



# Durham Drinker

Issue 154 Spring  
2026

## ...and Darlington!

### Inside:

- Boddies rises from the ashes
- Champion Winter Beer of Britain results
- CAMRA Durham Pub and Club of the Year results
- Details of proposed planning changes
- The usual quizzing
- Ins and outs amongst the inns—the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly
- Local brewery takeover



**CAMRA**

**MEMBERS'  
WEEKEND  
ST ALBANS 2026**

# The Half Moon, Durham

**Award winning** traditional British pub in the heart of Durham city, with listed features including the back bar and fireplace, fitted in 1905.

**A large riverside courtyard** partially covered with a retractable roof down by the river Wear. *Kept warm by our super-efficient heat lamps!*

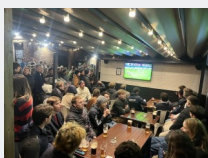
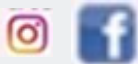
**Real ales**, including *Bass & Landlord*, a member of the Timothy Taylors champion club, and included in the GBG for many years. **CAMRA** discount!

**Full sports package** with 4 TVs inside and 6 outside. **Dog friendly** inside & out

**New Elvet, Durham, DH1 3AQ**

**0191 3741918**

Pease like our Facebook page and follow us on



## *Diary Dates:*

March 2nd-30th, Theakston Takeover at the Bay Horse, Bishop Auckland

March 4th-7th, Station House Beer Festival, North Road, Durham

March 4th-15th Wetherspoon Spring Beer Festival, various venues

March 12th, Branch Meeting at Ye Old Elm Tree, Durham. Festival business at 7pm, general stuff at 7:30pm.

March 20th—22nd, Darlington Beer Festival, Hopetown (adjacent to North Road Station) CAMRA Durham visit on Saturday 21st.

April 1st—6th, Victoria Inn Beer Festival, Witton le Wear

April 8th, CAMRA Durham AGM 7:30pm upstairs at the Station House, North Road, Durham

April 15th-18th Newcastle Beer Festival, Northumbria University



## Hello and welcome to issue 154 of Durham Drinker,

at a time when the hospitality industry—that's the one that provides you with the places to drink your beloved real ale—is under pressure that increases day by day. Pub closures have become an almost daily occurrence in our area, as licensees simply can't make a viable business of them. Raw material costs, fuel costs, rates increases, and national insurance increases all add up to make running a pub a tricky business. Various articles in this issue show what's happening and ask for central government to do something to turn the tide.

Just over the border in the Sunderland and South Tyneside CAMRA area, one of the longer-established breweries, **Maxim** of Rainton Bridge, has been taken over by the Powder Monkey Group, who not too long ago acquired **Castle Eden Brewery**. Rising from the ashes of Vaux of Sunderland, which closed in 1999, Maxim has been producing favourites like Double Maxim and Swedish Blonde since 2006. Mark Anderson of Maxim said that this move should safeguard these beers for many years to come, while Andy Burdon of Powder Monkey added "Maxim...has a fiercely loyal customer base...Hailing from the North East, I am all too familiar with the strength of Maxim's brands." *If it aint broke, don't fix it, please.*

All of these financial issues mean that the "inns and outs" section in this issue is a particularly busy one, with some pubs closing, and some brave souls moving into the industry and giving it their best shot. We - the people of the UK - desperately need pubs and clubs as part of our social life, and as a vital part of local communities. We need them for their charitable work, as bases for our sports teams and walking clubs, for their places to sit and chat, to be entertained, and to take part in community-based initiatives and activities that they organise. In short, please support your local pubs and clubs.

Meanwhile, the anniversaries continue. December saw Durham's Station House celebrate its first decade, showing what can be achieved in a difficult time for pubs, while February marked an incredible 55 years since the Richardson family took over the Joiners Arms in Hunwick—a pub which has been the epitome of a proper village local ever since. Many congratulations to both!

Finally, congratulations to **Consett Ale Works**, as their **Red Dust** made it to the finals of the Champion Winter Beer Of Britain competition. See page 23.

*Cheers, Paul Dobson*

## CAMRA Durham committee

**Chairman & Public Affairs Officer:** Paul Dobson

**Treasurer:** John Baxter

**Secretary :** Tony Dent

**Membership secretary:** Garry Halliday

**Durham Drinker, publications, & campaigns:** Paul Dobson

**Apple Rep (cider)** Chris Mansfield

**Pubs data co-ordinator:** Dave Thornton

**Website & Social Media:** Neil Shaw

**Social Secretary:** **vacant**

**Pubs Preservation:** Peter Jones

**Pub Promotions and Awards Coordinator:** Ronnie McDonnell

**Pub Protection Officer:** Peter Lawson

**GBG submissions:** Peter Jones

**Environment Officer:** Garry Halliday

## Brewery Liaison Officers

**Durham:** Stephanie Salter

**Consett Ale Works:** Sandra Wilkinson

**Hill Island:** Tony Dent

**Yard of Ale:** Arthur Corner

**Weard'Ale, George Samuel,** Paul Dobson

**Castle Eden:** Arthur Corner

**Hopper House Farm:** Peter Jones

**Caps Off:** Paul Dobson



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Durham Drinker's competi-  
tive advertising rates***

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***10% Discount for taking out  
one year's worth (4 issues)***

***3,000 copies distributed across  
County Durham's pubs and  
clubs, including Darlington,  
and anywhere else our mem-  
bers are visiting.***

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## Find us at:

[www.camradurham.org.uk](http://www.camradurham.org.uk)

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# The Victoria Inn, Durham

- *Bed & Breakfast, all rooms en-suite*
- *Private car park*
- *Friendly, atmospheric bar*
- *Five cask ales*
- *Whiskey and Whisky galore!*
- *English Heritage Grade 2 listed*
- *Durham's only CAMRA national inventory pub*
- *Over a dozen CAMRA awards*
- *Dog friendly*



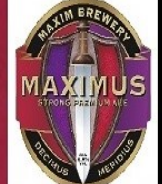
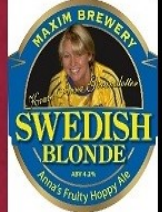
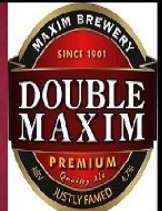
86 Hallgarth Street  
DH1 3AS  
0191 3865269

[mwebstervictoria@gmail.com](mailto:mwebstervictoria@gmail.com)



THE  
AWARD WINNING

# MAXIM BREWERY



*The home of Double Maxim*



# The Victoria Inn Witton Le Wear Beer Festival

1st - 6<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Featuring 9  
Real Ales



Scan for  
location

For Any questions please call  
George on  
07712603917

## Pub details online

Pub listings on the CAMRA website will increasingly include a 'Mobility Access Statement' in the **facilities available** section, which will always include a comment clarifying the situation. It should indicate, as a minimum, whether there is step-free access to the pub and if an accessible WC is available, but could include other information.

The bare wheelchair symbol with no clarification will no longer appear. It will take some considerable time for volunteers to gather this information but we've made a start. However, as usual, the more input from more different people the better—as many pairs of eyes as possible will get us more details and help us keep things up to date, relevant, and accurate.

The more, the merrier, so any help in this respect would be much appreciated: contact [pubsofficer@camradurham.co.uk](mailto:pubsofficer@camradurham.co.uk) with anything you consider relevant.

## Score Your Beers, Pretty Please!

The CAMRA beer scoring system has just got simpler, and even simpler using your mobile. Just Google (other search engines are available) "CAMRA" and sign in on the welcome page using your membership number and password. Once you're "in", add it to your home screen.



Click to open, and you can then choose your pub by clicking on "pubs nearby" and as if by magic, your closest pub will appear, or entering a pub name or town.



08:41

**Submit Beer Score** X

Location: Welcome, Bishop Auckland

When did you visit?\*

19/02/2026

What score would you give this beer?\*

Please select

What did you drink?

Search for a beer

Can't find what you are looking for? [Enter the beer manually.](#)

Comment on beer scored?

Price (£)

Your submission will be saved and you may be contacted by CAMRA in relation to your score. Read the full [Terms & conditions](#)

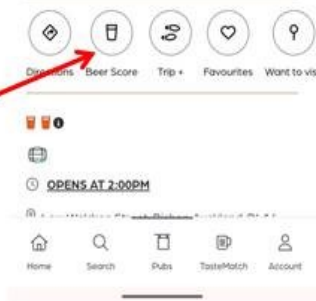
**Submit and score again**

You can scroll down to see all sorts of information – available beers, facilities: and the chance to **score your beer**. Once you're up and running, Tastematch will even suggest beers you might like based on your previous scores.

Scoring a beer is quite intuitive. Enter its name (if the system can't find it, you can enter manually by brewery) and give it a score by clicking on the relevant number

Please select

- 0 - No Cask Ale
- 0.5 - Beer Undrinkable / Poor
- 1 - Poor
- 1.5 - Poor / Average
- 2 - Average
- 2.5 - Average / Good
- 3 - Good
- 3.5 - Good / Very Good
- 4 - Very Good
- 4.5 - Very Good / Perfect
- 5 - Perfect



Once you've selected your score, click on either of the options....and keep the scores coming in!

Your submission will be saved and you may be contacted by CAMRA in relation to your score. Read the full [Terms & conditions](#)

**Submit and score again**

**Submit and close**

**Thank You!**

# Plan for the future

**CAMRA wants Government rethink on changes which could see pubs demolished or converted.**

CAMRA is calling on the Government to rethink plans to weaken protections in the planning system in England, which it says could lead to thousands of pubs being lost forever.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is consulting on plans to change the National Planning Policy Framework. Existing planning rules mean local councils have to protect all pubs, as they are considered vital community facilities. Pubs are offered protections in the planning system including the need for planning permission to be granted before a pub can be demolished or converted into houses, shops or takeaways.

But under the Government's new plans, protections would only apply if a pub were the last one in the local area, and CAMRA is warning that this could see thousands of pubs converted into flats, houses, shops or takeaways by greedy developers – even when local people want to save it as a community local.

The proposal comes shortly after a Government rethink on business rates bill increases for pubs in England which threatened thousands of local pubs across the country. CAMRA argues that it doesn't make sense for the Government to give help with business rates bills to stop pub closures and then change planning rules which could lead to more pubs being lost forever.

**Paul Ainsworth, CAMRA National Planning Policy Advisor said:**

“We strongly object to these plans which could spell the end for thousands of viable pubs across England. Strong planning protections are needed to give local people the right to try to save their pub if it is under threat of demolition or conversion. Crucially, this must apply to all pubs so that communities can save their local even if there are other pubs in the same area. Without protections for every pub, we risk seeing greedy developers cash in and try to turn pub buildings into other uses like houses, shops or takeaways. This would be devastating for communities who would lose a vital part of their social fabric. CAMRA wants Government ministers to rethink this proposal and keep strong protections for all pubs in the planning system so our locals can keep serving their communities instead of being lost forever.”

# Pub and Club of the Year

The votes are counted, the results are in, and we can now announce the CAMRA Durham Pub and Club of the Year winners in the various categories.

City Pub: **The Victoria**, Hallgarth Street, Durham. Runners up are **the Station House** and **Ye Old Elm Tree**

Town Pub: **The Grey Horse**, Consett. Runners up are **the Frog and Ferret**, and the **Little Tap**—both Spennymoor

Country Pub: **The Surtees Arms**, Ferryhill Station. Four runners up on equal scores are the **Three Horse Shoes**, Leamside, **the Hare and Hounds**, Westgate, **the Black Lion**, Wolsingham, and **the Victoria**, Witton le Wear

Cider Pub: **The Station House**, Durham. Runners up are the **Surtees**, Ferryhill Station, and **Fram Ferment**, Framwellgate Moor.

Club: Chester le Street **Masonic Centre**. Three runners up are **Tanfield Lea Club**, **Ceddesfield Hall**, Sedgfield, and **Shildon Railway Institute**

Meanwhile, massive congratulations to **Billingham Catholic Club**, which has been announced as the National Club of the Year in the 2025 competition. It's great to see one of our neighbouring branches have success in this category, and ,having visited the club, I can thoroughly recommend giving it a try.

In the Pub of the Year category for 2025, Tamworth's **Tamworth Tap** became the first pub to win it for a third time, after their success in 2023 and 2024.



**Billingham Catholic Club**

# 1 Picture Quiz

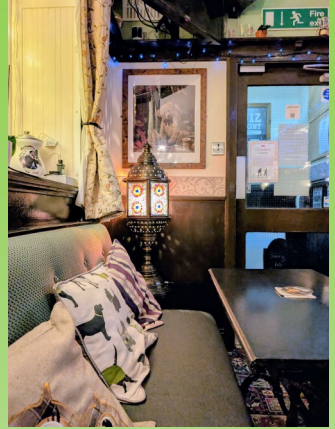
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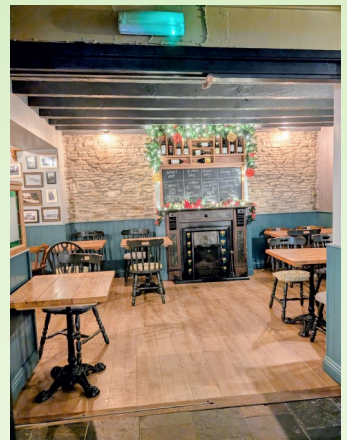
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10



9





# YE OLD ELM TREE



**Winner CAMRA  
City Pub of the  
Year 2023 & 2024**

**One of Durhams oldest traditional pubs,  
popular with locals and visitors to the city  
alike**

**5 Real Ales always available from our  
favourite local and national breweries**

**2 Guest craft beer lines and one hand pull  
guest cider**

**Large, sheltered, and sun filled beer  
garden**

**Weekly folk music sessions and pub quiz,  
as well as a monthly acoustic night**



# THEAKSTON

Tap Takeover!  
The Bay Horse  
Bishop Auckland  
March 2<sup>nd</sup>-30th



# The Good Shepherds?

*South of the border in North Yorkshire...*

After a period of financial uncertainty, the future of Black Sheep Brewery has been assured. A £6.5m takeover by Paramount Retail Group has saved 145 jobs, and provided a further £2m for investment in the business. The deal includes the creation of a new entity, the Great British Drinks Company, and the deal aims to restore pride to Yorkshire's brewing heritage, with a focus on rebuilding relationships with customers, suppliers, and staff, ensuring the brewery continues producing its well-known beers.

## More Help Needed!

Data from The Office for National Statistics shows that in 1987, the average price of a pint of draught lager was under £1, by 2000 it had risen to £2, and by 2025 it was £4.83. (Sorry, they don't seem to think Real Ale drinkers deserve the figures for their favourite brews to be released, despite us being the ones campaigning hardest for action)

In January, the government announced pubs and music venues in England would be given a 15% discount on their business rates from April after a backlash against November's Budget. However, this is a bit like putting the price of your pint up by 50p on Monday, reducing it by 10p on Friday, and telling you that you're better off. We're not that daft.

CAMRA Chair Ash Corbett-Collins, said pubs were facing a "gigantic fight every day to keep their doors open. The ever-increasing price of a pint means supporting your local is becoming unaffordable for many pub-goers, but for publicans the only choice is to raise prices or close their doors for good" he said. He said urgent government action was needed. They [landlords] must be given support with unrelenting energy bills, increases to National Insurance contributions must be reversed; VAT on food and drink, as well as duty charged on pints in pubs, must be lowered," he added.

**"Pubs desperately need permanently lower business rate bills if they are to thrive, not just survive."**

# Members' Weekend, April 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>, St Albans

With CAMRA's Members' Weekend coming up in April, I'm thrilled to share the launch of a project that our South Herts organising team has been building especially for you: the **St Albans: City of Ale** website — which is now live.



**City of Ale** is our name for a St Albans-wide programme of beer, cider and pub-focused activity taking place around Members' Weekend and beyond (16–20 April 2026). Rather than everyone huddling in one hall, we want you to get out and explore St Albans' vibrant and welcoming pubs, clubs and venues — many of which have something special lined up just for this occasion.

The new website brings all of this together in one place. You'll find:

Confirmed events — from tastings and tap takeovers to live music and special presentations.

Pub trails — great routes for sampling the city's best real ales, ciders and perries while taking in historic sights.

Travel and accommodation info — handy advice on getting here and where to stay.

Already featured are lively festivals, tastings and entertainment across a range of great venues — and more events are being added all the time. There's something for everyone, whether you're a passionate cask ale fan, a modern craft beer enthusiast, a cider devotee

or just looking forward to a fun spring weekend in a beautiful, historic city.

If you haven't taken a look yet, please do — and keep coming back as the programme grows. We can't wait to welcome you to St Albans: City of Ale in April!

St Albans: City of Ale events are open to members and non-members alike.

To register to attend Members' Weekend, go to <https://stalbanscityofale.org.uk>

*Emily Ryans, Chair, Local Organising Committee*



# DARLINGTON DRINKER

SPRING 2026



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# Darlington News

The first quarter of the year is always an exceptionally busy time for CAMRA branches and for Darlington in particular. We run our Pub of the Year competition through January and February, finalise our Good Beer Guide entries in March and run the biggest event in our branch's calendar, the beer festival.

This year will see the second running of our re-launched beer festival. We're back in the same location – Hopetown Museum on North Road in Darlington - which proved a popular venue. There will be more beer as we've increased the amount of real ale, cider and craft ale (50 in total), food will be available all day from multiple food vendors, and a ticketing system has been introduced to make sure we manage the flow of people better. We are also introducing sessions in order to allow a better consumer experience whilst also maximising the capacity so we can expand the beer range.

Friday and Saturday will have an afternoon and evening session each, whereas Sunday is a single session for the day. The beer festival committee have worked exceptionally hard to put on an event that really showcases our branch and our town.

We hope to see you there.

Beyond the beer festival and into spring/summer we will be continuing to arrange surveying trips by bus around the branch plus social events like town walks, brewery trips and our annual Quoits competition. Sign up to our social media to keep up to date.

Ian Taylor (Chairman)

## Pub News

The Bridge in Whorlton continues to be the subject of a bid from a community group to keep the pub as a pub. You can follow their progress on Facebook.

Opening soon – The Other Side, Houndgate, Darlington. A brand new micro pub promising to server multiple real ales.

Expected to be open in March.

The Angels Cut in Duke Street in Darlington has introduced a hand pull for Real Ale as has Kip and Nook Hotel, nr Manfield.



## CAMRA DARLINGTON SOCIAL MEDIA





SCAN HERE  
FOR MORE INFO

### Darlington pubs offering discounts and loyalty schemes

#### CAMRA discount vouchers

- William Stead
- Tanners Hall
- Tap on Bondgate
- ORB
- Vesuvio

#### Non-CAMRA

- The Half Moon
- House of Hop



**DARLINGTON BEER FESTIVAL 2026**

50+ CASK KEG CIDER | WINE/LOW ALC STREET FOOD | CAMRA MEMBERS FREE ENTRY (TICKET REQUIRED) | 20TH-22ND MARCH 2026

SCAN HERE

50%  
TICKETS  
SOLD

## Join CAMRA

Membership with CAMRA saves you money on pints, all while supporting the mission to preserve beer and pubs for future generations.



# Steam Machine Big Mash Up Review

Steam Machine celebrates 11 years since setting up its brewery and tap room in an industrial unit in Newton Aycliffe. Although a little off the beaten track (as is the nature of the modern tap room) it is definitely worth the effort to find. Whereas tap rooms can often be cold and cavernous due to their primary function of actually brewing beer, Steam Machine has created a cosy, vibe with it's separate bar and indoor marquee! TeePee, quirky décor and always friendly staff. They offer something unique, at least to our area of the world, with their beer



styles regularly being Belgian inspired or Whisky infused, but never boring. An 8% Turkish Delight Stout supplied

to the Darlington Beer Festival last year was the first beer at the festival to sell out!

The Big Mash Up festival runs across a weekend annually with a heavy focus on Belgian and German beers but covering just about every style you could think of – Pils, Gose, Sours, Bock, Dubbel, Smoked Porters and a variety of IPA styles. Perfect for the more adventurous drinker. As is usual here on most weekends, guest



street food vendors are busy providing the sustenance, delivering Bratwurst and Currywurst in keeping with the Euro theme, and there's an acoustic covers set from a live artist in the main hall to add to the atmosphere. I attended on a very busy Friday evening and the ticket sales for the rest of the weekend meant a pretty much sold out festival. Overall, if you're a fan of

beers on the higher side of 5%, and you're

not afraid of finding your new favourite taste/style combination (Toffee Apple Dubbel for me) then this is the place for you.

As it happens so early in the calendar, and with not much competition locally, the Big Mash Up is definitely worth making an annual event in your own calendar.

## Non-Camra Events



# WETHERSPOON

## BEER FESTIVAL

Wed 4 – Sun 15 Mar

### The Stanley Jefferson

5 Market Place, Bishop  
Auckland. DI16 7NJ

01388 452830

### Tanners Hall

63-64 Skinnergate,  
Darlington. DL3 7LL

01325369939

### The Grand Electric Hall

2 Cheapside,  
Spennymoor. DI16 6DJ

01388 825470

### The Horse Shoe Inn

4 Church Street, Crook,  
DL15 9BG

01388 744980

### William Stead

8 Crown Street,  
Darlington. DL1 1LU

01325341440

#### MONDAY CLUB

Choose from over 50 drinks

Real ales and beers  
Draught lagers and ciders  
Draught craft, Spirits  
Cocktails, Soft drinks

MON - WED

ALE

MONDAY to  
WEDNESDAY

Excludes bank holidays.

Guest ales

(various ABVs)  
Lower prices

## NEW CLUBS LOWER PRICES

MON - FRI, 2pm - 5pm

#### AFTERNOON DEAL

INCLUDES A DRINK

Choose from over 150 drinks



MONDAY

#### SMALL PLATES

Choose from 20 dishes



TUESDAY CLUB

#### NEW GOURMET BURGERS

INCLUDES A DRINK

Choose from over 150 drinks



WEDNESDAY

#### PIZZA CLUB

INCLUDES A DRINK

Choose from over 150 drinks



THURSDAY

#### CURRY CLUB

INCLUDES A DRINK

Choose from over 150 drinks



# Boddies Rises From The Ashes



Last year, the brewing of cask Boddingtons bitter was recommenced after a break of 13 years—albeit at JW Lees brewery in Middleton, Manchester.

It was once one of the great beers of Britain, produced at the Strangeways brewery in Manchester, which was founded in 1778 but closed by Interbrew (now AB InBev) in 2004. Situated just outside Manchester city centre, the brewery was family owned but in 1888 became a public company. By 1900 had about 200 pubs, most within 20-mile radius. In WW2 the brewery was severely damaged by German bombs and production was moved to Hydes brewery in nearby Moss side. The brewery was rebuilt after the war and was the first in Europe to install stainless steel fermenters.

Even by the time of CAMRA's creation in 1971, Manchester had ten breweries and Boddingtons had a cult status, with the first GBG in 1974 describing it as "one of the best" and production was almost entirely cask.

By the 50s bitter had taken over from mild in production and by 1980 accounted for 90% of the output, having an ABV of 3.5% and was described as a pale ale with a hoppy, malty flavour and a dry bitter finish.

The 1960s was a time of many mergers and take overs: Boddingtons took over Richard Clark & Co. of Reddish near Stockport in 1963, together with 63 pubs, but Allied breweries took a 35% share in 1969. Luckily, many small local shareholders refused to sell, but Allied persisted. Then in 1971 the CAMRA villain of breweries at the time, Whitbread, came to the rescue and bought 25% of shares and that saved it. The 70s and 80s were good times for Boddies, and in 1981 the Observer newspaper wrote "what has stood Boddingtons in good stead is the highly distinctive flavour of its brews, especially its bitters. In fact, in the North-West, Boddies is increasingly becoming a sort of cult brew."

It was time for Boddies to play the takeover game. In 1982 they bought Oldham brewery for £23m and with it 100 pubs, then in 1985 Higson's brewery in Liverpool for £23m together with 160 pubs. This introduced Boddies to the fine people of Merseyside, and by 1987 they were brewing 200,000 barrels a year and had 520 pubs.

However, the late 80s were a time when traditional vertical brewing was under review. Breweries started to morph into pub-owning companies and then sell off the brewing side. Boddies was no different, and in 1989 Ewart Boddington sold Strangeways Brewery to Whitbread for £50m.

The Whitbread era was in some respects a golden age for Boddies bitter, which was launched as a national brand and it was soon one of the three best-selling ales in the country, with produc-

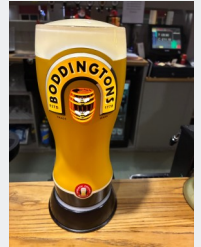
tion increasing from 200,000 to 850,000 barrels annually. This was driven by a very effective national advertising campaign with the slogan “the cream of Manchester.” (see top of previous page)

The canned version used a widgee (like Guinness) to produce a head and was the best-selling canned beer from 1992 to 2000. Sales were now world-wide.



On the left is an advert I saw in Tasmania in 2018 showing its worldwide distribution. It was said Manchester was famous for three things: Man United, Coronation Street, and Boddingtons brewery.

However, doom was on the horizon. In 2000 Whitbread was taken over by Belgian brewing colossus Interbrew. The Strangeways brewery was making a profit and employed over 100 people, but in 2004 Interbrew announced its closure, as the site in the now booming city of Manchester was worth £12m. Demolished and sold for redevelopment—something we’ve seen a lot of since, all over the country. Keg and can production was transferred to Magor in South Wales and Samlesbury in Lancashire, while cask production went to Hydes, but this ceased in 2012. The keg version is still available, and there is a keg dispenser, pictured right, in Sedgefield Social club.



**But now the good news.** Last year ABInbev, who own the brand, asked another Manchester

Brewery, JW Lees of Middleton, to brew cask Boddies. It’s quite different to in the past version, with an ABV of 4.0% as opposed to 3.5%, and the JW Lees recipe makes for a slightly darker, golden hue. The very subtle hints of banana and caramel are more complex, and the bitterness is a little more 'soft'.

I managed to track it down in the Founders pub on Albert Square in Manchester, opposite the Town hall. It’s notoriously difficult to remember tastes, but I don’t think it is as bitter as the original, nor is the head as creamy. In some respects it could be described as BINO (Boddingtons in name only), but I for one welcome it back from the ashes.



*Dr P. Jones*

Pubs, Pints, People.

# Give a gift membership to the beer lover in your life!

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

Set the membership to start on someone's special day!

They'll receive all the great discounts, benefits and vouchers you do, through the post.

Gift a membership today!  
[camra.org.uk/gift-membership](http://camra.org.uk/gift-membership)



FIND OUT MORE





# Champion Winter Beer of Britain

**Beer Street** (4 % ABV), an amber bitter with rye by **London Brewing** has won CAMRA's **Champion Winter Beer of Britain** title at Liverpool Beer Festival. After a year of local and regional blind judging heats, the Campaign's winter winners have been crowned. The category winners now go forward to the final judging in May at CAMRA's Cambridge Beer Festival where they'll battle it out to take the crown of Supreme Champion 2026.

**Cairngorm's** session stout, **Black Gold** (4.4%), took home silver, and **Green Jack's** Baltic Trader Export Stout (10.5%) won bronze. Judges were blown away by the winner, with judging panel coordinator Christine Cryne describing Beer Street as: "A sparkling golden amber bitter, with a dry and slightly bitter finish. Very easy drinking."

CAMRA's awards director, Shelly Bentley, said: "Our Champion Beer of Britain competition is the only truly independent beer contest in the UK. Brewers can't simply enter their beers, they have to be nominated by beer lovers or expert tasting panels."

Overall results:

**Brown Ales, Red Ales, Old Ales and Strong Milds:** Gold: Harvey's, Old Ale, 4.3%. Silver: Elmtree, Nightlight Mild 5.7%. Bronze: Red Willow, Sleepless, 5.4%

**Session Stouts and Porters:** Gold: Cairngorm, Black Gold, 4.4%. Silver: Green Jack, Lurcher Stout, 4.8%. Bronze: Blackjack, Manchester Stout, 4.8%.

**Strong Stouts and Porters:** Gold: Green Jack, Baltic Trader Export Stout, 10.5%. Silver: Ramsgate, Gadds' Black Pearl, 6.2%. Bronze: Five Kingdoms, Dark Storm, 6.9%.

**Barley Wines and Strong Ales:** Gold: Driftwood Spars, Alfie's Revenge, 6.5%. Silver: Grainstore, Nip, 7.3%. Bronze: Holden's, Old Ale, 7.2%.

**Speciality, Differently Produced:** Gold: London Brewing, Beer Street, 4%. Silver: Papworth, Koura, 5.7%. Bronze: Dorset, Jurassic Dark, 5.9%.

**Speciality, Differently Flavoured:** Gold: Farm Yard, Hoof, 4.3%. Silver: Titanic, Cappuccino Stout, 4.5%. Bronze: Cerne Abbas, Gurt Coconuts Rum Stout, 6.7%

..and a big shout out to **Consett Ale Works**, whose **Red Dust** made it to the finals, even if it didn't win.

# THE GOOD THE BAD AND THE UGLY



- ☀ **The Turf** in Consett has introduced cask after a long absence, with Wylam Gold and Landlord first up. Our visit on February 18th found the refurbishment to be a really good job, and the Wylam Gold to be very enjoyable.
- ☀ **The Farmers Arms** in Shadforth announced it is to open two new venues, one being at the closed Blacksmiths Arms in Pittington in our branch area.
- ☀ **The Ox Inn**, Oxhill near Stanley has been closed, but reopened under new management at the end of January. Cask is available.
- ☀ The company owning **Revolution** bars has gone into administration, causing the Durham City venue to close with immediate effect, although someone is paying the bills as the outside menu is still illuminated.
- ☀ **Durham Brewery's** new Taproom in Bowburn opened for the first time in January. Initially it will be Saturdays only, with cask, keg and bottles available, and our spies say it's really worth a visit.
- ☀ The former **TGI Fridays** in Durham City is to be taken on by the **Mayfair** chain. There's little expectation of any cask if they're following the model of its other outlets in Newcastle, Doncaster, and Harrogate.
- ☀ The former **Mill Inn**, Seaham - the main building is in use again, this time as 'Filthy's Deli'.
- ⇒ **The Court Inn**, Durham, closed for several years, has announced a reopening, with an "elevated drink and dine experience" coming soon
- ☀ A planning application has been submitted for change of use of the long-closed **Queens Head**, Chester-le-Street, to a children's nursery.
- ☀ **The Mitre** in Bishop Auckland is amongst a number of pubs put up for sale by Camerons brewery. The pub continues to trade, but no real ale.
- ☀ **The Eden Arms**, West Auckland announced closure on 21 February. Uncertain future.
- ☀ **The Cumberland Arms**, Bishop Auckland reopened under new management. No cask ale.



- ☀ **The Imperial Hotel** (Clock) in Stanley announced the reopening day as 28 February. Ale situation unknown at present.
  - ☀ **Harrys Bar** in Thornley reopened as the Queens Sports Bar, the name based on the original name of the pub. No real ale.
  - ☀ **The Barley Mow**, Birtley reopened in December under new management. Cask beer available.
  - ☀ **New Board Inn**, Esh closed for refurbishment on 5th Jan, expected reopening 20th. We'll check the beer situation when we deliver these magazines.
  - ☀ Handpulled Wainwright has been spotted in **Red Lion**, Ouston which previously did not serve real ale – we're attempting to get confirmation that this is cask and not 'fresh ale'.
  - ☀ **Hollathans** in Chester-le-Street closed on January 2nd for a 'total revamp' in preparation for reopening under new ownership.
  - ☀ **Quinns Inn**, Spennymoor was allowed to reopen with some changes to its licence arrangements after review.
  - ☀ The long closed **Eldon Arms** in Ferryhill Station suffered significant fire damage
  - ☀ **The Green Tree** in Bishop Auckland is under new management, as Johnny and Lisa Danby have left for pastures new after twelve years at the bar. Incoming licensee Chris Creamer will be augmenting the usual Old Peculier with occasional guest ales.
- ⇒ Real Ale in the form of Wainwright Gold is now available at the **Red Alligator**, South Church
- ⇒ Just outside our area, **The Rat Race** at Hartlepool railway station will close on March 21st. CAMRA Cleveland are visiting on 18th at noon—feel free to join them.

***If you find any of this information to be incorrect, or discover any other changes, please let us know—our information is only as good as the information we get!***



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# Grand Autumn Quiz—all North East!



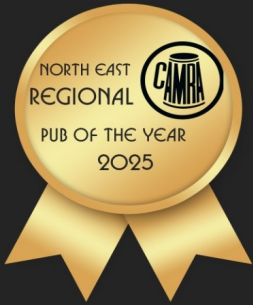
1. What is the study of mushrooms called?
2. Which film, starring Brad Pitt and Ed Norton, is based on a novel by Chuck Palahniuk?
3. What is the capital of Malaysia?
4. What is the name of the peninsula that includes parts of Russia, Norway, and Finland?
5. What is the currency of Hungary?
6. Where did backgammon originate?
7. Who played Queen Elizabeth II in the first two series of The Crown?
8. In which year was Four Weddings and Funeral released?
9. In which classic 1963 film did Charles Bronson appear?
10. In which year was the battle of Leipzig, at which Napoleon was defeated?
11. Who is Bibendum better known as?
12. Who invented the Flying Shuttle in 1733—his namesake missed the 1992 FA Cup Final through injury?
13. What colour is a giraffe's tongue?
14. In what year was South Park first broadcast?
15. What are a leprechaun's two professions?



# Discount for CAMRA members!

- **The Green Tree**, Bishop Auckland: 10p off pint of cask ale on production of CAMRA card
- **The Bay Horse**, Bishop Auckland 10% off real ale on production of CAMRA membership card
- **The Ship**, Middlestone Village, 10p a pint discount on production of current CAMRA card
- **The Half Moon**, Durham. 20p off a pint on production of current CAMRA card
- **The Red Lion**, North Bitchburn: 20p off pint cask ale for CAMRA members
- **The Pack Horse**, Burnopfield: 10% off real ale for card carrying CAMRA members
- **The Church Mouse**, Chester Moor: 20p off pint of cask ale to card carrying CAMRA members
- **The Grey Horse**, Consett: 20p off a pint on production of valid CAMRA card
- **The Duke of Wellington**, Durham: 20p off a pint of cask ale for CAMRA members.
- **The Head of Steam**, Durham: 20p off a pint of cask ale for card carrying CAMRA members
- **The Market Tavern**, Durham: 10% off real ale for CAMRA members.
- **The Waiting Room**, Durham 5% off cask ales (not keg) on production of CAMRA card
- **Chester le Street Masonic Centre** accept the vouchers
- **The Sportsman**, Belmont, 10% off cask ale on production of CAMRA card
- **The Hare and Hounds**, Westgate: First two pints of Weard'Ale beer half price with an evening meal or Sunday carvery. Table must be booked in advance.

In addition, all CAMRA members currently receive **£30 of CAMRA vouchers each year**, redeemable in the form of 50p off a pint of any cask ale nationally in many pubs. Full details of the scheme can be found on [CAMRA's website](https://camra.org.uk). In the Durham Branch area these are all pubs operated by the Wetherspoon group and some by the Stonegate group. If you are aware of any offers that aren't listed, or have any problems with those that are, please let us know. You can find out more about these outlets by viewing their entries in CAMRA's national database at <https://camra.org.uk>



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## The Answers Bit

**Grand Autumn Quiz** 1. Mycology 2. Fight Club 3. Kuala Lumpur 4. Ko-la Peninsula 5. Forint 6. Persia 7. Claire Foy 8. 1994 9. The Great Escape 10. 1813 11. Michelin Man 12. John Kay 13. Purple 14. 1997 15. Cobbler and Tailor



**Picture Quiz** 1. Angel, Durham 2. Black Lion, Sedgefield 3. Butchers Arms, Chester le Street 4. Crinnion's, Lanchester 5. Hop Knocker, Gilesgate 6. Hopper House Farm, Sedgefield 7. Station House, Durham 8. Market Tavern, Durham 9. Company Row, Durham 10. Joiners Arms, Hunwick

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