

Durham Drinker

100 Not Out! - The 100th Issue



*Cover Photo: Chester-le-Street Cricket Club,
CAMRA Durham Club of the Year, 2008*

Photo: Neil Shaw



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

“Like pulling hen’s teeth” is the phrase that comes to mind when trying to put the 100th issue of the Durham Drinker to bed; it has been three years since issue 99!

So what’s been going on in the meantime? Most of it seem to be bad news...

Sadly Durham has seen a number of pubs close, either to be turned into flats for students or into modern housing complexes (without pubs!) Most notable is the loss of the once great landmark on the Great North Road, the Cock O’ The North. This fine gateway to Durham has now been replaced by a faceless housing complex. The Pot & Glass in Crossgate Moor (now the Lodge) and The Britannia in Gilesgate have also gone along with the Prince Bishop in Brandon; to name but a few! More recently, the Branch has learnt of the demise of the Dun Cow (AKA The Cowstail) at Billy Row.

The most significant development is, of course, Walkergate beneath the Gala Theatre. We

have gained 2 national real ale outlets with the Bishop’s Mill, a Lloyd’s No 1, and the Slug & Lettuce. The area has also seen the arrival of Ebony, a Champagne Bar!

The Tap & Spile in Framwellgate Moor and The Vic in Durham are winning CAMRA Durham’s “Pub of the Year” with almost monotonous regularity, but deservedly so. However, The Ship at High Hesleden, the Grey Horse at Consett and the Three Horseshoes at Leamside are not far behind.

Let’s hope in the future we can still afford the price of a pint after the swingeing tax increases over the past three years and the soaring cost of raw brewing ingredients.

On a sad note, we lost our ex-Chairman and Beer Festival Director Jim McCaffrey last year, but more of that further in.

However, I am sure that with continued support, it won’t all be doom and gloom! Welcome to the 100th edition of Durham Drinker.

Eddie Turner and Neil Shaw

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CAMRA Durham Pub of the Year 2003, 2005, 2007

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**Congratulations Durham CAMRA
on its 100th edition of the Durham Drinker**

Our beers are available in 9 gallon casks and in bottles

Telephone 0191 584 8844 or visit www.dmbc.org.uk

Pub & Club of the Year

CAMRA Durham has recently announced its winners of the annual Pub and Club of the Year competitions.

This year sees the return of the Tap & Spile at Framwellgate Moor as the Pub of the Year, having last won the award in 2006.

The pub is a popular venue within the Branch, being a regular choice for Branch meetings. Landlady Lesley Fife has up to 8 real ales available, along with Old Rosie for the cider drinkers. The chalk board menu also keeps a count of the number of different ales the pub has had!

The pub is popular with all ages, and a lack of music means good conversation can be had (unless it's Wednesday night quiz night!) The walls of the pub are adorned with a selection of nicknacks from all over the world.

Cricket and beer proved they do mix as Chester-le-Street Cricket Club (not to be confused with the County ground, The Riverside, also in Chester-le-Street!) were presented with the Club of the Year award for the first time. The Club has recently opened its doors to non-Members and usually has up to 3 real ales available.

Upon receiving the award the award the Club's General Manager, Avril Currie, said "We are delighted to receive this award because it rewards the efforts put in by all the staff - both to

our real ales and our normal popular range. We work hard at keeping our cellar in tip-top competition and have always had a good name for our beers and we will certainly be celebrating with a drop or two of real ale".

Club Chairman Stephen Willis said "This award is a real feather in the cap for the Club and our congratulations go to Avril and her staff for their initiative and hard work. The Club is moving forward rapidly at the moment, both on and off the field, and we look forward to hosting even more members and guests during this year." The Cricket Club is also planning running a beer festival this October.

Our Pub and Club of the Year will now go forward to the Regional competition where they will face establishments from the other North East Region Branches; the winner going on to face the rest of CAMRA's Regions for the National Trophies. We wish the Tap & Spile and Chester-le-Street Cricket Club the best of luck!

2000 copies of the Durham Drinker are distributed through the Branch area. If any real ale licensee does not receive copies of this magazine and wishes to do so, free of charge, please contact the Editor - details on the inside back cover.

Jim McCaffrey

Jim McCaffrey was Durham Branch Chair from 1996 until 2002. He also filled the post of Treasurer and had been Beer Festival Director since the early nineties. Shortly after Jim retired from the Durham CAMRA committee his doctor told him to cut out the ale because of his illness and, presumably, this is why Jim let his membership of CAMRA lapse. Because of this, we believe, the CAMRA national newspaper "What's Brewing" did not publish his obituary - a shameful decision. We in the Durham Branch honoured Jim's memory at last year's Beer Festival with Bar 1 bearing his name and a special brew, JMC Strong.

The Woodman, Durham

The Branch was saddened to hear of the closure of The Woodman. This was a popular pub, and the reasons behind the closure are unknown.

Happily, owners Scottish & Newcastle have been able to find a familiar face in Paula, a previous owner, to take over running the pub.

Although the number of handpulls has been reduced from six to three, many Branch members are not too concerned as we recognise that quality is just as important as quantity; and that a balance needs to be achieved to ensure beer is sold at a rate that keeps the beer at the peak of quality.

The Branch wishes Paula every success in her new venture.



WELCOME BACK DURHAM DRINKER
FROM

**DURHAM CAMRA'S
PUB OF
THE YEAR
2008**

**EIGHT HANDPULLS FULL OF GORGEOUS
BEER FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT**

DON'T LET IT GO TO WASTE!

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Patrician Class on the March

The public and grammar school-educated political establishment have replaced the old aristocracy in telling the hoi polloi what to think, say, and how to behave and they have been successful at least on the surface. How long they can ignore the simmering resentment underneath is the question. This modern patrician class have successfully seen off the smokers and introduced what they call “social justice” which means no justice at all for many.

Now they want successive increases in the excise duty on alcohol (your pint) to try and curb the cretin class from throwing it down their necks to achieve vomit & violent mode. How will this affect you and your choice to visit your local and socialise over for a few good pints?

Increasing the tax on alcohol will not stop the young binge drinkers. What usually happens when adults tell teenagers something is bad for them and they shouldn't do it?

More rural and urban pubs will close. Supermarkets will continue to sell cheap beer & lager as a “loss leader” People in outlying areas will feel further isolated and village social life will suffer.

The extra tax raised will be offset by the fall in revenue caused by these pub closures and a general fall in pub attendances

Any surplus revenue will not be wholly

spent on treating NHS patients with alcohol related problems just as the majority of road tax is not spent on the roads.

So why are the Patricians showing increasing confidence that they can pull this off? Well – the Tories Social Policies Group, led by Iain Duncan Smith last year agreed with this view although the Conservatives seem to be having second thoughts.

Using tax increases on beer on the pretext of health issues is a sledgehammer approach that smacks of bar-rack-room and classroom discipline. Everyone suffers instead of those who deserve to suffer and it does not help those who need help. CAMRA has long advocated a ban on the media advertising of alcohol, as this would only affect those who are influenced by these slick and sometimes-puerile commercials. What is needed is new thinking on the subject instead of continually jeopardising the future of our community pubs and our small local independent breweries – or have the Patrician Classes really run out of ideas?

Eddie Turner

[To give you an idea of where your money goes, the average pint costs £2.45

The Government takes 35p Excise Duty and 37p VAT - A total of 72p (based on 4% ABV)

In a managed pub, CAMRA estimates that once brewing and pub running costs are accounted for there is 42p left over as profit/investment.

(Figures from CAMRA. Average pint price from 2008 CAMRA Prices Survey)] - Ed

A Brewer's Tale

The fact that this is the hundredth Durham Drinker brings to mind the idea of landmarks and anniversaries.

In the world of beer, CAMRA is pretty recent, and The Durham Brewery even more recent at fourteen years. Even so, we have seen some seismic changes in the trade over that time.

When we started in 1994 there were around 200 small breweries in the country, cask beer was becoming more common and there seemed to be plenty of room for growth. The micros were beginning to experiment with old beer styles, and porter and IPA were making a comeback. There were a good number of free houses to sell to and pubcos were relatively thin on the ground.

A kind of status quo had developed but then in 2002 SIBA's 21 year campaign for progressive beer duty bore fruit and the Chancellor allowed the smallest breweries to pay half beer duty. Market forces took over and the result was an explosion in the number of micros and a reduction in the price of beer to pubs – not the drinkers – so that now there are probably around 700 micros.

In addition to the extra competition, the pub groups have continued to purchase some of the best free houses. Some of these groups are enlightened and take beer from the micros, but on the whole they tend to have supermarket principles and prefer to buy in volume at low price.

Many micros take part in this market, but it should be stated that micros are

part of a craft industry with low volumes and are not particularly suited to high volume markets. But then we have a capitalist economy and we should not complain too much about competition.

When times change they can do so very quickly. Last summer came the credit crunch which was in turn magnified by the smoking ban. Drinkers are not frequenting pubs as much as they did and many are buying cheap supermarket booze. As people are reducing spending, the price of beer is increasing. Global weather was awful last year and many crops were spoilt or of low quality. The result is a massive increase in the price of malt and hops.

Talk about “kick a man when he's down”; the Chancellor made the biggest increase in beer duty in living memory and wants to increase it by 2 points above inflation every year until 2013. It has been predicted that we could have the £6 pint for the 2012 Olympics. The end result of these pressures are that - according to Rob Hayward (British Beer and Pub Association) - compared with last year people are drinking 1 million fewer pints per day and pubs are closing.

But enough of the doom and gloom, CAMRA has done its job so well that good quality real ale with a fantastic choice is available all over the country.

Steve Gibbs, Durham Brewery

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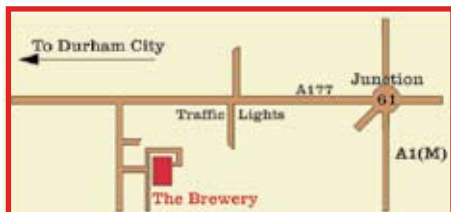


Opening times

Saturday mornings 10.00am - 12.00pm (noon)

Weekdays 8.am to 4.00pm

Plus order by telephone 0191 3771991
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A Landlord's Tale

Licensees were criticised by a reader in CAMRA's national newspaper, "What's Brewing," in April for not doing enough to make their businesses more viable, having too big a "mark up" on the beer and not listening to their customers. Mike Leonard is the Landlord of the Dun Cow in Old Elvet, this is his reply.

"In reply to Richard English (WB April), it is clear this gentleman has no understanding of the industry. He does state he is not privy to the wholesale price of beer and that demonstrates his ignorance in this area. There is no wholesale price of beer. Instead there is a discount structure that discriminates against landlords who have 'tied leases'.

While Wetherspoons can buy nationally at huge discounts, Licensees with a tied lease (who are in the majority) have no option but to purchase their products from their Landlord at the price it deems appropriate. In my own case, the local Wetherspoons is currently selling beers and lagers at less than the cost of purchasing through my tie. It is not Licensees who are profiteering but the Landlord Pub Companies, which put a stranglehold on the Licensee with both inflated prices and exorbitant rents.

Mr English speculates pubs are mak-

ing over a pound profit per pint, as if this is unreasonable. By the time I have paid rent and rates in excess of £50,000 per year and add staff costs and other overheads, then this is clearly the margin necessary for survival. Pubs are closing in ever increasing numbers because they are unprofitable. Lay the blame for this where it is due, at the feet of the Pub Companies not with the Licensee struggling to make a living in the face rising costs and unfair wholesale pricing regimes".

(Reproduced from the April 2008 issue of What's Brewing

Trading Standards

Although we hope you will never have to use them, we include contact details for Durham County Council's Trading Standards department.

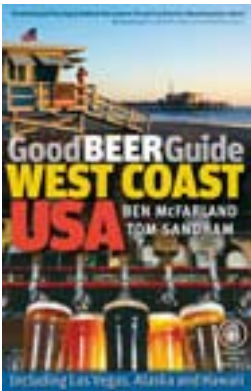
Should you ever be unlucky enough to come across a pub that fails to serve a full measure, does not display a price list and strengths of beers, or fails to meet any other trading regulations, please contact Durham County Council Trading Standards either by phone on 0191 383 3589 or in writing to:

Annexe Building
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UB

You may also wish to email details to the Branch at
chair@camradurham.org.uk

Good Beer Guide - West Coast USA

- * The definitive independent beer guide for visitors to America's West Coast, as well as to Las Vegas, Alaska and Hawaii.
- * A full-colour, illustrated guide to several hundred breweries, beers and great places to find them.
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- * Companion volume to CAMRA's comprehensive Good Beer Guide Belgium, Good Beer Guide Germany, and Good Beer Guide Prague & the Czech Republic.



As the place where American micro-brewing was born, America's West Coast has become the epicentre of a brewing revolution. Perhaps surprisingly to some, America is now home to more beer

styles than anywhere else in the world and its flourishing brewing industry has a growing reputation for quality

and innovation. This authoritative and entertaining guide to the breweries, brewpubs and beer bars of America's West Coast, Alaska and Hawaii is written by two experienced British beer writers who have spent considerable time travelling in America and developing an infectious enthusiasm for its exciting beers and brewing scene.

Biographies

Ben McFarland is a leading drinks and travel journalist who lives in London. He dances for beans at the behest of a number of national newspapers and magazines including the Guardian, Independent on Sunday, Loaded, Theme, Wine & Spirit, Beers of the World, Celebrator and numerous others. In 2004, he was named the youngest ever "Beer Writer of the Year" by the British Guild of Beer Writers and he won the award again in 2006.

Tom Sandham has been a drinks journalist for the last four years and has contributed to the top industry titles in the UK including The Publican and Class. He also holds a degree in American Studies and has spent the last ten years travelling to and from America learning about the country and enjoying its beer.

ISBN: 978-1-85249-244-1

Price: £14.99

<http://www.camra.org.uk/books>

The Durham Beer Festival

In January the Branch sent out a 3-page mail-shot to all members detailing the posts required on the Beer Festival Committee/Working Party. This cost us over £200 and we received one reply from some 290 members. Despite this, we believe it was worth it if only to indicate realistically the level of interest among usually non-active members – next to zero.

For a while it did not look as if the Festival would take place; but now we have a Festival Director who has already booked the venue (Dunelm House, New Elvet) and started planning the beer lists.

The message to all members is: Start getting involved if you want this event to continue.

Setting up starts at 09:00 on Tuesday morning, 26th August and again on Wednesday 27th August - come along and help, if you can. Helpers on Tuesday and Wednesday will receive free beer tokens for attendance; and a t-shirt for helping on both days! Helpers are also needed to help serve customers when the Festival is open and we will need more manpower on Sunday August 31st at 09:00 to help dismantle (very important!)

The Festival itself opens between 17:00 and 23:00 on Thursday 28th August and then 11:00 to 23:00 on Friday 29th and Saturday 30th August.

A sign-up form is in the Beer Festival section of the branch website:

<http://www.camradurham.org.uk/>

Richard & Ellie would like to extend a warm welcome to The Queen's Head Lanchester

We have 9 hand pulls serving 7 different cask ales with weekly changing guest ales we also have a varied selection of specialised beers.

All of our delicious food is freshly prepared on the premises & sourced locally, our service times are:

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Sunday 12noon - 8pm

Monday is Quiz night from 9pm onwards winning teams win 6pints or 6 175ml glasses of house wine.

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Pub News

☼ Like most rural community pubs, the Black Horse in Cornsay Village is finding the going tough. The Landlord, Gary Natrass, has used his former media skills to advertise his pub on YouTube. On the site, do a search on “Cornsay” or see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQ2z8HvYbPU>

☼ Paul Wilkinson has been resident licensee at Ye Olde Fleece Inn in Bishop Middleham for just over a year. The previous occupants had run the pub down but since Paul took over the cask ale sales have increased dramatically. A refurbishment should soon be underway which will result in food being served all day every day.

☼ Twenty years ago the Village Inn at Hett was a thriving local pub with a restaurant and featured in the 1990 Good Beer Guide. In the intervening years till now the story has been a familiar one of neglect and disinterest. Six years ago the villagers fought a successful battle to save the pub, which was then purchased by a private owner and leased out. Formerly also known as the Goldmine (don't ask), the pub is now the Hett Arms with new licensees Steve Hare and Sharon Standring and they are serious about running a real pub. Steve and Sharon have 3 hand-pulls with changing beers from local Micro Breweries. The pub will be open 3–11 Monday, Tuesday then 12–11 and 12–3.30 Sunday, 6.30–10.30. A Beer Festival with 20 brews is planned

for 11–14th September.

☼ *The Queens Head in Lanchester is owned by the small pub group McKenna Inns and was refurbished last September after years of neglect. It can now be counted among the smartest pubs in the county and has rejoined the best that make up the Good Beer Guide. Another house with 9 hand-pulls, licensees Richard and Ellie Windmill can serve 7 beers at a time. Bombardier is the regular ale with Taylor's Landlord frequently available and rotating guest beers.*

☼ Landlord Michael Webster of The Victoria Hotel met the part owner of the Kingstone Brewery in Monmouth while on a skiing holiday in Courcheval, France at Christmas. The result of this recently was three types of the Welsh brews on the bar, probably the first time featured in the County or anywhere in the North East.

Branch Diary

July

Tues 1st: Beer Festival Meeting, The Victoria, Durham. Start 7:30pm

Wed 16th: Branch Meeting, Old England, Great Lumley. Start 8pm

August

Wed 13th: Branch Meeting, Colpitts, Durham. Start 8pm

September

Tues 16th: Branch Meeting, Tap & Spile, Framwellgate Moor. Start 8pm

October

Tues 31st: Branch Meeting, Hett Arms, Start 8pm

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