



The Cockpit, Chislehurst - See page 12

wetherspoon

CAMRA

THE GOOD BEER GUIDE ★2026★ WE'RE IN IT



London pubs included in The Good Beer Guide 2026

London (inner)

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

London (outer)

J.J. Moon's, Hornchurch
J.J. Moon's, Kingsbury
J.J. Moon's, Ruislip Manor
Spouter's Corner, Wood Green
The Beaten Docket, Cricklewood
The Colley Rowe Inn, Collier Row
The Coronation Hall, Surbiton
The Eva Hart, Chadwell Heath
The Furze Wren, Bexleyheath
The George, Croydon
The Good Yarn, Uxbridge
The Great Spoon of Ilford, Ilford
The Greenwood Hotel, Northolt
The Moon and Stars, Romford
The Moon on the Hill, Harrow
The Moon on the Hill, Sutton
The Moon on the Square, Feltham
The Moon Under Water, Colindale
The Moon Under Water, Enfield
The Moon Under Water, Hounslow
The Mossy Well, Muswell Hill
The New Crown, Southgate
The New Fairlop Oak, Fairlop
The Nonsuch Inn, North Cheam
The Railway Bell, Barnet
The Red Lion & Pineapple, Acton
The Sir Julian Huxley, Selsdon
The Sir Michael Balcon, Ealing
The Village Inn, Rayners Lane
The Watchman, New Malden
The Whispering Moon, Wallington
The Wibbas Down Inn, Wimbledon
The William Webb Ellis, Twickenham
The Wrong 'Un, Bexleyheath

OPEN NOW

Sigered, King of Essex, 8–10 East Walk, Eastgate Shopping Centre, Basildon, SS14 1HG

The Sir Alexander Fleming, 5 Merchant Square, Paddington Basin, W2 1AS

Walham Green, 472 Fulham Road, Fulham, SW6 1BY
Next to Fulham Broadway station's entrance

OPENING SOON: WED 10 DECEMBER

Coombe Lodge, 104 Coombe Rd, Croydon, CR0 5RB

Subject to local licensing restrictions and availability at participating free houses. Illustration is for guidance only. J D Wetherspoon plc reserves the right to withdraw/change offers (without notice), at any time. See website for full details: jdwetherspoon.com. Allergen and nutritional information can be found on the customer information screen, website and Wetherspoon app.

for the facts drinkaware.co.uk jdwetherspoon.com wetherspoon

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

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

The next edition, February/March 2027, will be published on Wednesday 27 January. The editorial deadline for this issue is no later than Friday 8 January. Material for publication, including press releases, should preferably be sent by e-mail to *ldnews.hedger@gmail.com*. Please also use this e-mail address to contact the editor.

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

© copyright the London branches of the Campaign for Real Ale; all rights reserved. No consent is given for the content of this or previous editions to be uploaded to Artificial Intelligence.

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

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Branch diaries	4
CAMRA news and events	8
The final four	12
Wales takes the crown!	14
Visit Bromley's award-winning pubs and club	16
Explore the world of tasting!	18
Pub news	20
The Long Arm reaches out	22
Brewery news	24
News & views	28
Trade news	30
Shirk, Rust and Pray – again!	33
Pubs and planning	34
Learning from across the Pond	37
When is a pub not a pub?	39
Roberts Ramble	39
Meeting the brewer	40
On the road again	41
First for London Welsh	41
The Last Drop Inn	42
CAMRA pub information update 77	43
Tribute	46
End of an era	46
Are you a CAMRA member?	48
Idle Moments	48
Crossword	50



What interest does the Campaign for Real Ale have in pubs? Isn't it about all sorts of weird and wonderful beers with silly names? Well, no, it isn't. Firstly, there is one simple practical consideration: cask beer is a bulk product and, with all due respect to bottled and canned products, to reach and maintain the necessary quality it needs the volume sales that are mostly only possible in pubs, clubs and brewery taps.

The Government has declared itself to be 'pub friendly' and not just for financial reasons, although these are significant. A recent article in the *Propel* newsletter, written by leading retail trends commentator Glynn Davis, reported that pubs and beer contributed some £37.8 billion to the UK economy in 2025. They also generated £16.8 billion in tax income, as well as supporting almost one million jobs.

It goes deeper than that though. Recent research as quoted in the *Propel* article found that 95% of pub-goers believe that pubs play an important role in creating vibrant communities, while 88% of publicans believe their pub is a central part of its local community. It is no surprise that communities, especially in rural areas, put a lot of effort into saving their local pubs. To quote John Longden OBE, the chief executive of Pub is The Hub, *"Publicans and their pubs have a vital social role in supporting local communities and helping people to overcome social isolation and alleviate feelings of loneliness. They have a significant social value that is beyond economic impact. They are crucial in helping to bring people together and helping with the provision of lost services and amenities."* It has to be acknowledged that alcohol abuse can bring its problems but I would guess that the community pub does more to prevent such problems than exacerbate them, although I stand to be corrected there.

Two events prompted me to write this article. The first was a story from the *Plymouth Herald*, spotted on the Google news feed. The story may be from Plymouth but the message is universal. Steve Stamford, a Royal Marines Falklands War veteran struck up a friendship with Ted Ryan at the Mannamead, a Wetherspoons pub in Mutley Plain, (PL4 6JH). They met there two or three times a week over around twenty years. Sadly, Mr Stamford passed away in September. Knowing that he had no family, Mr Ryan decided to make sure that his friend received a proper send-off. He arranged a *GoFundMe* page and, with the help of the military and local community, Mr Stamford received the 'beautiful and dignified' funeral he deserved. Mr Ryan said that the support that his campaign received restored his faith in humanity and he wished his friend 'fair winds and following seas'.

The second event is personal. Once a month for some 35 years I have met up with a group of ex-colleagues for a few beers and a chat. Sadly, we have recently lost one of our little group. I dedicate this article to the memory of Dave Howes, whose company we will all miss deeply.

Tony Hedger



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

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



This is a list of CAMRA Greater London regional and branch events for December 2026 and January 2027, 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 PUBS GROUP

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

December

- Wed 16 Wapping tour: (7pm) Turner's Old Star E1W 2QG, (7.45) Prospect of Whitby E1W 3SH, (8.30) Captain Kidd E1W 2NE, (9pm) Town of Ramsgate E1W 2PN

January

- Mon 18 (7.30) Meeting; Clachan (upstairs), 34 Kingly St, W1B 5QH. All CAMRA members interested in pub research and preservation welcome

https://londonpubsgroup.camra.org.uk

CIDER

Ian White, ikwcider@icloud.com

January

- Sat 30 (2.30) Wassail; One Tree Hill Allotments, SE23 3LE: for details, visit *http://ianwhite.info/Wassail.html*

YOUNG MEMBERS' GROUP

Dario Bertero, dbertero.w@gmail.com

December

- Thu 3 (from 6pm) Pig's Ear beer festival social; Round Chapel, Hackney E5 0LY (see page 11)
- Wed 23 (from 3pm) Xmas drinks; Stranded WC2R 0JR. All CAMRA members welcome.

Facebook: *Greater London CAMRA Young Members*

BEXLEY

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

December

- Wed 9 (7pm) Meeting; Door Hinge, Welling DA16 1TR
- Wed 16 (7pm), Xmas meal; Wrong 'Un, Bexleyheath DA6 8AS
- Tue 29 (12pm) Social; Robin Hood & Little John DA6 8PF

January

- Wed 13 (7pm) Meeting; Bird & Barrel, Barnehurst DA7 6HG
- Wed 27 Bexleyheath social: meet (7pm) Rose DA6 7ES

www.bexley.camra.org.uk

BROMLEY

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

December

- Thu 10 (7pm) Winter Beer Month social; Orpington Liberal Club BR6 0RZ
- Mon 14 Beckenham BR3 social (7pm) Br3wery 4RP; (7.45) Three Hounds 4PR; (9.40) Bricklayers Arms 1BN
- Tue 29 Bromley BR1 social: (1.30) Crown & Anchor 3HJ, (2.20) Freelands Tavern 3HZ, (3.10) Red Lion 3LG, etc

January

- Sat 9 Penge SE20 social: (1pm) Craft Metropolis 7HW, (2pm) Goldsmiths Arms 7AA, (2.50) Pawleyne Arms 7AA, (4pm) Southey Brewing 7JD, (5.30) Moon & Stars 7QS
- Mon 11 (7.30) GBG selection meeting; Three Hounds BR3 4PR
- Tue 19 (7.30) Committee meeting; Sydney Arms, Chislehurst BR7 6PL
- Thu 28 Selsdon CR2 8LB social: (7pm) Sir Julian Huxley, (8pm) Golden Ark

http://bromley.camra.org.uk/calendar/

CROYDON & SUTTON

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

December

- Wed 2 Croydon CR0 social: (8pm) Surrey Cricketers 1DJ, (9.30) Spread Eagle 1NX
- Wed 9 (8.30) Meeting; Cryer Arts (Watercress Suite) SM5 3BB
- Thu 17 Carshalton SM5 social: (8pm) Railway Tavern 2HG, (9.30) Sun 2HU
- Tue 29 (8pm) Xmas social; Royal Standard CR0 1SS

January

- Wed 6 (8pm) Addiscombe social; Claret & Ale CR0 7AA
- Wed 13 (8.30) Open committee meeting; Green Dragon CR0 1NA
- Wed 20 Sutton SM1 social: (8pm) Oak & Anchor 1EZ, then Moon on the Hill 1DZ
- Thu 28 (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

December

- Tue 1-Sat 5 Pig's Ear Beer Festival, Round Chapel E5 0LY (see page 11)
- Thu 10 (6pm) Social; Leyton Orient Supporters Club E10 5NF: beers from Mighty Oak + mince pies
- Mon 14 (2pm) First GBG selection meeting; Coach & Horses, Leyton E10 5NA

January

- Tue 12 (7.30) Second GBG selection meeting; Leyton Engineer E10 5QN

www.pigsear.org.uk

ENFIELD & BARNET

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

December

- Tue 1 Social: (7pm) Woodman N13 4BD, (8pm) Salisbury Arms N21 3NP
- Wed 9 High Barnet EN5 social: (7pm) Monken Holt 5SU, (8pm) Black Horse 4BW
- Thu 17 (7pm) Xmas drinks; Little Green Dragon, Winchmore Hill N21 2A

January

- Fri 1 (from 12pm) Southgate social; New Crown N14 5PH
- Wed 6 (from 7.30) GBG selection meeting; Bohemia, North Finchley N12 9QH
- Fri 15 (12pm) Social; Railway Bell EN4 8RR
- Sat 23 Social: (1pm) Wild Swan EC4A 1AN, (3pm) Olde Mitre EC1N 6SJ
- Thu 28 (6.30) Brewers' social; Bohemia N12 9QH

https://enfieldandbarnet.camra.org.uk

KINGSTON & LEATHERHEAD

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

December

- Wed 2 (12pm) Pig's Ear festival social; Round Chapel, Hackney E5 0LY (see page 11)
- Wed 9 (2pm) Quiet Pint; Kings Tun, Kingston KT1 1QT
- Sat 19 Kingston Xmas tour: (12pm) Canbury Arms KT2 6LQ, (1pm) Wych Elm KT2 6HT, (1.45) Willoughby Arms KT2 6LN, (2.30) Norbiton KT2 6PW, (3.15) Bricklayers KT1 3DS, (4pm) Albion KT1 2PY

THE WHITE HORSE

43RD OLD ALE FESTIVAL 2027



FREE ENTRY

FREE ENTRY

EXCEPTIONAL ALES

GUEST SPEAKERS

THE WHITE HORSE, PARSONS GREEN

MONDAY 11TH - SUNDAY 17TH JANUARY 2027

11AM-11PM

CONTACT DETAILS: ENQUIRY@WHITEHORSESW6.COM

• Wed 30 Godalming GU17 Gander: (1.45) Jack Phillips 1DY, (3pm) Richmond Arms 1AF, (4pm) Star 1EL, (5pm) Sun 1NN

January

• Thu 7 (7.30) Meeting; Grafton Club, New Malden KT3 3AA

https://kandl.camra.org.uk/

NORTH LONDON

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

December

• Tue 1 (7pm) Pig's Ear festival social; Round Chapel, Hackney E5 0LY (see page 11)
• Tue 8 (7pm) Xmas Party; Doric Arch, Euston NW1 2DN
• Tue 15 Holloway Road N7 tour: (7pm) House of Hammerton 8LT, then Lamb 8JL and Horatia 8JE
• Tue 29 Euston Road tour: (7.30) Parcel Yard N1C 4AP, then Skinners WC1H 9NT and Euston Tap NW1 2EF

January

• Tue 12 Green Lanes/Turnpike Lane tour: (7pm) Old Ale Emporium N4 1EU, then Salisbury (Grade II listed) N4 1JX, and Green House N15 3BH (reopened in August 2026)
• Tue 19 (7pm) Winter Pub of the Season social; Grafton, Kentish Town NW5 3LG
• Wed 27 (4.30-8pm) Meet the new manager social; Beaten Docket, Cricklewood NW2 3ET
• Sat 30 (2pm) Whisky & beer tasting; Pineapple, Kentish Town/whisky-beer-tutored-tasting

https://northlondon.camra.org.uk

RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW

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

December

• Tue 1 (7.30) Meeting; London Apprentice, Isleworth TW7 6BG
• Sun 6 Rob Johnson returns (with full band) to Cross Lances, Hounslow. Details from Branch Contact
• Tue 14 (7pm) German Xmas meal: Northumberland Arms, Brentford TW8 8JB. Pre-booking required via Branch Contact

January

• Tue 5 (7.30) Meeting; Sussex Arms, Twickenham TW2 5BG
• Wed 20 Desi meal; African Queen, Hounslow TW4 5HL. Details from Branch Contact
• Tue 26 (7.30) Social; Green Man, Hatton TW14 0PZ

rh.camra.org.uk

SOUTH EAST LONDON

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

December

• Wed 2 (7pm) Pig's Ear festival social; Round Chapel, Hackney E5 0LY (see page 11)
• Sat 12 Andy Sewell Memorial social, a daytime trip to Rochester; meet (12pm) Coopers Arms, ME1 1TL

January

• Tue 5 (7.30) GBG selection meeting; Hand & Marigold SE1 3UH
• Mon 25 (7.30) **Branch AGM** and social; Southwark Brewing Company SE1 2EZ

https://sel.camra.org.uk

SOUTH WEST LONDON

Social Sec: Mark Bravery, info@swl.camra.org.uk
Cycling: Geoff Strawbridge, geoff.camra@gmail.com

December

• Wed 9 (7.30) Social; Park Tavern SW18 5SW

January

• Sun 10 (6.30) GBG shortlisting meeting; Hand in Hand SW19 4RQ
• Wed 27 District Line social: (7pm) Prince of Wales, Putney SW15 2SP, then Earl Spencer and Pig & Whistle SW18; Woodman, Hand & Racquet and Alexandra SW19

https://swl.camra.org.uk

WATFORD & DISTRICT

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

December

• Thu 10 Bushey WD23 social: (8.15) Red Lion 3HN, (9.15) King Stag 3EH, (10pm) Swan 3EE

January

• Fri 1 (1pm) Social; Nascot Arms, Watford WD17 4QS
• Mon 11 (8pm) Open meeting; West Herts Sports Club, Watford WD18 7HP
• Fri 22: 'Pre-Xmas' London pub crawl: meet (6pm) Southampton Arms, 139 Highgate Rd, NW5 1LE; later venues tba

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;

December

• Tue 1 South Soho social: meet (2pm) Queen's Head W1D 7HN
• Sat 19 (from 6pm) Alasdair's birthday bash: West London Trades Union Club W3 6ND
• Mon 21 Pimlico social: meet (2pm) Jugged Hare SW1V 1DX

January

• Wed 6 South Kensington social: meet (7pm) Anglesea Arms SW7 3QG
• Mon 11 (7pm for 7.30) Meeting; Harp (upstairs) WC2N 4HS
• Tue 19 South Marylebone social: meet (2pm) Portman W1H 7QW

www.westlondon.camra.org.uk

WEST MIDDLESEX

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

December

• Wed 2 (2pm) Pig's Ear festival social; Round Chapel, Hackney E5 0LY (see page 11)
• Sat 12 (meet from 11am Harrow & Wealdstone station) Day trip to Tring Brewery, Dunsley Farm, HP23 6HA (taproom opens 12, leave by 7pm); tour available 2-3pm, £5 book via *tringbrewery.co.uk*
• Tue 22 (from 2pm) Social; Village Inn, Rayners Lane HA5 5DY
• Thu 31 (from 9pm) New Year's Eve event social; Questors Theatre Grapevine Bar, Ealing W5 5BQ

January

• Wed 13 (8pm) Meeting; Grosvenor, Hanwell W7 2DT
• Mon 18 (from 2pm) Social; Botwell Inn, Hayes UB3 3EB
• Sat 30 (7pm) Post-Xmas social; Greenwood, Northolt UB5 4LA: please email *jason@westmiddxcamra.org.uk* by 5 January if you can attend and would like to contribute towards food.

https://westmiddx.camra.org.uk

The electronic copy deadline for the February/March 2027 edition is no later than Friday 8 January 2027.
Please send entries to ***ldnews.hedger@gmail.com***.

HO HO HOPS!

UNWRAP A BREW DAY

Swap the novelty socks for a mash paddle.
They brew with one of our brewers, then collect
a case of their own beer three weeks later.
A present with proper bragging rights.

BREW DAY GIFT VOUCHERS

£250 **- groups of up to six!**

London Drinker Exclusive

SCAN THE TAG TO BOOK →

www.mashpaddlebrewery.com/london-drinker-xmas

SCAN & BOOK

MASH PADDLE BREWERY, 92 ENID ST, BERMONDSEY, SE16 3RA

MASHPADDLEBREWERY.COM

REGIONAL PUB OF THE YEAR RUNNER-UP

This year, because the voting was so close, there was a runner-up award in the Regional Pub of the Year competition. The pub concerned is the Trafalgar in South Wimbledon (SW19 2JY), which has been in the news lately because of the campaign to buy the pub for the community.



The presentation was made on 26 October at the St John's Beer Festival which, this year, was raising funds for the campaign. CAMRA Greater London Regional Director Ellie Eames presented the certificate to the licensee, Oli Carter-Esdale. With thanks to Mark Davies for the photo.

JOHN YOUNG MEMORIAL AWARD

This year's John Young Memorial Award was celebrated on 1 October at the Bohemia in North Finchley (N12 9QH), home of winners, the London Brewing Company (LBC). The presentation was made by Torquil Sligo-Young, John Young's nephew, and Regional Director, Ellie Eames. The award consists of a perpetual engraved shield, which the winner holds for a year, plus a certificate. A number of previous winners attended the event.

Ellie said, *"The London Brewing Company deserves this award in recognition for its commitment to cask beer. They opened a second pub near Aldgate (Ye Three Lords) and put in handpumps when they could have easily just sold keg. They also have a reputation for developing brewers. These include Jenna Dunseath, who is now technical director at Real Drinks Ltd, Rich White, who went on to set up Werewolf Brewery in Camden and George Boustred, who is now the head brewer at Exale in Black Horse Lane. And to put the icing on the cake, LBC's Beer Street won CAMRA's Winter Champion Beer of Britain earlier this year, beating thousands of beers to get this accolade. They are the only London Brewer to have ever won it."*



The photo shows Alex Wood, LBC head brewer; Derek Prentice (past winner), Torquil and Senan, with other former winners standing behind.

RICHMOND & HOUNSLOW BRANCH NEWS

On 22 September, under the expert tutelage of our branch secretary, Damian Smeaton (in black T-shirt), members were shown how to use the new CAMRA beer scoring system. A range of different styles of beer were scored blind to help members understand what to look for.



Members promised to score more beers regularly, given the importance of scores in the selection of pubs for CAMRA's Good Beer Guide. It was an enjoyable and productive evening with nine beers scored, generously donated by the William Webb Ellis in Twickenham (TW1 3RR).

The branch returned to the William Webb Ellis on 7 October, the first day of the Wetherspoons Beer Festival, to taste and rate nine of the festival beers. The overall winner was Theakston's Salted Caramel Porter. Those present



A CHRISTMAS STORY FROM PIMLICO

B.C.

BEFORE CASK

Once upon a time
London was a beer desert...
Five lagers passed for choice.

Then came
2009.

We opened CASK in Pimlico with British cask ales, independent keg beers and bottles from around the world.



The Original. Still the Best.

WEST LONDON CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR 2025

CASK PUB & KITCHEN
6 Charlwood Street, Pimlico, SW1V 2EE

caskpubandkitchen.com

received a free pint of their favourite. Thanks again to Wetherspoons for their hospitality and a great selection of beers. John Austin supplied the photo.

On 14 October, a large crowd of regulars and guests visited the very popular Moon Under Water in Hounslow (TW3 3LF) to help the pub celebrate 25 consecutive years in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide. Incredibly, the landlord, Peter Johnson, has been



managing the pub for every one of those years. To mark the achievement, the branch presented Peter with a token of thanks and appreciation in the form of a certificate and an engraved tankard. The presentation was made to Peter (right) by branch chairman Bob Gordon (centre) and John Austin, branch press and publicity officer. With thanks to George Gimber for the photo.

John Austin

CHAMPION WINTER BEER OF BRITAIN

For the second year running, CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition will be hosted by the Liverpool Beer Festival. The event runs from on 18 to 20 February in the splendour of the Lutyens Crypt at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral. The judging will be held on the first day. The winning beer will be on sale while stocks last, as part of the 200-plus beers and ciders on offer. The cathedral is just a ten-minute walk from Liverpool Lime Street station. You can buy tickets for the five separate sessions on-line.

London, Capital of Brewing

Sadly, the number of independent breweries in Greater London has now fallen below 100. They are listed on CAMRA's Greater London Region website: *www.london.camra.org.uk*.

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



Prince of Wales

38 Old Town, Clapham SW4 0LB

Tel: 07593 732 008 powsw4.com

GOOD BEER GUIDE 2026 WE'RE IN IT

Celebrate the Landlord's 30 years with Sambrook's Ales at £4.95 a pint

Now with **12 beers** on tap, with **3 cask ales**.

10% Camra discount given on all cask ales.

Open weekdays from 3pm and weekends from noon.
Dog friendly, free Wi-Fi.
Cash and cards accepted.
Nearest tube, Clapham Common.

POW POW POW POW POW POW

EAST LONDON AND CITY BRANCH OF CAMRA PRESENTS

THE 42ND PIG'S EAR BEER AND CIDER FESTIVAL

THE FINE ALE FRONTIER

TUESDAY 1ST - SATURDAY 5TH DECEMBER 2026

NOON - 10.30PM (11PM FRI/9PM SAT)

ROUND CHAPEL, 10 GLENARM ROAD, E5 0LY

FREE FOR CAMRA MEMBERS - NON-MEMBERS £5

WWW.PIGSEAR.ORG.UK • @PIGSEARCAMRA

18+ ONLY

SCAN ME UP

CAMRA

SPONSORED BY

TAP EAST

BREW PUB · LONDON

The final four

The final four contestants in CAMRA's National Pub of the Year competition were announced in October and I am delighted to report that our Greater London Pub of the Year, the Cockpit in Chislehurst (BR7 6NR) was among them. This achievement should not be underestimated. To get this far, a pub has to be assessed three times (at branch, regional and 'super-regional' - last 16 - levels), each time by a different group of judges using the same criteria.

The Cockpit is on the cover of this edition. Our thanks to the licensee, Adam Miller, for the photo. Despite opening at the height of the pandemic in December 2020, it has proved to be a success. Easy going and chatty, it offers a choice of cask beers from small breweries from all over the country, served from a cold room behind the small bar. Possibly uniquely, as can be seen from the cover photo, it shares its premises with a florist but there is plenty of space with a variety of seating in separate inside areas as well as outside at the front.



The Regional Pub of the Year award was celebrated on 7 October by a good crowd of locals and CAMRA members. The photo shows our Regional Director, Ellie Eames, taking great delight in presenting the certificate to Adam. With thanks to Chris Crowther for the photo.!

On hearing the news, Adam told CAMRA's What's Brewing magazine, *"What boggling news this is to receive! It has caused a frenzy of frenetic jubilation amongst us staff and stalwarts at the Cockpit! This is a pub stripped back to basics, where the pristinity of our ales, ciders, food and wine speak to the uncompromising standards of the producers that grace our floorboards, along with our punters' intangible whimsies seasoning the atmosphere so dotingly; it is a truly treasured environment to serve such a convivial community. Thank you to all the stagehands that keep the wheels in motion, both on the jump and behind the curtain and thank you, CAMRA, for recognising our little boozer with this accreditation; what splendid company to be in."*

The other three contenders are as follows:

- The Turks Head, St. Helens (WA10 2DQ), the Merseyside and Cheshire regional winner: a Tudor-style pub dating back to the 1870s.
- The Countryman's Inn, Hunton (DL8 1PY), the Yorkshire regional winner: a welcoming free house, community-owned for the last four years, serving Yorkshire beers.
- The Tamworth Tap, Tamworth (B79 7LR), the West Midlands regional winner: three times winner of this competition (2022, 2023 and 2025) and clearly maintaining its standards. A fourth win would be a record.

Cider and Perry Pub of the Year 2026

This year's winner is the Hoptician, a micropub in Dursley, Gloucestershire (GL11 4ND). It opened only in 2024, in premises formerly occupied by an opticians practice (hence the name). Very much a community pub, it serves five cask beers as well as up to 20 ciders and perries.

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.**

THE CRAFT BEER CO. PRESENTS

The CATHERINE EDDOWES

EXCEPTIONAL BEER. EXTRAORDINARY CHOICE.

9 CASK ALES

18 KEG BEERS

A changing selection of outstanding cask ales from independent British breweries, alongside exceptional keg beers from near and far.

Wines, spirits, cocktails and Low & No.



Carefully chosen. Beautifully kept. Properly served.

FAMILY-OWNED. PROUDLY INDEPENDENT.

A name to remember

Catherine Eddowes, known as Kate, was a Londoner with a life of her own. She was murdered in Mitre Square, opposite our doors, on 30 September 1888.

We named our pub in her honour, so her name lives on in the heart of the City.

JUST 3 MINUTES' WALK FROM ALDGATE STATION

29-31 Mitre Street
London EC3A 5BU

Monday-Friday, noon-11pm
Closed weekends and bank holidays

thecatherineeddowes.co.uk

Wales takes the crown!

For the first time, a brewery from Wales has taken the Gold award in CAMRA's Champion Bottled and Canned Beer of Britain competition. The winning beer was a wheat beer, Geipel's Hefeweizen (5.2% ABV). The brewery is based in Pant Glas, Gellioedd, Corwen (LL21 0RN) in north Wales. This goes one better than Monty's Brewery from Powys who took the Silver award last year. The judging took place at CAMRA's Norwich Beer Festival.

A London beer took the Silver this year: Fuller's Vintage Ale (8.4% ABV), a previous winner, with another former winner, Durham's Temptation (10.0% ABV), an Imperial Russian Stout, taking Bronze.



Christine Cryne, the Judging Coordinator said, *"This year, the competition was particularly stiff with the feedback from the judges on the final panel saying that every single beer assessed was worthy of its place; the quality was thought to be excellent. The Hefeweizen was described by the judges as 'Everything you would expect of a wheat beer'.*

Eric Geipel, the winning brewer, was taken aback by his success. He said, "We're very honoured and amazed to win such a prestigious award. I never imagined that a non- native style would be a contender. Many thanks to the judges and prosit to all." ('Prosit' is a traditional German toast meaning 'to your health').

Shelly Bentley, CAMRA's Awards Director, added, *"Bottled and canned conditioned beers are often overlooked but, when done well, they really are the crème de la crème. What is nice to see this year is the mix of brewers in the medals. Fuller's, of course, is a large established London brewer, who have a small range of bottled conditioned beers. Durham is a family brewery, dating from 1994, where all of their bottled beers are bottle-conditioned and Geipel, who set up in 2013, concentrate on bottom fermented beers. So when it comes to producing great bottle-conditioned beer, there is no set template!"*

The beers in the final round of judging were:

Brewery	Beer	ABV	Style
Durham	Magus	3.8%	Session Blond
Hop back	Crop Circle	4.2%	Session Golden Ale
Hobsons	DHU Stone	4.3%	Session Stout
Geipel	Hefeweizen	5.2%	Wheat Beer
Conwy	Telford Porter	6.0%	Strong Porter
Fuller's	Vintage Ale	8.4%	Strong Amber Ale
Durham	Temptation	10.0%	Imperial Russian Stout

Christine Cryne





QUALITY HDMI DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

For Commercial and Residential Installations



4x4 HDMI over CAT6 Matrix Switch Kit	8x8 HDMI over CAT6 Matrix Switch Kit	1x4 HDMI over CAT6 Splitter Kit	16x16 HDBaseT Modular Matrix Switch + RX
£395 + vat	£955 + vat	£129 + vat	£4659+vat

Unbeatable Prices | High Quality Systems | Top Rated Service

*** Free next day delivery on orders over £50**

FOURKAY
HD EVERYWHERE

0207 175 5144
sales@fourkay.net
www.FOURKAY.net

Visit Bromley's award-winning pubs and club

There is an argument that Bromley has become the London Borough of Beer for 2026. As reported on page 12, the **Cockpit** in Chislehurst, having been voted Greater London CAMRA Regional Pub of the Year, has got through to the final four in the national competition. The Regional Club of the Year, the Orpington Liberal Club, is also in the Borough of Bromley. These two award-winning venues are only just over three miles apart; about 20 minutes by bus! Also, not far away in Petts Wood, the One Inn The Wood micropub is a previous Regional Pub of the Year and the runner-up for the current (2026) Bromley award. Bromley Branch would like to invite members and other beer and cider drinkers from other parts of London and beyond to visit these three award-winning venues. They are all listed in the 2027 Good Beer Guide. More information about how to get there and travel between the venues can be found on the Bromley CAMRA website at *https://bromley.camra.org.uk/branch-celebration/* or you can use our QR code.

The **Orpington Liberal Club** has won many CAMRA awards, Regional Club of the Year for 2026 just being the latest. So, how have the volunteer team, led by Peter and Phil, achieved this? There are a number of contributing factors. First the dedication and enthusiasm of the whole team is fundamental. Next, how many bars can say that, during the last 12 months, the ever-changing range of beer has encompassed 247 different beers from 64 brewers? At any one time between three and eight cask ales are available; around half of these beers are LocAle.



The Club recently ran a successful Autumn Beer & Cider Festival, with 22 casks, 3 kegs and 14 ciders on offer. Never a club to rest on its laurels, it plans a Winter Ales Month for December, along with a regular calendar of community and charity focused events. The presentation of the 2026 regional award took place on 12 November.

The full address is 7 Station Road, Orpington, BR6 0RZ. A CAMRA or National Union of Liberal Clubs membership card is required for entry.

One Inn The Wood was opened in 2014 by Barry and Sarah Bridge in a former wine bar. It was the first micropub in the Borough of Bromley. Since then, it has gone from strength to strength and has won many awards as well as featuring in eleven editions of the Good Beer Guide. A great selection of beer, cider and wine is available, plus snacks and grazing boards. Dog-friendly, and with outside seating and convenient transport links, it is well worth a visit.



Currently run by Martyn and Elliott, it has become a community hub, also running pop-up bars at local events. Every May they organise a beer festival, which is held in the nearby Memorial Hall gardens. This family-friendly event has a great range of beers and ciders, along with food stalls, music and even a bouncy castle for the kids.

The full address is 209 Petts Wood Road, BR5 1LA.

Bromley Branch

High Days and Holidays, Sad Days and Jolly Days, Beer is Best!



FROM ALL OF US BEHIND THE BAR

Merry Christmas

and a happy New Year



The Clement Attlee, Limehouse

Thank you for making our pubs part of your year.

Martin, Peter, Josh, Jon and all our pub teams

CRAFT BEER CO.

OUR EIGHT LONDON PUBS

CASK Pub & Kitchen, Pimlico
The Bear, Paddington
The Catherine Eddowes, City of London
The Clement Attlee, Limehouse
The Craft Beer Co. Brixton
The Craft Beer Co. Clerkenwell
The Craft Beer Co. Covent Garden
The Craft Beer Co. Hammersmith

thecraftbeerco.com

Although CAMRA loves visiting pubs, our activities extend beyond that and we also want to help people expand their knowledge and beer assessment skills. Below are details of two events coming up over the next few months. They are open to all, although CAMRA members get a discount on all tickets. Both sessions will be led by Christine Cryne, Guild of Beer Writers member, Master Trainer and World Whisky Judge.

Whisky & Beer Tasting

Saturday 30 January (2pm) –
Venue: Pineapple in Kentish Town (NW5 2NX)

What better way to spend a cold January afternoon than with some warming Scotch whiskies, accompanied by some great beer. Whisky and beer are a natural fit; after all, they are both made from malt, water and yeast. This tasting will feature four full flavoured Scottish single malt whiskies along with four tasty beers. It will start with an accessible Speyside whisky before moving on to the Highlands and Islands. The session will last about 2½ hours. And a ticket makes a great Christmas present for the 'hard to buy for' whisky and beer lover.

To book, go to *https://tckty.camra.org.uk/e/611/whisky-beer-tutored-tasting*. Tickets are very limited.

Taste Training for Tasting Panels

Saturday 6 February (11am) –
Venue: Parcel Yard, King's Cross station (N1C 4AP)

Fancy becoming an expert beer taster? If so, this course is for you. No previous experience is necessary, just a love of beer. The purpose of this accredited training session is to give you (or improve your) skills and confidence to assess beer objectively, learn about different beer styles and how to fill in CAMRA's tasting card. It also covers some of the more usual 'off' flavours that you can find in beer. After the training, you can then:

- join a CAMRA Tasting Panel;
- contribute to writing the beer descriptions in CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide*;
- contribute to the decision as to which beers go forward to CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain competition.

The course lasts 5½ hours. The event starts at 11am and will finish by 5.30pm. It is subsidised by CAMRA. The charge (£19) is to cover the cost of the beer, flavour phials, tasting biscuits etc.

To book (and for more information) go to *https://tckty.camra.org.uk/e/609/taste-training-for-tasting-panels*.

Christine Cryne



The Sultan Christmas Beer Festival

18th - 19th December
12:00 until 23:30

8 Real Ales - 6 Ciders

Plus our regular range of Hop Back Beers &
Mr. Barrick's fine Pork Pies & Scotch Eggs



The Sultan

78 Norman Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 1BT

For more information call us on 020 8544 9434
or find us on Facebook @sultanSW19

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.

* The case of the **Bell** in Walton-on-the-Hill (KT20 7UJ) has taken a curious turn. Following an application from CAMRA, the pub's interior fixtures have been statutorily listed at Grade II. The owners, the Brakspear Pub Company, are persisting with the planned conversion to a single dwelling but their designers have been obliged to submit a revised application for the work. This now retains the two-bar layout of the ground floor as it was in 1955 (when Charrington's remodelled the pub) and the bar counters and the partition between the bars will be preserved. While the result is welcome, Paul Ainsworth, CAMRA's National Planning Policy Adviser, is concerned that, once the site is in private hands, continued compliance will be difficult to maintain. In late October, the works had not yet started and the pub was still open. It may not be too late for a visit but it would be best to check before travelling.

* Promising developments at the **China Hall** in Rotherhithe (SE16 2XL). As mentioned in the previous edition, the Borough of Southwark prosecuted the owners for non-compliance, with Hamna Wakaf Ltd appearing in Croydon Magistrates Court in early September; they pleaded guilty. The exact terms of the decision are not currently known but, passing by recently, a colleague noted that the partitions that had divided the ground floor into accommodation had been removed and a bar counter installed. Further developments will be reported but there is a way to go yet.

* A 'good news and bad news' story here. The **Crooked Billet** in Stoke Row (RG9 5PU), to the west of Henley on Thames, dates from 1642 and is Grade II listed. It rates two stars on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. Sadly, the pub, a Brakspear Pub Company house with an award-winning restaurant, suffered extensive damage in a fire in July. The repairs will take at least a year. In the meantime, however, operator Paul Clerehugh has decamped to the Greyhound in nearby Peppard Common (RG9 5HT). Owned by the Wellington Pub Company, the Greyhound closed in December 2024 and so has been given a new lease of life. The current arrangement is only temporary but let us hope that the Greyhound will prosper hereafter. Although the Billet was principally a restaurant, space would, when possible, always be found for those who just wanted a beer.

* Having operated the **Duchess** in Goldhawk Road, Hammersmith (W6 0XF) for some time, the True Pub Company has now acquired the freehold. The pub is currently closed for a refurbishment that will see the upper floors converted into a boutique guesthouse with the potential for up to 20 rooms. It should reopen before the end of the year when it will be renamed the Queen. The company currently operates 15 pubs across London and the south east.

* The **Horseshoe** in Clerkenwell (EC1R 0AG), which I remember as a fairly basic but welcoming darts pub, has been acquired by a consortium that includes actor Daniel Craig, a former James Bond, whose parents were publicans. The pub, which dates from 1748, closed on 8 October and is to be refurbished; it is estimated that this will take about a year. An upstairs dining room is to be added but Mr Craig gave an assurance that they are *'going to keep it as a boozer'*.

* Remarkable Pubs has added to its estate with the acquisition of the Grade II-listed **Pineapple** in Kentish Town (NW5 2NX). It becomes the company's 18th site. The management will stay the same, as will the range of five cask beers and the Thai kitchen. The company's commercial director said, *"We intend to do minimal things to this site and slowly over time we will change the keg line up, but if it ain't broke, why fix it. Cask to still be the star of the show!"* The pub was CAMRA North London branch's Pub of the Year in 2012 and 2024.

* Tottenham's Bohem Brewery, producers of authentic Czech beers, have opened their fifth venue: the **Rag Fair Inn**, near Tower Bridge (E1 8LG), formerly a Simmons cocktail bar. As well as their own beers (served, as always, through Lukr side-pull taps and cooled via the traditional chladicí vana water bath), a larger range of rotating craft beers than usual will be available. There will also be a wider selection of other drinks, plus tap takeovers.

* For those interested in German beers, the **Royal Oak** in Marylebone (W1H 1QN), operated by Urban Inns Ltd, is now serving award-winning Schönramer Hell on draught. They believe that they are the only pub in the UK doing so. The beer is imported from Private Landbrauerei Schönram, a family brewery in the foothills of the Bavarian Alps, founded in 1780. The pub itself is of interest; it dates from the early to mid-nineteenth century with 1880 alterations and is Grade II listed.

* A second pub in High Barnet, the **Sebright Arms** (EN5 4ET) has become community-led. Originally a McMullen's house, it was sold to Punch Pubs in February of this year. Two regular customers have now taken over the tenancy. It was closed for a few days for redecoration but has now reopened. The new tenants are however planning a major refurbishment to enhance the pub's family-friendly atmosphere. In the run-up to their taking over, other members of the community took steps to renew the pub's Asset of Community Value listing. Happily, a good working relationship has been established with the nearby Black Horse, the area's other community-led pub.

Felix | Rescuing food for fuller lives

Volunteer Drivers Needed



FIGHT FOOD WASTE AND HUNGER IN THE UK

Enjoy driving? Make a difference in your local community.

Join Felix and help rescue good food that would otherwise go to waste. As a volunteer driver, you'll collect surplus food and deliver it to local schools and community organisations.

Flexible volunteering. Real impact. Every shift matters.

Scan the QR Code to find out more

volunteer@felix.org

www.felix.org

The Long Arm reaches out

The Long Arm brewery is something of a hidden gem. Although within walking distance of both Old Street and Liverpool Street, as situated down a side road it isn't that well known.

The idea came about in 2017 when the Montcalm Royal London House Hotel (part of the Marriott Group) decided that they could make better use of their loading bay in Worship Street. They invited the ETM company, owned by brothers Ed and Tom Martin (hence the initials), to set up a brewery and tap room. This wasn't the brothers' original business, however. They started with the microbrewery at the Ealing Park Tavern, formerly the 18th century Lewis Furnell Brewhouse, but left that operation once Long Arm was up and running.

In addition to the brewery and tap room, ETM operate the hotel's two restaurants. There are some benefits in the relationship with the Montcalm Royal. The tap room's toilets are in the corridor to the hotel and, with the hotel being five star, they have to be the poshest ladies ever seen in a tap room!



Jason

The head brewer is Jason Leeman, an American with a wealth of experience in brewing although his background is in kinesthetics and his first jobs were in hospitals. This was until he discovered that it was possible to have a job in beer. In Colorado, he was apprenticed as a brewer for two years before being promoted to head brewer at Rock Bottom until, after eight years, he moved to Blue Spruce Brewing. By then, he was married with children and they thought that the family needed to see more of the world. His wife got a transfer to London with her job and they moved to the UK.



Inside the bar

Jason began working as a recipe developer for Pinter, the home brewing company, before joining Long Arm Brewery as head brewer in 2022. He is assisted three days a week by Ben Oates. The brewing space is compact, with six fermentation tanks and six bright tanks plus a separate area for storing ingredients and a fridge for the yeast. *"The brewery isn't really adaptable and it's the smallest I have ever worked on," said Jason, who added, "We brew about twice a week and everything we brew is sold in the tap room, so we don't have any external distribution. The one beer we don't brew ourselves is Arm in Arm, our Helles Lager (4.2% ABV), brewed for us by Great Beyond (Hoxton) as we don't have the space for lagering."*



The spectacular mural!

Besides the Helles, Long Arm have four core beers: Lucky Penny (a pale ale and their flagship beer), Birdie Flipper (nitro Irish red), Shadow Wolf (dry nitro Irish stout) and IPA OK. They also have a range of specials; sometimes including a collaboration brew. *"I love doing collabs; I always learn something new,"* said Jason. Sours however are not on his agenda; Jason considers their brew length to be too big for the level of interest.

It isn't just his recipes that show creativity. Jason has a mixology side to him. For example, if you take the IPA and then carefully pour the stout on top, it creates an impressive looking two-tone beer that changes as you drink it. The end has a flavour of a Black IPA as the two beers blend.

The beers are mostly sold from tanks but, in order to keep the full range available for the customers, Jason may transfer the last of a beer into keg to free up the space for the next brew. The site has a variable footfall. Jason expanded, *"Summer time is slow with people on holiday and bad weather is good for us. We also do well with local companies and celebration parties. Our beer prices are very reasonable. Because we brew on site, we can afford to keep our beers at £5 a pint. The only place cheaper is Wetherspoons."*

The key step going forward is to improve visibility and the £5 pint certainly makes Long Arm a place worth seeking out. The full address is 20-26 Worship Street, EC2A 2DX. More information is available at *info@longarmpub.co.uk.*

Christine Cryne

HAND & MARIGOLD

A PROUDLY INDEPENDENT FREE HOUSE

4 Real Ales, 12 Keg Lines + Ciders

CAMRA Discount for Members

244 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3UH

15 Minute Walk - London Bridge or Borough Stations
C10, 1, 188, or 42 Bus Routes

Monday 4-11
Tuesday-Thursday 1-11
Friday-Saturday 12-11
Sunday 1-10



Podge's BELGIAN BEER TOURS

Christmas in Ostend *23–27 December 2026*

The Black Beer Tour *10–14 March 2027*

Beer & Monasteries Tour *12–16 May 2027*

Beer by the Seaside *16–20 June 2027*

Beer on the Sambre-Meuse *8–12 September 2027*

www.podgebeer.co.uk

Driving people to drink since 1994

Ring **07722 724 558** *for details*

Carlsberg Britvic to cease brewing cask beer

At the beginning of October, Carlsberg Britvic (CB) announced that they were closing what was originally Marston, Thompson & Evershed's Albion Brewery in Shobnall Road, Burton on Trent (DE14 2BB). The site, which dates from 1834, will close next summer with the possible loss of up to 300 jobs. This is the last remaining brewery in CB's portfolio that has the capacity to brew cask beer. It currently brews the few Marston's brands that remain, plus an assortment of beers acquired over the years from breweries that CB and its predecessors have taken over. These include Young's.

CB say that the *'stark reality is that UK cask ale volumes have more than halved in less than a decade'* and that they prefer to concentrate on their more popular products. Their chief executive did however have the decency to add, *"Marston's Brewery, its history and legacy in Burton upon Trent are iconic, and our teams there are true experts in ale. This proposal, therefore, is by no means a reflection on any of our people, and every effort will be made to help them through this period of uncertainty."*

Despite their saying that cask beer sales are falling, CB are still expected to contract out the brewing of at least some of the cask brands to independent breweries, which could be a boost for those involved. We will report on what arrangements CB make, although these contracts are often subject to non-disclosure agreements.

One particular brand that gives cause for concern is Draught Bass. The brand is owned by another global brewer, AB InBev, who have no facilities to brew it themselves and so, until now, have contracted its brewing to CB. Aficionados, of whom there are many, rate the current product as being as good as it has been for some time and AB InBev have recently started to put more effort into promoting the beer. Presumably it will be for AB InBev themselves to find a replacement brewer.

Some history, just for clarification. Marston's pubs are operated by a separate company that no longer has any connection with Carlsberg Britvic, apart from what they call a 'long-term brand distribution agreement' for their beers. The original Marston's brewery company was taken over by Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries in 1999 and W&D adopted the name Marston's for trading purposes a few years later. In 2020 Marston's came to a deal with what was then Carlsberg UK to merge their brewing interests into the Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company (CMBC). Marston's had a 40% stake in CMBC but sold out to Carlsberg in September 2024 for £206 million, giving CMBC full control of the breweries. This left Marston's to concentrate on their estate of around 1,350 pubs, bars and hotels across England and Wales. They recently predicted that, for the year ended 26 September, their underlying profit before tax will be 'above the top end of market expectations'.

Marston's have also announced that they intend converting around 100 pubs to their 'Grandstand' format which, they say, will bring 'the unrivalled atmosphere of a stadium match or event' to the pub with three-metre-long TV screens, flexible tiered seating and 'match-day ready' food and drink menus, whatever that means. One of the first to be converted is the Deer's Rest in Noak Hill near Romford (RM3 7LL). They have also put the freeholds of a dozen pubs in the midlands up for sale.

A long way to go...

Readers will recall that, earlier this year, Molson Coors (MC) announced that they were to close Sharp's Brewery in Rock, Cornwall. MC have now confirmed that the closure will take place by the end of this year, with the potential loss of around 40 jobs. MC say that the site is *'no longer financially sustainable'* despite having invested over £20 million there since they acquired it in 2011. MC are *'exploring a potential sale of the premises'* although this may not necessarily be as a brewery.

If there was one practical consideration that supported this decision it was access, given that transport links to north Cornwall are not the easiest. It is therefore somewhat baffling that MC have set up a contract for cask Doom Bar to now be brewed at Camerons Brewery in Hartlepool, County Durham, well over 300 miles in the other direction. Camerons, whose best known beer is Strongarm, are experienced contract brewers and I hope that the business is good for them. They may even produce a better beer. Doom Bar has however recently lost its ranking as the country's top selling cask beer to Taylor's Landlord.

As many readers will know, the Doom Bar is a geographical feature; a sandbar in the estuary of the River Camel, near Padstow. MC's marketing people have always promoted the brand's Cornish connection but CAMRA's Cornwall branch has made it clear that this should no longer happen. Happily, Private Eye (edition 1686) also picked up on the story, giving it useful publicity.

East London Brewing Co

In April, ELB, now in their 15th year, moved into the former Wild Card Brewery site on the Walthamstow Beer Mile. The move has enabled ELB to more than double their production. A pub, called the Black Horse Tap, has now been added to the site (E17 5RB) and is due to open on 27 November. The existing brewery tap is being retained.

Rebellion plan for the future

A problem that eventually faces many independent breweries is their continuation once their founders retire or are otherwise no longer around. The Rebellion Beer Company, based in Marlow, Buckinghamshire, has decided to transfer ownership of the company to an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT). The founders will continue to be involved until a new management team, comprised of existing long-term employees, is ready to take the reins. The arrangement will safeguard around 75 local jobs, as well as preserving the brewery's community spirit and ethos.

Sheps to build new brewery

In recent years a number of breweries such as Thwaites, Hydes, Wadworth, Wells, Everards and Greene King have built new breweries on brownfield sites out of town, enabling them to modernise their brewing process and free up a potentially valuable city centre site. Shepherd Neame have announced that they are doing something similar, although with one difference: they are building their new brewery on their existing site in Faversham. It will replace the existing bottling hall and, crucially, it allows Sheps to continue using their historic artesian well. 'Small packaging' will be contracted out. The two-year project is expected to cost around £15 million and will, the company says, *"secure the next generation of brewing in the town"* and will, *"provide us with the flexibility to continue to innovate and develop our portfolio in a rapidly evolving beer market"*. In the meantime, brewing will continue as usual.



THE VICTORIA

PADDINGTON

A LITTLE PIECE OF LONDON'S PUB HERITAGE

Tucked away in Paddington, The Victoria is a traditional London pub with a character all of its own. Steeped in history and full of Victorian charm, it's the perfect place to enjoy a well-earned pint, a good meal and some proper pub hospitality.

Behind the bar you'll find a great selection of Fuller's cask ales, alongside craft beers, seasonal favourites, wines and spirits. Pair your drink with a menu of freshly prepared pub classics, or make a Sunday of it with one of our much-loved Sunday roasts.

With its distinctive period interiors, welcoming atmosphere and beautiful upstairs spaces for private gatherings, The Victoria is a pub worth discovering, whether you're a local, a regular visitor to Paddington or simply looking for a proper London pub.

FULLER'S

10A Strathearn Place, Paddington,
London, W2 2NH

Discover more at:
victoriapaddington.co.uk

CAMRA

10% OFF FOR MEMBERS

Sheps are following the pattern set by Greene King with the Old Speckled Hen brand (before they sold it) and Adnams with Ghost Ship in turning Bishop's Finger into its own brand. The first new beer is Bishops Finger IPA Reserve (5.5% ABV), described as a 'golden, vibrant IPA'. 'Bishop's Finger' is the name given to a type of signpost on the Pilgrims' Way, which pointed travellers towards the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury Cathedral.

New beer and pub for Allsopp's

Allsopp's are adding an IPA (4.4% ABV) to their beer range. The recipe was found in the only known surviving Allsopp's brewing ledger, dating from 1822. The dark copper beer is brewed with English Golden Promise malted barley and Challenger hops. As with Allsopp's other beers (Pale Ale, Best Bitter, Stout, Lager, Double Diamond and Arctic Ale) it is being brewed for them by the Kirkstall brewery in Leeds. It originally came about when Samuel Allsopp was commissioned by the East India Company to produce a beer that was strong enough in hops and alcohol to survive the sea journey to India. It is said that the beer was first brewed in a teapot!

Associated company Allsopp Taverns has acquired the grade-II listed Warrington Hotel in Maida Vale (W9 1EH). The pub will undergo a renovation that will see the addition of a separate restaurant on the first floor, along with ten hotel rooms. Their director, Charlie McVeigh, told the *Propel* newsletter, *"Distinctive pubs act as showcases for the brewery and its heritage. We don't want to do hundreds of pubs. We'd like to do a few pubs that are beautiful and we're proud of, and make some money."* He added that the success of the Blue Stoops had given the group confidence to pursue larger projects.

Greene King new concepts

GK have a new concept called 'Stay to Play', featuring both traditional and digital pub games. They have spotted a demand for 'competitive socialising', which they believe will both attract and retain customers. Pool remains the biggest attraction, with the 600 tables across GK's managed estate bringing in more than £2 million per annum, not including what the players spend on drink and food. Darts and shuffleboard come a long way behind but are growing. GK have 560 dartboards, 50 of them digital and more 'digital darts lanes' are being installed. Astonishingly, GK say that, in 2025, more than 13.7 million darts were thrown at boards in their pubs. If my experience is anything to go by, mostly at double one. There are 37 pubs with shuffleboards and GK recently installed its first electronic version, with more to follow.

In another innovation, GK have appointed their first female chief executive. Clair Preston-Beer, currently their chief digital and commercial officer, will take over next March in a planned succession.



A Very CAMRA Christmas

WEDNESDAY 9TH DECEMBER – ALL DAY

To celebrate and support a group close to our hearts, we're hosting a Christmas get-together for all CAMRA members!

ENJOY £3.50 ALES ALL DAY LONG

It's our way of saying thank you to those who champion great beer and the pubs that serve it.

THE SUSSEX ARMS
15 Staines Road,
Twickenham, TW2 5BG

THE GEORGE
32 King Street,
Twickenham, TW1 3SN

THE ABERCORN ARMS
76-78 Church Rd,
Teddington, TW11 8EY

THE CRICKETERS
1 Stamford Green Rd,
Epsom KT18 7SR

THE RISING SUN
14 Heathcote Road, Epsom,
KT18 5DX

THE EXPRESS TAVERN
56 Kew Bridge Road,
Brentford, TW8 0EW

THE MAGDALA
2A S Hill Park, London,
NW3 2SB

THE PRINCE OF WALES
73 Dalling Rd, Hammersmith,
London, W6 0JD

Don't forget to bring your CAMRA membership card!

The budget

The Budget is old news now, so I will keep this brief. Chancellor John Healey presented his first budget on 28 October. CAMRA's aspirations were for measures to support pubs, social clubs, independent brewers, cidermakers, and, of course, consumers. These covered VAT, beer and cider duty, business rates and Employer National Insurance contributions. CAMRA made their usual submission to the Treasury detailing our views and asked members to lobby their MPs to support our arguments.

So, what did we get? Well, not a lot… Predictably, no change was made to VAT. An increase in the threshold for small business rates relief was welcome but, given that rateable values (RV) in London are so high, its effect is limited. RVs for London pubs were reassessed this year and increased by 23.7% against the 2023 value with 82% of pubs seeing an increase. The basis on which RVs for pubs are calculated really does need to change. The increase in Small Producer Relief on alcohol duty for small brewers and cider makers is also welcome but was balanced out by a 2p increase. This will no doubt mean an extra 5p or more across the bar when the increase in the national minimum wage takes effect. There was no change to Employer's National Insurance. There was however an interesting development with guest beers which is covered in the Pubs Code section below.

Pub is the Hub and hospitality grants

The Government has allocated £10 million for grants to the hospitality industry, spread over a three-year period. This funding will go towards projects such as opening new independent venues, bringing empty buildings back into use or training and skills. £3 million of this fund has been allocated to the Pub is the Hub organisation and will go towards expanding their services to publicans, rural pubs and community services, including helping pubs to diversify.

Pubs Code review

The Government's latest review of the Pubs Code for England and Wales concluded that the existing arrangements should stay in place. The government will however *'develop proposals with stakeholders'* to improve tenants' rights as regards the 'market rent only' option and to improve tenants' opportunities to go free-of-tie.

One significant development however was announced in the budget. The Pubs Code will be amended to allow tenants in England and Wales to serve a guest beer of their choice. This provision already exists in Scotland. No details as to how this scheme will operate - or when - were included, however, and the large pubcos are hardly likely to welcome it with open arms. Here, the devil will most certainly be in the detail. The government has yet to publish the results of their Access to Market Review, which has now been running for two years. That may provide further information in due course.

An alternative to this scheme would be to simply abolish the tie altogether, at least as far as it is used by non-brewing pubcos. The Pubs Code and its adjudicator, with due respect to the current post-holder, Fiona Dickie, would not then be needed. I do not underestimate the complexities of effectively changing all pub tenancies to 'market rent' arrangements and allowing tenants to arrange their own supply deals but it must, in due course, be better for the tenants and the brewing industry, if not necessarily for the pubcos.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

On 27 October, the day before the Budget, MPs debated *'the potential merits of recognising the production and serving of cask ale as intangible cultural heritage'*. The aim is to have cask beer recognised under UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage scheme, thus giving the UK's brewing heritage the same protection as Belgian beer and the French baguette. MPs from five political parties gave their support to the motion which was proposed by Derby South MP Baggy Shanker. Mr Shanker's concern was raised by CAMRA Derby branch's campaigning against keg 'fresh ale' being misleadingly sold through handpumps. Before it goes to UNESCO however, cask beer needs to be listed under the UK government's Living Heritage scheme. Happily, a minister confirmed that this had been taken on board and the bid is currently being assessed by an independent panel. The debate also gave MPs the opportunity to raise various issues, such as the closure of Banks's, Marston's and Sharp's breweries.

Supporting clubs

Clubs are no less in need of help in these difficult times than pubs. Social, trade and sports clubs are an important part of Britain's social and cultural heritage and, just like pubs, they host live entertainment, family celebrations, community events and social activities, often providing an affordable and welcoming space for people who might otherwise experience isolation. To help them, a new campaign, 21st Century Social Clubs, has been set up and it has secured funding of £2.7 million over five years from the National Lottery for the purpose. The campaign wants to present clubs as community assets with an important role to play in the future. Many CAMRA branches have a good relationship with their clubs and many run a Club of the Year competition alongside their Pub of the Year one. Clubs often rely on volunteers so that is another way that help could be offered. Clubs are worth getting to know.

Going for a song

Some while ago I was contacted by Richard from the band Zoo Shift. They are keen pub-goers and have recorded a song called *'Going to the Pub'*. I think readers might enjoy it, as indeed I did. You can find it on YouTube: *https://youtu.be/KM5_FEU4CNo?si=7WFWbWiBXfbBFgWW* or just Google *'Going to the Pub'*. Apart from Slim Dusty's *'A Pub with No Beer'*, the only other pub-related song that I can recall is Sham 69's *'Hurry Up, Harry'* from 1978. Personally, I prefer Zoo Shift's offering.



The William Walker

WINCHESTER

A PROPER PUB WITH A STORY TO TELL

Right in the heart of historic Winchester, just moments from the magnificent cathedral, The William Walker is a pub with a fascinating story behind its name and plenty to enjoy inside.

Named after the deep-sea diver who helped save Winchester Cathedral by working beneath its foundations, this characterful Fuller's pub brings together history, a warm welcome and a great range of drinks. Expect well-kept cask ales, craft beers, wines and cocktails, alongside a menu of freshly prepared seasonal dishes and traditional pub favourites.

Whether you're stopping by after exploring the city, settling in for a leisurely lunch or catching up with friends over a pint, you'll find a warm welcome waiting.

FULLER'S

34 The Square, Winchester,
Hampshire, SO23 9EX

DISCOVER MORE AT:
williamwalkerwinchester.co.uk

CAMRA
10% OFF FOR MEMBERS

Ardent Pub Group expands

The Ardent Pub Group has acquired a fourth site in London, due to open in early 2027. This is the former BrewDog Seven Dials pub in Shaftesbury Avenue (WC2H 8HJ). It will be renamed the Magpie. The pub has some history, first being licensed in 1791 and then rebuilt 1886. Backed by US-based private investment and positive trading results, the company are looking to invest in further pubs in London over the next three to five years. The company's existing three pubs are the Cadogan Arms in Chelsea (SW3 5UG), the George in Fitzrovia (W1W 7LQ) and the Hound in Chiswick (W4 1PD). The latter is an impressive conversion of a former police station. All serve cask beer.

Amber Taverns

Amber Taverns are a wet-led, community pub operator who operate nearly 200 pubs, mainly in small towns around the UK. So far, the Blackpool based company has not however ventured into London but this is about to change. They have acquired the Barrel & Horn in Bromley High Street (BR1 1PW) from Fullers and are reopening it as the Saving Grace. They have substantially refurbished the site but it should be open by the time that you read this.

Then there were four

Pete Holt, who operates the award-winning Cock Tavern (E8 1EJ), Southampton Arms (NW5 1LE) and Pocket (N1 2AS), has added a fourth pub to his portfolio. This is the Old China Hand in Tysoe Street, Clerkenwell (EC1R 4RQ). Dating from 1856, the pub is Grade II listed. Mr Holt, who also owns the Howling Hops Brewery in Hackney Wick, has acquired the freehold from the previous owners who have retired after 20 years. Originally the Three Crowns, older readers will fondly remember the pub as O'Hanlons before the brewery moved west.

Punch extend Unity Social brand

Punch Pubs are converting a number of their sites to their community pub brand, Unity Social. They are aiming for 200 or more pubs in this division by the end of 2027. The project is the brainchild of their group strategy and commercial director who previously worked for Stonegate and set up their Craft Union chain. He told the *Propel* newsletter, *"We're not building a pub division or a pub company, we're trying to build a movement, where friendships are formed, connections flourish and everyone belongs."* The aim is to revitalise underperforming local pubs by concentrating on *'fair pricing, sport, entertainment and community engagement'*.

Stonegate sales

Just as we went to print with the last edition, it was confirmed that Heineken-owned Star Pubs & Bars were front runners to buy some 300 pubs from Stonegate. They were due to exchange contracts in mid-October but no confirmation of this has been reported in the trade press. This leaves around 600 pubs from Stonegate's so-called Platinum portfolio on the market. Ironically, for the 28 weeks ended 12 April, Stonegate reported the best trading in its history. The company is also continuing to convert managed houses to leased or tenanted operation.

In the previous edition we reported that the Earl Spencer (SW18 5JL) had been sold to Fullers. It now appears that this pub was removed from the sale, most probably because a Craft Union arrangement had only recently been agreed.

New life for Whitbread sites

The Common Table Group (CTG) now own 57 of the former Whitbread sites that were put up for sale. A further 53 sites have gone to the Queensway Hospitality Group. The remainder will be incorporated in their adjacent Premier Inn hotels to expand room numbers. It is reported that around 4,000 jobs have been lost.

CTG who describe themselves as a *'roadside restaurant, bar, coffee stop and general store rolled into one'*, say that they do not intend to set up any sort of national chain but will aim to serve their local communities, with the slogan *'First Coffee to Last Call'*. This will include all-day food as well as drink with a *'welcoming local identity'*. They have also taken on some former Whitbread executives who know the sites and how they operated. Their aim is to get all of the sites fully trading again as soon as possible. They estimate that the project will generate around 700 new jobs, in addition to the existing Whitbread staff who transfer over.

Queensway's plans are to convert their 53 sites into 'affordable pubs'. It is not known at this stage quite what this entails.

Wetherspoon's news

JDW's latest London venture, the Piccadilly Hall on Shaftesbury Avenue (W1D 7EP), was due to open on 17 November. It replaces the Coyote Ugly Saloon. The overall site is owned by Criterion Capital and is part of their wider plan to redevelop the Trocadero building. The original Piccadilly Hall was built in the 17th century by a tailor called Robert Baker. It was both his home and factory, where he manufactured decorative collars known as piccadils, hence the name of the area. Above the pub is the Zedwell Piccadilly Circus hotel and the pub will provide food and drink for hotel guests. As ever, the pub has its own specially made carpet, 3,600 square feet of it!

I don't know if this was done using AI but someone has gone through two million reviews on Google to find out which are the best and worst JDW pubs in the UK. London took three out of the ten slots in the best rated list. Top of the list, the best JDW in the UK, was the Walham Green in Fulham (SW6 1BY). In second place was the Sir Alexander Fleming in Paddington (W2 1RB) while the Moon Under Water in Hounslow (TW3 3LF) came in 8th.

It was not all good news. There were two London pubs included in the 'worst ten' list but I will spare their blushes and not name them. That said, their scores of 3.12 and 3.61 out of 5 were not that bad! This is, of course, all highly subjective and should not be taken too seriously.

Fuller's news

Fuller's recently produced a collaboration brew with the Jiddler's Tipple brewery in Wood Green. This was a 4.1% ABV West Coast IPA called London Tipple. It was brewed with Cascade, Centennial and Amarillo hops and the tasting notes said that it had *'zesty grapefruit, pine and resinous notes, balanced by caramel malt flavours and a clean, refreshing bitterness'*. It was released on 15 October to 70 Fuller's pubs and was also available through the free trade. It is both vegan and gluten free. With luck, there is still some left.

The 2026 iteration of Vintage Ale is now available and has been seen on draught in some pubs. This year's version has an ABV of 8.4% and is brewed with pale malt (95%), Crystal Malt (3.5%) and Cara Gold (1.5%) plus English Jester and American Dolcita hops.

This year's winner of the Griffin Award, the company's pub of the year, is the Red Lion in Barnes (SW13 9RU). It was the winner of the 'Best Premium Neighbourhood Site' category. The other category winner in London was the Counting House in Cornhill (EC3V 3PD) for 'Best London City Site'.

STAR & GARTER
BROMLEY

The Star & Garter February 2027 Beer Fest

4th-7th February
12pm-10pm

18 Casks, 14 Kegs, and a selection of Ciders and Meads to try!

Charity tombola, beer of the festival vote and 10% off takeaways!

Free entry!
£5 glass purchase required or bring your Star & Garter glass!

Visit starandgarterbromley.com for more details.

Save the dates:
Summer Beer Fest: 17th-20th June
Autumn Beer Fest: 4th-7th November

227 High St. Bromley BR1 1NZ

@starandgarterbromley

Young's news

As from 9 October, Young's A ordinary shares are being traded on the FTSE 250 index. Young's chief executive, Simon Dodd, said, *"Joining the FTSE 250 is a significant milestone for Young's and the latest step in a journey that has transformed the scale and quality of our business."* The company reported that, for the 26 weeks to 28 September, total revenue increased by 10.4%, with an increase of 6.4% in like-for-like sales, having benefited from a *'standout summer of sunshine and sport'*. Mr Dodd added that the company was looking to expand the Cubitt House chain that Young's acquired in April, with some existing pubs being rebranded.

Slim pickings

Multinational brewers Heineken have expressed concern over the effect of the use of weight-loss drugs on the pub trade. According to Reuters, the company has warned its trade customers that GLP-1 category drugs such as Mounjaro and Wegovy could reduce sales because, although users were not abandoning alcohol altogether, the drugs make people feel full from 'fewer serves'. Their answer is for pubs to promote half-pints and low and no alcohol drinks.

On the other hand, Diageo believe any impact from GLP-1 drugs should be manageable while Carlsberg told Reuters that existing data did not yet support the view that the drugs were affecting the market.

To put this in context, the adult population of the UK (age 16 and over) is approximately 55.8 million while it is estimated that 1.6 million people were using the drugs in 2025 and this might increase to 2 million. Most users are in the 45 to 55 age group.

New stout from Taylor's

Timothy Taylor's have added a stout to their beer range. It is simply called 'Stout' and has rich coffee and chocolate notes with a gentle bitterness and a smooth finish. At 4.2% ABV, dare one suggest that it is aimed at a particular market? That said, it will, apparently, be available only in cask form. It has been successfully launched in Tim's pubs in their home town of Keighley and nearby Skipton and will be extended to their tied houses and eventually the free trade. It will, with all due respect, make a change from Landlord.

CAMRA Events

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



The third Shirk, Rust and Pray summer bus party took place one Saturday in mid-July and was once again a great success. The event links the Shirker's Rest (CAMRA's Lewisham Area Pub of the Year 2026), the Rusty Bucket (Eltham), and the Green Goddess (CAMRA's Greenwich District Pub of the Year 2026 and SIBA's Best Independent Beer Bar in London 2026) by vintage bus. The bus shuttled all day between the three venues with full loads on each trip; it was a busy day helping support independent pubs.

The day had a difficult start for Stephen O'Connor, co-owner of the Green Goddess (and occasional bus driver), when the open top bus broke down! Fortunately, he managed with a Routemaster instead and the party was on! There was a bonus starting point at the second Rusty Bucket in Bexley for those ready for a midday start. With cask and keg ales (and ciders) at all venues, including a Shirk, Rust and Pray West Coast IPA, specially brewed by Orbit Brewery for the occasion, what's not to like? The photo below shows father and son: Richard and Stephen O'Connor. Some readers will know Richard as the secretary of the GLC Real Ale Society.



Some intrepid explorers from CAMRA's South East London branch took the opportunity to up our step count to reach a new micropub, the Last Drop Inn, in Eltham. Four beers were available on cask here, including the refreshing Kent Session Pale and delightful Bexley Coconut Porter. Yum! And when it was all over, a more conventional red bus was on hand to take us for a half or two to finish at the River Ale House, Greenwich, (CAMRA's Greenwich District Pub of the Year 2024) which serves a great selection of beers and ciders. A super Saturday!

The Green Goddess team, not content with a successful summer bus tour, then had a cask ale festival in September. Co-owner Maryann O'Connor said, *"We were particularly excited about getting to pour the first fresh hop beer of the season, a collaboration between the Women in Beer group and Elusive, a golden ale called Progress. We also had a version of Oregon Trail from Elusive hopped with Sorachi Ace, one of our favourite hops. That hop might just be top of our list once we get brewing."*



Maryann

And finally, let's celebrate Maryann's recent award from Women in Beer for Hospitality Leader of the Year. Congratulations, Maryann; it's been a great year for the Green Goddess team so far. Keep an eye out for their socials and their mega cheese tastings. These pair cheeses with beer or cider - which goes best? There might be some special guests from the cheese, beer and cider worlds. Sounds like something to look forward to.

Cheers (and cheese!) to the beers (and ciders)!

Maria Freeman

All change

On 31 October, significant changes were made to the planning regulations for England. From now on, the majority of planning applications will be decided by planning officers rather than going to an authority's planning committee. The arrangement under which an application that received eight or more objections would go to committee has been abolished. Similarly, committees will no longer have the right to 'call in' applications. The government's aim is to provide greater clarity and consistency as to how planning decisions are made but critics take the view that reducing the role of elected members makes the system less democratic and less transparent.

The only circumstances in which an application can be referred to committee for decision are as follows:

1. the Chief Planning Officer and the Chair of the Planning Committee both agree referral is appropriate, and either
2. the application raises an economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area, or
3. the application raises a significant planning matter having regard to the local development plan and any other material considerations.

'Significant' here will vary from area to area but the government's guidance notes say that this could include the following:

- an application for outline planning permission for a large multi-phase residential development;
- an application for change of use of a community shop in a rural area;
- an application relating to a notable listed building in a town centre.

The notes also recommend that applications are not referred to committee so long as they comply with an authority's local plans and/or national planning policy.

Pubs remain classified as 'sui generis' and a full planning application will still be required for their demolition or change of use. Pub closures are frequently an emotional issue for a community, especially rural ones. The ability to appeal to local politicians is often crucial in saving a pub. It is not unknown, quite reasonably, for developers to consult planning departments prior to the submission of an application in order to establish what is or is not locally acceptable. It is unlikely that planning officers would then reject an application into which they have already had some input. It is interesting that the government's guidance specifies community shops in rural areas. Perhaps this should be amended to include all pubs, wherever they are.

New powers for the Mayor

Another recent change has extended the powers of the Mayor of London in regard to the licensing of venues. The Mayor has been given the power to introduce a strategic licensing policy for Greater London. This is intended to strengthen the capital's nightlife and hospitality sectors. The final version is currently in preparation and public consultation will take place shortly. Following on from this, he will also be able to call in decisions on licensing applications made by borough councils that are considered important to London and make an overriding decision, if felt necessary. Lord Khan said, *"As mayor, I've always been pro-jobs and pro-business and I'm determined to build on London's position as one of the world's great nightlife destinations. Our hospitality industry generates more than £46 billion for the capital each year, while our nightlife economy contributes more than £21 billion, supporting jobs and growth in every corner of London. But for too long, businesses, venues and community groups have told me that navigating the licensing system can be expensive and complex. These new powers give City Hall a stronger voice, allowing us to champion the venues that bring our high streets to life and help more businesses thrive."* The move received support from the chair of UKHospitality, Kate Nicholls, who called it, *"a significant moment for London's world-class hospitality sector"* adding that the new arrangements would support an industry employing around half a million people.

Heritage Public Houses bill

This private member's bill came out of the case of the Crooked House in Himley. It was instigated by the then MP for Dudley South, Marco Longhi, and was intended to offer greater legal protections for heritage pubs. In short, it required local authorities to *'maintain a register of heritage public houses in their area, to place restrictions on the sale of heritage public houses, to make provision relating to the nomination of heritage public houses as assets of community value and to make provision about the listing of heritage public houses; and for connected purposes'*. There are also provisions to ensure that illegally demolished pubs are swiftly rebuilt brick-by-brick. Mr Longhi lost his seat at the 2024 election and so sponsorship of the bill passed to Mike Wood, the MP for Kingswinford and South Staffordshire. It was due to have its second reading in March of last year but this was postponed and it did not come up for debate under 16 October this year. Sadly, it was 'talked out', mainly by Labour MPs because the Government considers that existing powers are adequate. This was despite CAMRA putting out a request for members to lobby their MPs, asking them to support the bill. CAMRA will continue to work with Mr Wood and other like-minded MPs to convince the Government that the planning system needs to be strengthened to protect pubs. During the debate, MPs name-checked 182 different pubs. I trust that any free pints received as a result will be entered on the Register of Members' Interests.

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).

Is your local pub under threat?

CAMRA has the tools to help you save it



Photo credit: Stop Press Media/ Alamy Stock Photo

camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal

CAMRA

Back to the bad old days

Twenty years or so ago, it was the practice of the large pub companies, when selling a pub that they no longer wanted, to include a 'restrictive covenant', a clause in the sale contract preventing the building from subsequently being used as licensed premises. It was always ironic that they felt the need to prevent a pub that they did not want from possibly being run successfully by someone else. This was something that CAMRA strongly campaigned against and, happily, the pubcos took the point and the practice was then discontinued.

Sadly, restrictive covenants have now raised their ugly head again. As previously reported, in the wake of the passing of long-time chairman Humphrey Smith, Samuel Smiths of Tadcaster are reopening a number of pubs but they have also put a number up for sale and, in some cases, they are imposing this condition. A prime example is the Grapes Inn in Heywood, Greater Manchester (OL10 4PR), a 1920s estate pub with a largely preserved historic interior, which closed last summer. CAMRA is seeking listed status to protect its historic features. Several other pubs with historic interiors are also on the list.

The situation raises interesting questions as regards planning law. As mentioned above, any significant change to a pub in England requires planning permission. Furthermore, under the recently revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), there needs to be evidence that there is no reasonable prospect of continued use as a pub, either because of insufficient community support or because the pub is no longer viable or feasible to operate. Where commercial viability is an issue, evidence needs be provided that reasonable steps had been taken to market the pub as a pub without success, for at least twelve months. That the vendor does not want the site to continue as a pub does not override these provisions and CAMRA's national planning adviser, Paul Ainsworth, has written to Samuel Smiths drawing this to their attention. The Campaign has also raised concerns with the government. You have to wonder why Sam Smiths' own lawyers and agents have, apparently, not advised them of this and, hopefully, those acting for any prospective buyers will offer the appropriate advice to their clients.

None of the pubs involved are in London. Sam Smiths were not the freeholders of the Swiss Cottage and it was not them who put it up for sale. There has however been some embarrassment for them regarding the Earl of Lonsdale in Notting Hill (W11 2QA). A review of the pub's licence was conducted following complaints about rowdy staff parties on the roof over the summer. The roof area has now been closed off.

CAMRA Heritage Pub Revival Award

CAMRA has created this award in order to recognise pub operators who, by preserving the heritage features of a pub on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Interiors, have created a thriving business that has a positive impact on their local community.

The winner for this year is the North Star in Steventon, near Abingdon in Oxfordshire (OX13 6SG). Family-owned for generations, this pub had to close for nine months for work to deal with damp and preserve the its Grade II-listed status. It is part of a row of 17th century half-timbered buildings. All of the work was carried out by local craftsmen.

The runner up was the Beacon Hotel in Sedgley in the West Midlands (DY3 1JE). Famous as the home of Sarah Hughes beers, both the pub and brewery are Grade II listed. The award acknowledges the work done to convert a sitting room and replace an old conservatory to provide much needed additional space and seating.

The award is coordinated by Paul Ainswoth, who commented, *"Both these pubs have truly precious historic interiors. At the North Star, it's brilliant that the serious structural issues have been fully addressed but equally great to find it in the hands of management committed to making it a real community hub. The work at the Beacon is a textbook example of how to expand and improve customer facilities without any detriment to the historic core."* Both pubs rate three stars on the National Inventory.

ADVERTISING IN *LONDON DRINKER*

Our advertising rates are as follows:

Full page colour £345; Full page black and white £275
Half page colour £210; Half page black and white £155
Quarter page colour £115; Quarter page black and white £90

Call **John Galpin on 07508 036835**

Email: *johngalpinmedia@gmail.com* or Twitter@LDads

London Drinker is published bi-monthly. The next edition, February/March 2027, will be available from Wednesday 27 January. It will also be available on-line at *https://londondrinker.camra.org.uk/wordpress.*

If you wish to contact the editorial team, please use *ldnews.hedger@gmail.com* rather than the address above.

Although Britain has a history of drinking beer with food, there are still many people who turn their noses up, preferring to order wine. Often this is because of the very poor range of beers offered by most restaurants. This is however something that brewers can do something about by taking a lead in their taprooms and promoting their beers as an accompaniment for food.

The push to widen the acceptance of beer as an alternative to wine isn't new. Back in October 2014 Britain's Beer Alliance (BBA) launched the 'There's a Beer for That' campaign. The BBA was backed by major global brewing giants along with a broad coalition of over 120 regional and independent UK brewers which, in 2014, represented over 90% of the commercial beer industry. Its aim was to *'promote the quality, diversity, and versatility of beer in the UK, shifting public perception away from outdated stereotypes'* and it was backed by a £10 million marketing budget. Less than a year later, the organisers estimated that they had reached 14 million people. Sadly, the campaign was relatively short lived and, in January 2018, BBA announced it was shifting its focus from consumer education to lobbying against beer taxation.

In comparison, the Brewers Association (BA), the not-for-profit organisation representing America's small breweries, has taken a longer- term approach. Six years before the 'There's a Beer for That' campaign, the BA launched 'SAVOR: an American Craft Beer & Food Experience' with a view to transforming craft beer and food pairing into a 'premium, national gastronomic showcase'. Then in 2015, after working with the BA for several years, they appointed Adam Dulye as their executive chef. He said at the time, *"From crafting unexpected and challenging pairings at events, to providing basic educational tools for beginners, our efforts are making waves in the ever-advancing culture of food and beer"*.



Adam Dulye

Once a year, the BA bring Adam to London to showcase his expertise of food and beer matching, usually featuring a selection of American beers not well known in the UK. There are always a few twists to the menu. This year, the tasting was held in Moi, a Japanese restaurant in the West End. After an introductory beer from Sierra Nevada and some hors d'oeuvres, the lunch started with house pickles, steamed fried buns and Bluefin tuna tataki, twinned with a beer that truly reflected the lunch's theme of 'east-meets-west', Embolden Beer Co's Midnight in Tokyo Matcha Hazy IPA. This beer uses premium ceremonial matcha (a form of green tea) from Kyoto.

The other four courses were equally imaginative with beers from Deshutes, Coldfire Brewing, Knee Deep Brewing Co and finishing with 'Ideas of Order', a mighty 13.2% ABV beer from the Virginia Beer Company, which was matched with a raspberry whey sorbet. Reflecting the ingenuity of the brewers, this Imperial Milk Stout is matured for 34 months in Bourbon barrels before being matured for a further 16 months in barley wine barrels. The result is rich, full flavoured but far easier drinking than the beer had any right to be!

Of course, this lunch had the benefit of Adam's extensive expertise and knowledge but it was interesting to find out whether food and beer matching played a part in the brewers' ethos and their tap rooms. Coldfire Brewing Co was set up by two brothers, Stephen and Dan, in Oregon in 2015. They specialise in standard IPAs and lagers but, less usually, sours and wild ales. We tasted their 8.5% ABV two-year-old oak fermented beer that was finished by being 'transferred onto freshly picked pinot noir clusters'. The result was reminiscent of a Flemish Red.



Stephen Hughes of Coldfire Brewing

This marrying of flavours reflects their ethos in food and beer matching. In 2025, they opened a restaurant next door to the brewery, simply called the Public House. To make it something different they teamed up with Alex Dakers, owner of Yabai Nikkei, a Japanese-American farm-to-table food cart, who

became their executive chef and general manager. Together they created a menu specialising in 'Wood-fired fare and fermented foods'. To quote Coldfire, *"Our kitchen celebrates the art of fire and fermentation to create an elevated take on classic pub fare."*

You don't however have to be small to take beer and food seriously. Another Oregon brewery, Deschutes, is over 100 times larger than Coldfire with an annual production of 248,195 barrels. For comparison, Fuller's Griffin Brewery has a capacity of around 470,000 US barrels. Ashley Pond, one of the brewery's directors, explained, *"Deschutes Brewery's original public house opened in Bend, Oregon in 1988 as a place to gather in a small logging town. We have served food along with our beer since the beginning, often cooking with the beer to enhance the menu. One of our founders came from the wine industry so beverage and food pairing came naturally."*

Ashley also reflected on how the market has changed since then, with people becoming more familiar with different beer styles as the craft beer market has grown and the impact that different beers have on the flavour of food. As a result, many breweries have been investing in beer education for their staff to enable them to be able to speak about various beer styles and how they pair with menu items.

When considering beer and food matching, Ashley believes that the diverse range of Deschutes beer is an advantage. She said, *"This allows us to cook with many different styles of beer and to always have a beer pairing to suggest. Our chef teams build our food menus based on local options, seasonal availability and guest preferences and we strive to have something for everyone!"*

They also create special menu items when they have a special beer release. *"For example, when our Abyss Imperial Stout is released each fall, our chef teams run specials made with the Abyss or that complement the Abyss all week long to celebrate. It's really a symbiotic relationship between the beer and the food at our pubs."* Building on this, Deschutes hold a number of beer dinners throughout the year. Ashley explained, *"Our chef teams work with our brewers to do a beer tasting prior to the dinner event and from that we create a special menu item to pair with each beer. As each course is served, our brewers and chefs speak about each beer and menu pairing, focusing on flavours and aromas."*

This ethos of education is extended to the trade, with Deschutes frequently providing guidance on food and beer pairings to their trade customers. Ashley said, *"Pairing beer with the right food can enhance both the dining and drinking experience, so we are always happy to share recommendations and best practices. Our sales teams across the US regularly host beer pairing events and collaborate with restaurants, pubs and retail partners to develop promotions and menu pairings. These events provide a wonderful opportunity for us to answer questions about beer, the brewing process, flavours and aromas they may get from each beer and how that beer brings out flavours and aromas in their food."*

Although some UK brewers and pubs will do the occasional beer and food event, it's quite different from what American brewers do, where there is a lot more embedding of a food and beer culture in their practice. There is no doubt that UK brewers could learn a lot from their approach. Add on the fact that the BA provides online courses and seminars on the topic, it's clear that the UK has a long way to go to change perceptions of beer and food, regardless of the sophistication of tap room and pub menus.



4 constantly changing real ales,
and 11 rotating keg beers
An extensive range of bottled craft beer
Food served daily
1 minute from Old Street Tube - Exit 4
3 Baldwin Street, EC1V 9NU
020 7253 2970
@oldfountainales
info@oldfountain.co.uk www.oldfountain.co.uk
Now open at weekends
with Sunday Roasts available
ELAC Camra City Pub of the Year Award for 2016



When is a pub not a pub?

In the case of Belushi's, when it is determined to be a 'drinking establishment with expanded food provision' rather than a 'public house'. Belushi's (formerly the Prince of Orange SE10 8JA), next to Greenwich station, closed in May 2026 and, shortly before this, twin planning applications were submitted seeking a change of use to either a cafe or convenience store.

Greenwich Council refused both applications on the grounds of the loss of a pub without it being sufficiently demonstrated that a pub is not viable in that location and it not having first been marketed for at least two years, as required under the local plan. The applicant appealed against the decisions and, in early October 2026, a planning inspector ruled in favour of both applications.



A key component of the inspector's decision was their determination that the premises previously operated as a bar which also offered food over and above basic bar snacks. In their view, therefore, in planning terms, the use was as a *'drinking establishment with expanded food provision'* rather than a 'public house', as the latter is deemed to need to be majority wet-led. Consequently, any pub protection provisions within national and local planning policies did not apply.

Section 3(6) of the Planning Use Classes Order currently in force lists the various 'sui generis' (standalone) uses which fall outside of the main planning use categories. These include the two referred to above; clauses (p) and (q) respectively. Unhelpfully, none of the national planning policy framework (NPPF), the London Plan or the Greenwich Local Plan include a definition of what constitutes a 'drinking establishment' and a 'public house', leaving it open to interpretation by local planners and planning inspectors. Also, under permitted development rights, the use of premises may be changed between these two categories, (p) and (q), without requiring planning permission.

The precedent set by this planning appeal decision clearly concerns those of us who are campaigning to save pubs because it opens the door to those pubs with a broad food offering being deemed to fall outside of national and local pub protection policies.

CAMRA has been pressing government for some time to enact a legal definition of a public house and the outcome in this case provides further strong evidence in support of this. CAMRA's Planning Advisory Group have reviewed the inspector's ruling and are seeking to meet with government officials to discuss this and other planning matters that impact on pubs. Given that changes to the law often take considerable time to progress, more immediate action could include asking the government to issue planning guidance that pubs are to be regarded as 'drinking establishments' too. Local authorities could also be encouraged to adopt CAMRA's pub definition within their local plans.

Steve Silcock

Roberts Ramble

Pete Roberts was a member of CAMRA's East London & City branch whose loves were real ale and rambling, which he would often combine. After his death, ELAC branch instigated an annual ramble in his honour to be held each summer. Our recent rambles have included Winchester, Windsor, Hampstead, Ware and Epping Forest. The crucial aspect of each ramble is that it includes a selection of interesting pubs along the way!

This year we visited the city of St Albans, famous for its rich Roman heritage, Britain's oldest continuous site of Christian worship and its medieval architecture. The chosen date of Saturday 3 October was cloudy but it stayed fine. We had a good turnout, with members from ELAC, Enfield & Barnet, North London and South Hertfordshire branches in attendance.

We met outside St Albans City railway station and then took a fifteen-minute walk to the former London Road Station. The old station building is on a disused branch line that is now a cycling and walking trail. From there it was a short walk to our first pub, the Great Northern (AL1 1PQ). This is an independent pub with a good selection of cask ales, including a stout. It also offered a CAMRA discount.

From there we admired the Odyssey, a cinema with art-deco features and, after a further eleven-minute walk, we came to the Clock Tower, a medieval belfry completed in 1405. We then visited the nearby Boot (AL3 5DG), a Grade II-listed pub dating back to 1422. It was very busy when we visited this Saturday lunchtime.

Next we walked to St Albans Cathedral. The cathedral dates back to the 8th century with the nave dating from the 11th century. Then it was a five- minute walk downhill to Ye Olde Fighting Cocks (AL3 4HE). Although it claims to be the oldest pub in Britain, some locals state that it is not even the oldest pub in St Albans!

From here we walked through Verulamium Park, with its various Roman remains, and then on through the picturesque St Michael's Village to the Lower Red Lion (AL3 4RX). On one of St Albans most picturesque streets, this two bar Grade II-listed building has lots of character.

We then walked back into the centre of the city via the Robin Hood (AL1 3TG), conveniently situated on the road back to the station. A former local branch Pub of the Year, it was holding an Oktoberfest during our visit. The landlord personally made sure that we were well looked after during our visit.

As always, we raised a glass to Pete Roberts during the afternoon. The photo shows the party in front of the Abbey Gateway in the grounds of St Albans Cathedral.

Roberts Ramble



The day went really well with positive feedback from all involved. In summary, great pubs, good beer, lovely walk and good company! Our thoughts now turn to where we should hold our ramble next year! All members are, of course, always welcome to join us on our future rambles.

Andy Kinch



Meeting the brewer

Members of Kingston & Leatherhead branch met on a dark October evening at Windsor & Eton Brewery's new bar, WEBrew, riverside in Kingston (KT1 1HH). My own journey was frustrated by Waze helpfully suggesting that I walk across the Thames to get there! Fortunately, the evening was enlivened by an entertaining and challenging session with Paddy Johnson, WEBREW's master brewer.

Paddy introduced us to his beers in a bar that few of us had visited since the brewery acquired it. Around 20 branch members, joined by friends from other branches, gave him a warm welcome, no doubt helped by his contribution of a pin of Eton Rifles (5% ABV): a generous gesture and an opportunity to sample the brewery's skills.

Paddy's talk took us through his 47 years in the brewing industry, spanning eight breweries from Newcastle to Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and London. There were no slides, but none were needed. The breweries came to life through his anecdotes, which entertained, challenged and reminded us how much the world of brewing, and the world beyond it, has changed.



Listening attentively

Starting his working life in 1979 at Courage Brewery in Horselydown Lane, Southwark, Paddy lived in the brewer's hostel on Tower Bridge Road, rent free and with a delivered beer allowance. His training day on drays also included a wet beer allowance and a pint in every pub with the driver before heading back with the dray via Fleet Street to finish off with a beer in the social club!

In the 1980s, he worked at Bass Mitchell & Butler's Cape Hill brewery in Birmingham brewing M&B Mild, mostly sold in those days in hogsheads; a limited choice in the pubs but of excellent quality. Paddy also recalled a particular night shift one very cold snowy night, when all the brewing staff went swimming in the hot liquor tanks in the open air.

Paddy's mainstream brewing history ended in 1996 at the Manchester Royal brewery, where the scale of the operation is illustrated by a canning line capable of filling 2,800 cans per minute. That is a significant contrast to setting up Windsor and Eton Brewery in 2010 with four friends. It's been a story of growth since then both at the brewery and with their three outlets, the brewery tap in Windsor (SL4 1SE), the George in Eton (SL4 6AF) and their latest addition, where we were located. The conversation continued for a couple of hours after Paddy's presentation, giving us the opportunity to discuss cask beer and brewing over the past 50 years with a genuine expert, willing to share as much of his knowledge as we could absorb.

The stories were many and varied. Some were scurrilous, others thought-provoking and a few downright depressing. We heard about high-gravity brewing and the differences between Courage's Directors Bitter (4.8% ABV), Special Bitter (4.5% ABV) and Best Bitter (4% ABV) in the 1980s. More depressingly, Paddy highlighted the inverse relationship between the number of breweries in the UK and the rewards enjoyed by their directors and staff. Other observations raised important questions about the future of cask beer. How do we make pubs financially attractive places to drink beer when staying at home with a phone is an increasingly compelling alternative? And how can we persuade drinkers to see beer as a premium product when

even some CAMRA members focus primarily on finding the cheapest pint?



On the bar

There were lighter moments, too. Paddy explored differences in drinking habits between what he characterised as the penurious North and the more prosperous South, particularly on London's and the Home Counties' apparent obsession with filling the glass to maximise the liquid and minimise the head. Paddy also elegantly illustrated the art of physically placing one's beer and one's head closer to the ground to get the right sized head! While some of us have been drinking beer for as long as Paddy has been brewing it, few, I suspect, have accumulated such a wealth of knowledge or can share it with such enthusiasm. We can all, however, enjoy his beers, particularly at WEBrew.

Paddy is happy to repeat the exercise for other CAMRA branches at a pub on their patch, saying, *"At the end of the day it's all marketing - and fun!"* Paddy can be contacted at paddy.johnson@webrew.co.uk.

Dave Butler

On the road again

On Saturday 12 September CAMRA's Enfield & Barnet branch ran one of their occasional minibus trips to visit a selection of four pubs that are off the beaten track. The tour started from High Barnet and, after a run through some narrow country lanes, we arrived at the Rose & Crown outside Rickmansworth (WD3 1PP). The front houses the traditional bar area and there has been much expansion at the rear, mainly for dining. There is also a large garden where most of us ended up. Ales were from Chiltern, Vale and Harvey's. We were lucky that the weather was still fine.

Our next port of call was a short journey to the award-winning Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty at Heronsgate (WD3 5BS). This is a *Good Beer Guide* entry. Here we were greeted by the pub dog and we had a choice of five ales including a mild, all well served. This pub faces an uncertain future and so we had an extended time here.

Next, we travelled on to Ley Hill to the Crown (HP5 1UY), also a GBG entry. Here the relaxed atmosphere was enhanced by the sight of two horse riders passing by the front. There were three ales from national brewers.

Our final stop was the Hen & Chickens at Botley (HP5 1XG). For many this was the highlight. The building is Grade II listed and dates from the 17th century. It was originally a small barn connected to two cottages. We were welcomed by longstanding landlady Helen. There were two ales from Rebellion. The team photo is taken outside this pub.



Finally, we dashed back to Barnet where some of the group adjourned to Ye Olde Mitre for a last pint. Thanks to Simon and Tricia for organising another enjoyable trip.

Brian Willis

First for London Welsh

The inaugural London Welsh Beer & Cider Festival took place on 6 and 7 November at the team's clubhouse in Old Deer Park, Richmond. The main brewery featured was Grey Trees of Aberdare with six of their ales available. There were also cask beers from other Welsh breweries, including the well-known Tiny Rebel and Purple Moose plus the lesser seen Bluestone, Mantle and Weird Dad. Three Welsh ciders and a perry were also available, along with cans from Polly Craft Brewers in Mold and bottles of Grey Trees Stormy Skies, a 9% ABV barrel-aged Imperial Porter, matured in Penderyn whisky casks.

The festival had been in the pipeline for several months with Alun Watkins, the festival organiser, having approached CAMRA Kingston & Leatherhead branch for help and advice. The festival was run in association with CAMRA; equipment such as the stillage and cooling was borrowed from the CAMRA warehouse. During the set-up, Alun and fellow club member Duncan received expert advice on cooling and beer management from Kingston's Chris Lucking and Dave Oram. This should bode well for the future and illustrates the knowledge available from CAMRA members..

First for London Welsh



Keith presents the certificate to Ray (right)

At the Friday opening, there was a relaxed atmosphere with plenty of seating available in the hall and some CAMRA notables making the effort to turn up. Ray Davies, the Grey Trees brewer, took the opportunity to run an impromptu tutored tasting of his beers, including the Imperial Porter, which was highly appreciated by those who took part. Following the tasting, Ray was presented with the certificate for the Beer of the Festival award from Kingston Beer Festival in June. The winning beer was Digger's Gold, a 4% ABV golden ale. During the evening Alun sought out those who seemed interested in craft beer, particularly the younger attendees, to give free samples of the Polly cans. These were highly hopped, hazy beers, maybe not to everyone's taste but definitely worth trying.

The Saturday had a different vibe, with the rugby crowd there to see London Welsh play Canterbury. Halves became pints as spectators took their beers to their seats in the stands. The festival was helped by there also being games from the Nations Championship being shown on television. Wales vs Japan saw the entire clubhouse belt out *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* (Land of My Fathers) – a very emotional moment and wonderful to hear. In the evening the players came in to try a few beers and it was fun to try to recommend ones they might like.

Overall, it was a very successful event which will certainly be repeated. As with all such festivals, a wash-up meeting will be held to reflect, review and seek improvements. See you next year!

Keith Richardson

The Last Drop Inn

Since it opened its doors in February, the Last Drop Inn in Eltham has quickly cemented itself as a standout addition to the local hospitality scene. Located at 279 Eltham High Street (SE9 1TY), at the corner of Elderslie Road, this charming, family run micropub represents a clever transformation of a former mobility aids shop into a warm, community-focused neighbourhood hub.

Stepping inside, customers are greeted by a thoughtful décor, blending rich wood textures with deep dark blue paintwork. Adding a touch of playful character, the walls are adorned with regal portraits of family-owned dogs and cats. The layout accommodates up to 40 guests indoors, with 32 seats at high tables and eight at lower tables, alongside a couple of comfortable settees at the rear. For the warmer afternoons or crisp evenings, the pub boasts a small back patio fitted out with classic picnic tables. Look out for the unique stone stools shaped like giant champagne corks.

At the heart of the operation is a traditional corner bar counter with four handpumps dedicated to a rotating selection of well kept cask ales. There are also five craft keg taps and up to four 'bag-in-box' traditional ciders. Wine and spirits lists are on every table while the available beers and ciders are shown on a central chalkboard.

As a micropub, the Last Drop Inn cannot provide hot meals but, in the evenings, customers are welcome to order authentic Italian and Indian food from neighbouring restaurants to eat in the pub, thus boosting local trade.

The Last Drop Inn is open every day except Monday, when the owners take a well deserved rest. Tuesday to Thursday: 5pm to 10.30; Friday and Saturday: 2pm to 11pm; Sunday: 2pm to 10.30.

Whether you are a seasoned real ale connoisseur or simply looking for a comfortable, homely space to share an evening drink with friends and neighbours (and dogs), this is a gem well worth a visit.

Wi-Fi is available (Sky Login) and the pub is on *Real Ale Finder.*

Chris Cooter





CAMRA pub information update 77

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, CAMINO (FARRINGDON), 89 Turnmill St. Modern Spanish restaurant in a converted warehouse with a separate bar.

EC1, COACH, 26-28 Ray St. Reopened as **HORSES** by the Public House Group. No cask beer.

EC1, SIMMONS FARRINGDON, 105 Charterhouse St. Reopened as **GRACE'S** from Whelan's.
One cask beer is understood to be available.

EC1, ST BARTS (Fuller's), 64-66 West Smithfield.
Fuller's London Pride.

EC2, CAMINO (SHOREDITCH), 2 Curtain Rd.
Modern Spanish restaurant with a separate bar.
Spanish beers in keg and bottles.

EC2, PICCOLINO, 11 Exchange Sq.
Rebranded as **LAST EXCHANGE**, a modern gastro-pub in September. Fuller's London Pride and Timothy Taylor Landlord.

EC3, SIMPSONS TAVERN, 38 1/2 Cornhill. Reopened as **CLOTH CORNHILL**. Two bars, on the ground floor and in the basement. Downstairs are Amy's Bar for standing only, with overspill into the courtyard, and the adjoining former grill room, which has seating for 40 people. Some of the original signage remains.

E1, SIMMONS TOWER BRIDGE (Wellington), 61 Royal Mint St. Becoming RAG FAIR INN from Bohem Brewery mid-November.

E1, XP TAVERN, 9 Chaucer Gdns. Modern gaming bar and lounge. You can just have a drink/food and watch the sport.

E11, 7 CHURCH LANE (Waltham Forest Council), 7 Church La. Once a library, now reopened as **ALTAR**, a two-floor music venue, vinyl bar and record shop. Local keg beers.

E14, ALTO 19, Level 19, Carter Circle Locke.
Modern restaurant & cocktail bar on the nineteenth floor of the Locke hotel. Mediterranean food and bottled beer.

E14, TALLYMAN, 5 Chancellor Passage. Modern pub & restaurant in the former post office. Sharp's Doom Bar, Timothy Taylor Landlord and a guest (e.g. Boddingtons).

NW1, CAMDEN ROAD ARMS (Heineken),
102-106 Camden Rd. Reopened under Heineken's Just Add Talent retail agreement. Harvey's Sussex Best spotted.

SE1, LEATHER EXCHANGE (Fuller's),
15 Leathermarket St. Reopened.

SE5, TIGER (Heineken UK/ex Antic), 18 Camberwell Grn. Reopened by Urban Pubs & Bars. Cask beer status unknown.

SE17, TANKARD, 178 Walworth Rd. Fuller's London Pride.

SW1, MARKET PLACE, Unit 15-16, Victoria Pl.
Shopping Centre. Immediately at the top of the escalators at Victoria Station by platforms 15-19, this is the sixth Market Place site in London. Ten different street-food offers and a bar; all major games are shown. Various keg beers.

SW2, BARRIO, 30 Acre La. Reopened as **ANTRO BRIXTON**, a tropical cocktail bar with keg beers.

SW4, COACH & HORSES (Stonegate), 173/175 Clapham Park Rd. Cask beer reinstated, currently Siren Memento.

SW4, SIXTY FOUR, 64 Clapham High St.
Reopened as **MIMOSA**, an upmarket cocktail bar and restaurant

W1, NQ64, 53-54 Berwick St.
Reopened as **NQJPN**, a Japanese arcade bar.

W1, NQ64, Orange Yard, Manette St. Previously home to Borderline night club and G-A-Y Late, this is the new flagship venue for the growing NQ64 chain of gamer-themed bars, 9,000 sq ft across ground floor and basement offering a mix of retro gaming including augmented reality darts and UV pool. Wide drinks menu includes many beers. No food offering. Smart/casual dress: no tracksuits/jogging bottoms or sportswear (trainers OK). All entry is at the discretion of the door team, over 18s only. There may be an evening entry charge.

W7, POETS WINE BAR, 71 Greenford Rd.
Community wine bar opened December 2025 with four draught keg beers. Charcuterie boards and cheeseboards.

W12, QUEEN ADELAIDE (Greene King), 412 Uxbridge Rd. Reopened as the **TALLI QUEEN**, combining talli, Hindi for tipsy, with the pub's familiar name. Taken over by chef Avi Shashidhara, formerly of the award-winning modern Indian restaurant the Pahli Hill in Fitzrovia. The food centres around a charcoal-fired grill and tandoor, and an Indian Sunday lunch. 18 draught lines include cask ales and stout, and there is a strong focus on cocktails using spirits from India. Cask beers on reopening were Allsopp's India Pale Ale and Thornbridge Brother Rabbit. The pub hopes to sell more on QPR match days. Its interior has a woody feel, with a mixture of tables/chairs and banquettes. The kitchen is open-plan. A semi-enclosed patio terrace at the front is popular not just with smokers, but cannot be booked, first come first served.

W14, CROWN & SCEPTRE (Heineken), 34 Holland Rd.
Reopened again. No cask ale.

OUTER LONDON

HAM, HAND & FLOWER (Stonegate), 24 Upper Ham Rd.
Reopened and now part of the Morgan Pub Collective.
Harvey's Sussex Best plus two guests, e.g. Oakham Citra and Robinsons Dizzy Blonde.

ICKENHAM, SOLDIERS RETURN (Wellington), 65 High Rd.
Reopened October after closure since 2020. No cask beer.

KEW, BOTANIST (M&B/Castle), 3-5 Kew Green. Cask beer reinstated, Fuller's London Pride.

ORPINGTON, STRIKERS SPORTS BAR, 40b The Walnuts, High St.
Opened early September in former Talli Kitchen Restobar. Spacious and decently furnished sports bar with external seating. Wall-to-wall screen showing live sport with gaming opportunities in-house. No cask beer, low-alcohol options available.

SUTTON, SUTTON ARMS (Salmina Ltd), 60-62 High St.
After being closed by Greene King in June 2025 and sold, reopened late October as **OAK & ANCHOR**. Draught beers initially include two cask ales (Sharp's Doom Bar and Atlantic).

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

INNER LONDON

WC2, LONG ACRE (Stonegate). Renamed **LA CLUB**.
Cask beer no longer available. To become a branch of Irish pub chain Nancy Spains in December.

EC1, BE AT ONE (Stonegate), Charterhouse St.
Closed, lease on the market.

EC1, HORSESHOE (Stonegate). Closed after Richard and Pauline Tucker decided to retire. Freehold now bought by Daniel Craig, in partnership with Nick Jones of Soho House and Flat Iron steakhouse founder Justin O'Shea.

EC3, PITCHER & PIANO (Marston's). Closed, future uncertain

EC4, POPWORLD (Stonegate). Closed, lease on the market.

WC2, BE AT ONE (LCP Corp Ltd/Stonegate).
Closed owing to neighbouring hotel construction.
Unlikely to reopen as a pub on Wellington St.

WC2, GEORGIE'S BAR (Nli Hotels). No cask beer.

E1, PEACOCK (Emerald Hospitality). Closed, lease on the market.

E3, LORD MORPETH (Stonegate).
Still closed owing to flooding, waiting for the cellar to dry out.

E14, QUEENS HEAD. No cask beer.

E15, SPORTSMAN (Stonegate). Closed in September.
Freehold of the wider building on the market.

N7, TOLLINGTON. Closed after fire.

N13, ALFRED HERRING. Closed suddenly in October.

NW1, OXFORD ARMS (Stonegate leased). No cask beer.

NW1, ZODIAC. Closed, future uncertain.

NW6, COOPERS ARMS (Stonegate). No cask beer.

NW6, KILBURN BRIDGE (Stonegate).
Closed, lease/freehold on the market.

NW6, SIR COLIN CAMPBELL (Stonegate leased).
No cask beer - the Doom Bar pumpclips are for show.

SE1, DOVER CASTLE. Closed. The management has moved to the Crown, SW11. Freehold on the market.

SE1, ELEPHANT & CASTLE (Urban Pubs & Bars). No cask beer.

SE1, LIMIN BEACH CLUB (Coin Street Community Builders).
Closed late September along with the rest of Gabriel's Wharf as the owner decides what to do next before ultimate long-term redevelopment.

SE1, RING (Windmill Taverns). No cask beer.

SE4, PARLEZ. Closed September.
Likely to become neighbourhood grocery store, delicatessen, cafe-bar and wine shop.

SE10, GUILDFORD ARMS.
Closed in September, freeholder seeking new tenant.

SE13, LEWISHAM TAVERN (Stonegate/Craft Union).
No cask beer.

SW1, BEER HOUSE (VICTORIA) (Network Rail/SSP).
No cask beer.

SW1, PRINCE ARTHUR. Closed for extensive renovations/redevelopment work. Future site use unknown.

SW1, WHITE FERRY HOUSE (Stonegate/PubLove).
Closed, free of tie lease for sale

SW2, PRINCE OF WALES (Brakspear Pub Co). No cask beer.

SW4, RAILWAY (M&B/Castle). No cask beer.

SW6, BOHA LONDON. Closed. Was for auction.

SW9, GROSVENOR ARMS. No cask beer.

SW11, ANCHOR (Stonegate/Craft Union). No cask beer.

SW11, CROWN (Stonegate/PubLove).
No cask beer. No longer PubLove, now under same management as the now closed Dover SE1 (see below).

SW11, HAWKINS FORGE (M&B/Castle). No cask beer.

SW14, JOLLY GARDENERS.
Now closed and boarded up, future uncertain.

SW18, EARLSFIELD. No cask beer.

W1, NEWMAN ARMS (Aldrich Inns). No cask beer.

W1, SHIP (independent). No cask beer.

W6, KINDRED (Kindred Hospitality). Now an event venue

W9, WARRINGTON HOTEL (Allsopp).
Closed for renovation of the building

OUTER LONDON

CARSHALTON, COACH & HORSES (Heineken). No cask beer.

COULSDON, BAR CHORD. No cask beer.

HARROW, GEORGE (Stonegate/Craft Union).
Closed, tenancy advertised.

HIGH BARNET, ARKLEY GOLF CLUB. No cask beer.

HIGH BARNET, SEBRIGHT ARMS (Punch).
No cask beer since change of tenancy.

KINGSTON, PARK BREW & KITCHEN. Closed.
Due to reopen as the Park Pantry with more of a retail focus.

KINGSTON, PARK BREWERY TAP ROOM.
Closed towards the end of September along with the Brewery.

SURBITON, BRAVE NEW WORLD. No cask beer.

OTHER CHANGES

INNER LONDON

EC1, OLD CHINA HAND. Sold by retiring owners Mike Peck and Rowena Smith. Bought by Peter Holt of Southampton Arms/Pocket fame.

EC3, CRAFT BEER CO. (Craft Beer Co.).
Renamed **CATHERINE EDDOWES**.

EC3, DIRTY MARTINI (CG Restaurants & Bars).
Renamed **TEQUILA MOCKINGBIRD MONUMENT**.

EC4, EDITORS TAP (Stonegate).
Now operated by the Dunning chain of Irish bars.

WC1, QUEEN'S HEAD (Stonegate/Pub Love). The Easton Street pub is now tenanted, no longer operated by Pub Love.

WC1, RUGBY TAVERN (Rugby School/Berkeley Inns).
Century Inns since December.

E10, AUCTIONEERS (Punch).
Now just **AUCTIONEER** and part of the Unity Social brand.

E18, WOODFORD BAR & GRILL (Stonegate).
Renamed **MANNERS LOUNGE** in March.

E20, GRAVITY MIX. Renamed **GRAVITY MAX**.

N1, ISLINGTON TOWN HOUSE (Stonegate/Twenty6).
Now operated by c2kgroup,

N7, VICTORIA (Stonegate).
Now operated by the Morgan Pub Collective.

N9, RAILWAY (Enfield Council/RedCat). Now Admiral Taverns as part of a package of leased pubs sold by RedCat.

NW5, PINEAPPLE (McGrath, Davies Property Services).
Sold to Remarkable Pubs. No changes planned.

SE1, DUKE OF SUSSEX (Stonegate/The Chapter Collection).
Now a Fuller's managed pub.

SE1, THREE STAGS (Greene King).
Part of the Black Dog Pub small chain.

SE16, BLUE MONK. Reopened as **VOLLEY SOUTH** mid-October
A cask beer such as Siren Memento is often available.

SE23, BLYTHE HILL TAVERN (Stonegate).
Now operated by Whelans

SW6, LILLIE LANGTRY (Stonegate).
Now operated by Fuller's. Expect changes to beer range.

SW14, VICTORIA (Stonegate/Jolly Fine Pub Group). Another pub taken over by the ever expanding Morgan Pub Collective.

SW18, GROSVENOR ARMS (Stonegate). Sold to Belfry Real Estates, refurbished and operated by Leisure Works.

SW6, BOUNDARY (Wellington/Young's).
Leased/operated by the Arden Pub Group.

SW6, ELEPHANT & BARREL (Redcat/Bangalore Fulham).
Freehold sold to Admiral Taverns as part of the disposal of Redcat's leased estate.

SW9, PADDY'S YARD. Opened and renamed in September **RATTLIN BOG** and sister to the one in Clapham.

W1, BONDS (Stonegate). Now operated by Fuller's.
London Pride, St Austell Proper Job and Timothy Taylor Golden Best available on 10 November.

W1, DUCHESS (Stonegate). Now operated by Fuller's.
Expect changes to beer range.

W6, BLUE ANCHOR (Stonegate).
Now operated by Fuller's. Expect changes to beer range.

W7, GROSVENOR (RedCat). Now owned and part of Punch's Managed Partnership division. Fuller's London Pride, St Austell Tribute and Timothy Taylor Boltmaker. Range may change when new landlord starts.

OUTER LONDON

BEXLEYHEATH, COBAN'S KITCHEN.
Renamed **MARMARIS TURKISH RESTAURANT & COCKTAIL BAR** Autumn 2026.

CROYDON, SURREY STREET LOUNGE.
Reverted to **CORNER HOUSE**.

KINGSTON, BLACK HORSE (Stonegate).
Now **BLACK HORSE & DRUNKEN WOK**.

SIDCUP, HOPPER'S HUT. Now under the same ownership as the Bat and Ball, Mottingham.

TEDDINGTON, TEDDINGTON ROYAL BRITISH LEGION CLUB.
Renamed **CAMBRIDGE HOUSE CLUB**. Whilst it still supports the RBL, it is a separate entity.

TWICKENHAM, RIFLEMAN (Tavern Property Co/TFA Pubs).
Under a new tenant since November. Beer range still includes Twickenham The Naked Ladies but has added Treen's Classic as regular with two beer from the likes of Treen's and Farm Yard as guests.

UXBRIDGE, FIG TREE (Greene King). Refurbished October and converted to 'Hive' format. IPA and Abbot initially available on reopening,

WEMBLEY, TWOMEY'S IRISH BAR.
Renamed **ANNIE TWOMEY'S** and now operated by Partners'n'Pubs



Tribute

Craig Douglas



I'm sure that many readers will remember Craig, who ran the Bree Louise pub in Euston with his wife, Karen. Craig has passed away, aged just 66. The son of a coal-miner, he played professional rugby before going into the pub trade at the then Jolly Gardeners in 2002. Shortly afterwards, Karen gave birth to twins, George and Bree Louise. Sadly, Bree Louise did not survive and so they renamed the pub in her memory.

The pub was forced to close in 2018, when the building was compulsorily purchased for the HS2 railway project. Losing what was their home as well as their business was deeply traumatic, as was the subsequent battle to secure commensurate compensation for the eleven years left on his free-of-tie lease from the Stonegate Group. My understanding (and I'm happy to be corrected) is that HS2 offered them compensation based on the site's prospects as a 'going concern' pub while Craig and Karen believed that it should be based on its value as a development site, especially after it was decided that the site was no longer needed for the Euston station expansion and would be used for housing. A settlement was eventually reached but Craig never hid the damage that was done to both his physical and mental health. This included a heart attack on the way to one of the court hearings. The family moved to Bournemouth after the settlement. We send our condolences to Karen and George.

End of an era

It is with some sadness that I have to announce the retirement of our (very) long serving crossword compiler Dave Quinton. A couple of months ago he sent me two puzzles for our October and December (this one) editions and, in his covering message, he wrote that these would be the last crosswords he would be producing for the magazine.

He went on to explain that after having thoroughly enjoying doing them for over 40 years, his concentration is not really up to the job, adding, *"I don't want to produce poor quality work so have got to call it a day."*

I am personally very sad to lose Dave as an integral member of the *London Drinker* team, maybe not as an editor or layout man, but, to many people, the crossword is truly an integral part of the publication.

For most of the time that he has been providing our crosswords, I have had the privilege of being the one who takes Dave's contributions and prepares them for printing. In the spring of 1983, a new three-man editorial team took over the Drinker, comprising the late Chris Cobbold, Martin Smith and me. As well as being best mates, Chris and Dave worked together as teachers at a local primary school in Balham. Dave had produced a few crosswords for the previous editors but had not been totally happy with the accuracy of what got printed and so I volunteered to do the preparation of it for printing and to take full responsibility for getting it right. On this basis, Dave was happy to carry on producing the puzzles and the rest (as the cliché goes) is history - and quite a bit of it. Chris was also a member of the team as the entries went to his home address and he took on the task of checking all the scripts and selecting the winner from the correct ones (or rather, getting his next-door neighbour to shut his eyes and pick the lucky one). Incidentally, having looked through the *London Drinker* archive, I estimate that I have been involved with about 340 crosswords with Dave over the past 40-odd years.

Sadly (as reported in the August/September *Drinker*) Chris passed away and so, to keep things simple, that task has also passed to me.

Aside from the *London Drinker*, I also got to know Dave, Chris and others through working with them at South West London branch's beer festivals at the William Morris Club in Wimbledon and subsequently at Battersea Arts Centre. Dave is a fine fellow (and a very good tenor).

Looking forward, we have secured the services of another crossword compiler (and, by coincidence, a long-term friend) who will be introduced to you in the February/March *London Drinker.* In the meantime, I trust that you will enjoy Dave Q's farewell offering.

Andy Pirson

Letters

LETTERS

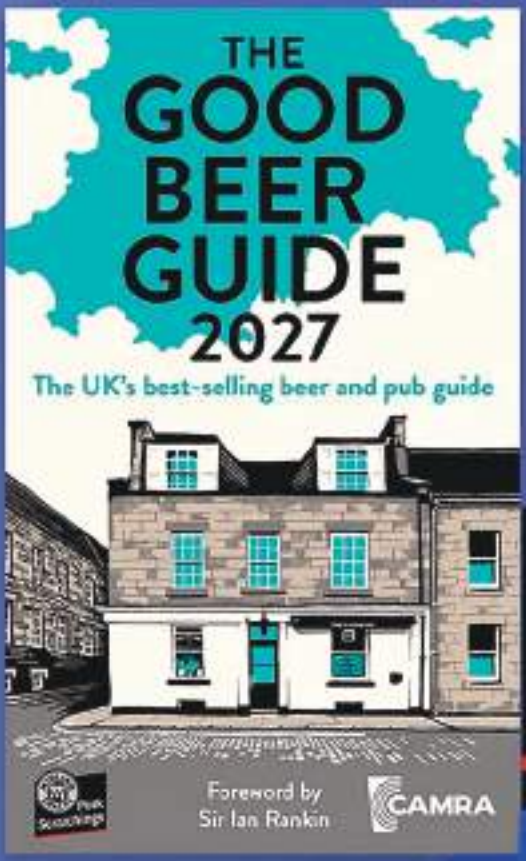
All readers – not just CAMRA members – are invited to submit letters for publication to *London Drinker* but please remember that the letters column is intended for debate and constructive criticism. The editor reserves the right not to print any contributions that are otherwise. Please e-mail letters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

Pubs worth the journey.

Buy your guide today.





Foreword by Sir Ian Rankin

Sponsored by

MIDLAND SNACKS

TRADITIONAL Pork Scratchings

CAMRA

*Sir Ian Rankin photo credit Louise Mather

Are you a CAMRA member?

If not, why not join? See below for details

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

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

- **The campaign: keep up with the campaign that your membership is supporting with our *What's Brewing* online publication, available online here *https://wb.camra.org.uk/*.**
- **Beer discounts: your membership card and vouchers get you discounts on your beer at pubs up and down the country. Check out *whatpub.com*, search for locations and use the filters to find great pubs near you with features you like.**
- **Beer festivals: as a member of CAMRA, 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

Greetings all, and welcome to the festive season. May I be the first (if you read this in time) to wish you tidings of comfort and joy. In saying that, my tidings do not extend to making the puzzles following this greeting easier than their normal annoying nature. I can't comment about whether they will be easier or harder than usual, because I have really no idea what you find simple or impossible or anything in between. I simply offer them for you to have a go at or to ignore as you see fit.

Should you wish to use them as a means of entertainment with visiting Christmas guests, I can only wonder at your normal choice of seasonal revelries!

So here they are, starting with 5BY4. The other day, I was looking at the shelf of one of the bookcases in my study containing all of my Good Beer Guides from 1974 (no, not an 'Avoid Like the Plague! version) up to 2012. The later ones are scattered almost randomly among the other books where space will permit at all angles etc. I thought I would pick a number of brewery companies that no longer exist for you to test your knowledge (or powers of deduction) about where these were located. Alternatively, you could (if you are old enough) dig through your own library for your own copy and spoil the fun.

As Billy Bookcase shelves are quite deep and GBGs are fairly narrow, these books are stored in two rows, with 1974 to 2001 behind the later editions. I chose the 2002 edition as the oldest accessible and chose from there. So here they are; can you match these ten breweries to these towns or villages:

1. Alcazar	A. Cinderford, Gloucestershire
2. Barngates	B. Melksham, Wiltshire
3. Caythorpe	C. Hertford
4. Dark Horse	D. Ambleside, Cumbria
5. Eglesbrech	E. Hoveringham, Notts.
6. Freeminer	F. Bideford, Devon
7 Glentworth	G. Gosport, Hampshire
8. Jollyboat	H. Nottingham
9 Moles	I. Doncaster, S. Yorkshire
10. Oakleaf	J. Falkirk, Central Lowlands

Now, last time, I made some amusement for myself (and who knows, possibly you as well), by creating anagrams (anagrounds? or undergrams?) from stations on the TFL Underground map. Having had a moderate amount of fun myself (yes, I concede that!), I thought that I would inflict another ten of the little perishers on you so here they are, together with a line that serves them:

1. NAIL OUR PRISM (Metropolitan)
2. EAT AT GLADES (District)
3. BRING HEATH (Northern)
4 HUNT ME, RANGER (District)
5. CREWS ON STAGE (Windrush)
6. HELP WITH ACE (Hammersmith & City)
7. ENTANGLE HERB (Central)
8. SOW ALONE – THUS (Piccadilly)
9. SNARK WEDGE (Mildmay)
10. SHOUTING ALE (Piccadilly)

There, that's done; only the General Trivia bit to go now. Stay strong (or be sensible and do something else). As I have found it interesting (for me, at least) riffling though that old book of dates to find questions matching the currency of the magazine, this time I thought I would do a set called 'The Twelve Dates of Christmas'. You get two bonus questions that way (Oh, lucky YOU!). Anyway, here they are:

1. Who was the scientist born on 25 December 1642 at Woolsthorpe in Lincolnshire?
2. What chemical element was discovered and isolated by Pierre and Marie Curie on 26 December with G Bémont?
3. In what year did HMS Beagle set off for its famous voyage around the world with Charles Darwin on board on 27 December?
4. The Peak District was designated as the first National Park in Britain on 28 December of what year?
5. The world's first iron hulled warship was launched on 29 December 1860. Still to be seen in Portsmouth, what was (/is) she called?
6. Who is the four times World Speedway Champion, born on 30 December 1934 in Christchurch, New Zealand?
7. Who was the first Astronomer Royal, who died on 31 December 1719 (for whom King Charles II established the Royal Greenwich Observatory?
8. Six states and two territories were consolidated to form the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 January of what year?
9. Sixty-six spectators were killed when a crowd control barrier collapsed at Ibrox Park, Glasgow on 2 January in what year?
10. J R R Tolkien was born on 3 January 1892, in what country (and city, if you want to show off)?
11. The World's first pop music chart, based on record sales, was published in Billboard magazine in New York on 4 January of what year?
12. The first automatic barrier on the London Underground was put into operation on 5 January 1964, at what District Line station?

So, there we are then; challenges completed (or, more sensibly, rejected) you are now free to enjoy yourselves. I wish you a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Andy Pirson

Here are the solutions to the puzzles set in the **October/November** column:

5BY4 (Proms Composers):

1. Fountains of Rome and Pines of Rome – Ottorino Respighi
2. An American in Paris – George Gershwin
3. Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune – Claude Debussy
4. The Three-Cornered Hat – Manuel de Falla
5. Symphony No. 6 'Pastoral' – Ludwig van Beethoven
6. Symphony No. 9 'From the New World' – Antonin Dvořák
7. On the Town – Leonard Bernstein
8. The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra – Benjamin Britten
9. Appalachian Spring – Aaron Copland
10. Concierto de Aranjuez – Joaquín Rodrigo

Underground Anagrams:

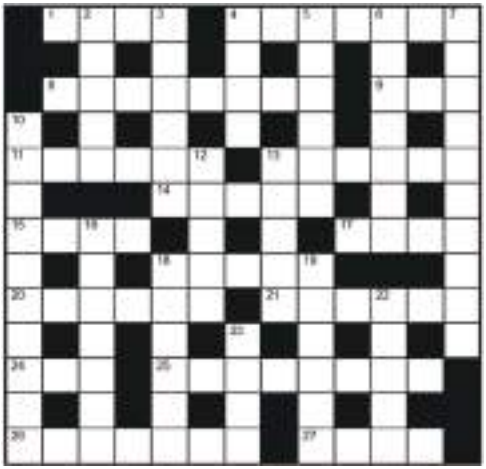
1. BOG HOUR (Northern)	BOROUGH
2. BLARE MARCH (Central)	MARBLE ARCH
3. STEWING ALE (Elizabeth)	WEST EALING
4 MENTOR SCENTING CORN (Northern)	MORNINGTON CRESCENT
5. A RED DOWAGER (Circle)	EDGWARE ROAD
6. LAD AND SINGERS (DLR)	ISLAND GARDENS
7. RENEW RASTER (Victoria)	WARREN STREET
8. NEW SLOW SHOUT (Piccadilly)	HOUNSLOW WEST
9. LOSE DOUG CARTER (Piccadilly)	GLOUCESTER ROAD
10. SNARE SPONGER (District)	PARSONS GREEN

General knowledge:

1. When Albert Speer and Baldur von Schirach were released from Spandau Prison in Berlin on 1 October 1966, the sole prisoner remaining in custody was Rudolf Hess.
2. Prior to its independence on 4 October 1966, Lesotho was a British Protectorate called Basutoland.
3. The Independent newspaper was first published on 6 October 1986.
4. The Dow-Jones Index, based on stock prices on the New York Stock Exchange, was instituted on 8 October 1896.
5. The Labour Prime Minister born on 12 October 1866 in Lossiemouth was Ramsay MacDonald.
6. Queen Elizabeth II became the first British monarch to visit China on 12 October 1986.
7. Tennis player Martina Navratilova was born in Prague on 18 October 1956.
8. The M25 motorway was completed with the opening of the section between Junctions 22 and 23 on 29 October 1986.
9. The big band leader and trombonist, born on 19 November 1905 and who died on 26 November 1956, was Tommy Dorsey.
10. The catastrophic fire which destroyed the Crystal Palace occurred on 30 November 1936.

Ooh! What a busy month October 1986 was!

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



Name .....

Address .....

.....

Telephone .....

E-mail .....

All correct entries received by first post on 19 January will be entered into a draw for the prize. The prize winner will be announced in the April/May edition and the solution will be given in the February/March edition.

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

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

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER SOLUTION



ACROSS

1. End revolution in China. [4]
4. Short agreement. [7]
8. Flower less cold and flatter. [6,2]
9. A politician's current measure. [3]
11. Goes round for alternative pieces. [6]
13. A professor is an attractive man. [6]
14. Refreshing group. [5]
15. Quietly unwell? Take this. [4]
17. Cause trouble in prison. [4]
18. Dickens fourth little girl's ring. [5]
20. Priest with time to talk. [6]
21. Island food. [3,3]
24. Risk from microbe toxin. [3]
25. Pond creatures. Small amount taken with rods. [8]
26. Slips round and gets jobs. [7]
27. Soldiers hoping to start band. [4]

DOWN

2. When it's up it's OK. [5]
3. Vegetable is rubbish in muck. [6]
4. Complain about the fish. [4]
5. Grumbled about small vehicles. [6]
6. Opposed to putting cooker on this month. [7]
7. Records attempts to make wall coverings. [10]
10. Relative to arrive shortly with a moral tale. [10]
12. Original sin isn't common for a good person. [5]
13. Man following a passage in church. [5]
16. Throw rest out for this seafood. [7]
18. Rig trap up for young Tomp, perhaps. [6]
19. Fruit that may be confused with others. [6]
22. Looks for equals. [5]
23. But they may be even [4]

Winner of the prize for the August/September crossword: Stu Madison, Ealing.

Other correct entries were received from:

Ted Alleway, Tony Alpe, David Barrett, J Batchellor, Mark Bravery, Hugh Breach, Kay Breach, Kelvin Brewster, Jeremy Brinkworth, John Butler, Hilary Clark, John Clark, Owen Cunningham, Michael Davis, John Dodd, Lynne & Joe Ellis, Penny Farthing, Bill Fullick, Richard Garton, Roger Grant, Paul Gray, J E Green, Alan Greer, A Gregg, Richard Gregory, Matthew Griffiths, 'Shropshire' Dave Hardy, John Howarth, Eileen Howey, Mr T C Hull, Alan Humphrey, G L Jarrett, Anthony Jenkins, Eric Johnstone, D M L Jones, R L P Keys, Toby Kirby, Steve Laight, Pete Large, Terry Lavell, Aidan Laverty, Mal Lawlor, Stewart Leach, Julie Lee, Tony Lennon, Ben Little, David Lopatis, Donald MacAuley, Ken MacKenzie, Rachel McKay & Paul Brown, Steve Maloney, Martin Mason, Mick & Nigel, Rob Mills, Pam Moger, Robin Moore, Ruth Moreton, Al Mountain, Brian Myhill, Mark Nichols, Mick Norman, Gerald Notley, Michael Oliver, Nigel Parsons, Alan Pennington, Robert Perris, Neil Pettigrew, Portrush Annie, Barrie Powell, Jeanette Powell, Nicholas Priest, David Renwick, Robert Ripley, Nigel Roe, Richard Rogers, Derek Seeley, L Silcock, Pete Simmonds, Paul Skinner, Bill Stewart, Martin Stubbs, Roy Tassi, Mike Teale, Bill Thrackray, Mark Thompson, Jeff Tucker, Andy Wakefield, Martin Weedon, Alan Welsh, Spud Whale, David Whitelam, Jerry Wigens, John Williamson, Nigel Woodford, Shez Wright, K Zemek.
There were also four incorrect and three incomplete entries.

Pubs, pints, people.



BUY NOW for FREE festival entry

Treat the beer lover in your life!

Buy a gift membership.

Beers are best shared with others. So, treat someone you like to a CAMRA gift membership this festive period and bring them along to the pubs and festivals that matter.

Set their membership to go live on a specific day and they'll receive all the great discounts, benefits and vouchers you do, through the post.

FIND OUT MORE

Buy a gift membership today
camra.org.uk/membership

CAMRA

HARVEY'S
BREWERY



SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM THE HEART OF HARVEY'S

FAMILY BREWERS SINCE 1790

www.harveys.org.uk