

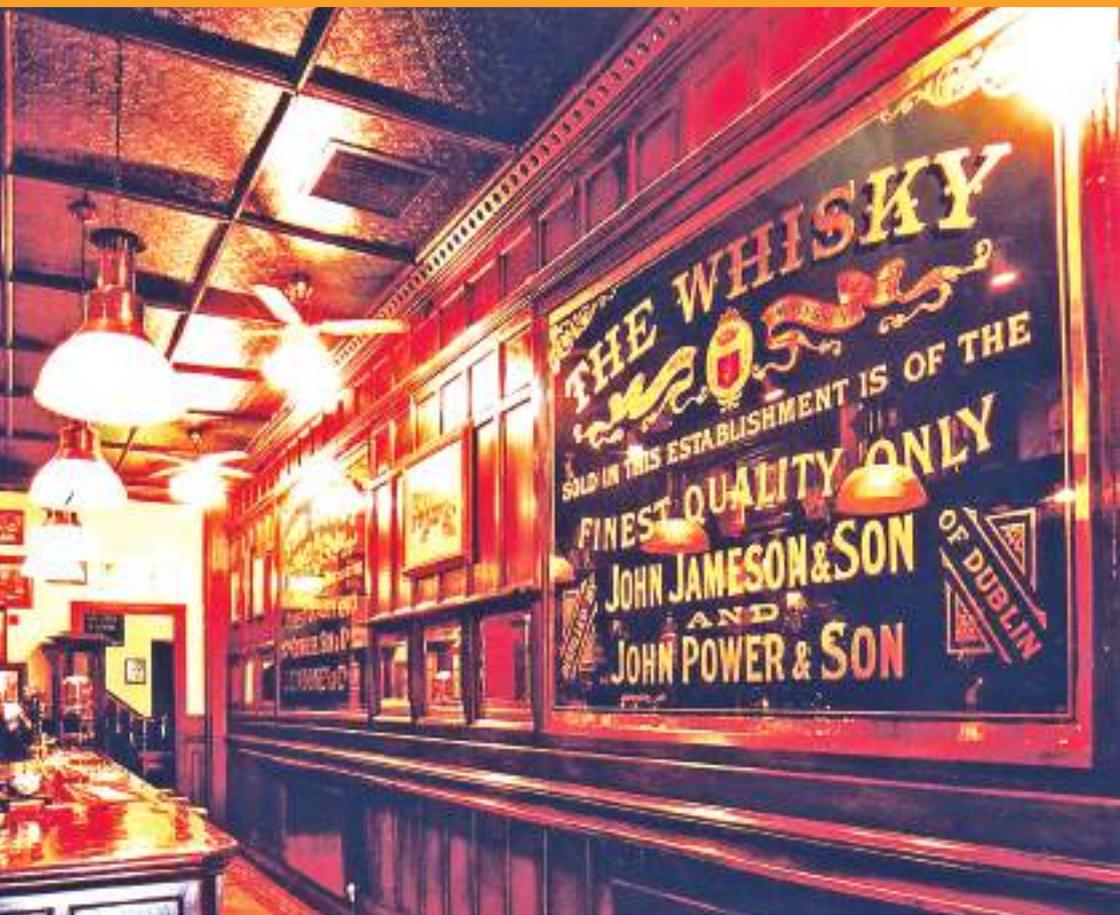


LONDON

DRINKER

Volume 43 No. 2
April/May 2021

FREE



The interior of the Tipperary EC4 (see page 22)

Photo by Michael Slaughter LRPS

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London Drinker is published on behalf of the Greater London branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, and is edited by Tony Hedger. CAMRA is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and registered in England; company no. 1270286. Registered office: 230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 4LW.

Material for publication, including press releases, should preferably be sent by e-mail to ldnews.hedger@gmail.com. The editorial deadline for the next edition, June/July 2021, is no later than Friday 7 May. At this stage it is anticipated that the June/July edition will be available on-line only.

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

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Welcome to the April/May 2021 edition of *London Drinker*. There are two major events to report on: the plan to take us out of the third lockdown and the Budget. The two are, of course, inextricably linked: will the budget provide enough help for our beleaguered pubs to help them survive until they are allowed to open again? The Budget is covered on page 12.

The regulations covering the lockdown specified that there was to be a review on 15 February and the outcome, which somehow acquired the epithet 'roadmap' but is properly called the COVID-19 Response – Spring 2021, was announced by the Prime Minister on 22 February. This was not before the now customary deluge of rumours, much as happened at the end of the first lockdown. The details are covered on page 9. The announcement led to newspaper headlines such as 'passport to normal life' (*Metro* 24 February) while the Prime Minister, echoing Winston Churchill, spoke of 'sunny uplands'. Without wishing to be a party pooper, it needs to be understood that the Prime Minister did make it clear that the dates given were 'first possible' ones and not targets. The measures do not come into effect automatically; the Government has to give the go ahead for each event, in the form of a week's notice. As recently as 9 March, Professor Chris Whitty, the Chief Medical Officer for England, told the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee that COVID will never be eliminated. Sadly, it is unlikely that the pandemic has finished with us yet.

This time the system of regional tiers

has been abandoned. Instead, England will be covered by 'one size fits all' regulations. There is good news in that, once reopening is permitted, we will not be subject to the 10pm curfew and the 'table meal' requirements. The bad news is that table service, the 'rule of six' and social distancing will still be with us. Table service is my pet hate; I still believe that it puts bar staff at a higher risk than service at the bar.

Curiously, to begin with, nothing was said about relaxing the restriction on pubs selling take away alcohol, something which I had been expecting. I assumed that, in line with their existing policy, once people were permitted to again meet in groups in public parks and open spaces, the Government would not want them consuming alcohol when doing so. A few days later it was reported in the press, in this case the *Hertfordshire Mercury*, that 'Downing Street has confirmed that pubs will be allowed to serve drinks on a takeaway basis from April 12 to help boost those without a garden area. The Prime Minister's official spokesperson said, "Outdoor hospitality is permitted so I believe it would be the case that takeaway alcohol will be permitted." I'm not sure that this makes sense but let's not complain.

One very odd rumour was that pubs were to be allowed to reopen so long as they did not sell alcohol. The *Telegraph* reported that the ban was to ease the concerns of those, said to include Professor Whitty, who were concerned about the impact of drinking alcohol on social distancing. My first thought was that the 'powers that be' were calling our bluff over our view of the importance of pubs to mental health along the lines of 'if you think they are so important then you will use them even if they are not selling alcohol'. I hope I was wrong because that shows cynicism and ignorance in equal measure. What they believe happens in pubs is clearly based on old prejudices and although they pay lip service to the mental health issue, I doubt that they understand the

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I'm sure that readers will appreciate why there are currently no printed copies of *London Drinker* available. The production team would however like to assure you that we will return to a printed version as soon as circumstances permit. This may however not be for some time yet. . .

Introduction

damage done. It did however bring to mind the old Slim Dusty song: 'But there's nothing so lonesome, morbid or drear, than to stand in the bar of a pub with no beer'.

Taking the opposite stance was the COVID Recovery Group of MPs who took the view that there was no justification for restrictions to continue beyond the end of April and certainly not once all those over fifty had been offered a vaccination, a process due to be completed by the end of May.

CAMRA's National Chairman, Nik Antona, responded to the Prime Minister's announcement as follows: "While we understand the Government's cautious approach, this will nonetheless be a disappointing announcement for the beer and pub industry, which looks set to be the last to be allowed to properly reopen. We know that pubs aren't vectors for transmission, so ministers must publish the full evidence behind applying restrictions on pubs when the likes of non-essential retail will be able to fully open up sooner and without restrictions. Whilst scrapping the curfew and substantial meal requirement is welcome, only permitting pubs to operate using outside space at first, and then inside using table service only, isn't a proper reopening. Two thirds of pubs could stay closed during the outdoor-only trading period, with many more likely to struggle without being able

to trade at full capacity while the table-service-only requirement remains.' The Prime Minister's commitment to continue financial support is welcome, but, as a result of this roadmap, next week's Budget is more vital than ever. First and foremost, pubs, breweries and the wider supply chain desperately need ongoing financial support not only for the next few weeks but for as long as pubs are operating at a reduced trade. The Budget must also include an extension to furlough and the business rates holiday, a reduction in VAT for on-trade alcohol sales as well as food and cutting duty for beer served in pubs to help them compete with supermarkets."

I picked up on a worrying point from a Government press conference in early February, when one of the speakers said that COVID is unlikely to be totally eliminated so will have to be controlled in the community, much as has 'flu for many years now. Although it hasn't been thought necessary to put restrictions on pubs to control 'flu, my concern is that an attempt will be made to impose long term controls on pubs because of COVID.

Finally, at least we do appear to have some way forward. In memory of Captain Sir Tom Moore, let us hope that, eventually, 'tomorrow will be a good day'.

Tony Hedger

Who recognises one of these?

I hope that Andy Pirson does not mind but I thought that we would have an extra quiz in this edition. What is one of these?

The answer is given on page 35. Many thanks to John Paul Adams for the photo.



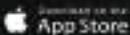
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BROMLEY BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The branch AGM will be held virtually, via Zoom, on Saturday 10 April 2021, from 3pm. Details will be e-mailed to branch members in due course and will be available on the Bromley CAMRA branch website, www.bromley.camra.org.uk/.

50 YEARS OF CAMRA

As I'm sure readers know, CAMRA was formed fifty years ago, on 16 March 1971, and celebrations are in progress accordingly. An important part of the celebrations is a history of the campaign, which has been commissioned from beer writer Laura Hadland. There is an advert for the book on page 45 and it will be reviewed in the next edition. On the great day itself, Laura hosted a live Zoom event with other beer writers and contributors to discuss her research and answer questions.



The day was also heavily celebrated on social media but how much better would it have been to have been able to celebrate in a pub, our natural home. The celebrations will continue with CAMRA, as a volunteer-led organisation,

celebrating Volunteers' Week (1 to 7 June) when we will be looking back over five decades of 'CAMRaderie'. Members will have the opportunity to say what volunteering has meant to them or find out what being a volunteer is about and the great benefits it brings.

Another way of celebrating will be to purchase an anniversary beer box. CAMRA has asked the UK's leading beer experts to choose their favourite beers and, from hundreds of suggestions, have settled on a box of the most popular beers, with a beer from each of CAMRA's newly updated beer styles. The box will contain eleven beers plus a limited edition 50th anniversary tasting glass. You will be able to pre-order a Good Beer Box from 31 March through the CAMRA shop (<https://shop1.camra.org.uk/>). The boxes will be delivered from 10 May so you should be able to finish them before we are allowed back inside pubs.

One gesture which was very much appreciated came in the form of a House of Commons Early Day Motion from Daisy Cooper, the MP for St Albans (where else!), which said, *'That this House congratulates the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), headquartered in St Albans, on their 50th anniversary; commends the organisation and its members for their tireless campaigning in support of the unique heritage of real ale, cider and perry found in the British Isles; further congratulates them for their successes over the last half century in protecting our brewing traditions and striving for greater quality and variety of cask ales; recognises their role in lobbying producers and government on behalf of consumers; celebrates their longstanding campaign to protect and enhance pubs and clubs; commends their ongoing work to provide information, education and training to all those with an interest in pubs, beer, cider and perry; extends thanks for CAMRA's advocacy on behalf of the pub*

CAMRA Greater London Region – branch websites

If you want to check on the areas covered by the branches shown below, please go to www.london.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=20208.

London Region:

www.london.camra.org.uk

London Pubs Group:

www.londonpubsgroup.camra.org.uk

Cider and Perry Campaigning:

www.camra.org.uk/cider

Young Members' Group:

<http://groups.google.com/group/london-camra-ym>

Bexley:

www.bexley.camra.org.uk

Bromley:

www.bromley.camra.org.uk

Croydon & Sutton:

www.croydon.camra.org.uk

East London & City:

www.pigsear.org.uk

Enfield & Barnet:

www.enfieldandbarnet.camra.org.uk

Kingston & Leatherhead:

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

North London:

www.northlondon.camra.org.uk

Richmond & Hounslow:

www.rhcamra.org.uk

South East London:

<https://sel.camra.org.uk>

South West Essex:

swessex.camra.org.uk

South West London:

<https://swl.camra.org.uk>

Watford & District:

www.watford.camra.org.uk

West London:

www.westlondon.camra.org.uk

West Middlesex:

www.westmiddx-camra.org.uk

and brewing sectors, especially during the Covid-19 crisis that continues to endanger our unique pub and brewing heritage; and wishes them every success for the next fifty years.' Hear Hear!

GOOD BEER GUIDE 2022

In normal times, CAMRA branches would have selected their entries for the Good Beer Guide 2022 by now. The announcement that, all being well, pubs will reopen on 17 May still allows time for the selection process to happen but the publication date has had to be put back to 28 October. It will be a challenge but the consensus is that it would be sad to break the 47 year sequence, especially when we are celebrating our 50th anniversary. It is also still important that we publish the Guide's unique breweries section. It will also help the pubs that are selected for inclusion to re-establish their trade. The 2022 GBG will not simply be a rehash of the 2021 edition. It will be as relevant and up to date as it can be, given the current situation.

BEER FESTIVALS UPDATE

The following decisions were all taken before the Prime Minister's announcement on 22 February. Given the conditional nature of the 'roadmap', which, of course, does not promise anything definite, the circumstances in which these decisions were taken have not really changed.

The Great British Beer Festival has had to be cancelled for the second year running. Organiser Catherine Tony said that the difficult decision has been made due to increasing uncertainty in the likelihood of large 'in person' events being able to take place in August and that 'we will have an alternative event in its place and will release more information on this once we have more details. We should also be back in 2022 and hope to make it even better than before!'

It had been announced the previous week that the Peterborough Beer Festival had also been cancelled. A spokesman said, "This has not been an easy decision to take, but is without doubt the correct decision at this time. Let me just put some perspective on this, maybe a brief explanation. It costs CAMRA around £250,000 to build the site and get the infrastructure into place, before we even consider the cost of purchasing beers and other wet sales products, or consider staffing costs or the range of other

behind the scenes activities. Many suppliers are national companies with long term commitments and overheads that require a substantial deposit from us in advance of the event taking place. We cannot take this financial risk given the current uncertainty. In addition, PCBF has to have the correct insurance cover in place but with COVID-19 conditions needing to be included into insurance policies the costs and risks are beyond our means at this time. No one can be sure where we may find ourselves in late August, but one thing for certain is that many uncertainties will still prevail, even in six months' time. The percentage of the public with up to date vaccinations, any new variants of the disease, group isolation/lockdowns and the possibility of legislation to close down events with little or no notice are factors that we have no control over."

Likewise, on 21 February, it was announced on the Berkshire Live website that Reading Beer Festival, scheduled to be held in May, had been cancelled. The organisers said, "As it takes many months of planning and due to COVID uncertainties, we very sadly won't be able to run RBF as usual in May, but we will be looking at possible ways to hold a small festival later in the summer. We hope to be able to make a further update around Easter." The very popular Isle of Wight Beer and Buses Weekend has also been cancelled. They also are thinking about a smaller event later in the year.

You will notice the reference to insurance. Whether or not it is a consequence of the Supreme Court's ruling on business continuity policies, I don't know, but it is now impossible to get event cancellation cover which includes a provision covering COVID. This may well have been why other events (such as the Glastonbury Festival) have also been cancelled. Among the rumours circulating before the Budget was one to the effect that the Government were going to introduce an insurance scheme for events but nothing came of it.

PUB, CLUB, AND CIDER AND PERRY PUBS OF THE YEAR COMPETITIONS

In February, the co-ordinators of these awards, given that pubs were unlikely to reopen before May, took the decision to cancel the super-regional and final, national, rounds of these competitions. They may still be run at branch and regional levels, if practical and at the discretion of regional directors.

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CAMRA's Golden Awards

As part of the celebrations for its 50th anniversary, CAMRA will be giving Golden Awards to fifty individuals, groups or businesses that have made a significant contribution to its aims during its existence. Those involved do not need to be CAMRA members and nominations were also open to both members and non-members. Nominations closed on 16 March (the anniversary itself).

The criteria for nomination were 'Pubs. Pints. People' as follows:

Pubs – nominate a pub or club that has stood the test of time; convivial, characterful, community-focused and consistently pouring great pints;

Pints – recognise a brewery or cider/perry producer that has gone above and beyond in delivering excellence or innovation over the years;

People – honour an individual, or a group of individuals, who have made a significant contribution to the achievement of CAMRA's campaigning aims.

The winners will be announced during the course of 2021 and be added to a Roll of Honour. The winners will, of course, be reported here.

The organiser of the awards, Lynn Atack, said, "As we look to celebrate 50 years of campaigning, it is worth reflecting on how far the beer and pubs industry has come since the organisation was launched in 1971. When CAMRA was founded, the market was dominated by just six regional brewers pushing tasteless, kegged beers onto consumers



because they were easier to store and serve. CAMRA was founded to demand something better and give a voice to the consumer. As a result, we have 2,000 brewers across the country today. The last year has been incredibly difficult for both the beer and pubs industries, and we are already seeing both in decline because of forced closures, restrictions, and curfews. To see such massive changes, in such a short period of time, demonstrates how relevant an organisation like CAMRA still is today. That's why it's more important than ever before to shout about the last 50 years of campaigning to demonstrate just what can be achieved when we come together in support of the beer and pubs industry. The Golden Awards aim to do just that by honouring the people, groups, breweries, cider producers, pubs and clubs that have really made a difference to the beer world since 1971."

COVID-19 update

HITTING THE ROAD

The Government's COVID-19 Response – Spring 2020 document strikes me as being more like a timetable than a roadmap, given the warning of cancellations. It is quite a convoluted document (68 pages of it!) and it has been well covered in the media so here I will focus on the provisions which affect us pub goers. All the stages occur at intervals of a minimum of five weeks and are subject to satisfactory progress with the following criteria:

- the vaccination programme continues to go to plan;
- there is a sufficient reduction in the number of people dying from the virus or needing hospital treatment;
- rates of infection are not likely to cause a surge in hospital admissions and put the NHS under pressure;
- there are no new coronavirus variants which fundamentally change the level of risk.

The first key date (**Step 1 Part 1**) was 8 March, when schools reopened. By the time you read this we should know if, as some had predicted, this caused a rise in the COVID infection rate and consequently the whole plan has been cast into doubt.

There were further changes scheduled for 29 March (**Step 1 Part 2**) which saw the end of the general 'stay at home' restriction, although many restrictions, including those on travel and staying away from home overnight, remained in place.

12 April (Step 2): pubs with gardens and open spaces may reopen but, as before, only with table service, contact tracing measures and customers restricted to groups of up to six from any number of households. Social distancing remains in force and there must be no mixing. Customers cannot order from the bar or drink standing up. It is expected that they will be able to use the pub's toilets but, again, as before, facemasks must be worn when moving around, although this is yet to be confirmed. The 10pm curfew and the substantial meal requirements have definitely been dropped. If any marquees or similar structures are in use, more than half of the sides must be open (the same requirement as for smoking shelters).

The same rules apply to restaurants. The 'fast track' temporary licensing of pavement tables will be in operation again. As mentioned in the Introduction (page 3), at this point pubs will also be allowed to sell take-away alcohol once more. Non-essential businesses can reopen at the same time. This includes hairdressers and so, should you need a tidy up before returning to the pub, you can get one.

17 May (Step 3): pubs and restaurants can allow customers inside. The previous regulations as above continue, although some changes may be made to allow people to make what the Government calls 'informed personal decisions'. Groups of up to 30 customers will be permitted outside.

Restrictions on stays in hotels will end, although travel is still to be kept to a minimum. Large events will be permitted,

inside and outdoor, but with restrictions on the numbers attending.

Starting in April, some limited pilot events will be permitted to establish the rules for further, larger ones.

21 June (Stage 4): legal restrictions as regards social contact will end but, nearer the time, the Government will be issuing revised guidance on continuing to minimise the risk of transmission. Consequently, we might not have seen the end of table service and the like. Nightclubs may open.

Happily, this time, brewers and other suppliers have plenty of notice to have beer ready for the full reopening of pubs, although it is not impossible that the plan might be halted at just a week's notice.

There seems little scope for beer festivals even at this stage, unless they are relatively small and they can provide table service. What can be organised later in the year will depend on what rules are made following the assessment of the pilot events.

REACTION FROM THE TRADE

In response to the various advance briefings, Kate Nicholls, the Chief Executive of UKHospitality said, *"Keeping indoor areas closed until May and only allowing the use of outdoor areas is going to be economically unviable for many businesses. If this is the plan for reopening, it will see more businesses going under. We need a plan to get pubs open safely more quickly, otherwise the sector is in real danger of even more failures and job losses."* Tim Martin, the Chairman of JD Wetherspoon, told the *Mail Online*, *"These decisions are made by ministers with no experience of business or empathy for business. In my 41 years in business, it's the least consultative and most authoritarian Government I've experienced."*

Earlier in February, a group of pub sector executives, led by Patrick Dardis of Young's and Kevin Georger of St Austell, resigned from the weekly forum run by Paul Scully, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Mr Dardis told the *Morning Advertiser*, *"We are exasperated at the obvious lack of interest and respect we are getting from this Government. It is abundantly clear that they are just playing politics under the guise of consulting. We are shocked and appalled that the government is basing its decisions to keep the great British pub closed on unfounded and unproven statistics."* Addressing the Prime Minister, he added, *"Please do the right thing and demonstrate strong leadership when our industry needs it most."*

There had previously been some bad feeling when the job of representing the hospitality sector on the Government's Build Back Better Council, set up to advise on economic recovery and growth after the COVID crisis has passed, had been given to the chief executive of the restaurant chain Prezzo.

PUB CLOSURES

According to an analysis published in the *Morning Advertiser* on 22 January, the number of licensed premises in the UK fell by almost 6,000 during 2020. This was across the full hospitality sector. It compares to 2,171 in 2019. The 2020 figure was made up of 9,930 closures, net of 3,955

new openings. The attrition rate for pubs was between 4% and 5% but for the 'casual dining' sector it was almost 10%. A number of restaurant chains closed or reduced their number of outlets, leaving a lot of gaps in high streets.

It occurs to me that while many pubs will reopen on 17 May, trade will be low, to begin with at least, and their accumulated debts (deferred rent, support loans, etc) will catch up with them. I'd like to think that if a pub can hang on until Christmas/New Year, it will probably survive. Let's hope that there will not be a third surge.

WITHOUT SUBSTANCE

The circumstances under which the infamous 'substantial meal' requirement was dropped aren't entirely clear. Sacha Lord, the Night-time Economy Adviser for Greater Manchester, had taken legal action against the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, claiming that the rule was discriminatory in that it showed *'an ignorant disregard for the most disadvantaged or oldest in society who are unable to afford meals just to be able to socialise with friends, see loved ones or simply feel part of their community'*. As quoted in the *Morning Advertiser* on 1 March, the High Court ruling was that, *"It is arguable there is no scientific evidence to support the distinction that has been drawn between the service of alcohol in accordance with the table meal exemption and serving alcohol in other circumstances. It is arguable that a policy which permits drinking alcohol with a meal but does not permit such premises to open if they do not serve a substantial table meal discriminates against people from a non-white or BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) background."* The Secretary of State did not file his defence until 25 February. He referred to the Prime Minister's announcement three days earlier and said that the regulation had been dropped.

There was also a judicial review of the 10pm curfew which was heard on 3 December but I have not been able to find out what happened there. In any event, that has also been discarded.

TABLE BOOKINGS

Many pubs and brewery taprooms require tables to be booked for the outside areas reopening on 12 April because of the anticipated demand.

Indeed, a lot of them are already reporting that they are fully booked. We all know that the table service requirement is because of the COVID hygiene regulations and not necessarily the pub's choice. If you book a table and then find you cannot go, please let the pub know. It's only fair to both the pub and your fellow drinkers who could take your place.

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There was a budget on 3 March. As a continuation of its #PubsMatter campaign, CAMRA asked its members to e-mail their MPs in advance of the day, asking the MPs to lobby the Chancellor of the Exchequer for help for our beleaguered pubs, clubs, brewers and cider makers. Specifically, CAMRA wanted to see:

- A lower rate of duty on draught beer, to encourage people back into pubs when they reopen;
- An extension to the VAT reduction, and for it to apply to alcohol sales;
- The cancellation of business rates for another year;
- The furlough scheme extended until every pub is properly open again.

So what did we get? Well, not a lot really. Duty on alcohol was simply frozen for a second year (see below). There was no change to the system itself, although it is under review.

It had been announced in advance that the Government had no plans to extend the reduction in VAT beyond 31 March, but it was in fact extended to 30 September. It will then increase to 12.5% and return to the full 20% rate from April 2022. It was not however extended to alcohol sales and so continues to be of little help to wet-led pubs.

Similarly, business rates for the hospitality sector will continue to be frozen but only until the end of June. From 1 July business rates will be charged at one-third and will return to the full rate in April 2022, although it is possible that a new system will be introduced then.

The furlough scheme is being extended once again but only until the end of September. Staff who are on furlough will still have 80% of their wages paid by the Government but, as previously, the employer's contribution will increase; this time to 10% for July and to 20% for August and September. We can hope that the majority of pub staff will have been recalled by then, although redundancies cannot be ruled out.

Overall, the financial situation for privately owned and tenanted pubs is going to be very tight, especially if they have loans to repay. The large pub owning companies will benefit from some changes to Corporation Tax. The increase to 25% from 2023 will only apply to profits of more than £250,000. Anything below that will still be taxed at 19%. There are also some generous allowances for investments.

CAMRA's National Chairman, Nik Antona, commented, *"Freezing alcohol duty is obviously better than a rise. However, CAMRA had hoped to see the Chancellor announce a cut in duty on beer served on tap in pubs and social clubs to benefit consumers and help the great British pub recover and thrive in the difficult months and years ahead by being able to compete with supermarket alcohol. The Government's commitment to review alcohol duties in the coming months is welcome. CAMRA will continue to call for a lower rate of duty for beer served in pubs; an option available to the Government now we have left the European Union. Reducing tax on beer served in pubs and social clubs would encourage responsible drinking in a supervised, community setting, as well as boosting jobs and local economies, helping consumers and benefiting pubs and licensees. Cutting VAT as pubs begin to reopen, and reducing it until April next year, means they can now start benefiting from that cut but CAMRA believes this VAT cut should be extended to alcohol so that traditional locals that*

don't serve food can benefit too. The extension of furlough until September and new grants of up to £18,000 are very welcome. However, pubs are unlikely to be able to fully reopen at pre-COVID trading levels due to outside space and then table service only indoors restrictions. The beer and pubs sector will need further support over the coming months, over and above new loans, to help them get back on their feet until there is a full and proper reopening and they can trade at full capacity. Extending the business rates holiday until the end of June will help keep the wolves from the door for many English pubs, with the two-thirds reduction for the rest of the financial year a welcome step. However, given how tough it will be for many pubs we believe the 100% cut in business rates needs to be extended for a full twelve months, as has already happened in Scotland."

The Government also announced the creation of the Community Ownership Fund. See page 17 for details.

RESTART GRANTS

The new grants that Nik mentions are specifically for businesses that have been forced to close during lockdown. Non-essential shops can claim up to £6,000 but pubs and restaurants are entitled to up to £18,000 to compensate for their later reopening. It might also help with the cost of perishable stock that had to be thrown away when the third lockdown was introduced. The grants will be funded by the Government but administered by local councils, starting in April.

There have been complaints about the payment of locally administered grants being delayed. On 3 March, the representative body for the London borough councils, London Councils, commented, *"Unfortunately, boroughs face a number of barriers to getting grants out, which we would like Government to help us address. These include the complexity of the grants system – there have been 12 different grants announced since November 2020 with different criteria – and delays in publishing essential guidance on allocating funding"*.

There will also be a new round of recovery loans starting from 6 April. These are operated by the major high street banks and are intended for larger businesses. They range from £25,000 to £10 million and are guaranteed up to 80% by the Government.

TIME TO PAY

On 5 February, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a change in the terms of the Bounce Back Loan Scheme under which some 1.4 million small firms had borrowed a total of £45 billion. The maximum loan was £50,000 and was free of interest for the first year. The BBC reported that the repayment period could now be extended from six to ten years and payment holidays would be permitted. The Chancellor said that he wanted to give firms a 'breathing space to get back on their feet'. The National Audit Office had expressed concern that up to two thirds of the loans might not be repaid because of company failures.

ALCOHOL DUTY

Prior to the Budget, 68 Conservative MPs wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking him to cut beer duty. One of them was quoted in the *Morning Advertiser* as saying,

"The best way for (pubs) to build back better after this crisis is to get people back into pubs and the best encouragement for publicans and the public is to see real action on beer duty." But is this correct? Does cutting beer duty actually help pubs? It is breweries that pay beer duty, not pubs, and it is part of the buy-in price that pubs pay for their beer. That is unlikely to be reduced in these circumstances.

Back in October 2018, Geoff Strawbridge, CAMRA's Regional Director for Greater London, contributed the following article. The logic has stood the test of time, although the amounts involved are out of date. Some of you may have seen this recently on Facebook (although neither Geoff nor *London Drinker* were asked or credited).

WHO TAKES HOW MUCH FROM THE PRICE THAT I PAY FOR MY PINT - A WORKED EXAMPLE

For a firkin of my favourite session bitter, the price paid to the brewer by the pub owning business (POB) via the SIBA Beerflex scheme is £57.87 plus VAT. That £57.87 includes £16.50 beer duty at the 50% rate applicable under Small Brewers' Duty Relief. The price paid to the POB by the tied house where I drink that beer is £120.52 plus VAT; so the POB takes a 'wet rent' on that firkin of £62.65. This particular session bitter lasts to well down the cask, so let's assume for the purposes of this calculation that the pub can get 70 pints out of each firkin (very conservative, I know); so the POB profit per pint is around 90p.

I pay £4.40 in that tied house for that pint (I read that £4.44 is the London average price of a pint these days); so 20.3% of what I pay in this instance goes to the POB, 16.7% goes to the Government in VAT, 13.4% goes to the brewer and just 5.4% goes (via the brewer but not included in that 13.4%) to the Government in beer duty. The remaining 44.2% has to cover the dry rent paid to the POB, the business rates, staff wages, maintenance and an income for the publican which is likely to be well below the minimum living wage.

And of course beer duty has no less impact – actually proportionately more! – on the price of discounted beer in supermarkets.

Why not do the same sums for your favourite beer in your pub?

Geoff Strawbridge

Normally, *London Drinker* is distributed by CAMRA volunteers to some 1,200 pubs and clubs in and around Greater London and is supplied direct to all of their outlets in the area by J D Wetherspoons. This will be resumed as soon as possible.

A link to the on-line version is e-mailed to all CAMRA members in Greater London for whom we have e-mail addresses.

If you know of a CAMRA member who has not received the e-mail but would like to, they need to change the settings on their membership record. They need to sign in, go to 'My Membership/edit membership details' and opt into receiving electronic communications.

Alternatively, they can call the CAMRA Office on 01727 867201.

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PUBS WANTED

In the introduction to the last edition, I said that I foresaw that there would still be people who want to join or return to the trade as well as small pub chains and breweries who wish to expand and that there needed to be pubs available for them to do so. It appears that I was correct although I didn't see it happening this way and I'm not sure how welcome it is. As detailed in the Trade News section (page 28), various private equity investment companies are taking an interest (in both senses) in our pubs. In most circumstances, investment is welcome but I'm not sure here. Private equity operations normally expect a quick return on their investments and so, given that it may well be several years before what is left of the UK pub trade is fully back in business, the suspicion must be that they see their opportunity in property development. The changes to the planning system which are due to be made later this year could become very significant.

BUSINESS RATES REVIEW

Clues had been given as regards the partial continuation of the business rates holiday. Property advisors, the Altus Group, as reported in the *Morning Advertiser* (19 February), said that the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Jesse Norman, had asked local authorities, to 'consider issuing business rates bills after the Chancellor has set out his plan at the Budget' because 'it is in the public interest to avoid any potential confusion for businesses and to avoid the cost of having to re-bill businesses in light of any measures that may be included in the Budget'. The latest estimate from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is that the business rates holiday for 2020/2021 (in England only) cost £11.06 billion.

Irrespective of what the Chancellor did in this budget, it has long been generally agreed that the system for charging for non-residential property needs a full review. The Government announced in the last budget that a report was to be commissioned and evidence was invited last July, with the report due about now. According to the *Morning Advertiser* (as above) however, this has been postponed until the autumn. An interim report is due on 21 March but that may come too late to be included in this edition.

PUBS CODE NEWS

The Pubs Code Adjudicator, Fiona Dickie, has issued some timely clarification in the *Morning Advertiser* as to how the code applies when pubs change hands. If a tied pub is acquired by one of the pub owning businesses (POB) already regulated by the PCA, the tenant is covered by the code from the date of sale. If however a pub is purchased by an unregulated company from a regulated one, the tenant immediately loses the right to a Market Rent Option (MRO) but other code protection continues until the next rent review or the end of the tenancy, whichever comes first. If an unregulated POB acquires enough pubs to take it over the 500 pub threshold, so long as it continues to own more than 500 pubs for at least six months, its tenants become protected by the code from the start of the next financial year. If the pubs involved were purchased from a regulated POB, the tenants would temporarily lose their rights under

the code, including the MRO, from the date of sale to the start of the next financial year.

The PCA has had a further disagreement with Heineken owned Star Pubs & Bars (see page 31).

Star, incidentally, who have reportedly allowed tenants around £62 million in rent reductions during the COVID crisis, has extended its 90% rent concession arrangement, originally due to end on 1 March, to 16 May. From 17 May the reduction will be reduced to 10% and, from 21 June, full rent becomes payable again. This is in line with the projected reopening dates for pubs and applies to England only.



SHORTAGE OF CANS

Happily this problem does not appear to have 'crossed the pond'. Apparently, beer consumption in the USA increased last year to such an extent that, by the end of 2020, there was a national shortage of cans. 60% of beer sold in the USA is in cans. As reported in *Beer Business Daily*, the Ball Corporation, the biggest producer of cans in the world, said that they were short by ten billion cans. The shortage was largely caused by a lack of manufacturing capacity rather than any shortage of aluminium. The popularity of the new 'hard seltzer' drinks and a move away from single use plastics also contributed to the shortage. The biggest impact, predictably, was felt by craft brewers because the large users such as Pepsi, Coke, Anheuser-Busch and Molson Coors have preferential contracts with the producers.

NO NEW STARS

Understandably, given that they have barely been open, no new pubs were awarded Michelin stars this year. There are currently sixteen of them in the UK and Ireland, with the Harwood Arms in Fulham (SW6 1QP) being the only one in Greater London. Not too far away however is the Hand & Flowers in Marlow, Buckinghamshire (SL7 2BP), operated by Tom Kerridge, which is the only pub in the country with two stars.

DISAPPEARING BEER

A pair of strange stories. The news website, *India.com*, has reported that a total of around 29,000 litres of confiscated alcohol has disappeared from 25 out of the 30 police stations in Faridabad, the capital of Haryana state in India. The courts had ordered that it be destroyed but it disappeared before that could happen. Most of the alcohol was in plastic bottles and the website claims that the police are putting the blame on rats.

In an even more bizarre case, three breweries in Mar del

Plata in Argentina, Heller, La Paloma and Baum, joined together to carry out an experiment into aging beer underwater. Last November, barrels containing 600 litres of beer were placed in a steel cage aboard a shipwreck 20 metres down on the seabed. Sadly, when they went to retrieve it in early March, it had gone. The owner of Baum brewery, Juan Pablo Vincent, told the local paper, *La Capital*, "It was a very educational project: we knew it was being

done in other parts of the world but never before had it been done here and so deep. We lost money but more than anything, what bothers us is that this project had sentimental value and they took away the possibility for us to learn from it." Vandalism is suspected, which is sad because the proceeds were promised to the local natural sciences museum. They are going to try again.

My thanks to John Cryne for alerting me to these items.

Protecting London's pubs

Early March saw the publication of the Mayor's London Plan 2021. This document, which informs planning applications across the capital, recognises that "pubs are a unique and intrinsic part of British culture" and is vital to protecting local pubs. Reproduced in full below is Policy HC7, *Protection of public houses*, which cross refers to Policy D13, *Agent of change*.

In securing the adoption and promotion of these policies, CAMRA members across London have worked with the Mayor and his staff for years in order that our local pubs and social clubs are adequately protected in the planning system and can remain at the heart of our communities. We are delighted to see them finally published in the new Plan.

Boroughs are urged to support local pubs and to protect them from demolition or conversion to housing or other uses, as well as to resist any developments that would make pubs unviable and to consider replacing them where they are lost as part of redevelopment schemes. These policies should really help us to save our locals – particularly from housing developers looking to seize on the pandemic to suggest that pubs are no longer viable businesses.

CAMRA will continue to work with the Mayor and London borough councils to protect and promote our community pubs and clubs, bringing people together for companionship and good health.

Geoff Strawbridge

CAMRA Greater London Regional Director

New London Plan Policy HC7 - Protecting Public Houses

A In Development Plan Documents, town centre strategies, and planning decisions, boroughs should:

(1) protect public houses where they have a heritage, economic, social or cultural value to local communities, or where they contribute to wider policy objectives for town centres, night-time economy areas, Cultural Quarters and Creative Enterprise Zones

(2) support proposals for new public houses where they would stimulate town centres, Cultural Quarters, the night-time economy and mixed-use development, taking into account potential negative impacts.

B Applications that propose the loss of public houses with heritage, cultural, economic or social value should be refused unless there is authoritative marketing evidence that demonstrates that there is no realistic prospect of the building being used as a pub in the foreseeable future.

C Development proposals for redevelopment of associated accommodation, facilities or development within the curtilage of the public house that would compromise the operation or viability of the public house use should be resisted.

7.7.1 Pubs are a unique and intrinsic part of British culture.

Many pubs are steeped in history and are part of London's built, social and cultural heritage. Whether alone, or as part of a cultural mix of activities or venues, pubs are often an integral part of an area's day, evening and night-time culture and economy. An individual pub can also be at the heart of a community's social life often providing a local meeting place, a venue for entertainment or a focus for social gatherings. More recently, some pubs have started providing library services and parcel collection points as well as food to increase their offer and appeal to a wider clientele.

7.7.2 Through their unique and varied roles, pubs can contribute to the regeneration of town centres, Cultural

Quarters and local tourism, as well as providing a focus for existing and new communities, and meeting the needs of particular groups, such as the LGBT+ and BAME communities. However, **pubs are under threat from closure** and redevelopment pressures, with nearly 1,200 pubs in London lost in 15 years. The recent changes to the Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development Order) (England) (2015) have however, removed permitted development rights that previously allowed pubs and bars to change planning Use Class to shops, financial and professional services, restaurants and cafés without prior planning approval. This change in legislation offers greater protection for pubs and also incorporates a permitted development right that allows pub owners to introduce a new mixed use (A3/A4) which

Protecting London's pubs

should provide flexibility to enhance a food offer beyond what was previously allowed as ancillary to the main pub use.

7.7.3 Many pubs are popular because they have intrinsic character. This is often derived from their architecture, interior and exterior fittings, their long-standing use as a public house, their history, especially as a place of socialising and entertainment catering for particular groups, their ties to local sports and other societies, or simply their role as a meeting place for the local community. In developing strategies and policies to enhance and retain pubs, boroughs should consider the **individual character of pubs** in their area and the broad range of characteristics, functions and activities that give pubs their particular value, including opportunities for flexible working.

7.7.4 **New pubs**, especially as part of a redevelopment or regeneration scheme can provide a cultural and social focus for a neighbourhood, particularly where they offer a diverse range of services, community functions and job opportunities. However, it is important when considering proposals for new pubs that boroughs take account of issues such as cumulative impact zones, the Agent of Change principle (see *Policy D12 Agent of Change*) and any potential negative impacts. Boroughs should consider the replacement of existing pubs in redevelopment and regeneration schemes, where the loss of an existing pub is considered acceptable.

7.7.5 Boroughs should take a positive approach to designating pubs as an **Asset of Community Value (ACV)** when nominated by a community group. Listing a pub as an ACV gives voluntary groups and organisations the opportunity to bid for it if it is put up for sale. The 'right to bid' is not a right to buy and although owners of the asset have to consider bids from community groups, they do not have to accept them. An ACV listing does, nevertheless, give communities an increased chance to save a valued pub or other local facility. Boroughs should consider the listing of a pub as an ACV as a material consideration when assessing applications for a change of use and consider compulsory purchase orders where appropriate.

7.7.6 When **assessing whether a pub has heritage, cultural, economic or social value**, boroughs should take into

consideration a broad range of characteristics, including whether the pub:

- a. is in a Conservation Area
- b. is a locally- or statutorily-listed building
- c. has a licence for entertainment, events, film, performances, music or sport
- d. operates or is closely associated with a sports club or team
- e. has rooms or areas for hire
- f. is making a positive contribution to the night-time economy
- g. is making a positive contribution to the local community
- h. is catering for one or more specific group or community.

7.7.7 To demonstrate authoritative **marketing evidence** that there is no realistic prospect of a building being used as a pub in the foreseeable future, boroughs should require proof that all reasonable measures have been taken to market the pub to other potential operators. The pub should have been marketed as a pub for at least 24 months at an agreed price following an independent valuation, and in a condition that allows the property to continue functioning as a pub. The business should have been offered for sale locally and London-wide in appropriate publications and through relevant specialised agents.

7.7.8 Many pubs built on more than one floor include ancillary uses such as function rooms and staff accommodation. Potential profit from development makes the conversion of upper pub floors to residential use extremely attractive to owners. Beer gardens and other outside space are also at risk of loss to residential development. The **change to residential use** of these areas can limit the operational flexibility of the pub, make it less attractive to customers, and prevent ancillary spaces being used by the local community. It can also threaten the viability of a pub through increased complaints about noise and other issues from new residents. Boroughs should resist proposals for redevelopment of associated accommodation, facilities or development within the curtilage of the public house that would compromise the operation or viability of a public house. Where such proposals would not compromise the operation or viability of the public house, developers must put in place measures that would mitigate the impacts of noise for new and subsequent residents (see *Policy D13 Agent of change*).

Campaign to reform Regulation 7

On 22 March, with the support of CAMRA, the Forum of British Pubs (FBP) has launched a campaign to 'Reform Regulation 7' of the Pubs Code.

Aimed at protecting tied pub tenants, Regulation 7 acknowledges situations where there has been an unforeseen fundamental change in the trade of a pub, enabling the tenant to have its rent reassessed to help the pub to remain viable. Rents are usually reviewed every five years, but the Regulation states that when a 'trigger event' has occurred, the tenant can accelerate the review.

However, that regulation defines a 'trigger event' as one that 'must be unlikely to impact all pubs in England and

Wales', and so the large pub owning groups covered by the Code can claim that COVID should not be regarded as a trigger and therefore ignore requests for early rent assessments.

The Campaign calls on both the Small Businesses Minister and the Pub Code Adjudicator to support an amendment to the Code such that Regulation 7 can be invoked by an event that does indeed have the capacity to affect all pubs, such as the current pandemic.

Founder of the Forum of British Pubs, Dave Mountford, explained, "It is clearly in the country's interest for pubs, currently impacted so badly by the COVID crisis that they

Campaign to reform Regulation 7

may well not open again, to have the opportunity of a rent reassessment right now. But the conditions set out in Regulation 7 of the 2016 Pubs Code give the pubcos the ability to reject this. In conjunction with CAMRA we are seeking an immediate amendment to the Regulation so that COVID is regarded as a 'trigger event' which could well save many of the 10,500 tied tenant pubs in our communities."

A group of 25 MPs led by Tracy Brabin (Member for Batley and Spen), and the Labour Party candidate for West Yorkshire Mayor, has made the argument clear in writing to Small Business Minister, Paul Scully MP. "What should have been the lifeline for tied pubs across the country is no more than

a bad insurance policy, one that never pays out no matter how deserving the claim. By simply removing this one line, tied pub tenants could pay rent proportionate to their current turnover, and would stand a fighting chance of achieving profitability during the incredibly difficult months ahead."

In association with the Forum of Private Business, FBP was set up last year specifically to campaign for fair treatment of tenants in the regulated pub company sector, to get a united voice heard and positive changes made. It has a website: www.forumofbritishpubs.com.

Geoff Strawbridge

Community Ownership Fund

The creation of the Community Ownership Fund (COF) was one of the more interesting parts of the Budget and, given the state of the pub trade, it could be one that has the most lasting effect. I should make it clear however that it is not intended only to be used for pubs. The plan is that communities can use it to buy a variety of assets at risk, such as sports grounds, theatres and music venues and even local shops. It forms part of the Government's 'Levelling Up' agenda and places where community assets could make the most difference will be given preference. Both that and property prices will, I suspect, limit its effectiveness in London.

Introducing the project, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, "Pubs and sports clubs are the heart and soul of our local towns and villages; they're the glue that keeps us together. This fund will help to ensure vital local institutions aren't lost to those who treasure them most."

The Government will be putting £150 million into the COF, which will operate across all four nations of the UK. Communities can bid for grants of up to £250,000 to take over community assets which are at risk of being lost and run them as community owned businesses. This can be increased to £1 million where sports facilities are involved. The first round of bids will open in June, when full details of the bidding process will be published. The scheme will run initially for four years.

Bids are likely to be restricted to community and voluntary organisations which have some sort of formal constitution and structure in place. It is specifically aimed at these groups and

local councils, including parish councils, are not eligible. Those making bids will need to prove that the project will be sustainable under community ownership.

Now for the bad news. The grants will be made on a 'matching funds' basis. The community group will need to raise a substantial amount of the money required themselves and this will then be matched from the fund. Some finance for planning and organising the bid may however be made available.

CAMRA welcomed the announcement. National Chairman Nik Antona said, "Our locals are vital parts of our social fabric, bringing communities together and helping to tackle loneliness and social isolation. They deserve to be protected as community assets, which is why this announcement of new funding from the Chancellor is great news for the great British pub. Having enough funding can make all the difference when a community group is campaigning to save and take over the running of their local pub. As well as this new funding announcement, the Government and local councils must make sure that pub protection policies in the planning system are properly enforced so that developers can't exploit the pandemic. This would also give communities an opportunity and the time they need to use the new Community Ownership Fund to bid to take over the running of their local pub or social club if it is threatened with closure, change of use or demolition."

Anyone interested in saving their local pub can find detailed guides with all the tools campaigners need on CAMRA's website: www.camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal/.

Community Pub Hero Awards

These awards have been organised jointly by PubAid and the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group (APBBG), with sponsorship from the drinks company Matthew Clark. PubAid is a trade body, set up to promote pubs as a force for good in their communities and highlighting that every year (when they can) pubs raise over £100 million for charities and £40 million for grassroots sport. The awards, formerly the Charity Pub of the Year, are in their third year and this time have taken on a different focus.

Pubs could nominate themselves or be nominated by their MP and there were 115 entries in all. The judges used criteria such as providing vital supplies for residents, cooking hot meals for the vulnerable or easing social isolation to reduce this to a shortlist of ten. The winner will be announced later in the spring.

There was one London pub on the shortlist, the Angel & Crown, a Fuller's house in Richmond. Their nomination was as follows, 'The team at this Fuller's pub, led by licensee Nick Botting, jumped into action as soon as lockdown was announced, providing hot food and drinks, clothing and toiletries to anyone in need, as well as pairing with local homeless organisation SPEAR to help find accommodation for people. At the height of the first lockdown, they were serving up to 70 people a day, initially funded by Nick but, as demand grew, local residents stepped up to continue the service. In total, the Angel & Crown served 5,000 hot meals, 6,000 cups of tea and 7,000 bottles of water to local people in need. We wish them every success!'

For details see <https://whatpub.com/pubs/HOU/6767/angel-crown-richmond>.

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Where I give a current description of a pub in this column, it is based on how it used to be, in expectation of it being the same when it reopens.

Alliance, West Hampstead: the private owner of this pub has already converted the upper floors into seven flats and has now submitted an application to Camden Council to convert part of the ground floor into two one bedroom flats. The development would displace the existing kitchen and function room with them both moving to the basement. Regulars and local residents groups are objecting to the plans because they believe that a windowless function room will not be attractive and a basement kitchen could be difficult to operate in a food led pub. A spokesman for the Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Development Forum told the *Ham & High* newspaper, "The thing about the Alliance is that it's a pub that does really cater for the West Hampstead community. I have been to funerals, birthday parties, all sorts of meetings there, it's that sort of pub. We would be very concerned about anything that puts that at risk, and anything that makes it less viable as a pub." The owner, on the other hand, believes that the changes will make the pub more viable and that, as he told the *Camden New Journal*, "The creation of two additional residential units accords with the council's aim of maximising the supply of new housing in the borough." If the plans were refused then the pub could close. The pub was listed as an Asset of Community Value in 2016 and the Forum, along with the Fordwych Residents Association, will be seeking a renewal.

Black Cap, Camden: this iconic LBGTQ+ venue closed in April 2015 but its supporters, the Black Cap Foundation, commendably continue to lobby for its reopening. The property is an Asset of Community Value and plans for redevelopment have been refused by Camden Council. The situation regarding the ownership is currently unclear but the Foundation hope that a community owned company will reopen it and restore it to its former glory. In the meantime, when allowed, they continue to hold weekly meetings at a local community centre.

Brewdog & Friends: the Scottish brewery and pub company has acquired the Grade II-listed red brick former London Hydraulic Power Company power station in Wapping with a view to turning it into a brewpub. The provisional name for the project is Brewdog & Friends. It is a large site which was until recently used as an arts project and then an events venue. It dates back to 1890 and was originally steam powered but was later converted to electricity. Much of the original equipment remains in place. It stands opposite the famous Prospect of Whitby pub.

The story of the London Hydraulic Power Company is fascinating in itself and well worth some research. It was a particularly impressive sight when one of their high pressure mains fractured.

Crown, Willesden Green: a curious case. The lease of this pub was inherited by Greene King following their takeover of the Spirit Group. The freehold is owned by the Wellington Pub Company. The pub ceased trading in 2008 and is now

in a very sorry state. In November, planning agents acting for Greene King gave notice to Brent Council that the property was to be demolished. The Council refused to accept this because, being a public house, full planning permission is required, not just notice of demolition. This action has presumably been prompted by the lease coming to an end next year because, according to what the planning agents said in their application, the lease requires that the site be handed back in its 'original state as a clear site'. The procedural issue is unlikely to stop the eventual demolition of the pub, given its state of repair, but it is likely to increase Greene King's costs considerably.

Dodo micropub, Hanwell: unable to hold a fourth birthday party because of lockdown, the Dodo instead suggested that the Hanwell Massive and other customers donate the money that they would have spent on beer to charity. The nominated organisation is Refuge, the domestic violence charity. This acknowledges the worrying increase in this crime arising from lockdown. If you want to participate, their fundraising page is www.justgiving.com/fundraising/The-Dodo-Micropub. The Dodo ended their Facebook post with the encouraging message 'Our good times will return!'

Gunnersbury, Chiswick: formerly the John Bull, a music pub popular with bikers, this Chiswick High Road landmark is up for sale at an asking price of £5.3 million. The upper floors have already been converted into five flats and the particulars indicate that it is being sold with a view to further residential development for which planning permission was obtained last May. This involves extending the existing rear extension and adding an additional storey. The also suggest that there is potential for residential development of the ground floor and basement, subject to further planning permission.

King Edward VII, Highams Park: it is not clear when this site, 2 Winchester Road, ceased to be a pub and until two years or so ago it was a double glazing shop, painted in a rather garish colour. All being well, this will change shortly following local wine and craft beer retailers, Vinoramica, obtaining planning permission to turn it into a shop and tasting room, allowing consumption on the premises. They are also planning to create some outside seating areas. There will be no hot food but they will serve bar snacks and cheese and charcuterie plates. This is an expansion of Vinoramica's existing business. They already have a shop in the Broadway (E4 9LQ) and operate a substantial on-line delivery service for both wine and beer (<https://www.vinoramica.com/shop>). In their planning application they said, 'We are firm believers that having a shared space to drink and socialise safely is a key element in developing community cohesion' and 'The intention is to bring the site closer to its original usage and recreate the original character of the building, in a way that is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area'.

Lamb, Holloway: many pubs have launched crowdfunding appeals to help them through the COVID crisis and sadly, we



simply don't have room to list them all. I thought however that this instance was worth a mention because of its unique nature. The Lamb is a music pub and, as reported in the *Islington Tribune* (16 January), twenty two of the bands that play at the pub decided to help out by producing an album called *Hatful of Holloway*. The pub's landlord told the *Tribune*, "I am overwhelmed by the fact that bands and artists from north London who have either played in the pub or have drunk in here have come together to make this. Holloway Road has a rich musical heritage and it is brilliant to be able to in some small way celebrate that." The pub also featured traditional singalongs on Thursday nights and is popular with Arsenal supporters on match days. Originally the tap for the Highbury Brewery, it was once one of David Bruce's brewpubs, the Flounder & Firkin. It is locally listed.

Montague Arms, Peckham: this is an imposing corner building which was originally a Truman's house and it still bears their brown and cream signage. The Monty, as it is known locally, was a significant music venue until, against significant local opposition, it was closed in 2018. It had also held regular LGBTQ+ events. It was then reopened as a comfortable food led operation but has since closed again. It is now in danger of being demolished and replaced by a building twice the height containing nine flats, some office space (Use Class B1) and an area which is said to be a replacement pub. It is however only 100 square metres so might be more suited to a coffee shop or food outlet. As usual, the developers claim that the pub is not viable but have included space for a smaller replacement for its 'communal value'. Local councillors will be opposing the plan and, in an open letter quoted in the *Southwark News*, said, "The post-COVID world will need to rebuild our society. Pubs and entertainment are a vital part of restoring social interaction that we've lost since the first lockdown. As such,

we will be objecting to the planning application to demolish the pub. We will also ask that the decision goes to a planning committee of elected councillors if it is not refused by officers."

Princess Royal, Brentford: Fuller's have closed this pub permanently. It is up for sale but there is no evidence to support the local rumour that it was being sold to Tesco's. Between 2005 and 2010 the pub was leased by Brentford Football Club whose Griffin Park ground was famous for having a pub at each corner; the Princess Royal was one of them. Brentford left there for the new Community Stadium near Kew Bridge at the start of the current season and Fuller's believe that the pub is no longer viable because it is too far away for supporters to continue using it. Planning permission has been granted for Griffin Park to be redeveloped as housing, incorporating an open space the size of the former football pitch. If the residents of the new development need a pub then they are not too far from the Black Dog Beer House, Richmond & Hounslow CAMRA branch's current Pub of the Year.

Star, Upper Holloway: we have been notified by the Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Forum that they have succeeded in having the pub listed as an Asset of Community Value. The pub, formerly the Totnes Castle, is primarily food-led but serves a rotating range of real ales and also stages music sessions and other entertainment.

Sydney Arms, Lewisham: this pub was closed some ten years ago and was extended and converted into sixteen flats in 2015. According to the *London News Online* website (11 February), it was purchased in January as accommodation for rough sleepers by Lewisham Council using funds from the Greater London Authority's Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme.

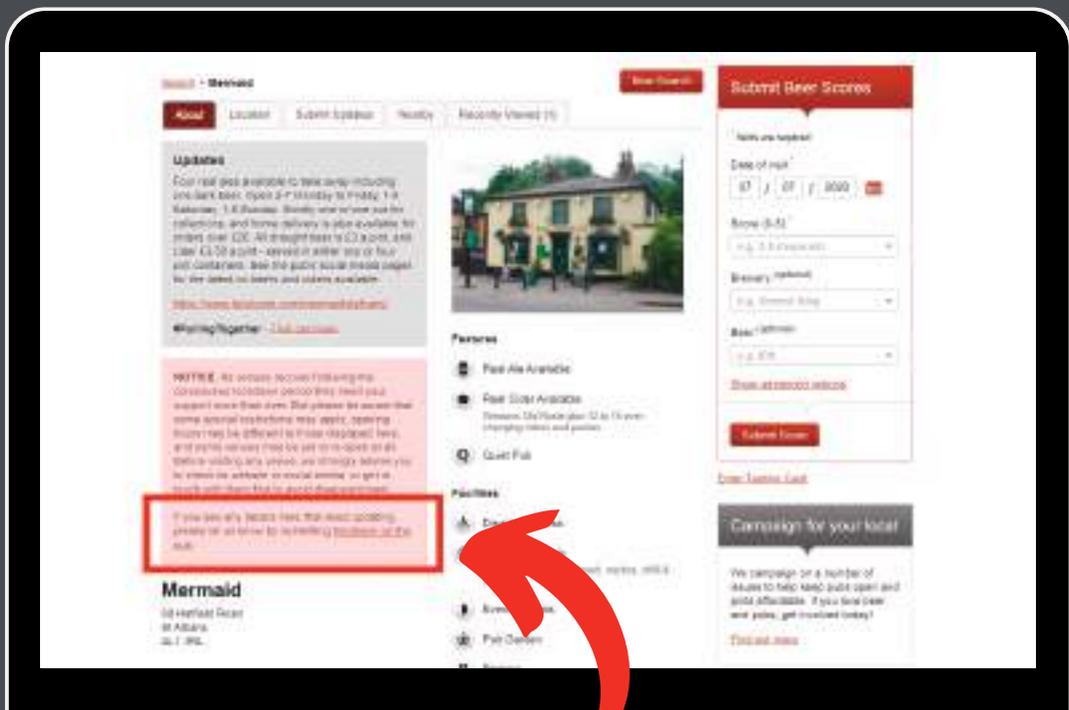


One of CAMRA's aims during the lockdown is to support pubs and breweries by asking people to buy their beer direct from them and not from supermarkets. There is, of course, currently a problem with pubs making off-sales but not so with breweries or off-licences. That said, not everyone has easy access to a local brewery or you may be looking for a wider choice, including cider and perry. Consequently, as part of its *Pulling Together* campaign, CAMRA has joined up with the on-line delivery service Brew2You. Through their website or using their 'app' you can order a wide range of beer, mostly for delivery. There are also some sites where you can place orders for collection.

As an example of the benefit to small breweries, Buster Grant of Brecon Brewery said, "Brew2You has been a great success story for us. With pubs closing due to the restrictions, we needed to add to our online presence and CAMRA's Brew2You site was the perfect fit. It was a really easy site to set up, and the system works really well, and is very intuitive. With the launch of our partnership with the Welsh Rugby Union, Brew2You was an ideal place to sell these new beers to a much wider audience, and we've had plenty of positive feedback. We look forward to expanding what we can offer on Brew2You."

Any brewery or cider producer who would like to register on Brew2You can do so through the website. There is a small fee.

Help us power



Things are a little different now. Help CAMRA keep WhatPub up to date by using the feedback form to let us know about any changes at the pub: www.whatpub.com



Protecting our pubs - the Tipperary in Fleet Street

I'm sure that many readers will know the Tipperary, 66 Fleet Street (EC4Y 1HT). Previously called the Boars Head and the Irish House, it was owned by Greene King until a few years ago but is now in private hands. Although the front of the pub is early 20th century, the main building dates from 1667 and is Grade II-listed.

Its most famous interior feature is a pair of large advertising mirrors, one for stout and the other for whisky. These are believed to date from around 1895 to 1900. When the pub was refurbished in the late 1980s, the original mirrors were retained and they form an important part of the pub's listed heritage assets.



On 1 March, a passer-by noticed one of the mirrors being removed. Fortunately, this particular passer-by had some knowledge of the trade and, having found out from the removal men that the mirrors had been sold, apparently to 'a museum in Ireland', he alerted Jane Jephcote, the chair of CAMRA's London Pubs Group. Through CAMRA's network of contacts, the information was quickly passed to the City of London's planning enforcement team who acted commendably swiftly. Only one mirror had actually been removed and, as at 9 March, both mirrors were confirmed to be hanging in the pub again.



It is understood that the pub has recently been sold and the most recent tenants have departed. One report was that it was to be used as the site office for a nearby development. The Enforcement Team are now tracing the new owners, although, unfortunately, this may be a slow process because there are currently delays to updating records at the Land Registry. Once they have identified them, they will make sure that they understand that listed building consent needs to be obtained before they make any changes to the building and that this should not be taken for granted.

Furthermore, to carry out works to a listed building without such permission is a criminal offence for which the maximum penalty is two years' imprisonment or an unlimited fine. Ignorance of the fact that the building is listed is no defence. Both those who instigate the damage and carry it out (for example, where an owner employs a builder) are liable.

This episode shows the benefit of being aware and acting promptly, especially given that there may well be an increased number of pubs changing hands over the coming months. If you are suspicious about work being carried out on a pub that you think might be listed, let CAMRA know by using the report form on the WhatPub system (see page 21). This also applies to cases where pubs are being stripped of their interior. Together we can protect our pubs. It also shows how effective the planning laws can be when, as in this case, they are applied speedily and positively. Many thanks to City of London Planning Enforcement accordingly.

Given the circumstances, there must be some concern over the Tipperary's continued existence as a pub. We will keep you informed.

With thanks to Michael Slaughter LRPS for the photographs.

Farewell to Achel

This is a sad story because it sees the end of a part of brewing history. As I am sure most readers will know, a beer can only be classed as an Authentic Trappist Product (ATP) if:

- It is brewed by a Trappist abbey;
- It is brewed in or close to the abbey;
- Brewing is carried out or supervised by monks or nuns;
- Any profit is used to support the abbey or other charities.

St Benedict's Abbey in the Limburg province of Flanders, the Dutch speaking region of Belgium, was a founder member of the Internal Trappist Association (ITA) which controls the ATP label. It was the smallest of them and sadly, over the last four years, had only two monks in residence. Both retired in January and, consequently, brewing of their Achel beers at the abbey has ended.

Brewing originally started in 1648 but the abbey was destroyed during the French Revolution and it was not re-established until 1844, with brewing starting again in 1852. The monks were driven out during the First World War and, in 1917, German forces broke up the brewing equipment to take its copper content. Brewing did not then start again until 1998 when the brewery was rebuilt with the assistance of monks from two other Trappist breweries, Westmalle and Rochefort.

Production of the beer is however set to continue, with Westmalle coming to the rescue again. It will be rebranded.

For the record, the founding members of the International Trappist Association were Orval, Chimay, Westvleteren, Rochefort, Westmalle and Achel from Belgium, Koningshoeven from the Netherlands and Mariawald from Germany. The most recent abbey to be granted ATP accreditation was Mount Saint Bernard in Leicestershire (2018) who brew Tynt Meadow (7.4% ABV).

Tribute - Les Maggs

It has been a strange old year, as all will acknowledge. It came as a complete shock to hear in early February that Les had passed away. While self-isolating, Les had kept in touch with his CAMRA colleagues as well as his close friend Jim Betts but, after there had been no contact for a while, it was found that he had apparently suffered a fatal fall in the lounge at home in Queens Park, NW6. He was 73.

Les had been a real ale activist for over 20 years and had chaired CAMRA's West London branch for the last ten years, having been elected in June 2010. Les was not what you'd call a flamboyant character but, in his quiet understated way, he has had a profound impact, and left an indelible impression, on CAMRA locally and indeed across London. He was in many ways indefatigable; John Cryne, CAMRA's London Regional chairman, described him as a campaigner of the old school, a true foot soldier, and no bad thing for all that.



Les (right) helps Roger Protz launch the 2018 Good Beer Guide at the Star

Many remember him fondly. Julio Moncada remembers Les for all the visits he paid them when they first started their brewery, just off Ladbroke Grove. They still have the handwritten lists of the pubs that he gave them, on small pieces of paper, to help them get started. George Wald, the Corporate Communications Manager at Fuller's, remembers Les from when she first started work there in 2002; he would always turn up with a big smile and a plastic carrier bag, every time! Helen Wilson and Chris Cochran at the Victoria in Paddington also recall him well, "This wonderful gentle man who for many was the face of CAMRA West London. We knew Les Maggs for over twenty years and were lucky enough to have him hand over a good few CAMRA awards to us over that time. He always attended beer launches and tasting events, adding his ale enthusiasm and knowledgeable observations to every visit. We last saw Les in September for his birthday at the Vic. So long kind sir. We hope you are enjoying a pint of ESB in the most convivial of pubs in the sky. Les, we raise a glass to you."

CAMRA's West London branch presents no little challenge, covering as it does the heart of the West End and beyond: the thousands of pubs across the City of Westminster and the boroughs of Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham. Les 'struck gold' in his very first year in the chair when one of the branch's pubs, the Harp in Charing Cross, was voted CAMRA's National Pub of the Year (2010). Karl Seville, formerly the assistant manager and cellar manager at the Harp for many years, knew there was a keen eye keeping his beers under close supervision and was always up to the mark. He wrote from New Zealand, "Les was a great ambassador for West London CAMRA, even if his meetings were more fluid than business. He will be missed."



Presentation at the Cask in Pimlico in 2013

At meetings Les had a wonderful, open, and disarming personal style and chaired the branch with a light touch that was remarkably successful in keeping the meetings cohesive, motivated and friendly. Along with his responsibilities leading the branch, Les would often be seen trudging round West London every two months with his trademark shopping trolley carrying up to 900 copies of this magazine for distribution to pubs.

He was also, for many years, Brewery Liaison Officer for two local breweries, Moncada and Portobello, helping them in their start-up period and then keeping them up to date with forthcoming beer festivals and pub news. He also made sure that the branch had a very good relationship with a much larger local brewery, Fuller's, and with its pub managers.

Les volunteered every year at our 'local' beer festival at Olympia (the GBBF), usually working on the glasses stand. He also volunteered for many years at Ealing Beer Festival, invariably staffing the tombola stand alongside his good friend Paul Gray. Les did not use information technology so, as well as formerly being branch treasurer, Paul handled Les's IT needs for him. Les could generally be relied on to support CAMRA's various Parliamentary Lobbies.

In his quiet way he could be very effective at brewery and pubco AGMs, including Fuller's, Young's and Wetherspoon's, where he was well known. He would be forthcoming with senior managers and board members on the various problems and concerns CAMRA had with the industry.

Les was a private man. He was born in Marylebone and was an only child. His family moved to Queen's Park when he was ten. After a varied career, most latterly with a steel stockholding company based in the Lee Valley, it was after then being made redundant, and retiring, that he became interested and active in CAMRA.

It was a surprise in some way to learn of his enthusiasm for model railways, where a detailed knowledge of Great Western steam locomotives, which he developed from walks to and from school, stood him in good stead. He was a long term member of the Model Railway Club, Kings Cross, and he supported and assisted at the annual show at Alexandra Palace for many years.

Les enjoyed his football. As the family had relatives in West Ham, his father regularly took him and school friend Jim Betts to West Ham United matches, cementing his support for the Hammers for life. I gather he also keenly enjoyed TV quiz shows and Jim reckons that he would have made a knowledgeable contestant.

Tribute - Les Maggs

Les had his favourite pubs, there was no doubt, and before the pandemic struck I would see him occasionally in my own local, the Harp, most usually on a Sunday evening. Apart from his regular favourites, the Victoria, the Cleveland Arms, the Grand Union, and the Mad Bear and Bishop, which were all fairly local, he could and did range widely, including a variety of Wetherspoon's pubs, both for the ales as well as the food, in and across London. In so doing he may well have been the number one user of the Freedom Pass.

We will, when the times have become a little saner and we are permitted to meet in larger numbers than is possible right now, be celebrating and commemorating Les, his life and contribution. While I didn't know him well, and would

not always see eye to eye on matters of policy or possibly priority, he commanded a great deal of respect.

I think that as a final tribute, here at least, only Jim's words will serve, "Les was a bachelor who enjoyed west London life and expressed little desire to travel and none to move. He was independent and resilient, strong minded but perhaps not always politically correct, and yet always calm, level-headed and reflective – and absolutely reliable."

My thanks to all who have contributed towards this appreciation. Even if not directly included, your words have helped fill out the character of someone who has, in his way, played his part well.

Dominic Pinto

Health and wellbeing

STAYING AT HOME

Apparently more people took part in Dry January this year than ever before. That is not surprising given the reported additional consumption of alcohol during lockdown periods. I have also seen a report which, equally not surprisingly, claims that home brewing is one of the hobbies to see significant growth over the last year.

OPEN ARMS

In February, Loughborough University, in conjunction with Heineken UK and the Campaign to End Loneliness, issued a report called *Open Arms: The Role of Pubs in Tackling Loneliness*. I suspect that most readers of this magazine do not need to be told that pubs have a key role to play in their communities in tackling loneliness among people of all ages and backgrounds and that they offer a social value above and beyond the contribution they make to the economy. The report also explains that pubs are an important part of community infrastructure, with equal value to libraries, cafés and community centres. This was true before the coming of COVID and has been greatly increased by it.

Nik Antona, CAMRA's National Chairman (speaking before the Budget) commented, "CAMRA welcomes this report which shows just how much pubs matter to individuals and communities, and why they are worth saving so that they can reopen and thrive post-COVID. Our pubs provide a safe, regulated environment in which to relax with a drink and mix with people of other age groups and backgrounds - and are often the only place left for people in many communities to meet. Yet too many had already closed even before COVID, with the coronavirus crisis put tens of thousands more at risk of permanent closure. It is vital that governments across the UK recognise the role that pubs will play as part of our social fabric, bringing people back together after this pandemic, and take action now to save our pubs. The Chancellor's upcoming Budget is the perfect opportunity to commit to a long-term financial support package for pubs and breweries to see them through the tough months ahead. Pubs need greater help to get back on their feet again, which can be achieved by ending unfair and un-evidenced restrictions like the 'substantial meal' requirement once they are allowed to reopen."

If there is concern about increased levels of alcohol consumption then the sooner pubs reopen the better. That may seem counter-intuitive to those who believe that pubs are a health risk. In fact, pubs provide a controlled and responsible environment for the consumption of alcohol. In the pub, people are more likely to drink beer than the cheap supermarket spirits that many have been consuming at home. Furthermore, if the additional alcohol consumption was driven by loneliness, the pub must be the better option.

Cider Update

CAMRA's Cider and perry campaigning comes under the remit of the Real Ale, Cider and Perry Campaigns Committee (RACPC).

There are Facebook and Twitter accounts dedicated to cider and perry as follows:

- www.facebook.com/camracider.perry
- https://twitter.com/CAMRA_APPLE

If you wish to share any items of interest you can do so via cider@camra.org.uk.

A review group has been set up to review and, if thought necessary, update CAMRA's definitions of what constitute traditional cider and perry. In addition to CAMRA members, producers and publicans have also been recruited to the group. The outcome will go to CAMRA's National Executive for ratification.

A group of cider and perry makers have joined together to promote their products under the banner Discover Cider. You can find out more at <https://discovercider.com/>.

London, Capital of Brewing

At the last count, there were around 130 breweries in Greater London. They are listed on CAMRA's Greater London Region website: www.london.camra.org.uk. Please support them by buying their beer, where available, either direct or from permitted stockists.

Have a gaze at pubs of the past

We may have lost a lot of pubs in London over the years but many of them can still be recalled, thanks to photographic archives. This is the story of one in particular, which exists thanks only to the heroic efforts of Robert Humphreys MBE. Mr Humphreys worked for Charrington's Brewery for twenty years and is a former secretary of the Parliamentary Beer Group. Thirty years ago, during an office move, he saw that Charrington's entire collection of photos and drawings had been thrown into a skip and, happily, he was able to rescue them. A grateful home for them was found at the National Brewery Centre Archive, based in Burton-on-Trent.

Readers are now able to view the photos and also order copies thanks to an arrangement made with the Mary Evans Picture Library in Blackheath. There are currently 333 photos available, with more to come. They cover pubs that Charrington's owned from all over the south of England, from Kent to Somerset, as well as London's Victorian and Edwardian gin palaces and East End boozers. Sadly, many, but not all, of the pubs pictured have fallen victim to the wrecking ball. These photos offer a glimpse of a time long past and are worthy of closer examination. Robert said, "*History sometimes seems remote, detached and hard to hold in one's hand. This collection brings history into our own lives. Pubs lie at the heart of their communities, and the people in them are the heart of the pub. Following our emotions and instincts in the pursuit of personal understanding through this collection can bring great rewards.*"

Viewing the online photos is free (www.maryevans.com) and the Mary Evans Picture Library also offer prints (from £6.99) or even a jigsaw puzzle (from £27.99) and thus a chance to personally own one of these amazing photos. I know what I want for my birthday! See the advert on page 27 for more details.

Christine Crye

MARY EVANS

Mary Evans, born 1936, was a lifelong collector of pictures and images of all sorts, an enthusiasm shared with her husband, Hilary. In 1964, their personal collection formed the basis of the Mary Evans Picture Library which was eventually housed in the former All Saints' parish hall in Blackheath. By the time she passed away in 2010, the library had a website holding around one million images and employed fourteen people.

CHARRINGTON'S BREWERY

I thought that a short history of the brewery might be of interest. I have fond memories of Charrington IPA because it was the beer that, half a century ago, converted me to real ale.

With the retirement in 1783 of their original partner, Mr Moss, brothers John and Harry Charrington became owners of the Anchor Brewery in the Mile End Road, E1. In 1833 the company changed its name to Charrington & Head, following the takeover of Steward & Head of Stratford, but the Charrington family remained in control and it reverted to Charrington & Co in 1880. It was registered as a limited company in 1897.

The company also brewed in Burton on Trent for a time, buying and rebuilding the Abbey Brewery in 1871 and selling it in 1926.

Strangely, they did not register the name 'Charrington' as a trademark until December 1932. A year later they took over Hoare & Co Ltd of East Smithfield and adopted Hoare's 'Toby Ales' trademark. 'Toby' became an important part of their branding. Many of their pubs were distinguished by their green glaze tiling, a few examples of which still exist. The second half of the 20th century saw the consolidation of the UK brewing industry. Firstly, in 1962, Charrington & Co merged with United Breweries Ltd to become Charrington United Breweries Ltd. Five years later came the merger with Bass, Mitchells & Butlers Ltd to create Bass Charrington Ltd and thus they became one of the infamous 'Big Six'. 'Synergies', as they would be called these days, led to brewing at Mile End ending in 1975 and the Anchor Brewery was mostly demolished within the year, leaving only the now Grade II-listed office block. The brewery site is now a retail park.

In 1997, Bass Charrington sold most of its 11,000 pubs to the company that became Punch Taverns and then in 2000, sold off its brewing operation to what was then Interbrew. Their remaining pubs and other properties were transferred to a new company called Six Continents which split in 2003, with the pubs going to a pub company which revived the name Mitchells & Butlers.

The story of Frederick Nicholas Charrington, whose life took a very different direction from that of the rest of his family, is interesting. I won't go into detail here but enter his name in your preferred search engine for the full story.

Advertising in London Drinker

For obvious reasons, we cannot currently produce a printed version of *London Drinker*. At present, we expect the June/July edition to be available on-line only as well. If you would like to advertise in the on-line edition, please contact John Galpin, our Advertisements Manager, as below.

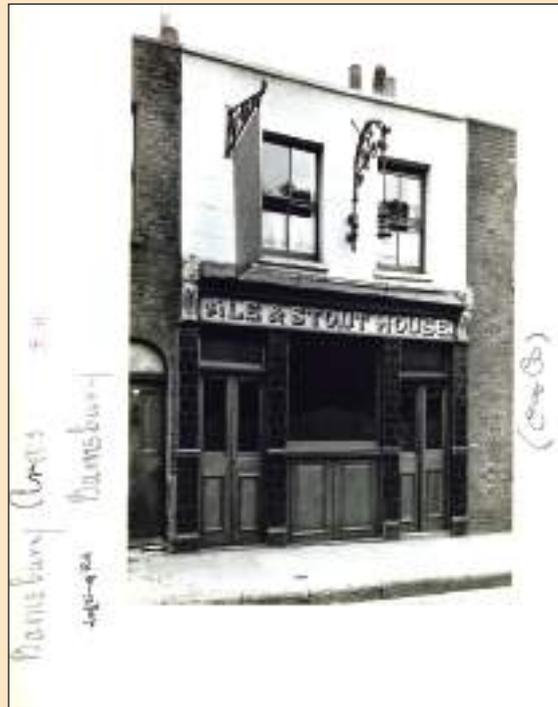
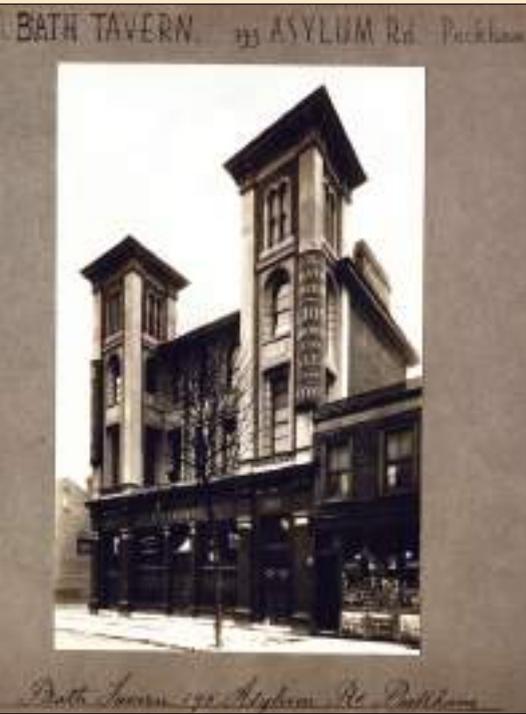
We will return to producing the printed version as soon as we can. Our advertising rates will then stay as follows:
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Call John Galpin on 020 3287 2966; Mobile 07508 036835. Email: johngalpinmedia@gmail.com or [Twitter@LDads](https://twitter.com/LDads).

London Drinker is published bi-monthly. The June/July edition will be available on-line from Wednesday 28 May.

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

Pubs of the past



The Mary Evans Picture Library have very kindly allowed us to reproduce three of the Charrington's archive photographs and these are the ones chosen by Christine Cryne.

Top left

The Bath Tavern, 195 Asylum Road, Peckham SE15. Now demolished.

Top right

The Barnsbury Arms, 24 Lofting Road, Barnsbury, N1 (previously John Street). Believed to have been taken around 1930. The pub was part of a terrace of houses that was demolished in 1971.

Opposite

The Alfred's Head in Stepney, believed to have been taken around 1920. There is some confusion as to whether the address was 49/51 Gold Street or 67 Shandy Street. The pub has since been demolished.



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NEW VENTURES

In late January came the announcement of the formation of two new pub owning businesses (POBs). One analyst told the *Morning Advertiser* that, "We fully expect 2021 to present a number of opportunities for new entrants and existing operators to acquire assets, individually or in packages, as the market rebounds from the series of lockdowns and the vaccines take effect." I'm assuming that the targets will be independently owned pubs or very small chains which see being taken over as the only way out of their mounting debts. I assume that they will not be looking for tenanted pubs and that rival POBs would not give their consent anyway.

So, is this a vote of confidence in pubs and, by implication, in pub goers or will it simply be an asset stripping exercise? Some combination of both is possible, of course. The leisure industry property specialists, Fleurets, produce an annual survey of pub prices and the one for 2020 reported that the average price for a freehold pub still trading had fallen by 35% and that for a leasehold pub by 46%. Increases had been reported prior to the COVID outbreak.

The first of the new companies is the **RedCat Pub Company**, which sees the return to the pub trade of the former Greene King chief executive, Rooney Anand. Mr Anand has recently been chairman of the Casual Dining Group, which includes such brands as Bella Italia and Café Rouge. He will be executive chairman of RedCat. Chris Hill, previously with the pub and bar chain New World Trading Company, has been appointed chief executive and their non-executive directors include a former Lord Mayor of London. The company was reported to have a war chest of £200 million provided by an American private equity fund, subsequently revealed by the *Telegraph* to be Los Angeles-based Oaktree, whose £110 billion portfolio already includes interests in the UK. The funding may be increased by up to a further £300 million in due course through borrowing. Mr Anand told the *Telegraph*, "There is no set playbook. I am not trying to recreate Greene King. I see myself as someone who's investing in a sector that has been oversold, where people have taken cover and written it off and have been quick to say 'it's not going to recover'. I've always been a strong believer in the great British pub. It has survived the Blitz, the Great Plague and the credit crunch; always bouncing back and taking its rightful place at the heart of the community. There will always be a market for a decent pub."

The other is the **Valliant Pub Company**. This company also sees the return of some experienced pub operators, the co-founders of Hawthorn Leisure, Mark McGinty and Gerry Carroll and James Croft, who used to be the group strategy and retail director for the Ei Group. They had previously worked together at Enterprise Inns. The initial funding has been provided by the trio themselves, along with some other private investors and they are looking for more. Their target is reported to be pubs in the suburban and community pub sector. Mr Carroll told the *Morning Advertiser*, "We obviously want an unrestricted market place; we don't want to be opening up when you can't have vertical drinking and you're stuck with table service and closing at 10pm. We

were heartened to see how well pubs bounced back post the first lockdown and believe that once COVID restrictions are lifted the pub sector will be one that recovers quickly." He added that they were already 'eyeing up sites as we speak' and 'would look at bigger deals as they come to market'.

In the event that a tied pub is acquired from a pub owning business (POB) which is subject to the Pubs Code by a POB that is not (ie owns less than 500 pubs), the tenant retains some Pubs Code rights, including a rent assessment when the rent is next reviewed. The tenant's right to change to a Market Rent Only agreement is however lost. The entitlement to Pubs Code protection lasts until the next rent review or the existing agreement expires.

Wouldn't it be a positive gesture if, to show good faith, these new companies decided not to operate the tied house system and instead let their pubs long term on agreements similar to 'market rent only' terms.

YOUNG'S

Young's have confirmed that 143 of their pubs which have gardens or outside space will be reopening on 12 April. All being well, the rest will follow on 17 May. Work has finished on the Grade II-listed Enderby House in Greenwich and that will also be opening. Usefully at this point, it has two terraces areas.

Young's have also acquired a pub in St Albans, the Alban's Well, a former BHS store in Peters Street. It is currently undergoing an extensive refurbishment and will feature a self-service 'Wine Wall'.

J D WETHERSPOON

In March, JDW very usefully issued lists showing which of their pubs would be opening their outside areas from 12 April. As I understand it, the lists included all of their pubs, area by area, with the pubs that were opening indicated by a tick. Unfortunately when the lists were printed in a number of local newspapers, the ticks were missed off.

The company originally said that it would extend the life of CAMRA vouchers that have gone out of date during the recent lockdown by six months. This has now been extended to a year.

JDW issued a COVID update, as reported in the *Morning Advertiser* (20 January), which said that it had 99% of its staff on furlough. Despite implementing cost saving measures, the company was still spending nearly £3.5 million per month on those staff not furloughed and the costs for those that are.

JDW have decided to join the British Beer & Pub Association (BBA) who are regarded as the trade body for the larger pub owning businesses.

In order to cover a slow return to profitability, JDW have raised £93.7 million through a share issue (8,370,000 shares at 1.12 pence each). The *Guardian* (19 January) reported that the funds might also be used to buy more pubs although JDW subsequently made it clear that their aim was 'the acquisition of a number of properties in central London, the freehold reversions of pubs of which it is currently the tenant, and properties adjacent to successful pubs'. It was reported in the *Morning Advertiser* (3 December) that chairman Tim Martin had disposed of more of his own

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shares, reported to be around £5 million (431,500 shares at £11.66 each) which leaves him with 27% of the company's shareholding.

MITCHELLS & BUTLERS

I reported in the last edition that M&B might have to ask investors for more funds and they did just that in early February, to the tune of £350 million. It however became more significant to the future of the company than expected. I mentioned previously that Joe Lewis, the majority shareholder in Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, and racehorse owner John Magnier owned more than half (not 'nearly half' as I said) of M&B's shares. I should also have mentioned that their shareholdings were held by their investment companies, respectively Piedmont and the Elphida Group, in which Mr Magnier is partnered by J P McManus. They have now teamed up with a third shareholder, currency trader Derrick Smith, whose shares (4.3%) were held by a company called Smoothfield Holdings, to form a new holding company, Odyzean, into which all three have transferred their interests. Odyzean then acquired the whole of the new issue of £350 million, giving it 55% of M&B's shares and unchallenged control of the company. M&B's chairman, Bob Ivel, told the *Morning Advertiser*, "We are pleased to have received the support of our major shareholders and key creditors. Mitchells & Butlers was a high performing business going into the pandemic and this capital raising and refinancing will provide the business with the certainty of funding that it needs in order to emerge in a stronger position to take advantage of its strong property portfolio, well known brands and operational expertise in order to win market share and continue its long-term strategy of deleveraging and driving value creation for shareholders." Odyzean are reported to be fully supportive of M&B's current management but are considering reducing the number of non-executive directors on its board and reviewing the company's strategy.

MARSTON'S ATTRACT INTEREST

Marston's, formerly Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries and who, contrary to what was said in several newspaper articles, are no longer a brewing company, recently attracted the attention of an American private equity group called Platinum Equity Advisors (PEA). At the end of January, PEA made what Marston's called an 'unsolicited and non-binding proposal' in the form of a cash offer for £1.05 per share. This followed earlier bids priced at 88p and 95p. PEA's offer would have made Marston's a private company with their shares no longer traded. It led to the value of Marston's shares rising by 17% to 87p, putting a value on the company of £553 million. In 2019, their shares had been valued at around £1.30.

Marston's directors unanimously refused the offer because it undervalued the company. That suggested that they might still be open to an offer nearer their valuation. This left Platinum Equity with a deadline of 26 February by which time they had to either make a definite offer or confirm that they were not proceeding. They however announced on 11 February that they would not be making a further offer. Marston's share price fell to 86p.

An influential party in this deal must have been the Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company (CMBC) in whom the Copenhagen based multi-national has a controlling interest. CMBC would not have wanted to lose Marston's 1,400 pubs as outlets for their products.

Given that the activities of such organisations as PEA are normally based on research, I wonder what attracted PEA to bid for Marston's in the first place. Like the Terminator, will they be back?

HAWTHORN LEISURE

Hawthorn, the pub company owned by property developers NewRiver, has some £250 million available for further additions to its 700 strong estate. This is after investing some £9.4 million on pub projects during the latter half of 2020. Their funds have however been bolstered by the disposal on 'non-core' pubs. Their Chief Executive, Mark Davies, told the *Morning Advertiser*, "Hawthorn's overwhelming priority is to protect our people and to protect our pubs. We're continuing to support our pub partners to help them stay afloat and to ensure that they can thrive again and bounce back when their pubs reopen. We remain bullish about the role that community pubs will play in people's lives once lockdown is lifted."

REVOLUTION BARS GROUP

A pattern is emerging here. As I reported two editions ago, following a company voluntary arrangement (CVA), RBG's plan was to renegotiate the rents on a number of their sites. The landlord of their site at Clapham Junction preferred to grant a lease to Wetherspoon's instead and now the same thing appears to have happened with their riverside site in Richmond upon Thames, the former Castle hotel and ballroom. A spokesman for the company told the *Richmond and Twickenham Times*, "We have loved our time in Richmond and hope to return one day, however due to the government's ongoing closure of the hospitality industry we have had to seek concessions from our landlords and in this instance our landlord has taken the opportunity to assign a new lease to another operator. We are doing all we can to secure onward employment for our Richmond team." There had previously been complaints about noise levels and, last year, Richmond Council refused an application for extended hours. The identity of the new lessees is not yet known.

HEINEKEN

Being a pandemic, COVID is also hitting the multinational companies. Heineken, the second biggest brewer in the world, registered a net loss of £96 million for 2020. As a consequence, they are restructuring the company, looking to cut costs by £1.75 billion over the next two years. This will include reducing their workforce by 10% with the loss of up to 8,000 jobs, many of them at their Amsterdam headquarters. Their future plans include introducing more no and low alcohol lines and 'hard seltzers' (alcoholic carbonated drinks) while dropping some existing beer brands. There is no suggestion that the losses have come about for any other reason than COVID. There will be job losses in the UK, including some at Star Pubs and Bars. No other effect on Star's operations has been reported. The

announcement was made by Heineken's chief executive and chairman, Dolf van den Brink, who took over in April 2020. Not, perhaps, the best of times to do so.

STAR PUBS & BARS

Meanwhile, Heineken's UK pub operation, Star, has fallen foul of the Pubs Code Adjudicator again, although this time with an amicable outcome. One of the rights that the Pubs Code gives a pub tenant is to oblige their pub owning company (POB) to give them a rent assessment proposal (RAP) if there has not been one during the previous five years. Star were not doing this because they claimed that, where their agreements provided for automatic rent increases based on the retail price index (RPI), this amounted to the same process. The PCA disagreed and pointed out that this had already been the outcome of a previous arbitration. Star agreed to change their practice accordingly. A spokesperson for Star was quoted in the *Morning Advertiser* as saying, "We welcome the improved relationship with the PCA. They came to us in this instance with their concerns and we were able to resolve the issue to everyone's satisfaction." This, of course, is a reference to the row about Market Rent Only applications where Star have an appeal pending against a £2 million fine. The report, incidentally, added that Star have so far allowed rent reductions totalling £44 million arising from closures during the COVID pandemic.

DIAGEO

The increase in home drinking enabled Diageo to stay in profit over the last six months of 2020, although profit fell by 10% to £2.2 billion. Sales in the UK actually increased by 2%, with off-sales increasing by 30% to compensate for pubs being closed. The included sales of spirits increasing by 15%, which hardly contributes to controlled drinking. I have, incidentally, yet to see the alcohol free version of Guinness, '0.0', return to supermarket shelves after its withdrawal shortly after it was first released.

AB INBEV (BUDWEISER BREWING)

The Leuven based multinational has upset many of its customers by reducing the strength of its flagship product Stella Artois. Apparently, as is often the tactic with such events, this happened last October but it is only now being noticed. The 'reassuringly expensive' beer has been reduced in strength from 4.8% ABV to 4.6%. It had already been reduced from its original 5.1% ABV. AB InBev's brewmaster in Leuven, Dorien Nijs, was quoted in the *Daily Mirror* as explaining, "We know that taste and quality remain the number one priority for Stella Artois drinkers. We also recognise a health and wellness trend through moderation." According to the same article, one unhappy customer complained on Tesco's website, "I cracked open a can of Stella 4.6 per cent and thought I had COVID since I could not taste anything" while another commented, "A once great beer of the geezers. Now watered down to 4.6 per cent."

Apparently, AB InBev have produced a dark version of Stella Artois, called Midnight or Noire at 5.4% ABV. It is not clear however whether it is available in the UK.

For 2020, AB InBev reported a fall in sales of 5.7%, leading to a reduction in revenue of 3.7%. They are however still planning to invest £72 million in the former Whitbread plant at Magor in Monmouthshire, which is their largest UK operation and produces both Budweiser and Stella Artois. There are also plans to expand production at Salmesbury, another former Whitbread site, in Lancashire.

CURIOUS TO BE SOLD

The Chapel Down winemaking group have decided to dispose of their Curious brewery and cider making operation, based in Ashford, Kent. According to a report in the *Morning Advertiser* (9 February), their plan is to put the business into administration and for private equity firm NewCo Risk Capital Partners to then purchase the business and its assets from the administrator. Nearly all of Curious's output goes to the on trade, so it has suffered because of COVID and, unlike the wines and spirit business, no alternative sales were possible. Chapel Down's chief executive, Frazer Thompson told the *Morning Advertiser*, "Following a strategic review, the board has taken the decision to focus our energy and resources on building the Chapel Down brand and business to ensure we continue to flourish. While this has been a difficult decision, we are very pleased to have found in Risk Capital Partners an excellent home for Curious Drinks, where the business will be able to fulfil its exciting growth potential." There will be no redundancies and shareholders in Curious will be offered shares in Chapel Down. The founder of Risk Capital Partners, Luke Johnson, said, "We see terrific potential in the Curious Drinks business and we are very excited about its future, despite the challenges of the past year. Brewing will always be a cornerstone of British culture and the craft beer revolution has only strengthened that. Curious is a great brand made in a fabulous facility and, with our support, the business can be developed further."

KEGSTAR

Casks and kegs, especially durable stainless steel ones, are one of a brewery's biggest investments. Quite often, small brewers find it easier to hire them, especially if the hire company themselves recover the cask from the brewery's customers. One of the biggest cask hire companies, KegStar, has been taken over by a company called MicroStar Logistics who are based in Denver, Colorado. KegStar already operate in the USA, as well as the Netherlands and as far away as Australia. Thanks to Martin Butler for the information.

Are you a CAMRA member?
If not, why not join?
See page 47 for details.

MORE THAN JUST BEER

It is often said that necessity is the mother of invention but one suspects that innovation is at the heart of the Two Tribes brewery, regardless of the impact of COVID. Like a lot of breweries, Two Tribes has been pushing out cans (they are fortunate to have their own canning line) and this has meant that the brewery has continued to brew throughout the lockdowns and they have been keeping busy. Head brewer, Christoffer Tuominen, said, "We have our own on-line shop and don't charge for delivery within a three mile radius. We also use a third party for distribution around Britain, which means if an order is placed by 3pm, it will arrive the next day. Beer Hawk also takes our beer and we featured in the 'Beer Hawk Aisle' in Sainsbury's."



It is not just the usual cans on offer however. Two Tribes has also been selling beer in branded twisted cans for draught beer (these are two American pints in size). Chris explained, "We have been supplying these to a number of outlets who want to offer beer alongside their food orders."

All this activity has led to brewing increasing from once to an average of three times of week, depending on the brews. Fortunately, this expansion in production was easily taken in their stride because in 2019 they had taken the decision to move their tap room out of the brewery to create space for eight new fermenters, bringing the total number to twelve.

This doesn't mean the brewery hasn't been affected by COVID; their plan was to open their new tap room last year but this has been delayed and they now hope to open it in the spring. Chris explained, "It's mostly done, we just need the heating. It's right next door and we are also putting in two shipping containers in the yard outside. We are even looking at having a roof terrace on top of one of the containers. We want to broaden our offering and provide a 'camp fire' with a fire pit and invite chefs to do pop-ups; for example, we have been talking to 'From the Ashes' for BBQs." Broadening the offer goes beyond the food; Chris continued, "We will be having the music students back again but we are looking to do much more. We have teamed up with Peter Herbert, who is a well known Ibiza DJ to provide background music and we hope to host album launches."

Their creativity has also extended to keeping in contact with their customers, despite them not being able to physically visit Two Tribes. They have set up a monthly club linking music, food and beer. The subscriber gets two beers

(one core, one special), a seven inch vinyl with original mixes, a bottle of one of their hot sauces, a recipe card and a gift. The January pack was all about foraging and included a book on mushroom picking and a chilli mushroom ketchup!

The core beer range still includes Metroland Session IPA (3.8% ABV), Dream Factory Pale Ale (4.4% ABV) and Power Plant, a gluten free lager at 4.5% ABV. "We are brewing modern beer with a focus on lagers", said Chris as he explained about his single hopped lager range. However, Two Tribes have been branching out further: "We have been doing some speciality kettle sours, changing the fruits with each batch and the 'Metroland World Tour' series. These have been inspired by major cities e.g. London, New York, Tokyo and Rio." Two Tribes have also been named as the house beer for the NoMad Hotel in Covent Garden. Chris added, "We are flattered as their house beer in their New York Hotel is from Brooklyn Brewery. Our beer is a Margarita kettle sour lager, which will be available at their bar and in the mini bars. They are looking to use it for beer cocktails".

It looks like Two Tribes will be able to weather the pandemic no matter how long it goes on and, to give the last word to Chris, "Two Tribes more than just beer" and with their creativity and wider thinking, that seems to be a very true statement.

Stop press: Two Tribes have confirmed that the Campfire open air tap room and barbecue will open on Saturday 17 April 2021 at the Tileyard in Kings Cross. Go to www.twotribes.co.uk/campfire-venue for reservations.

GERMAN KRAFT ON THE RISE

Youth is no barrier to establishing great breweries, or having great ambition; Felix Bollen and his three partners at German Kraft are testimony to this. But where did it all start? Felix was born in Germany and every year went with his father to visit his grandparents in Franconia. He became very familiar with the idea of local beer served fresh and, when he was eighteen, ended up doing an internship at the town's Steinbach Bräu brewery. Add to this a growing obsession with craft beer and you have the beginnings of German Kraft, which started while Felix was completing his studies in graphic and media design in London.

The first outlet was set up in 2017 in Mercato Metropolitano, an Italian food market at the Elephant and Castle. Initially, beer was brought in from Steinbach Bräu whilst the brewery was being built (the 2,000 litre kit came from Hungary). The first brew took place in the following February and the team were assisted by a Steinbach Bräu brewer. Felix said, "We did ask the brewery if they would like a joint venture but they declined, saying they wanted to keep their brewing local."

The European theme is also reflected in Felix's partners who are from Germany and Italy. Anton Borkman was at school with Felix and is a special design graduate and Michele Tieghi is a business graduate. After the first four months of operating, they were joined by Andreas Ferrario, another Italian but one who had been living in Australia. He had come over on holiday, helped out with the food at the first venue, lived on the couch for three months and never went back, becoming the fourth partner and providing restaurant and food expertise.



The four partners

The second venue, which opened in February 2020, is also in a Mercato Metropolitano. It's a stunning looking bar in an old church in Mayfair dating from 1825. Here, German Kraft has installed a mini 250 litre brew kit in the underground crypt which they use to brew speciality beers. They bring their mainstream beers in from Elephant and Castle. There are three beers in the core range, Herbert Pale Ale, Heike Blonde (Helles Lager) and Edel Weiss (wheat beer), alongside seasonal and collaborations.

The partners are very much into being green. "Our ethos is fresh beer from the tank; it's all unfiltered and unpasteurised, so we don't use cans or bottles and our kegs, when we use them, are refillable" said Felix, who added, "The carbon dioxide is artificially added to the tanks. We did look at recycling it from the brewing but we are too small at the moment to make it cost effective but we do re-use the carbon dioxide whenever we can."

The knowledge of design and their green approach was put to good use at the new outlet. Their website explains, "We collected all the glasses that break at our brewery in Elephant & Castle. They were then melted in a 1200C oven and poured into a mould with colour pigments to form the bricks making up the altar bar. All 1,000 plus bricks were

handmade by the boys of German Kraft over four months after learning about annealing points and resting times of the specific pint glass quality."

Around the time of this bar's opening, the partners started to plan for a third venue. This time, they had a new partner, Locke, which is an apartment-hotel chain. Situated in Dalston, and working with the partner, this outlet is modern with a small brewery, which, at 500 litres, is twice the size of the Mayfair brewery. Felix said, "We opened in December only to close again in days, thanks to the winter lockdown. But I am really excited about our new venue. It was different from the other two, which was very much DIY and we had to do everything ourselves. Dalston is very much design orientated and we worked with Locke's designers to create it."

Felix then reflected on the closure, "We had staff who weren't eligible for furlough as they hadn't been with us long enough. The directors have taken a percentage out of their salaries to give to them. It's not a lot but it's something." During the first lockdown, German Kraft started to do some takeaways using five litre mini kegs and delivering them around the area. Felix said, "It was hard work and there were only two or three of us. When we reopened, we took more money in a few days than we did during the whole of the lockdown so when the next lockdown happened, we didn't bother. And it also doesn't fit with the idea of fresh beer. We have been spending the time fixing things, tweaking our brand and concentrating on cutting costs".

Despite the impact of COVID and the current challenges, German Kraft has a clear vision of their future. "We want to grow large" explained Felix; "Our model relies on high footfall as the beer needs to be drunk fresh, so we are looking at cities." Felix intimated the next outlet might be in a mainland European city but wouldn't be drawn as to where. But, wherever it is, German Kraft's partners have big ambitions and they could well be a name to look out for when we can finally get out for a beer again.

For more information on the brewery, see www.germankraftbeer.com.

Christine Crye



The magnificent Mayfair venue

BIG SMOKE BREW CO

The Esher based company added an eighth pub to their estate in February. This is the White Horse in Mill Lane, Welwyn, Hertfordshire (AL6 9ET). It is a Grade II-listed 18th century former coaching inn that features a large secluded garden. The pub is being renovated in readiness for reopening when that becomes possible.

BRIXTON BREWERY

In 2017, Heineken took a 49% interest in the company, which financed Brixton's move from railways arches to a purpose built site, still in Brixton, with new kit that allowed them to just over double their production capacity. It was announced on 1 February that the Danish multi-national had acquired the remaining 51% from the four founders, Jez Galaun, Libby Galaun, Mike Ross and Xochitl Benjamin. Ms Benjamin told the *Brixton Blog* website, "We honestly can't believe how far we've come, from home brewing to launching a small brewery, to building a highly recognisable community-based brand, with a larger new brewery and taproom. It makes us want to dream even bigger for the next seven years." The four founders will remain in charge of the brewery's operations and creative direction, seeing this as an opportunity to 'secure the future of Brixton Brewery for our team, our families, our community and fans of our beers'. The company employs some 25 staff, pays the London Living Wage and remains committed to the local community, although their beers will now be marketed nationally.

FIVE POINTS BREWING

Some good news. For a while it looked as if we might lose Five Points but I'm pleased to say that they have now found new premises and remain in Hackney, their home for the last eight years. This also gives them the opportunity to consolidate their brewing, sales and distribution operations on one site in Mare Street. There will also be room for a large taproom featuring a large outside area which they hope to have ready in time for the reopening of outdoor hospitality.

The Pembury Tavern will continue to operate as before, as soon as opening is permitted. Managing director and co-founder, Ed Mason, said, "The past twelve months have been incredibly challenging for independent breweries, as they have for all small businesses. So it is incredibly exciting to be able to look to the future and place the company on a secure footing with a new brewery and taproom, in our Hackney home. I cannot wait to be sharing pints in the sun in our new outdoor taproom this summer."

Five Points retain their commitment to their Charity Partnership Scheme, which supports local charities and organisations. Their 2021 Charity Partners are mental health charity Mind in the City, Hackney & Waltham Forest, and the Hackney Food Bank. Since the start of the first lockdown, Five Points have donated £1 to charity for every order placed through their on-line shop.

FOURPURE BREWING COMPANY

Fourpure, part of the Lion Little World Beverages group, have been reequipping their brewery in Bermondsey. They have installed new kegging and canning lines at a cost of £2.5 million. Their Supply Chain Director, Frank Markham, told the *Morning Advertiser*, "The demand for our canned beer has doubled since the beginning of the COVID pandemic and the improved facilities mean we can fulfil this increase in sales, while still meeting world-class hygiene and safety standards. Carrying out this update in current times has obviously brought its own challenges and I am incredibly proud of the excellent safety standards our team met throughout. We were also really happy to be able to support a number of contractors during this process, many of them smaller businesses and many brewing-specific."

MECHANIC BREWERY

It was assumed that when they closed their brewery Mechanic had stopped trading. That was wrong. Owner and founder Olga Zubrzycka has contacted us to say that the company remains very much a going concern and, in due course, still intends to be active on the London brewing scene. I have apologised to Olga for the misunderstanding.

Ed and co-founder Greg Hobbs in the new Five Points brewery



PARK BREWERY

I'm grateful to Dave and Gill Morgan, the joint Brewery Liaison Officers, for these notes. For obvious reasons, this has been an unusual year and particularly challenging for those with children like Park's owners, Frankie and Josh. They have however weathered the pandemic well. As well as starting to can their beers, as previously reported, Josh has continued to experiment and new brews came on stream, included the very popular Schone Eiche (Marzen Amber Lager). A successful crowdfunding campaign raised double the initial target and will be used to fund extra tank space, marketing and much needed staff. The brewery also received a Lockdown Hero award from CAMRA's Kingston & Leatherhead Branch to acknowledge their hard work in supplying all their customers, local and national, with exciting beers.

PORTOBELLO BREWING

Portobello are about to lose one of their two original pubs, the Hack and Hop in Whitefriars Street. The pub is part of a large site just off Fleet Street which is being redeveloped to provide new court buildings and a police station. Contrary to some reports, the pub is not a listed building. However, a building in nearby Salisbury Court, which is Grade II listed, is being remodelled to include a 'drinking establishment with expanded food provision (sui generis)' and hopefully Portobello will be given first option on it.

SAMBROOK'S BREWERY

The new brewing kit has been installed at the Ram Brewery site in Wandsworth, following the arrival of the conditioning tanks. Test brewing has already begun with production not far behind. Work on the Heritage Centre has however been delayed because of supply chain issues. Once this has been completed, work will start on the taproom.

SOLVAY SOCIETY

Solvay's 'pay it forward' fundraising campaign in January was successful and they should by now have moved into the railway arch next to the one that houses their taproom in Leytonstone. Their brewing operations will then be moved in from Ilford. In due course, they plan to turn the taproom into a brewpub and install a canning line. Roman Hochuli, their founder and head brewer, said, "We're really happy to hit our target and so grateful to everyone who has supported us so far. With the money people have pledged, we'll be able to fund the move, buy a new tank and upgrade the brewhouse so we can continue to churn out fantastic modern Belgian beer."

WILD CARD BREWERY

Wild Card are opening their first tied house. It is the Tavern on the Hill in Highams Hill (E17 5RG). The pub was formerly called the Warrant Officer and was, coincidentally, where Solvay Society first brewed. Wild Card are looking for someone to provide the food. The main requirement is that they must be able to turn out a 'cracking Sunday roast'.

CASK THEFT

Times are hard for small breweries and so they can do without the organised theft of a vital and expensive asset,

their casks. A gang has recently stolen casks from brewery yards in several parts of London. It is believed that the stolen casks are being sent to Eastern Europe, presumably as scrap metal. So far, some 240 casks and kegs of different sizes worth over £18,000 are missing. The Kegwatch organisation is aware of the situation and is liaising with the police accordingly. If you see casks being loaded into an unmarked van, especially late at night, a call to the police might be worthwhile, but don't put yourself at risk.

TRUMAN'S BREWERY REDEVELOPMENT

Although no beer has been brewed at the Brick Lane site for many years, it remains an iconic part of London's brewing history. Sadly there are plans to seriously change the ambience of the area. The excellent *Spitalfields Life* website reports that a large area of original granite pavements and setts in the large yard east of Brick Lane has been removed. You can see photos of what has happened on their website: <https://spitalfieldslife.com/2021/02/07/wilful-destruction-at-truman-brewery/>. The Spitalfields Trust has reported this to Tower Hamlets Council's Planning Enforcement Team, pointing out that what has happened far exceeds being the repair work that it is claimed to be. The Trust has asked the Council to order the reinstatement of the paving, something that they are empowered to do if it is decided that the works were illegal. Planning permission is being sought for the construction of a shopping mall and offices on the corner of Brick Lane and Woodseer Street and this may be connected with that. The Trust have also objected to that project.

TIME TO PARTY AGAIN!

The answer to the puzzle on page 4 is that it is a tap for a Watney's Party Seven can. I apologise if I am making anyone (myself included) feel old. These devices, powered by a soda stream bulb, cost £3.75 which, at the time, was a small fortune. Consequently, screwdrivers, hammers and the like were more usually employed.

This isn't just a stumble down memory lane. Watney's Party Seven has made a comeback in the form of a five litre mini-keg with a proper built in tap. It is much more stylish than the original, which was a simple cylinder. The name Party Seven incidentally referred to the container, not the beer inside. There was also a Party Four. The beer in the new mini-kegs is 4.2% ABV (see their website for tasting notes) whereas the contents of the original version were only 3% ABV. It was rumoured to be Northampton brewed Watney's Starlight Bitter, a beer so dreadful that, on its own, it justified the formation of CAMRA. In my recollection it was certainly worse than Red Barrel.

The Watney brand was revived a few years ago by the Brands Reunited Company which licensed the rights to the brands from Heineken in 2014. Cask versions of various beers have previously been available, brewed under contract by various small brewers. The company changed its name to Watney's Party Seven when they decided to concentrate on canned beer during the COVID crisis. The beer, along with some interesting merchandise, can be purchased through their on-line shop: <https://party-seven.com/collections>.

A Werewolf born out of love

Although neither a Werewolf nor a teenager, Rich White is definitely an American in London.

Back home in New York, Rich was working for a credit union and running brewpubs in his spare time. Then, in November 2013, he decided to come and see Frank Turner (an English punk and folk singer-songwriter) at the Wembley Arena. Not knowing anyone, he posted on the artist's message board asking if anyone was free to meet up. Laura Emson replied and offered to show him around. Rich said, "It was love at first sight, aided by the fact that Laura loves her beer. And we married at a Frank Turner concert". Laura is a bar manager at CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival.



Rich

Consequently, Rich moved to the UK and started working at the Pelt Trader in the City when he heard that the Bull in Highgate (home of the London Brewing Company) wanted an assistant brewer. He began working with Jenna Dunseath and took over as head brewer when she left a few months later in early 2014. After a couple of years, the London Brewing Company took on the Bohemia pub in North Finchley and Rich moved there to set up a new 6.5 barrel brewery, which was over three times bigger than the brewery at the Bull.

After three years, in 2019, Rich decided it was time for something new, "I felt London could do with something a bit different as to what was on offer in the London beer market. I wasn't getting a beer with the mouthfeel, quality and consistency I wanted". Rich's views were reinforced by a visit to the USA the following year, "I noticed the quality difference and wanted to do it my way (in London). I like being my own boss, having my own vision and doing things left field. And I don't think I am the easiest employee, so setting up my own brewery became my goal."

To begin with, Rich went to work with Susan Currid of the Business of Drinks company, on business and brand development. He said, "Originally, I was thinking about something bigger than I have ended up with; I bought House Brewery's Five barrel plant that they used at the Prince in Wood Green."

The inspiration for the name Werewolf was the film *American Werewolf in London*, and Rich has trademarked the name in the UK and Europe. He explained, "I was surprised that no brewery was using this name and so my initial challenge was to develop a social media presence without a

product. I did have to buy the twitter name off someone though. I was doing some home brewing to develop my recipes but I needed to get a brewing licence and an AWRS Number (see note) and that meant finding premises. The Rose & Crown in Kentish Town fortunately stepped in to allow me to temporarily set up in their basement with a 50 litre plant and this allowed me to refine the recipes."

Finding a permanent home hasn't however been easy. Rich continued, "I have been working on a location for over a year. COVID has given me the time to think through what I wanted to do and what I could afford. I was originally going to make the taproom a priority but now it's off sales and a canning line." Following the tradition of many London brewers, the premises currently under consideration are a railway arch, just a few minutes' walk from Camden Road Station. Rich likes the site because there is a gated area which can be used as a large beer garden. This is just as well as it gives Rich somewhere to put the ghost train he purchased; this came from the Rainbow Park in Hunstanton and the carriages will be used for seating.

Unlike many breweries, Rich is not intending to install a keg washer; he intends to use key kegs or Kegstar for his containers, so they are all 'one way journeys'. This will also eliminate the need for keg collection. At the moment, he has no intention to produce cask beer.



So what of the future? "I'll be brewing classic American beers that are bitter but balanced. The core to start with will be a lager (Moonstop), Psycho Billy APA, Horrorshop Rye IPA, Creepster American Brown and a session citrus called Stay Out. I am also going to brew a 'visual range' of one off beers with the colour coming from the ingredients. We hope to be ready by July and we'll probably look at some crowdfunding in due course".

Who would have thought that true love would end up being responsible for an American Werewolf in Camden!

Christine Cryne

Note: anyone selling alcohol commercially needs to be approved by HM Revenue & Customs and issued with a unique AWRS (Alcohol Wholesaler Registration Scheme) number. The scheme was introduced in 2017 to control alcohol related duty and VAT fraud.

For a small wholesale business, managing stock at the right levels and getting new business form part of a difficult acrobatic exercise. But when pubs close with a days' notice and you no longer have customers, it becomes a nightmare. Imagine starting your business and growing slowly, then you get a veritable asteroid hit; that was COVID in March 2020.



Best Cask Ltd became fully operational in August 2019, when we commissioned our cold store and we could keep beer and cider at 11 to 13 C to maintain our link in the cold supply chain. At first it was an uphill struggle to get customers, surrounded as we were by Ei, Punch and Star pubs who were forbidden to buy out of tie.

Yet we managed to get beer out to festivals, and we grew a core customer base of independent free houses by the start of 2020. Then, bang, that asteroid hit and we delivered to just three pubs during the whole month.

We were not alone of course. Medium size competitors like Dayla and Pigs Ears and larger national wholesalers such as Small Beer and Matthew Clark also felt the effect, furloughing staff or completely closing operations. Breweries stopped production and some, like Reunion, closed. Other small brewers, Kew for example, decided to relocate and start again. The options laid out for a small wholesaler were few; pack up and go home, keep going and hope for the best or push into new markets and grow. We chose the last.

With the *Good Beer Guide* in one hand and typing away at *WhatPub*, the search began to widen the footprint beyond

our initial focus of 50 miles. This brought in West Berkshire and Wiltshire to the west, Essex and south east London and Kent to the east, and, to the south, the coast from Southampton along to Brighton. Micropubs popped up, as did small cask-oriented free houses and taprooms. E-mails and phone calls followed and, while not all replied, a new customer base emerged. In April we delivered 16 times, May just over 40 and by September 65. One man, one van, and pubs desperate for beer for takeout and home delivery. We diversified into cans and took on more kegs, but cask was what pubs wanted, so we obliged. Local breweries were able to shift cask stock too, which otherwise would have been poured down the drain. Larger wholesalers started delivering again, and we met Pigs Ears drivers at the odd pub or brewery along the way. Everything seemed to be going to plan...

Then came Tier 3, Tier 4 and finally full lockdown in December, with only 20 odd deliveries and, in January, just 13. With a reasonable amount of Christmas stock left over and getting close to or past the seemingly arbitrary 'best before' dates on casks, we face new challenges. Our customer base has grown incredibly given the circumstances and, with excellent support from them and suppliers, there is a glimmer of hope that once through this, small independent wholesalers can survive.

Doug Scott, Director Best Cask Ltd

Editor's note: Doug is a former CAMRA London Regional Director and was the organiser of the first Feltham Beer Festival, the forerunner of Twickenham Beer Festival. He was also involved with the Small Beer beer agency in its early days, along with his brother Dave.



Trouble House Halt

I've known of Trouble House Halt for many years because it is mentioned in the Flanders and Swann song, *The Slow Train*, a bittersweet requiem to British Railway stations closed under the Beeching Plan. What I had not realised until I read Bob Barton's excellent book, *Unusual Pubs, Amazing Stories*, was that it had a drinking connection. Indeed, the halt was built simply to serve the pub of the same name.

The pub dates from the 17th century and was originally called the Waggon & Horses. Its unusual subsequent name comes from it being built on land which was known as the Troubles because it was prone to flooding. In addition, a number of landlords during the 18th and 19th

centuries suffered an astonishing assortment of misfortunes, some involving Navy press gangs and agricultural riots. The pub however survives and can be found, once it reopens, on the Tetbury to Cirencester Road (A433) near the hamlet of Trull (GL8 8SG). It has odd opening hours so check before travelling.

The pub's location is rather remote so, when, in February 1959, British Railways decided to introduce diesel railbuses on the Tetbury to Kemble branch line, they took the opportunity to add two new stops: Church's Hill and Trouble House. The latter was a basic wooden platform with no shelter or amenities whatsoever.

Sadly, the halt had a relatively short life. The branch line was closed in April 1964. The occasion of the last train to Kemble was marked by it being loaded at Trouble House with a coffin made by the pub landlord and his brother. This was filled with empty whisky bottles and adorned with messages for Dr Beeching. It is believed to have made it as far as Paddington. The route of the branch line largely now forms the Tetbury Trail.

Berney Arms station in Norfolk is also named after a pub but it also served a small settlement, so the pub was not its only reason to exist. The situation here is the reverse of Trouble House. The station is open but the pub closed in 2015. Planning permission for conversion to a house was refused and there is a campaign to reopen the pub. There are however reports that it may reopen as a bistro.

The WhatPub entry for the Trouble House can be found at <https://whatpub.com/pubs/GLO/0471/trouble-house-tetbury>.



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Tribute - Martin Pope

Members of CAMRA's East London and City Branch, and more importantly the national brewing industry, will be devastated to learn of the sudden death of CAMRA life member Martin 'Animal' Pope on 22 January 2021 at the age of 70. He was a founder member of the branch and I attended the first meeting with him as hanger-on. Incredibly for somebody who lived the axiom of Groucho Marx (*I don't want to belong to a club that will accept me as a member*) he was the branch's first Social Secretary, alongside the sadly departed Brian Marsh (the first Chair) and Pete Roberts (1947-2004) of Roberts Rambles fame. Brian was also Martin's long-term cycling partner, with whom he explored the real ale of the Home Counties for many years.



There are probably few around now who can remember the brewery visits that Martin organised, but he did so at a time when there were barely 100 brewers in the country and he assiduously identified some of the smallest and most hospitable, dragging people from London across the countryside to visit some gem. Other members will recall his distinctive bearded and increasingly corpulent form at the branch's Pig's Ear beer festivals, working there for many years, and in the pubs of east London and in darts leagues in the City and Stoke Newington. Although his active involvement with the branch dwindled, he still helped with surveys for many years. I recall reviewing all the pubs of E10 with him for what I think was the last East London Guide. There were pubs with no draught beer at all, not even bottled Guinness but plenty of drugs, pubs with no customers except those apparently offering sexual favours to the staff, and lots of undrinkable rubbish. No wonder the traditional pub was vanishing! He continued to take photos for the CAMRA website and deliver his devastating verdicts on pubs and beers alike.

Latterly his locals were around Walthamstow and Wanstead: the George, the Drum, the William and the Rose

& Crown, but these were generally staging posts on his way home from almost anywhere. Previously, over the years, they also included the Prince of Wales on Lea Bridge Road, the Anchor and Hope, the London Tavern (E5), the Wheatsheaf (Borough Market), the Windmill (Tabernacle Street), the City Retreat (for darts), the Angel (St Giles Circus), the Leopard and, closer to home, the Cricketers in Woodford. And, of course, back in the 1970s, there were the handful of real ale havens: Becky's, the Sun, the Anglesea Arms and the White Horse etc. Further afield favourites included the Vaynol Arms in Nant Peris and, until lockdown, most weeks he was to be seen at least once in the Great Western at Wolverhampton, a strong candidate for his favourite pub of all. Choose the day of the week and work from there!

Martin was a purist and, over the years, his view of what was 'pure' in the world of beer evolved dramatically, as did his views on pubs and their offerings. After years of drinking the tasteless keg offerings of the likes of Worthington E and Tartan, he probably became seriously interested in real ale through Young's beers and the attractions of the Wandsworth 11. I met him in the years of the big six, when it was possible to consider drinking at all the real ale pubs in London and sampling all the real ales in the country and, with his fellow committee member Barry, he had a bloody good go at doing it. Then Watney's, followed by Ind Coope, decided to launch their own real ales in the late 1970s and the task became pointless, especially given the abysmal state of many of the pubs on offer. I remember doing a crawl with him, around 1974, from the Blind Beggar at Mile End Gate up to the White Swan at Clapton and feeling more and more depressed by the rank quality of the beer and the lack of a friendly atmosphere in many of the pubs. The Blind Beggar had been given a makeover, no doubt to give it a post-Kray fillip, but you wondered why.

He upped his game and became dismissive of Charrington's, then Young's and Fuller's because they seemed to betray his standards. Greene King, whose Abbot Ale he sported on many T-shirts in the 1970s, was consigned to his rubbish bin. He hoovered up all the pubs of the smaller regional breweries just like he had collected train numbers in his childhood: Ridley's, Rayment's, his beloved Brakspear's, Donnington's, Batham's, Simpkins, Harvey's and Timothy Taylors, recording it all in his collections of beer guides and subsequently his databases. With a persevering mentality he continued until COVID struck us, polishing off all the Wetherspoons across the country (except, of course, those in airports) and most of the micropubs as well, setting out from one of London's terminals a couple of times a week. In the process he visited almost everywhere in the British Isles, although retaining his favourite haunts in North Wales and the West Midlands. If you wanted to know a good beer he was your man; although committed to drinking the strongest, he was well aware of what a decent well-balanced beer should taste like. If you want to gain his knowledge of British beer, be prepared to accumulate a lot of rail miles and spend a lot of cash, and don't stop exercising! I doubt that he had serious rival anywhere. So, choose a beer from the Blue Monkey range or, closer to home, ELB, and raise a glass to Martin; if you don't these breweries will not survive and it won't be just Martin we are mourning in 2022.

Mike Chimes

WHAT IS WHATPUB?



WhatPub? is CAMRA's on-line pub database. It is available for all to use, not just CAMRA members; just go to <https://whatpub.com/>. It features some 38,000 pubs which currently serve real ale plus records of non-real ale and closed pubs. All of the information 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 real ale and cider on offer. You can search by specific pub name or general location. It is also possible for all users, again not just CAMRA members, to submit updates for entries (factual ones, not contentious customer reviews, please!).

In normal times you will find opening times, descriptions, facilities, maps and of course details of the real ale and cider on offer. In the light of the current crisis however, WhatPub is being temporarily updated with details of which pubs have now reopened and also includes an 'additional services' filter to help you find pubs and local brewery taps which are offering take-outs and/or deliveries. Please understand however that given the frequent changes that are occurring, we cannot guarantee that every entry is up to date.

WhatPub is, incidentally, not to be confused with the Good Beer Guide 'app'. Good Beer Guide pubs are, of course, included but you cannot simply search for GBG pubs in a particular area.

whatpub.com

WhatPub? update 43

WhatPub? Update publishes news items collated by Greater London branches, often from information supplied through the 'Submit Update' button on WhatPub. We aim to report all openings and closures of places that satisfy the CAMRA definition of a pub (including those selling draught but not real ale); all pubs that add or remove real ale; and changes of name, ownership or beer policy. Readers are encouraged to visit WhatPub? for pub details, and to 'Submit Update' when they find incomplete or out-of-date information.

E1, ALDGATE EXCHANGE. Became offices c.2015.

E1W, WHITE SWAN & CUCKOO (Ei Group). Renamed **DOCKERS INN**.

EC1, OLD RED COW (Pubs of Distinction). Pubs of Distinction liquidated. Closed since March 2020. Lease on the market.

N7, CASTLE BAR (Prestige Property Developer Ltd). Planning granted for demolition and redevelopment.

N19, TOURIAN LOUNGE (Tavern Property Co). To become **BRENDAN THE NAVIGATOR** on reopening. Was the **OLD CROWN INN**.

NW3, MAGDALA (Mulberry One Capital). Mulberry has signed a 15 year lease with operators Twickenham Green Taverns who already run a number of pubs.

NW6, CORRIB REST. Planning granted Jan 2021 for conversion to educational use.

NW10, CHAMBERLAYNE (Masseria Group). Renamed **RISE**. Was **BANKER'S DRAUGHT**

NW10, GREENES. Closed since the summer of 2019. Planning application to reduce to one unit refused by Brent Council.

SE3, NEW TIGERS HEAD. Converted in spring 2021 to operate as Blackheath Food Centre.

SW3, CHELSEA PIG (Chelsea Pubs). Closed having filed for insolvency in Feb 2020. Was **PIG'S EAR** and the **FRONT PAGE**

SW3, SURPRISE (Young/Geronimo). New leaseholder is Jack Greenall, a scion of the Greenall Whitley brewing family.

SW8, MIST ON ROCKS. Planning granted Aug 2020 to convert to coffee shop with flats above and below. Was the **PLOUGH INN**.

SW10, RILEYS (Tavern Property Co). Tavern Propco has sold on the lease to Call to the Bar Ltd. The sub lease is retained by Market Taverns.

SW12, WOLFGANG'S BEER HAUS. Planning permission granted Jan 2021 for change of use to post office/retail/cafe/hot food serving.

SW20, EDWARD RAYNE (Wetherspoon). Wetherspoon's has handed the lease back, and the freeholder has sold the property to someone who is not a pub operator. It is understood there is someone interested in taking on a lease, although there are practical obstacles in the way.

Advertising in London Drinker

For obvious reasons, we cannot currently produce a printed version of *London Drinker*. At present, we expect the June/July edition to be available on-line only as well. If you would like to advertise in the on-line edition, please contact John Galpin, our Advertisements Manager, as below.

We will return to producing the printed version as soon as we can. Our advertising rates will then stay 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 and quarter page black and white £90.

Call John Galpin on 020 3287 2966; Mobile 07508 036835. Email: johngalpinmedia@gmail.com or [Twitter@LDads](https://twitter.com/LDads).

London Drinker is published bi-monthly. The June/July edition will be available on-line from Wednesday 28 May.

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

BEER BY DESIGN - THE ART OF GOOD BEER BRANDING

By Pete Brown, with Liz Vater

Tracing the history of beer label design and advertising through the ages, this book offers both lessons in how design works in the context of advertising and an interesting historical narrative of how design in beer branding has evolved over time. Succinct chapters with excellent accompanying photographs give this book that 'coffee table' feel to it. However, as much as one can dip in and out of this book, with any page capable of holding the reader's attention, the way the author engages the reader when discussing the tools used by those in marketing and how and why they've related to beer branding - from Bass and Allsops in the late 1800s, right through to the eye

watering displays that we see on bars today (mainly in supermarkets for the time being) - makes this book well worth the reader's full attention from cover to cover.



The author's informed and expert explanation of specific tools and tricks used by those in design for marketing and how they can work on us subconsciously was (even for a cynic like me) eye opening. Every accompanying photograph has been

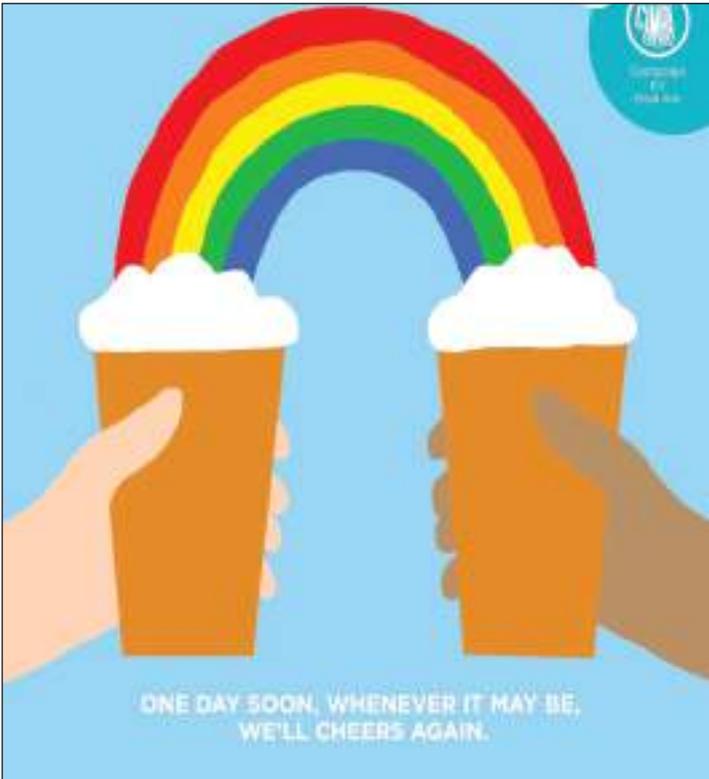
carefully chosen and in some cases meticulously broken down to explain each concept. Each chapter exemplifies the fact that whether coming from a global super brewer or a smaller, passionate, 'craft' brewer, there are very few happy accidents in branding when businesses are vying for your money.

Although the author drops enough hints that he clearly enjoys cask ale, I enjoyed the fact that he hasn't been dogmatic about only discussing 'real ale' but has looked at all beer branding design and this book is all the better for it. I feel, after reading this book, that some cask brewers could do a lot worse than have this as a reference in their breweries.

A thoroughly recommended read.

Navindh Baburam

The book is available on-line at shop.camra.org.uk priced £15.99
ISBN: 978-1-85249-368-4.
Paperback 25 x 21 cm; 224 page



If you are one of the people who are keeping the country going at this difficult time, whoever you are or whatever you do, thank you.

Hello again. Funny old world, isn't it. As I sit typing this (on 11 March) I have just been reminded (by Breakfast TV) that a year ago today Covid-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation and a year ago yesterday was my 70th birthday. An awful lot has happened in that year and quite a lot of it awful... Still, one advantage of getting older is that I've probably forgotten a lot of the awfulness. Ho-hum!

Sorry about that; will a non-rhyming limerick brighten things up? Here's one from June 1988 (blimey! 33 years ago) by Mike Gigg and Chris Leftley:

A football team coming from Slough
Had gallantly fought their way through
To play Middlesbrough.
But lost the match though,

'Cos their tactics weren't thorough enough.

Let's get on with something to pass the time, sadly not in a quiet corner of the balloon bar with a glass of something nice beside us, but maybe you've got a bottle (or firkin?) of something nice at home. Here are some number puzzles:

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. 2 S on a CS | 6. 3 NOH by MM |
| 2. 3 BS | 7. 1686 L of LF |
| 3. 19 is ONO on a DB | 8. 5 D is Z in MC |
| 4. 5 is the AN of R | 9. 2 T in the BS |
| 5. 5050 is the S of the
N from O to a H | 10. 20 FS is the W-T |

Now for 5BY4. I don't know why but the thought came to me to use the code names for allied operations of World War 2. Here are ten of them; can you match them up?

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1. Market Garden | A. The capture of Northern Burma |
| 2. Overlord | B. Plan for invasion of Japanese homelands (halted after bombing of Hiroshima) |
| 3. Carthage | C. Development of the Bouncing Bomb and Ruhr Valley dams raid |
| 4. Crossbow | D. Normandy Invasions (D-Day) and battle for France |
| 5. Dynamo | E. The invasion of Sicily |
| 6. Husky | F. Invasions of North Africa Nov 1942 to May 1943 |
| 7. Downfall | G. The evacuation of Dunkirk |
| 8. Chastise | H. Netherlands campaign stalled at Arnhem ("A Bridge Too Far") |
| 9. Capital | I. RAF bombing of Gestapo headquarters in Copenhagen |
| 10. Torch | J. Operations against German V-Weapon installations |

Getting lazy in my old age, I thought I would continue on from the last edition with events which happened in years ending with the number one. I have advanced through the year a bit and all of this month's are from June, July or August:

1. The Duke of Edinburgh was born on 10 July 1921 – on what island?
2. In what year (on 7 July) did Solar Challenger, piloted by Steve Ptacek, become the first solar powered aircraft to cross the English Channel?
3. The Royal Liver Building was opened on 19 July; in what year?
4. Britain's first trolleybus service started running on 20 June 1911. In which city did it operate?
5. Whom did Sheriff Pat Garrett shoot in New Mexico on 15 July 1881?

6. The first Royal Ascot race meeting was held on 11 August 1711. Who was the monarch in attendance?
7. Of what Commonwealth country did Dom Mintoff become Prime Minister on 21 June 1971 following a Labour Party general election victory?
8. Who was enthroned as the 100th Archbishop of Canterbury on 27 June 1961?
9. On 28 July 1821 which South American country was proclaimed an independent nation, having been liberated from Spanish rule by the forces of San Martin?
10. On 17 July in what year was the Humber Estuary Bridge officially opened by HM The Queen?

Well, that's about it for this time. By the time you read this you should be getting close to being allowed to visit pubs (well, pub gardens) again. And by the time the next edition comes out you may even be allowed INSIDE pubs! That's all assuming, of course, that all the politicians trying to get places open before it's safe, don't win.

Have fun and stay safe (hopefully they aren't mutually exclusive).

Andy Pirson

As usual, here are the solutions to the puzzles set in the February Idle Moments column.

NUMBER PUZZLES:

1. 17 Platforms at Clapham Junction Station
2. 206 Bones in the (Adult) Human Body
3. 5 Violin Concertos by Mozart
4. 29 is the Atomic Number of Copper
5. 1441 Foundation of King's College, Cambridge
6. 2 Violins in a String Quartet
7. 31 is the Highest Number whose Square is Under One Thousand
8. 2 Stars in a Binary Pair
9. 6 Top Ten Hits of Gerry and the Pacemakers
10. 8 Arches of the Wharcliffe Viaduct at Hanwell

5BY4:

Avian Taxonomy (Coastal)

1. Oystercatcher – *Haematopus ostralegus*
2. Gannet – *Sula bassana*
3. Common Tern – *Sterna hirundo*
4. Dunlin – *Calidris alpina*
5. Puffin – *Fratercula arctica*
6. Manx Shearwater – *Puffinus puffinus*
7. Herring Gull – *Larus argentatus*
8. Arctic Skua – *Stercorarius parasiticus*
9. Curlew – *Numenius arquata*
10. Little Auk – *Alle alle*

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE:

1. The name of the World's first space station, launched by Russia on 19 April 1971, was Salyut.
2. The FA Cup Final held on 23 March 1891 was the first to use nets on the goals.
3. The French impressionist painter, born in Limoges on 25 February 1841, was Pierre Auguste Renoir.
4. On 5 April 1971, Mrs Fran Phipps became the first woman to reach the North Pole.
5. The first licensed betting shops were opened in Britain on 1 May in 1961.
6. The sculptor Gutzon Borglum, born in Bear Lake, Idaho,

- is most famous for the sculpture of the four Presidents on Mount Rushmore.
- Capital punishment was abolished on 8 May 1921 in Sweden.
 - On 31 March 1921, at Leicester, the jockey who rode Gay Lord to the first of his 4,870 wins was Sir Gordon Richards.
 - The trial of Adolf Eichmann for war crimes started on 11 April 1961. It was held in Jerusalem.
 - The purpose of the 22nd Amendment to the United States constitution (ratified on 27 February 1951) was to limit the President to two terms in office.

Letters

All readers – not just CAMRA members – are invited to submit letters for publication whenever they feel so inclined. Please remember however 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.

NOT A REAL ALE DEFINITION AT ALL

I am uncertain how many readers will have seen the latest CAMRA definitions of real ale, in a single two page document dated November 2020. I don't think they had been widely distributed until you included them in the February / March 2021 *London Drinker*. Yes it is now definitions, plural, but does no longer actually define real ale at all. It defines cask ale and live beer, either of which might be real ale or might not. How did we come to this?

Probably to placate the supporters within CAMRA, who want to support and promote new wave keg beers, there is no mention of the acceptability or otherwise of different methods of draught dispense. From what I understand so called live beer dispensed by gas (not air) pressure being applied, with that gas being in contact with the beer, would now be regarded as real ale. This is after 50 glorious years of saying it would be disqualified.

I doubt this ill-fated document would help anyone, in future, to definitively identify if any individual beer on offer is a real ale, which is more than sad as we are principally the Campaign for Real Ale. I am convinced we must go back to the drawing board and produce a draft that leaves no room for dubiety

when it comes to ingredients, manufacture and dispense and then have this validated or rejected democratically by the membership at a National AGM. One cannot fail to recall the ferocity and intensity of debate on this issue, in past years, when changes to the definition had been proposed. Cask ale is under enough threats without this latest dilution of our total commitment to real ale by removing the previous clarity on the unacceptability of extraneous gas, under pressure, being applied to it during storage and dispense.

Our previous definition was one paragraph, lucid and punchy and has long been adopted by the Oxford English Dictionary as well as many other dictionaries and reference books. I note that, to date, none of those have adopted our new so-called definitions.

Roger Corbett

Editor's note: in accordance with our policy of giving a right of reply, Roger's letter was forwarded to those who drew up the definition for comment.

Thank you for giving me a chance to respond to Mr Corbett's letter. It is incorrect to say that the new definition does not define 'real ale'; it very clearly defines real ale as 'live beer' and then goes on to give a full technical definition, the crux of which is that live beer contains live yeast and enough fermentable sugars: any 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".

This definition is more scientifically based than our previous one: "beer brewed from traditional ingredients, matured by secondary fermentation in the container from which it is dispensed." Any beer with enough live yeast and sufficient fermentable sugars will undergo a secondary fermentation, and

so in practice the definitions are identical as regards the nature of the beer.

What has changed is that we have removed any description of dispense from our real ale definition. This is because it is simply incorrect to imply that a beer becomes a different product if it is dispensed in a different manner. CAMRA retains policies on our preferred dispense methods in other documents.

The extra definition of 'cask-conditioned live beer' differentiates what some might still consider to be the only real ale from the generic concept. It also helps us to continue to campaign for this particular method of presentation of live beer, linked so strongly as it is with our pub and club campaigning.

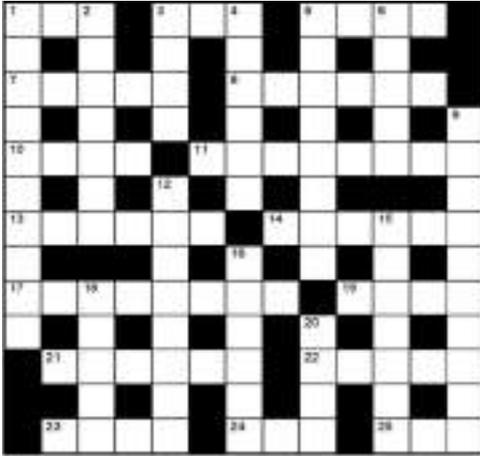
Catherine Tony
CAMRA Technical Director

DARK BEERS

I sadly missed the virtual Beer and Cheese tasting held by North London. This echoed an event held some years ago by local property developers in Biggin Hill who, on opening their marketing office, had a stall demonstrating the matching of beers to cheese. Most enlightening to me at the time as I was not driving! I do see however that yet again, the favourite beer type was porter or stout. A fact held out at beer festivals (remember them?) where it is always the dark beers that sell out first. But, how can we persuade the (wo)man in the street of this? It is not long ago that I nagged one of my locals to stock a porter and to this day the publican reminds me he had 'a little more wastage than anticipated' and he stocks a variety of beer types. Trying to get an ordinary local boozier to stock at least one nice cask stout or porter seems to be so hard and especially galling when you see how much 'super cold' Guinness is being sold at that venue. Suggestions please?

Kent Sadler

Compiled by **DAVE QUINTON**
£20 prize to be won



Name

Address

All correct entries received by first post on 23 May will be entered into a draw for the prize.

The prize winner will be announced in the August/September *London Drinker*. The solution will be given in the June/July edition.

For preference, entries should be submitted to:
London Drinker Crossword, 25 Valens House,
Upper Tulse Hill, London SW2 2RX,
but in the current circumstances, we will accept entries in any format that you can manage.

FEBRUARY/MARCH'S SOLUTION



ACROSS

- 1 & 3. Device filling great organisation with energy. [6]
5. Complain about the fish. [4]
7. Extra lean. [5]
8. Collect food on behalf of the elderly. [6]
10. Regretted vociferously being coarse. [4]
11. Article cut from Tory paper disturbed the land. [8]
13. Genius making Italian city grand. [6]
14. Damage to church is unusual. [6]
17. Works on musical production before set back. [8]
19. Composer's short party. [4]
21. In scruffy clothes being ridiculed. [6]
22. It's part of my dream, please make it large enough. [5]
23. Exciting action of the First Irish Fusiliers. [4]
- 24 & 25. Badly bruised, I abandoned the vehicle. [3, 3]

DOWN

1. Cutting off players share. [10]
2. In the East End my wife and I wander around. [7]
3. Some considered England a paradise. [4]
4. Have enough for a first flash car. [6]
5. Shell makes vehicle fast. [8]
6. He's in agreement. [5]
9. They help you find a flat. [4, 6]
12. Put at risk? Calm down. [8]
15. Upset? Bear up, love. We'll get a good drink here. [4,3]
16. Gentle nurse. [6]
18. Precise demand. [5]
20. Singer kicked out of the pub, apparently. [4]

Winner of the prize for the December/January crossword:
David Renwick, Acton, W3

Other correct entries were received from:

Tony Alpe, Pat Andrews, Lorraine Bamford, Hugh Breach, Kelvin Brewster, John Butler, Paul Curson, Peter Curson, Joe Daly, John Dodd, Joe & Lynne Ellis, Paul Gray, Caroline Guthrie, Ms Gerry Guthrie, Stuart Guthrie, Peter Haines, "Shropshire" Dave Hardy, Claire Jenkins, Mike Joyce, Mick Lancaster, Terry Lavell, Aidan Laverty, Marjorie Lopatis, Ken Mackenzie, Rob Mills, Pam Moger, Dave Murphy, Paul Nicholls, Mark Nichols, Nigel Parsons, Mark Pilkington, Betty Pleasants, Robert Pleasants, Portrush Annie, Barrie Powell, Jeanette Powell, Nigel Roe, C J Tansley, Bill Thackray, Mark Thompson, Andy Wakefield, Martin Weedon, Richard Whiting.

There was also one incorrect entry.

Please note: any mention of beer takeaway and delivery services is simply a service to readers.

It does not imply any recommendation and should you have any complaints, please take them up direct with the supplier concerned.

London Drinker has no commercial connection with any of these companies.

"CAMRA has created life changing experiences for its members and advocated for beer drinkers for half a century. Its achievements are all the more remarkable when you consider that it is truly a grassroots organisation."

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Here, in no particular order, are some items that arrived after the editorial deadline:

CARLTON TAVERN, KILBURN

Given its history, I don't want to tempt fate here but there are some very positive reports circulating. There will be more in the next edition or you may be able to find out yourselves on 12 April.

EALING BEER FESTIVAL

Sadly, Ealing, scheduled for July, can now be added to the list of cancelled festivals (see page 7). The organisers are considering their options for an event later in the year. They will post updates on their website and social media accounts.

JUDICIAL REVIEW ON OPENING DATE FOR PUBS

Sacha Lord, the Night-time Economy Adviser for Greater Manchester has joined Hugh Osmond, the founder of Punch Taverns, in instigating a judicial review of the Government's decision to delay the reopening of pubs until after the reopening of non-essential shops. Mr Lord has already had some success with his action over the 'substantial meals' requirement (see page 10). Although pubs with gardens and outside areas can reopen on 12 April, the same time as non-essential shops, the action is intended to protect those pubs which cannot and have to wait until 17 May. It was reported in the *Morning Advertiser* that the pair wrote to the Government on 12 March, giving them notice to supply 'evidence or justification for the prioritisation of non-essential retail over hospitality' by 17 March but no satisfactory response was received and so the matter will now go to the High Court. Mr Lord made the point that, "Operators have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds creating indoor COVID secure environments, as advised by ministers themselves and we firmly believe these regulated, ventilated venues have much safer measures and greater social distancing in place than retail stores. This is not a hospitality versus retail argument, but Government decisions must operate on a level playing field and be supported by evidence. We currently see no clear justification for the delay."

FURTHER EXTENSION TO COMMERCIAL EVICTIONS MORATORIUM

On 10 March, the Housing and Communities Secretary, Robert Jenrick, announced that the ban on commercial landlords (including pub owning businesses) taking legal action to recover rent arrears would be extended from 31 March to 30 June. This includes actions to have tenants declared insolvent. It is welcome but most pubs are unlikely to make enough money between 12 April or 17 May and 30 June to pay off their debts. As I have said before, it is simply 'kicking the can down the road'. As reported in the *Morning Advertiser*, once again, Mr Jenrick said that rent is one of the costs intended to be covered by the Government's various support grants and loans. He added that the Government's hope is that business landlords and tenants will be able to reach mutual agreements to pay or write off rent debts by 30 June, something that the Government will support and, if necessary, legislate upon.

SMALL BREWERS' RELIEF

As mentioned in the previous edition, the Government have issued their technical consultation and the closing date for submissions is 4 April. CAMRA's Campaigns Committee has asked CAMRA branches to contribute their views. I am not expecting the outcome to be known in time for our next edition.

MARSTON'S

Further to the main report on page 30, Marston's have now acquired the freehold interest of eight of the 156 pubs which they leased from Brains. Details of the pubs have not been released but Marston's have confirmed that they are to be converted into long lease franchises. I wonder if these were tenancies that ran out of time and money.

It was announced on 11 March that Ralph Findlay, who has been Marston's chief executive for twenty years, will be leaving at the end of September. No successor has yet been appointed. There was no report on Mr Findlay's own future plans but it is unlikely that he will be leaving the business; perhaps he is going to start a pub company as well.

TURNING THE TIDE

Readers may recall that in the last edition (page 19) I mentioned that Gabriele Bertucci's *What's in the Glass* project, a digital community for the hospitality and beer industry, was producing a series of 25 minute films documenting London's beer culture during the pandemic. The release dates for the five episodes have now been confirmed. They are 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 April. They can be viewed at www.youtube.com/WhatsInTheGlass.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO CASK BEER

The All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group (APPBG) is to conduct an inquiry into the future of cask beer in the UK and has invited interested businesses, organisations, and individuals to submit evidence. The closing date was 31 March. They will then produce a report containing recommendations for the Government. The chair of the APPBG, Mike Wood, the MP for Dudley South, said, "Real Ale is unique to the UK, central to our brewing heritage, and extraordinarily dependent on pubs for its sales. The lockdown caused an unprecedented fall in volumes, which were down over 60% in 2020. This has had a widespread impact, as for many brewers cask ale makes up a large proportion of their output. The revival of sales is vital to their commercial future and we want to understand how best this can be ensured. The fortunes of cask beer are dependent on two things: pubs reopening successfully and consumers being confident that it's safe to go out. We look forward to hearing from operators on the pressures they face, and to considering what actions will best enable cask beer to recover from this national crisis." The APPBG has strong links with the larger breweries and pub owning businesses (see <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmallparty/190213/beer.htm>) and so it will be interesting to see what they come up with.

Why should I join CAMRA?

In 2021 CAMRA celebrates its 50th anniversary. In those years it has become one of the most successful consumer organisations in Europe. We must not rest on our laurels however. Above all, we are a campaign; we must continue to protect and promote real ale and to protect the great British pub. This work is currently even more important than ever with Government restrictions putting the hospitality sector under great strain and increasing the risk of pub closures and redevelopment happening under the cover of COVID.

CAMRA is led by volunteers, right up to its National Executive. The more of us doing the campaigning, the better. Please think about joining CAMRA.

There are lots of ways that you can contribute. Just using your local pubs regularly (when you can) is important but there are other tasks such as lobbying MPs, updating pub information, submitting beer scores or liaising with breweries. Hopefully, we will be allowed to meet as groups again before too long. We will then return to listing local branch events in our diary section. In normal times there are as many, if not more, social events as there are business meetings. If you come along, you will not be jumped on to take a job of some sort, although if after a while you feel like doing so, more the better. We appreciate that not everyone has time to give so there are no expectations.

More importantly, you will meet new friends. CAMRA members are a wonderful mix of people of all ages, from all walks of life.

In due course, we will also be able to start holding beer festivals again. Most CAMRA beer festivals need new volunteers and there is a very wide range of jobs available. There is a special sort of camaraderie among beer festival volunteers. It's hard work but there are many who, having tried it once, are hooked for life.

CAMRA also has an active Pub Heritage Group which records, celebrates and helps protect some of the nation's most important community buildings. There are some excellent pub heritage guides available.

CAMRA members can also enjoy a wealth of on-line information on our Learn & Discover platform, contributed by experts in their fields. You can also listen in to our podcast, *Pubs. Pints. People*, all about the world of beer, cider and pubs.

Although not all of them are useful at present, the material benefits of CAMRA membership are:

- Our monthly on-line newspaper 'What's Brewing'
- Our quarterly magazine 'Beer'
- Free or discounted entry to most CAMRA beer festivals, including the Great British Beer Festival
- Discounts on CAMRA books
- Discounts at some carefully selected holiday companies
- £30 worth of vouchers (60 X 50p) for use in the pubs of those companies who are participating
- Discounts at some pubs, at their discretion

Single membership, paid by Direct Debit, costs £26.50 and Joint membership (partner at same address) £31.50. 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'.



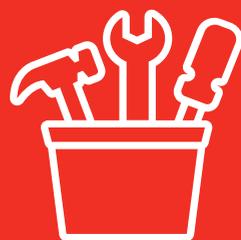
CAMRA'S PULLING TOGETHER CAMPAIGN

- 1** Pubs, clubs, brewers and cider makers need customers to support them to make sure they can survive through the latest lockdown.
- 2** We ask people to support pubs, clubs, brewers and cider makers by using takeaway and delivery services – and we help them do that by promoting where and how they can.
- 3** The beer and pub industry is a force for good and continues to do amazing work to help the COVID response in their local communities.
- 4** Consumers want to get back to the pub, enjoy cask beer, and have access to local and independent brands.



Is your local pub under threat?

CAMRA has the tools to help you save it



camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal



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for
Real Ale