



Out of lockdown (for the time being) special

CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Durham Drinker



Inside:

- Around Consett—a pub visitors guide
- Losses amongst our pubs and clubs
- Who'd open a brewery in times like these?
- How's your Covid compliance?
- A recipe with beer in it

Hello and welcome to another limited edition, online only, advert-free, paperless issue of Durham Drinker.

With the current situation regarding gathering in groups of more than a certain size (I've deliberately not included the exact number, as the current unprecedented situation is under constant review), and CAMRA maintaining its sensible stance on holding physical meetings (don't), there has been a limited amount of "groundwork" that active CAMRA members can do. In our area, as in the rest of the region north of the Tees, we've had the imposition of special measures following a "spike" in virus cases—meaning irritation for beer drinkers and the potential for big financial problems for the licenced trade. The harsh reality is that some pubs will simply not reopen.

Since the re-opening of pubs in July, we've been able to re-establish physical contact with licenced premises and in some cases brewers, giving those magnificent folks in our hospitality industry a reminder of what we actually look like. We've done our best to keep the revised opening hours which many establishments have been forced to employ up to date, and to provide details of whatever Covid-related procedures are in place in those pubs and clubs.

The best way to keep up with this information is to refer to our Facebook page, check the details in our fortnightly-ish information emails, and visit Whatpub.

One thing that has become apparent over recent months is the resilience and innovation of our pubs and breweries in keeping things going. How do you keep a brewery going when there are no pubs to stock your beer? Online sales, home delivery, click and collect, drive through....you name it, they came up with it and came out of the other side still very much alive. Astonishingly, the Durham CAMRA area has actually seen some new breweries open, and there's another two which will begin production in the next few weeks. There are some details further into this publication, but please remember that the current situation is very fluid and subject to change at any time. In short, whatever's said in this publication might well not apply next week.

As ever, we rely on our members to keep feeding us any information they come across, so if your local pub or brewery is doing something special, please let us know.

We have put together a page which links to CAMRA's WhatPub site showing which outlets are providing these services and also details on our local breweries and their activities. We urge you to visit this page at <https://www.camradurham.org.uk/covid-19> on a regular basis to see what is going on. There are also links on that page to email the Branch to update us on any missing or inaccurate information.

Above all, please remain safe at this time. While we're currently able to enjoy visiting the pubs and clubs, the situation remains very much on edge, so please follow whatever rules are in place and keep supporting "the trade.". We look forward to seeing you all in the, hopefully, not too distant future, and in the meantime please be nice to the staff in any pub or club you might visit. Remember that they're just as frustrated with the current situation as you are, and they're having to work under strange and unfamiliar conditions.

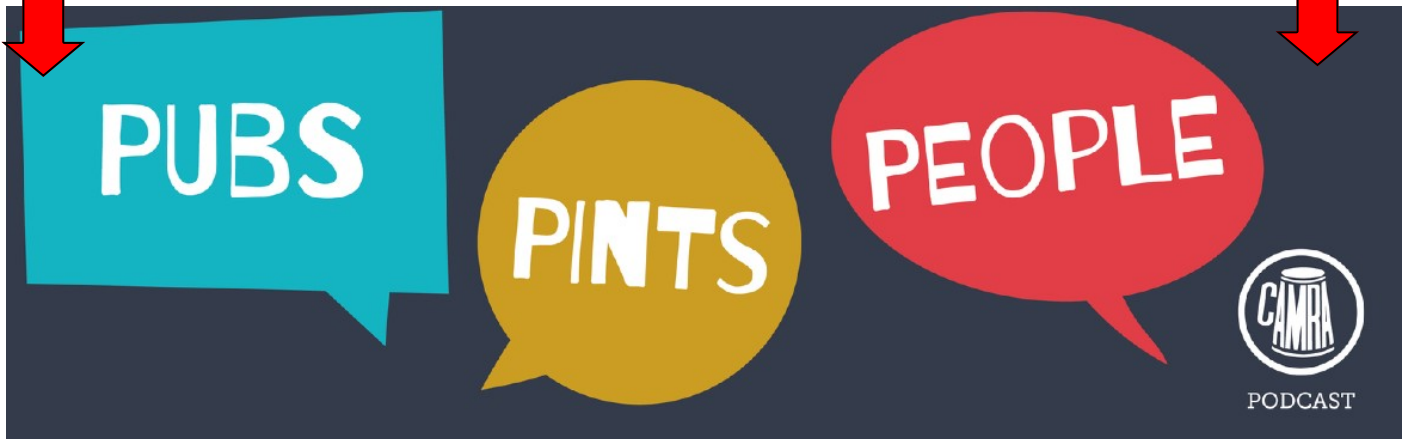
Cheers, and stay safe

Paul Dobson

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



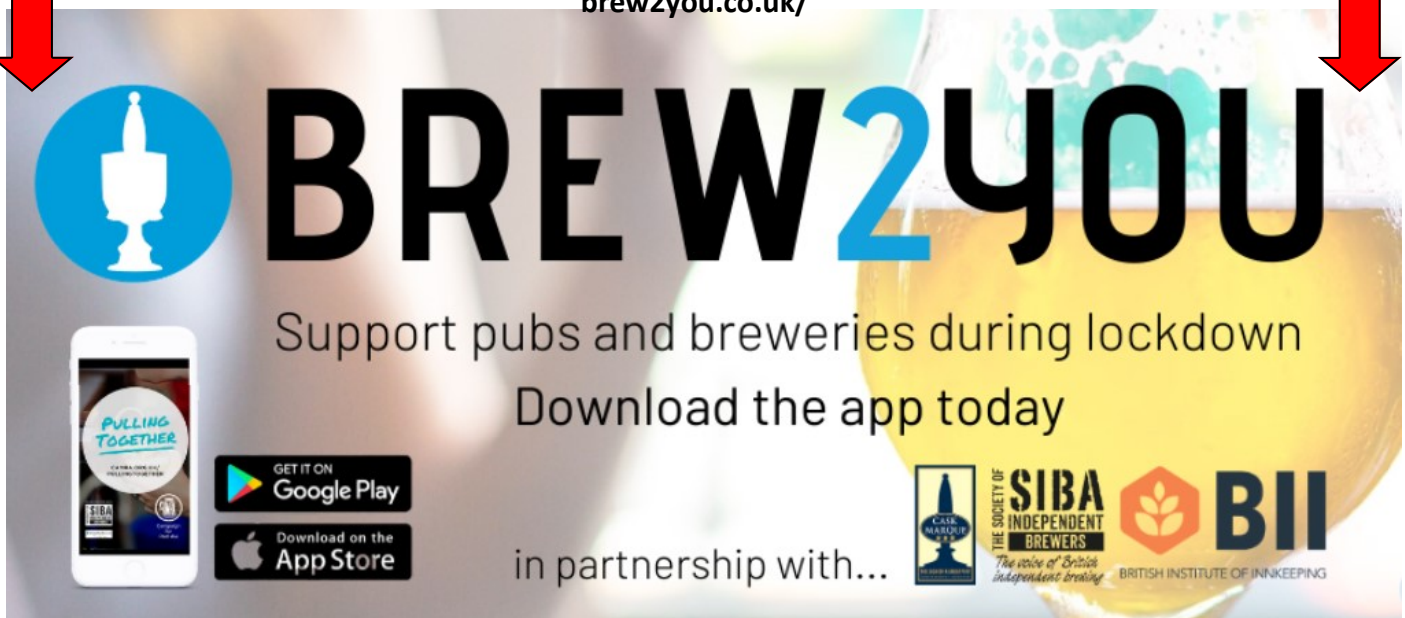
If Peter Crouch can do Podcasts, so can CAMRA! <https://camra.org.uk/podcast/>



CAMRA can help you find and order beer and cider to be delivered to your door

[https://](https://brew2you.co.uk/)

brew2you.co.uk/



For clarity, here are the official details of the “latest” (September 18th) Covid restrictions.

*Please note that the words below are lifted from the Durham County Council website, please note the words in **red**, and please don't shoot the messenger.*

From Friday 18 September, regulations will lawfully **BAN** the following:

- Residents must not socialise with other people outside of their own households or support bubble in private homes and gardens.
- Hospitality for food and drink will be restricted to table service only.
- Late night restriction of operating hours will be introduced, with leisure and entertainment venues required to close between 10.00pm to 5.00am.

Residents are also **ADVISED** to adhere to the following guidance to further reduce rates of infection:

- Residents should not socialise with other people outside of their own households in all public venues.
- Residents are advised to only use public transport for essential purposes, such as travelling to school or work.
- Holidays should be taken within your own household or support bubble.
- Residents are advised against attending amateur and semi-professional sporting events as spectators



Try CAMRA's national online pub for chat and socialising

New breweries keep appearing!

It might seem like a crazy time to be opening a brewery, but there's no stopping some people. Ali Wild of Caps Off in Bishop Auckland pushed ahead with plans to brew his own, and has opened **Caps Off Brewery** in the town, a few minutes' walk from the pub. They currently brew three beers – Pale (4.3%), IPA (5.0%), and Brown (7.4%) – as well as doing collaborative work with other local brewers.

The **North Pier Brewery** is in the process of relocating from Sunderland to become Tow Law's first brewery, with the first batch of ale due in October.



Also in the pipeline is the **Bishop Auckland Brewing Company**, which is planning to produce its first ale in November, from its site in South Church.

George Samuel brewery, formerly of Spennymoor, has re-opened in Shildon with its own bar at the Canteen Bar & Kitchen. It's in the former BR canteen, and brewer Andrew Ferriman has brought back the popular – and CAMRA award winning – Harvey Porter to stand alongside new brews Travelling Light, Terminus,

Leaves On The Line, and Locomotion No. 1. The bar opened on September 11th, and provides a welcome drop of real ale in a town which suffers from a distinct lack of the stuff. Opening night featured Harvey, Travelling Light, and Locomotion No. 1, and a good turnout of discerning drinkers took full advantage of those brews... and the pork sandwiches, complete with crackling.



While it never closed, **Weard'Ale** brewery at the Hare and Hounds in Westgate ceased brewing temporarily for obvious reasons – the pub was shut. It was back up and running once the doors re-opened in July, providing refreshment for folks

up the dale.

McColl's in Evenwood maintained their brewing through lockdown by doing home deliveries, and now have an extended bar area which is open most Fridays and Saturdays. Check their Facebook page for exact dates.



While the Grey Horse in Consett was closed, **Consett Ale Works** brewery also continued to produce ale, with twice-weekly home deliveries, or pick-ups from the premises, keeping the thirsts of North West Durham slaked during lockdown.



Completely new to the pub scene is the **Little Tap**, on King Street in Spennymoor, the town's first micro-pub, which opened its doors on September 13th, offering a range of beers from the Durham Brewery. Ales from other local breweries will follow.



In the wake of the most recent government announcements, we've seen the **Green Tree** in Bishop Auckland decide to close its doors for two weeks from September 18th, and **Tanfield Lea Club** close "until further notice." The same situation applies at Durham's **Dunelm Club**. Many other pubs and clubs have made alterations to their opening hours above and beyond those they made upon the initial reopening in July, and those that traditionally do the bulk of their trade after 10pm will no doubt be badly affected.



Following the initial lockdown, the award-winning **Black Bull** in Frosterley has announced that it will not be reopening, and the **Travellers Rest** in Crook is not opening its doors until 2021. The **Coal Face** in Seaham will remain closed until October 9th, but the **Wicket Gate** in Chester le Street, which closed for refurbishment before the March situation, reopened on September 15th with its new roof garden, no more music, and a good selection of ales including Allendale Golden Plover, Maxim Double Maxim, and Hadrian Border Tyneside Blonde.



Up at the **South Causey Inn**, John Taylor has resumed brewing at their Brewery - he's started with South Causey Blonde 4.2%, which is light and refreshing with lots of comet and summit hops in bittering and aroma to give a balanced citrus finish. On sale in the South Causey Inn from mid-September with the promise of more brews subject to the re-emergence of real ale drinkers.



Over at Leamside, the **Working Hand Brewery** is about to re-start production too, with the beers initially going into the

On Your Bikes!

Lockdown and the social distancing measures which followed reopening of pubs hasn't deterred our good folks from their charity fundraising. A team of cyclists, walkers, and runners headed out from the **Bay Horse** in Bishop Auckland on August 23rd, doing as many of the designated two-mile laps of the town as they fancied. Organised by the pubs football team, and augmented by a raffle that raised over £600, almost £3,000 has been raised, which will be shared between the **LimBo** Foundation, which provides prosthetics and support in using them, and the **Ifucareshare** mental health charity.

NB: The pub now features Timothy Taylor Landlord permanently.



A few miles away on September 5th, the **Ship Inn** at Middlestone Village saw their cycling team, including landlord Tony Langdale, set off to do either 50 or 100 miles to raise money for **MNDA**, the **Motor Neuron Disease** charity, with over £2,300 being collected. NB: The motorbike was for support purposes only!



Your Branch needs you - talk to us!

Elsewhere in this edition a summary has been provided of the pubs known to us that have closed or not reopened from the original lockdown. Our knowledge however is far from complete as the information has been garnered from a very small band of members providing details about pubs that they know about. Indeed the bulk of it has been gathered by scouring social media announcements provided by pubs themselves or their web pages.

But of course not every pub is particularly good at using social media to promote themselves, and a lot that do tend to promote their food offerings rather than their drinks!

Consequently whilst our data on open and closed pubs since lockdown isn't complete, our information on what they are selling since reopening is even scander. In particular we have little idea of the amount of cask beer being offered relative to pre lockdown. It is known due to the nature of the product (shelf life) and availability many pubs will have reduced the provision or even removed cask beer from their offerings.

The branch has over 800 members but we hear from very few of them, and we don't even now how many have started going back to the pub.

So this is a plea to help to provide information about the pubs near you or the ones you pass or visit - particularly that are open or closed, what their opening times are and most importantly their cask beer offerings (or not as the case might be).

Talk to us - please don't assume we know what is happening in a particular pub, its better to get duplicate information rather than none at all.

How to do it -

Use Whatpub - YOU DO NOT NEED TO LOG IN TO WHATPUB TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON A PUB - YOU DONT EVEN NEED TO BE A CAMRA MEMBER.

Just

Go to whatpub.com on your computer or mobile device

Use the search facility to find the pub in question

Use 'Submit updates' to provide any info you like about that pub.

or

Just send an email to pubsofficer@camradurham.org.uk

or

join the CAMRA Durham facebook group

and leave comment there.

Thank you!

To keep you busy, and full of cake

Chocolate Stout Cake

For the cake:

Unsalted butter: 120g

Dark brown sugar: 200g

Cocoa powder: 50g

Bottle-conditioned Stout (or Porter, or even Chocolate Stout for extra chocciness): 200ml (equivalent to approx. 200g)

Plain flour: 175g

Baking powder: 1/4 tsp

Sodium bicarbonate: 1 tsp

Eggs: 2 (large)

For the topping:

Double cream: 200ml

Stout: 2 tblsp

Icing sugar: 1 heaped tblsp

Method

Preheat oven to 160C (140C fan)

Cream butter and dark brown sugar together in a large bowl until fluffy.

Put cocoa in a separate bowl and whisk with stout.

In another bowl mix flour with raising agents.

Add eggs to butter/sugar while adding a little sifted flour and mix thoroughly.

Add half the cocoa/stout and sifted flour, mix well.

Add the rest of the cocoa/stout and sifted flour, beating thoroughly.

Pour mixture into a 20cm diameter round baking tin, lined with greaseproof paper.

Bake in centre of oven for approx. one hour.

Note: Cake must be moist, so check carefully every 5 minutes after 45 minutes cooking time has elapsed - a metal skewer should be clean when withdrawn from cake.

Allow to cool.

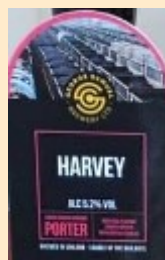
The topping is made by dissolving the icing sugar in the stout, adding the cream then whisking until soft peaks persist. Use to 'ice' the cake when completely cooled.

Store in a fridge, and it's best eaten within two days. This is not usually a problem.

Reward yourself for your efforts by drinking the remainder of the Stout or Porter. In an emergency a stout from a well-known Dublin brewery can be used in place of a bottle-conditioned product.

Enjoy!

Phil Glass the Baker



Venturing forth....

We weren't really ready to return to the pubs but a combination of the overall CAMRA messages (Help Keep the Pubs Alive) and recent Government advice that we're all going to have to wear masks in all shops from Friday 24th July finally enticed us to say "bo££*cks, if we don't try it we'll never know'.



We also liked the idea of contributing to the pub list that CAMRA Durham's Pubs Officer Dave Thornton sent out asking for information on pub openings, beer, and what's happening in general during these Covid-restricted times. Therefore, on Sunday 19th July we decided to have a 'look out'.

We took the X5 bus from Lanchester to Consett.....£7 All Zones ticket with Go Aheeee, with our masks on (homemade by Wendy), and it was our first bus journey since lockdown. Normally we would use the bus quite often, so it was unusual to see not many people were on board, and all bar one were wearing masks. We got off at Lidl in Delves Lane and wandered a few yards to the Travellers Rest. Last time we visited was on the Durham CAMRA 'mystery beer trip' in December last year, when we had found out that the pub was for sale. There was no sign of life this time, so we wondered if it was still a victim of lockdown? Had it been sold? We looked through the window and spied a bit of a building site inside, leading us to believe that there was no way that pub is going to re-open very soon.



Across the main A692 by-pass road via the pedestrian bridge we found the Consett Station Club, which was open. There are quite a few working-men's clubs still in Consett, left-over no doubt from the days of the now-vanished industry. The Station Club had only just re-opened a couple of days before our visit, on Friday 17th, but was operating reduced hours "to test the water", and was just open Fri evenings and Saturdays and Sundays. It was very friendly, but no real ale though. We asked about the nearby Travellers Rest and found out that the owners hadn't been able to sell the pub so had taken it off the market and decided to refurbish it – which answered our question we'd asked ourselves on peering through the window! The opening date wasn't known, but it has in fact re-opened, proving just how hard people can work!



On to the crossroads and the main traffic lights, with the Black Horse on the corner. It was fully open, seven days from 10am, but again with no real ale. The pub was very quiet (this was lunchtime-ish), with just a handful of people in the bar. Across the road is the Company Row (Wetherspoons). This was also fully open of course with their usual hours (open from 8am). It was quiet, so quiet. Hardly anyone was in, and believe me in Consett the Wetherspoons is usually very busy all day. There was a one-way system in operation for entry and exit, perspex screens between tables and along the bar, signage everywhere, and hand-sanitation. There was also one of those QR scan code things on the entry door as part of the 'NHS Test and Trace' operation

and clear instructions on how to use it. Well, as we're techy dinosaurs, our mobile lives in the kitchen drawer and is switched on about twice a year..... and anyway it doesn't have a camera! There was a second option to complete a form and leave it in the box provided, which was much more satisfying.

There was a good line up of beer, Double Maxim at £1.99 pint, (a favourite of mine, and during lockdown we've been collecting it direct from the brewery at Houghton-le-Spring), along with Allendale Golden Plover-£1.99, Theakston Old Peculier-£1.99, the usual Doom Bar-£2.10, Ruddles Best-£1.69 and Abbot Ale -£2.25, and something called 'Monkey Mango' at £3.15 a pint (we'd never heard of it, but it turns out it's a cider). We were tempted to stay, but we had a plan.

We crossed the road to Consett Working Men's Club, as some friends drink here but I've never been in. I was trying to still jot down notes from Wetherspoons, and Wendy decided to wander into the Club. It was open, and back to its regular opening times, but there was a bit of a surprise for her. After she asked about opening times, how they were finding it etc., did they have any real ale? No real ale was the reply, but there was worse news "Oh", she said, "what's that?" "Women aren't allowed in!" Nowhere, not any part. I thought it was funny, and no, Wendy said I can't join.

A few yards along the Duke of Wellington was open, regular hours, no real ale again and just three people, one of whom was the landlord.

Further along from there is The Fountain, which was all closed. A look through the window revealed that it was preparing to open, as we could see cleaning equipment, signage etc. No real ale was visible on the bar. We've since found out it reopened on Monday 20th July.

Back over the road again to The Steel Club and a chat to the bar staff who were taking a break. There was no real ale and they were also open temporary hours to see how it would go. They had mixed feelings, with the previous night (Sat 18th July) being 'quiet' and with no problems. The previous Saturday, July 11th, had not been very good, as it had been far too busy, there had been no observance of the measures in place and it had been impossible to manage - it sounded like some of the scenes we've seen in city centres.

We then deviated along Middle Street towards the Whistle Blower which took us past Greggs, so I asked if the stotties had returned yet. No she said, and possibly not until December!

The landlord of the Whistle Blower told us said he was new there from just November last year. He had tried real ale from the beginning but it just didn't sell. They were busy getting ready to re-open on Monday July 20th for the first time. He also told me The Turf (around the corner) had just opened the previous day (Sat 18th July) for the first time.....any real ale?.....they thought not, but the Turf in fact sells Hobgoblin and occa-



sionally backs this up with guest ales.

Our last pub in Consett was Bellamy's Bar, which again had just a handful of people. The usual hand-sanitation and book to sign were provided and the friendly bar staff told me they were back to regular hours but had no real ale.

Apart from Company Row (Wetherspoons) in Consett it would appear that there is a shortage of real ale in the town centre. Thankfully the Grey Horse is only a few minutes down the road, and it re-opened in August after a bit of a refit.

We walked down to Blackhill, stopping at The Cricketers, another closed pub but while we were looking through the window the next-door neighbour, who was painting her fence, remarked that we looked like "kids looking through the sweet-shop window". She told us the pub was thinking about opening mid-August but she wasn't sure, although she could tell us though it doesn't sell real ale – which goes against other reports which tell us that it sells Great Corby Blonde and a guest ale. We'll have to get in once it's reopened to check, as there are folks out there who still don't understand what real ale is.



We knew somewhere that did sell real ale though - the Scotch Arms in Derwent Street, another pub visited on the CAMRA beer trip last December. As well as the beer we were also going to try the Sunday lunch.

Two handpulls, Big Lamp 'Sunnydaze' and 'Workie' (now brewed by Blue Brewing Company). It used to be known as Workie Ticket from the Mordue brewery, and it tastes the same to me, and is still a cracking pint, Wendy tried the Sunnydaze.

The pub had more people in than we'd seen in any of the Consett pubs. There was a nice atmosphere, and it felt like a proper pub. It just felt right, with everyone there having come out to be social and not daft. The landlord had all the right things in place, a book to sign, hand-sanitation etc. and instead of waiting at the bar he said he would bring the drinks to the table-£3.20 a pint. The landlady explained she was selling plenty of takeaway Sunday lunches but not many people had returned yet to eat in the pub – but we were some of the few. After a couple of pints she brought our lunch. There was a choice of beef, pork, chicken, mince and dumplings or steak pie. It was very good, home-cooked food, no scrimping on portions, two Yorkshires each, plenty of vegetables and gravy, and piping hot, Wendy had beef, I had the pork. There was also jam roly-poly (homemade) and custard to follow. Wendy held up her hands - too much for her, so and we were offered a takeaway of the dessert, but we declined. There was a steady run of people taking their Sunday lunch home. The price-it was either £7.50 or £7.95 each, I forget which because we had some more drinks before we left and I'd stopped taking notes. We left the Scotch Arms late in the afternoon, and plenty of people were still there.

You can't hang around too late on a Sunday, as the bus to Lanchester doesn't run very late and trying to understand the 'coronavirus' bus timetable is difficult, as we have to catch two buses from Blackhill via Consett back home, but no worries - masks back on for the bus. The usual idiots hanging around the bus station in Consett were trying to smash the perspex roof - in contrast to the pleasant scene we've just left back in the pub. It takes all sorts.



Back in Lanchester we wandered towards home, passing the Black Bull where they are cleaning the Windolene (other glass cleaning products are available) from his front windows which have been obscured for several weeks. We knew the opening was scheduled for Monday July 20th. He always has one hand-pull for the real ale and there is an excellent beer garden at the rear, with proper grass and where it's sunny most of the day - very nice.

Lanchester Working Men's Club across the road is also open, only just, it opened the Wednesday before. No real ale but it usually has Black Sheep from a pressurised 'keg'. They have a sign at the front door, only members (and guests) allowed in and they're not accepting any new members at the moment - so no dropping 20p in the ashtray at the door. I guess they are trying to see how it goes and don't want to cope with crowds, and it's also easier to control members. The other two pubs in Lanchester have been open since Saturday July 4th. The Kings Head has quite a good food menu and real ale, usually offering the ubiquitous Sharp's Doom Bar. Crinnions has a changing selection of real ale, usually three hand-pulls, but again we haven't visited yet. They were trying a 'cover charge' per person, to cover extra coronavirus costs, and there have been mixed comments about this, but there are strict social distancing measure in place. This obviously means that, like anywhere else, the usual pub practice of moving between tables to chat isn't possible. It's just a friendly local that is doing its best to operate in challenging circumstances.



So, we thoroughly enjoyed our 'first day out' and it's encouraged us to venture out again. We shall choose our pubs carefully though - nothing too boisterous (yet), but the social interaction was very welcome.



Enjoying your beer?

It could be under threat.

Sign the petition and ask the government to support small brewers today.

Petition by
**ANSPACH
& HOBDA**
LONDON

THE SOCIETY OF
SIBA
INDEPENDENT
BREWERS

CAMRA
Campaign
for
Real Ale

camra.org.uk/sbr

siba.co.uk/sbr

- The Treasury has proposed some changes to the Small Brewers' Relief scheme – this scheme allows smaller brewers to pay less tax to compensate for the economies of scale enjoyed by larger brewers.
- The scheme been instrumental in the brewing boom of the last two decades.
- The changes that the Treasury wants to make will take away tax relief from the brewers at the smaller end of the production scale to give more relief to larger 'small' brewers – it's a 'reverse Robin Hood' tax.
- This is bad news for small brewers at any time, let alone coming out of the COVID lockdown.

The government's changes to the small brewers' duty relief scheme, which were announced just before the politicians went on the summer holidays, was exactly what the small brewers did not need, especially as the changes came after the lockdown and its associated downturn in trade.

The scheme as it stands gives 50% discount on beer duty to breweries who produce less than 5,000 hectolitres (that's 880,000 pints in old money) – and a sliding scale of relief up to 60,000 hectolitres (that's a shade over 10 million pints). The changes proposed mean that the rate of duty will rise for more than 150 small brewers, while at the same time discouraging growth amongst those who currently produce below the new threshold which will be set at 2,097 hectolitres (369,000 pints).

In the eighteen years since the scheme was introduced, it's helped smaller concerns compete with the larger companies who've been able to employ economy of scale to keep their costs down. It's led to a huge growth in the number of "micro-breweries" and helped those at a disadvantage to Pubcos, who can (and do) hike prices to their tenants thanks to the beer tie system.

Why the change in duty relief? Well, a small but perfectly formed group of a few dozen brewers got together as the Small Brewers Duty Reform Coalition, and acquired assistance from political lobbying company Tendo. Tendo was founded by Peter Carroll, who used to be a special adviser to the treasury – handy for them. They argue that the current system prohibits mergers and acquisitions and discourages growth, while opponents of changing the system argue that it will cause the closure of small breweries –

as well as allowing the big hitters of the brewing world to gain even more share of the market. The founder of the SBDRC is Robert Thompson of Hogs Back brewery, who's also gained support from his Surrey MP, Michael Gove.

Four years ago, Mr Gove asked a question in the House about when the small brewers' relief scheme would be reviewed, and two years later commented in Parliament that it should be looked at "in order to maximise growth in that sector, so that we can all enjoy great British beer."

Consultation by the Treasury will occur this autumn, with CAMRA involved in the technical aspects, while the petition to reverse the proposed changes has over 40,000 signatures. If your signature isn't among those 40,000-plus, have a look here and see what you think. <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/334066>

...and finally, a plea from our pubs officer

In addition to the complications caused by the pandemic, an additional factor has affected trade in Durham City with the enforced closure of the New Elvet Bridge for 14 months for essential maintenance work.

This has had particular impact on businesses located in the Elvet area of the city where footfall consequently has decreased significantly. This has affected a number of pubs including three in the current Good Beer Guide - the Court Inn, the Dun Cow and the Half Moon.

The Swan and Three Cygnets and City Hotel are also in this area. Even before the latest local restrictions the Dun Cow for example was only opening at weekends after it reopened following the full shutdown and they and other businesses have expressed great concerns as to how they will survive with these extra considerations to contend with.

Members are encouraged to support these outlets whenever they get the opportunity.

Thanks

Dave Thornton

