

READ BY 2 MILLION CUSTOMERS

YOUR FREE MAGAZINE | WINTER 2022/23

WETHERSPOON NEWS

the CRAFT COLLECTION



**FIND
OUT
MORE
INSIDE**

Pages
18-20

BEER-ISTAS FIND PERFECT BREWS

Two hundred of the company's pubs are listed in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2023

THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE THREE

Smaller 3oz beef burger allows customers to opt for a smaller portion

#TASTE, TRENDING FOR 8 CENTURIES



Leffe

**BELGIAN
ABBEY BEER
SINCE 1240**

be [drinkaware.co.uk](https://www.drinkaware.co.uk)

© 2022 AB InBev UK Limited, all rights reserved.

WIN!

PRIZE
CROSSWORD
105

INSIDE

36

FEATURES

Tim's viewpoint Piping pub news and common-sense opinion directly to customers for 30 years	4
Beer-istas find perfect brews Two hundred of the company's pubs are listed in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2023	8
Hygiene - we hit the heights Wetherspoon given highest average rating, per premises, of any pub company	12
Craft brewers get a leg-up Locally sourced bottled and canned craft beers now being served in 11 regions across the UK	18
Pressing matter Three new ciders now on sale	24
£5.8 billion of tax paid to the government in the last 10 years The government needs taxes, but there should be tax equality between supermarkets and pubs, says Wetherspoon	26
Cocktail pitchers given a shake-up Exciting times as two new exotic recipes thrown into the mix	28
Killing off an urban myth The ludicrous fairy tale that Wetherspoon sells beer which is close to its sell-by date	33
The best things in life are three (ounces) Smaller 3oz beef burger allows customers to opt for a smaller portion	36
Festive ales deliver seasonal levity Give your taste buds a surprise this year, with festive-sounding beers	38
£484 million in free shares and bonuses paid to employees since 2006 83 per cent paid to pub staff	44
Looking for a little sparkle? Give your taste buds a work-out this season, with three brand-new special spritz cocktails	47
All welcome, even tim'rous beasties, at Burns' week Life and poetry of Scottish poet Robert Burns to be celebrated at Wetherspoon's pubs	50
Alternative views Wetherspoon News presents articles from the press	54
Birthday cake galore Pubs' birthdays aplenty as milestones whizz by	76



Presidential pubs Premises with links to past US leaders	79
The Good Beer Guide The Counting House has featured in The Good Beer Guide for at least 10 years	82
Romanian red and French rosé added to wine list Bottle-only offerings from Transylvania/Banat and Provence join Wetherspoon's ever-growing array	88
Students lazy? That's just a lazy stereotype Many of our pubs' part-time staff are also studying – and work hard for us, as well as for their qualification	96

THE REGULAR STUFF

Now-open and new-look pubs	66
Meet the brewer	74
People	15, 22, 34, 42, 63, 71, 73
Community	30, 40, 48, 98
Young Lives vs Cancer	84, 90
CAMRA's bar talk	106

Written and edited by Eddie Gershon, along with welcome contributions from Wetherspoon staff.

Using paper from sustainable resources, this is printed in the UK.

Pricing, participation and opening/food-service times may vary per pub.

All J D Wetherspoon food and drinks in this magazine are subject to local licensing restrictions and availability at participating free houses. Photography is for guidance only. J D Wetherspoon plc reserves the right to withdraw/change offers (without notice) at any time. See main menus and customer information screen for allergen information, symbol explanations and additional details of our terms and conditions.

Android, Google Play and the Google Play logo are trademarks of Google Inc. Apple and the Apple logo are trademarks of Apple Inc, registered in the US and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc.

Power to the people!

Beware the expert - and remember that the people, once a public debate has taken place, usually know best

The last Wetherspoon News edition discussed the optimistic views of Cambridge University's Professor Robert Tombs, who believes that the UK "remains what it has always been – one of the half dozen or so strongest states in the world and one of the most global in its attachments, its visions and its trade".

Professor Tombs, confounding the doomsayers, says that the UK's economic performance "has almost exactly kept pace with that of the United States, ever since 1945, whether outside or inside 'Europe'".

Wetherspoon News contrasted the professor's views with those of former MP and respected Times journalist Matthew Parris, who argued that the UK is "a gently declining manufacturing economy" whose inhabitants are "mostly not aspirational".

We are not, says Mr Parris, "a coiled spring of a nation" which is about to become "Britannia unchained" – in that respect, at least, even Britain's most optimistic backers would probably agree with Mr Parris.

My own view, for what it's worth, is that UK inhabitants are not, indeed, inherently superior, or inferior, to any other people – the defining characteristics of any successful nation are primarily a combination of democracy, a free press, the rule of law and the encouragement of free enterprise.

Provided that power remains vested in the people and democratic institutions are intact, many nations seem to achieve remarkably similar results.

Declinism

Professor Tombs says that pessimistic views about the UK's relative position in the world have been around for centuries, calling this syndrome "declinism".

Without doubt, there is a current epidemic of declinism in many western countries, fuelled by inflation, the war in Ukraine and (in this country at least) anxiety about the UK's prospects outside the EU.

One of the most anxious is Matthew Syed, an intelligent and

widely read author, a very prominent Sunday Times journalist... and a former table tennis champion.

In a recent Sunday Times article, Mr Syed stated that the UK is enduring "the gravest economic mismanagement since the overreach of the postwar consensus in the 1970s, perhaps since the Second World War".

Mr Syed sees the UK's problems as stemming from neither the worldwide pandemic nor the war in Ukraine, but, in general, from Brexit and, in particular (in a recent article), from "contempt for expertise", following "the 2016 referendum campaign".

The question of how much weight should be attached to expert views is, indeed, a vexed one.

Advice

Few people contemplating serious medical treatment, a complex mechanical issue or a legal case, for example, would dispense with expert advice.

However, experts often disagree or, indeed, they can occasionally agree – and still be wrong.

Lawyers, for example, often disagree among themselves for years on end, with cases proceeding all the way to the Supreme Court – whose judges are themselves often at odds.

No bad thing, either, since debate leads to better results.

And medicine is also a battlefield of conflicting expert opinion, as anyone who has lived through the COVID-19 pandemic knows.

In life, the reality is that we are all, almost daily, faced with conflicting expert advice – in the cars we buy, the jobs we apply for, the food we eat, the exercise we take and a myriad of other decisions.

However, the problem is that what passes for expert advice is often nothing of the sort – it's really just a fashionable and currently accepted view, which will prove, in hindsight, to be cobblers.

Investment guru Warren Buffett calls this sort of expert consensus the "institutional imperative" – as in the proposition that "everyone else has bought Enron shares, so it's safe for me to do so, too".

The UK witnessed an apparent expert consensus during the pandemic, when the government, with full support of opposition parties, copied China and most other countries in locking down in reaction to the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

The UK's World Health Organization-approved plans prescribed an entirely different course of action – which did not involve lockdowns.

However, anyone who dared challenge the expert consensus of the moment, which history will surely conclude was faulty, risked appalling vilification.

In fact, during the pandemic, the government (including the opposition) did exactly the opposite of what Mr Syed alleges – it 'followed the science'... that is to say the so-called 'expert advice'.

It did so by creating a body (called SAGE) of 'medical experts' then deferred to, or hid behind, the so-called science, rather than questioning and debating each facet of the advice.

Contempt

Mr Syed is incorrect, therefore, in asserting that current economic mismanagement stems from contempt for expert advice.

Instead, it really stems from cravenly following the consensus of expert advice by locking down the economy.

The government then doubled down on its mistakes by following the consensus of worldwide economic expertise, in concert with the Bank of England, which involved the creation of half a trillion pounds of new money to pay for the lockdown, thereby directly leading to the inflationary and health crisis we now face.

When you create new money out of thin air, on a colossal scale, you devalue that money already in existence – that's the definition of inflation.

And in approving the government's course of action, all of the main political parties were complicit.

So, how can governments, businesses or other institutions avoid the trap of following expert advice which will later prove to

be faulty or even catastrophic?

At Wetherspoon, we were attracted by the approach of Sam Walton, the founder of Walmart (the world's biggest retailer), whose philosophy, broadly speaking, was that the people working on the front line know best – just explain the problems to the workers and they will tell you what to do.

Walmart elicited ideas from front-line staff, through a suggestion scheme, and through HQ staff regularly calling on the stores and speaking to staff and customers.

Suggestions

Every week, there would be a 'Saturday-morning meeting', attended by store workers and HQ staff, to rake over the suggestions made and try to adopt the best ones.

Wetherspoon tries to do the same thing.

Senior people spend two or three days a week calling on pubs.

Staff send in suggestions – and we try to implement changes, based on a consensus, at weekly head-office meetings which are always attended by (on a rotational basis) area managers, pub managers, kitchen managers and pub staff.

Expert opinions are welcome, yet must be put forward at these weekly meetings.

Some become accepted, some are adapted and some rejected.

What Wetherspoon has found, contrary to the ingrained belief in the elite, that experts know best, is that Sam was right and that people who work on the front line do know best.

So, the big mistake which the UK made during the pandemic, giving rise to the health and economic problems which we have today, was excessive deference to received medical and economic advice, coupled with the shutting-down of debate and the vilification of contrarian thinkers.

Rather than today's economic problems stemming from disdain for expertise, they emanate from excessive reverence for expertise and academic qualifications, as

Tim says: “Matthew Syed, an insightful commentator, says “contempt for expertise” is the root cause of the UK’s economic problems. I argue that the opposite is true – lockdowns, financed by printing half a trillion pounds of new money, on the advice of experts at SAGE and the Bank of England, supported by all major political parties, are the real cause.

But what do I know? Wetherspoon News readers will make up their own mind...”

DOWN THE TORY RABBIT HOLE, WE’RE LED TO BELIEVE IMPOSSIBLE THINGS

MPs cheer one economic plan – and then its opposite. No wonder we’re paying a ‘moron premium’

Can I be honest? I am struggling to get my head round the events of recent weeks. Jeremy Hunt trashed everything that Kwasi Kwarteng advocated when the latter offered us his mini-budget less than two short months ago. Hunt didn’t merely repeal his policies and censure his long-term plans, but also eviscerated almost every jot and tittle of his remarks.

But that isn’t the only reversal we have seen. Kwarteng had already taken down a great deal of what Boris Johnson stood for on economics. He cancelled the rise in corporation tax, reversed the increase in national insurance and blew a hole in the wider approach to macroeconomics.

He didn’t do so apologetically or stealthily, by the way. No, like Hunt, he did so explicitly, almost gleefully.

And yet here’s the thing that whacks one between the eyes: Tory backbenchers cheered wildly through all these different, flatly contradictory statements. They waved their order papers, stamped their feet and seemed delighted with it all. You might retort that this is merely a case of MPs showing loyalty to whoever is in charge. But I invite you to watch the television pictures side by side (if you can bear to). Listen to the guttural cries of “Hear, hear!” and “Yes!”. These people look less like democratic representatives and more like children or puppies. Some were apparently proclaiming their glee in how Hunt’s statement had “wrongfooted” Labour. Did they not have the self-awareness to see it had wrongfooted them too?

Aristotle argued that the basic criterion of rationality is non-contradiction, or what we might call intellectual consistency. I honestly can’t help wondering if many of our MPs — and, indeed, ministers — fail this test. The security minister Tom Tugendhat, who praised Liz Truss’s policies — “Liz’s plan for the economy is founded on true Conservative principles of low tax, a lean state and bold supply-side reform” — is now vocally supporting a cabinet that despises those policies. The same can be said for the foreign secretary, James Cleverly (“the mini-budget is incredibly well thought through”), and his cabinet colleagues Penny Mordaunt, Suella Braverman, Ben Wallace and Chris Heaton-Harris. The problem is not that there are different views within the government, a phenomenon familiar to all democracies. The problem is that there are different views within individual ministers.

Again, you might retort that this is merely straightforward hypocrisy and ambition. After all, Tugendhat found Truss’s policies impressive only once she had raced to an uncatchable lead over Sunak in the leadership election. But I have also noticed ministers supporting a policy one week and then seeming dumbfounded when accused of a U-turn the following week, not realising they had made one. Think of Cleverly on the Today programme under pressure from Mishal Husain — “Did you have doubts about it [the mini-budget] at the time?” — or Sir Graham Brady, the voice of the backbenchers, who was shocked to be reminded he had once eulogised it: “The new government’s determination to move away from the highest tax burden in 70 years in a drive for economic growth is welcome,” he said.

George Orwell used the term doublethink to denote the capacity to believe two contradictory things at once. Lewis Carroll alluded to this phenomenon too: the White Queen claims to have believed six impossible things before breakfast. The Tory party seems to believe a multitude of impossible things simultaneously: clusterthink? Isn’t that why there is an Alice in Wonderland feel to this period, as if the nation is living in the rabbit hole of someone else’s fantasies? It is

certainly why the Tory government remains fundamentally unstable and it is not impossible Sunak will be challenged before we get to the next election.

But why is this happening? Let me suggest that one factor is the contempt for expertise that filtered into the Tory ranks during the 2016 EU referendum. I remember during that campaign someone using the phrase “Ah, but you’re an expert” not as a compliment but as an insult. Kwarteng, if anything, took this to a new level, trashing Treasury orthodoxy, sacking its permanent secretary and giving a fiscal statement without the oversight of the Office for Budget Responsibility.

That’s why the markets reacted so badly to his statement in September. It had little to do with the UK’s level of debt, which was the second-lowest in the G7, a point made by Kwarteng when he got to his feet. No, they were reacting to a nation that seemed to have become unmoored from reason. Indeed, a phrase started circulating in financial institutions to account for the additional amount we were having to pay to service our debt: “the moron premium”.

Admittedly, that is not a very pleasant phrase. But the premium itself was not the contemptuous invention of any one person but a market price reflecting the collective judgment of millions. Isn’t that what happens when a government is all over the place, contradicting itself without realising it, jumping the rails the whole time? Isn’t that why it is mistaken to assume all our problems are due to external factors like the energy shock? As Paul Johnson of the Institute for Fiscal Studies noted on Friday, we are more vulnerable to these headwinds because of “own goals” scored right here.

But — to come to my diagnosis — isn’t this what we might expect to happen when a governing party becomes detached from expertise? Isn’t this what happens when knowledge is considered suspect? Isn’t it what happens when a party vests its faith in people like Jacob Rees-Mogg (admittedly no longer in the cabinet), a man so detached from empirical reality that he is now arguing we should ditch Bank of England independence, despite voluminous evidence showing that central bank control over interest rates — even taking into account occasional errors in policy — is significantly better than the alternative?

I am not saying expertise is flawless. We know from the pandemic that experts can disagree and that the expert consensus is not always reliable. Expertise, we might say, is valuable but never sacrosanct. That is why representative democracies tend to work in two distinct conditions. The first is when low-quality politicians are humble enough to plug the gaps in their knowledge by listening to experts, who typically know more. The second — and much the more benign — is when high-quality politicians are capable of probing and challenging the expert consensus, permitting a creative synthesis that transcends the capabilities of both.

I can’t help thinking that what we have had from the Tories is the worst of all worlds: low-quality politicians deriding expertise and thereby taking the nation from crisis to contradictory crisis. That is why we have endured the gravest economic mismanagement since the overreach of the postwar consensus in the 1970s, perhaps since the Second World War. And here’s the thing we should never forget: a critical mass of Tory MPs cheered it all.

By Matthew Syed

The Sunday Times / 20 November 2022

Print credit: © The Sunday Times / News Licensing

personified by SAGE and the Bank of England.

So, don’t be gloomy, Mr Syed.

All of the political parties fell into the same trap.

‘Beware the expert’ is our mantra, but listen and show respect to those with a good track record of being right.

And, above all, remember that the people, once they are given the information and once a public debate has taken place, usually know best.

Tim Martin
Chairman

Note from the editor

In the last edition, Wetherspoon News contrasted Warren Buffett’s optimistic view of democracy’s progress in the USA with Matthew Parris’s pessimistic view of the UK.

An article by Professor Robert Tombs, of Cambridge University, was also featured – it demonstrated that the UK had, despite problems, matched the amazing US performance over the decades.

The three articles have been reproduced on pages 54–57.

In the summer edition, Wetherspoon News argued that government and opposition parties got it wrong by locking down the country under emergency powers and by vilifying those who disagreed.

On the health issues, we featured an article by Professor Francois Balloux, writing in The Guardian, and Professor Robert Dingwall, writing in The Daily Telegraph.

On the civil liberties issues, we featured an article by former Supreme Court judge, Lord Sumption.

These articles are presented on pages 58–62.

ALL ABOARD: STEAM-THEMED PUB ARRIVES AT NEW STREET RAIL STATION



Wetherspoon has opened its new pub at Birmingham New Street railway station.

The pub, The London and North Western, is located at The Concourse.

It is managed by John Whitewood, who has been a Wetherspoon pub manager in Birmingham city centre for more than 10 years.

John is pictured (right) with Network Rail employee and Wetherspoon superfan Stuart Warner, who works at Birmingham New Street railway station and was chosen to officially open the pub.

One hundred jobs have been created at the pub, which cost £2.4 million to develop.

Clad in stainless steel panels, with a vaulted glass roof, the Grand Central shopping centre stands directly above New Street railway station.

The new pub is situated by the main entrance on the south side of the development.

The first New Street station was built during 1846–54 by the London and North Western Railway company, remembered in the new pub name.

The London and North Western Railway (known as both LNWR and L&NWR) was a British railway company during 1846–1922. In the late 19th century, the LNWR was the largest joint stock company in the United Kingdom.

In 1923, it became part of the London, Midland and Scottish (LMS) railway, then, in 1948, the London Midland Region of British Railways. The LNWR is effectively an ancestor of today's West Coast Main Line. The LNWR described itself as the Premier Line and at its peak, just before World War I. It ran more than 1,500 miles (2,400km) and employed 111,000 people.

The London and North Western is open from 7am until midnight (Sunday to Thursday) and 7am until 1am on Friday and Saturday.

Food is served throughout the day, from opening until 11pm every day.

It is open for family dining, with children welcome in the pub throughout the week (accompanied by an adult) until 9pm.

The pub is wheelchair accessible and has a specially adapted toilet for customers with disabilities.

The London and North Western's interior design and finishes, with beams and structural elements of dark green with gold, as well as light fittings, decoration and furnishings, are aimed at evoking an air of opulence, reminiscent of the age of steam travel, as well as reflecting the industrial culture and heritage of Birmingham.

The pub features a bespoke carpet design, inspired by the concept of a Birmingham-built Watt double-acting steam engine, together with the artwork for an original stamp used by LNWR for sending parcels by railway.

Historical photos and details of local history, as well as artwork and images of local scenes and characters of the area, are also displayed in the pub.

The pub has an outside area, with approximately 20 tables.

Pub manager John Whitewood said: "I am delighted to be managing the pub and confident that it will be an excellent addition to the train station."

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, added: "Wetherspoon has several pubs at train stations across the UK – and this is a great addition."



PROUD TO SPONSOR NATIONAL PUBWATCH AWARDS



Pictured (left to right) are National Pubwatch chairman Steve Baker OBE, pub manager Selcuk Devecioglu and deputy manager Kara Nash (both of The Assembly Rooms, Epsom), Lord Kennedy, Your Pontypridd BID project officer James Payne, Pontypridd pubwatch chair Sian John, Reading pubwatch honorary secretary Bill Donne, Reading pubwatch chair and Purple Turtle bar general manager Stuart McNaught and Wetherspoon's legal director Nigel Connor

Wetherspoon showed its support for UK-wide pubwatch schemes – by sponsoring the National Pubwatch Awards.

National Pubwatch is a voluntary organisation which works to promote a safe, secure and social drinking environment in all licensed premises throughout the UK.

It supports more than 800 individual pubwatches across the UK, many of which have Wetherspoon pubs involved.

The National Pubwatch Awards, rewarding best practice, took place at the House of Lords.

The main award is judged by National Pubwatch committee members and recognises the work of local pubwatch schemes and their efforts to provide safe drinking environments for customers and staff.

Reading pubwatch was named as the winner of the award, with Pontypridd and Epsom pubwatches highly commended.

Reading pubwatch was recognised for the range of new initiatives launched over the past 12 months, including a new standard operating procedure for licensed premises, an antidrink-spiking campaign, increased security searches and running antiterrorist seminars.

That pubwatch also has a robust banning system which has had more than 100 offenders banned for a period of between three months and five years.

Reading pubwatch's honorary secretary, Bill Donne, said: "We are honoured to have won, against stiff competition, the prestigious National Pubwatch of the Year award.

"We are grateful for the judging panel's recognition of our commitment to partnership-working which we have developed over many years."

Pub manager Selcuk Devecioglu and deputy manager Kara Nash (both of The Assembly Rooms, Epsom) were presented with a highly commended award, on behalf of Epsom pubwatch and its members.

The award was for 'outstanding social responsibility'.

Several other awards were also handed out on the night.

National Pubwatch's chairman, Steve Baker OBE, said:

"Recognising best practices and people who have gone above and beyond is important for the pub and licensed trade.

"It has been a challenging year for the industry, yet ensuring safe drinking environments for customers and staff remains a priority.

"It is a privilege to be able to recognise best practice by rewarding Reading pubwatch and also to highlight the contribution of those individuals who have made the sector a safer place."

Wetherspoon's legal director, Nigel Connor, said: "We are delighted to sponsor the National Pubwatch Awards in the organisation's 25th year.

"We would like to pay tribute to National Pubwatch's founders Raul de Vaux, Malcolm Eidmans and Bill Stone.

"The organisation which they established has been crucial in helping local pubwatches to play a key role in ensuring not only safer hospitality venues, but safer towns and cities too.

"We are proud of our association with National Pubwatch and the fact that so many of our pubs are members and, in many cases, head their local pubwatch scheme.

"Congratulations to all of the finalists and the award-winners themselves."



BEER-ISTAS FIND PERFECT BREWS



Pub manager Beth Burns

THE QUEENS HOTEL Maltby

A former residential hotel and pub on a busy crossroads, reopened and completely refurbished by Wetherspoon after a lengthy period of closure.

Now firmly established, this spacious pub has an attractive family dining area offering typical Wetherspoon value for money food and drink.

Maltby is not blessed with many real ale outlets and The Queens Hotel has raised its profile in the township.

Regular Meet the Brewer nights are held.

Next to Coronation Park and handy for Maltby Crags and Roche Abbey.

● Tickhill Road, S66 7NQ

Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK have been acclaimed for the quality of their real ale – by members of their respective Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branches.

In total, 200 of the company's pubs are listed in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2023, the UK's best-selling beer and pub guide.

Local branch members chose the pubs, following regular visits to check on the quality of the real ales on offer.

They also took into account customer service, décor and overall atmosphere.

A CAMRA spokesman said: "The pubs all deserve their place in The Good Beer Guide 2023.

"It is our belief that, if a licensee serves an excellent pint of real ale, then everything else in the pub, including customer service, quality of food and atmosphere, is likely to be of an equally high standard."

Wetherspoon's operations director, Martin Geoghegan, said:

"It's great news that so many of our pubs have been recognised, once again, for the quality of the beer on offer.

"Each of the pubs always offers customers an excellent choice of real ales, including those from local and regional brewers, as well as hosting its own beer festival.

"Staff at the pubs work hard to ensure that the real ales on offer are kept in first-class condition at all times – and the pubs' inclusion in the guide highlights this."

● We feature descriptions from CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2023 of four Wetherspoon pubs, one each in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

● CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2023, 50th edition, is available from bookshops and directly from CAMRA: shop1.camra.org.uk, priced at £16.99 (website discount available to CAMRA's members)



THE CAPTAIN JAMES LANG Dumbarton

A former Woolworths store, this Wetherspoon pub has a light and open layout with a variety of seating options.

It is named after the renowned captain of the paddle steamer Leven, which was built in the town.

Pictures on the wall commemorate Woolworths, the locally built Cutty Sark and racing driver Sir Jackie Stewart, who was born nearby.

A large beer garden at the rear overlooks the River Leven.

Frequent trains and buses serve the area.

- 97-99 High Street, G82 1LF

Pub manager Ryan Hegarty (left) with shift managers Meghan Hegarty and Ethan Anderson

THE MARDY INN Gorseinon

This Wetherspoon establishment was formerly a traditional high-street pub.

Following a major refurbishment, it is now modern in style.

It has a large single bar with several TVs for news and sport, and an adjoining airy extension overlooking the furnished patio area.

Some interesting pictures of old Gorseinon are on the walls, depicting the town and its inhabitants in years gone by.

A good selection of local and national beers can be enjoyed in the beer garden.

- 117 High Street, S4 4BR



Pub manager Alun Mosford (centre) with shift manager Sophie Tucker and shift leader Corey Rosser

THE CENTRAL BAR Carrickfergus

Lively market-town community local with a loyal clientele.

This Wetherspoon pub has a ground-floor public bar of robust character.

On the first floor is a quieter, family-friendly loggia-style sitting room with exposed timber trusses, giving fine views from its many windows over Belfast Lough and the adjacent 12th-century castle.

Handpumps on both levels dispense two house beers and three guests, often from Whitewater Brewery.

Alcoholic drinks are served from 11.30am (12.30pm Sun).

- 13-15 High Street, BT38 7AN



Bar associate Rhys Tomlinson

AWARDS

RUTHIN

BEAUTIFUL BLOOMS BRING VICTORY FOR CLASSY CASTLE

For the second year in succession, The Castle Hotel (Ruthin) has won first prize for its beautiful blooms.

The pub was voted the winner in the 'licensed premises' category in Ruthin Town Council's 2022 'best floral display competition'.

Ruthin Town Council's town clerk, Siân Clark, reported: "Representatives from Rhuthun (Ruthin) Town Council completed the judging of this year's floral display competitions and The Castle Hotel – Wetherspoon – has been successful for the second year in a row.

"The judges complimented the array of flowers which the pub had and the obvious care they received from the pub's manager and team."

Siân added: "The town of Ruthin is noted for its floral displays. Thank you to The Castle Hotel for making a positive contribution to brighten up the town in this way."

Following the lifting of restrictions, the presentation of the trophy and certificate by the mayor, Cllr Menna Jones, took place at the returning annual Ruthin Flower Show in August.

The pub's manager, Ian Hughes (pictured), said: "To win the award for a second successive year is a fantastic achievement for everyone involved.

"The team and I are delighted that our beautiful beer garden's blooms have been recognised, once again, in the town council's annual competition."

Ruthin Town Council arranges the annual floral display competition for local businesses and licensed premises, as well as organising the display of colourful flowers on the lighting columns throughout the town.



MARCH

HIPPODROME BOSS LOOKS TO THE FUCHSIA, AFTER FLORAL WIN

The Hippodrome (March) has won a prestigious local prize for its beautiful array of hanging baskets and flower boxes.

The pub was chosen by judges Paul and Maria Nielsen-Bom, who have run the local competition for five years.

Paul said: "We were very impressed with the work the staff put in to create and maintain an excellent display."

Steve Kaczorovski (pictured), who manages the Cambridgeshire pub, said: "We were delighted to win.

"We have a lovely display of six hanging baskets and lots of flower boxes too. Customers often comment on how beautiful they look.

"The theme of the floral display is fuchsias, for no particular reason other than their remarkable colour."

The pub was presented with a certificate, now proudly displayed in the main lounge area.



RUISLIP MANOR

J.J. MOON'S SHINES BRIGHTEST, SAY MIDDLESEX ALE EXPERTS



J.J. Moon's (Ruislip Manor) has been recognised for the quality of its real ale by members of the local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch.

The pub, managed by Sam Garvey since December 2021, was voted West Middlesex CAMRA District Pub of the Year 2022, Hillingdon winner.

The CAMRA branch's chairman, Thomas Black, is pictured (right) presenting Sam with a certificate – now on display behind the bar.

Thomas said: "J.J. Moon's is an excellent welcoming community pub which always serves a good beer from local breweries."

Sam added: "Hillingdon is a big borough, with a lot of local competition, so we are delighted to have been voted by members as their 'pub of the year', the first time since 2017.

"It is great for the pub to be recognised."

Previously the pub manager at J.J. Moon's (Wembley) and The Moon on the Hill (Harrow), Sam is also a partially qualified beer sommelier and, in his spare time, enthusiastic home brewer, describing real ale as a 'big passion'.

He is assisted in 'all things real ale' by cellar champion and team leader Carey Hough, who has worked at the pub for 17 years.

Sam revealed: "Carey has had a huge hand in this award success.

"She deals with all of the ale orders, knows all brewery contacts by name and also what is popular with our real-ale customers."

Among the favourites with regulars at the pub are Vale Brewery Gravitas (4.8% ABV) and Old Empire (5.7% ABV) from Marston's Brewery, along with Oakham Ales Citra (4.2% ABV) and Green Devil (6.0% ABV).

Away from the twice-yearly real-ale festival, the pub usually offers eight guest ales, as well as the three permanent choices of Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King IPA and Abbot Ale.

Sam continued: "Every Wednesday, we have a 'cellar dash' event, which increases our guest ale choices to 11.

"This weekly 'ale club' session gives us the chance to chat to customers and gather any suggestions.

"We also have a great relationship with the local CAMRA group. I have known the branch secretary (former chairman) Roy Tunstall for more than 10 years.

"In July, we helped with its Ealing beer festival, receiving delivery and tapping 70 to 80 barrels, sharing our knowledge and lending a hand."

CAMRA Greater London's deputy regional director, Roy Tunstall, added: "I first came across Sam Garvey when he was one of Gil Cooray's trainees at J.J. Moon's (Ruislip Manor).

"Sam was part of Gil's team who would help us with the set-up of CAMRA's Ealing Beer Festival (mostly with the heavy lifting, placing casks on the stillage).

"With Gil retired, Sam has now taken over providing volunteers for our beer festival set-up.

"When Sam became manager of The Moon on the Hill (Harrow), he instigated real-ale nights, taking customers through the various beer styles, using the knowledge which he had gained behind the bar, as well as being a home brewer.

"Following a period managing J.J. Moon's (Wembley), I was delighted to find out that Sam was returning 'home' to take over at 'Moons in the Manor'.

"Managers make a great deal of difference, so it was no surprise to find out that West Middlesex CAMRA members had voted J.J. Moon's as their Hillingdon Pub of the Year 2022."

HYGIENE – WE HIT THE HEIGHTS

Wetherspoon given highest average rating, per premises, of any pub company – in new food hygiene rating league table

Wetherspoon is the highest-placed pub company in the latest food hygiene rating league table (www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk), as at 24 October 2022.

Among the biggest pub chains, Wetherspoon's pubs consistently top the charts in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

The company's pubs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, have an average food hygiene rating of 4.98.

The FHRS is run by local authorities and is the only independent government scheme assessing the level of hygiene standards in pubs, restaurants, take-aways, clubs and cafés.

It scores outlets 0–5, with the highest-possible rating of five meaning 'very good' hygiene practices and safety systems in place, fully complying with the law.

Outlets with a rating of four are deemed to have 'good' hygiene standards, while three is 'generally satisfactory', two needs 'some improvement', a rating of one requires 'major improvement' and 0 requires 'urgent improvement'.

Wetherspoon had the highest average FHRS rating, per premises, of any pub company.

It was ahead of pub companies including Slug & Lettuce and Loungers/Cosy Club and was also rated higher than restaurant and sandwich chains, including, PizzaExpress, Miller & Carter and Greggs – although many of those companies also scored highly.

Of our pubs, 773 currently have an FHRS rating, with 98.06 per cent of those achieving the highest-possible rating of five.

Scotland operates the Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS). This scheme has a pass/fail rating – with 60 Wetherspoon pubs in Scotland gaining a 'pass' score – a 100-per-cent success rate.

The ratings for both FHRS and FHIS follow an independent assessment of food hygiene at premises, determined by local authority environmental health officers visiting outlets to assess hygiene levels.

Environmental health officers assess three areas: food hygiene and safety procedures; structural compliance; confidence in management.

The ratings (as well as the date of inspection) can be found online and on stickers displayed at businesses' premises.

Wetherspoon's personnel and retail audit director, James Ullman, said: "We are proud of our pubs' hygiene ratings.

"However, we also take it extremely seriously when a pub does not achieve the maximum rating in either scheme.

"Where a maximum score is not achieved, we work hard with each pub's team and local authority to ensure, as quickly as possible, that standards are returned to expected levels."

To achieve the highest-possible rating of five, our pubs' management and staff must achieve and maintain the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene, including:

Hygienic food-handling

This is how food is prepared, cooked, cooled, reheated and stored:

- checking fridge temperatures
- hand-washing facilities and practices
- equipment used for raw and cooked foods being kept separately
- staff members' understanding of food hygiene

Physical condition of the premises and facilities

This is the assessment of the standard of cleanliness and upkeep, including whether:

- the condition of general decoration, layout and lighting is of a good standard
- it is clean and cleaning materials meet requirements
- there is suitable ventilation and pest control
- rubbish and waste are disposed of correctly

Food safety management

This ensures that suitable precautions are taken to keep food safe, including:

- staff training records
- logs of relevant checks, such as fridges' temperatures and cleaning
- safety procedure records

Did you know?

As well as the independent assessments by the FHRS across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the FHIS in Scotland, Wetherspoon also monitors its own pub hygiene standards.

Every pub receives at least five quality-assurance visits each month from a combination of its area manager, Wetherspoon's own audit department, an external 'mystery shopper' company and other head-office managers.

The only independent government scheme assessing food hygiene standards



	Total premises scored	Average premises score out of 5
GBK	37	5.00
Aldi	763	4.99
Wetherspoon	773	4.98
Nando's	420	4.98
ASK	65	4.98
McDonald's	1247	4.96
Lidl	651	4.96
Greggs	1847	4.95
Walkabout	20	4.95
Prezzo	151	4.94
Miller & Carter	113	4.94
TGI Fridays	72	4.94
Yates	34	4.94
Slug & Lettuce	77	4.93
Giraffe	15	4.93
Starbucks	1011	4.92
All Bar One	49	4.92
Browns	24	4.92
Costa Coffee	2388	4.91
PizzaExpress	337	4.91
Hungry Horse	245	4.91
Coffee#1	104	4.91
Nicholson's	67	4.91
Be At One	36	4.91
O'Neill's	34	4.91
Côte	85	4.90
Table Table	43	4.90
Carluccio's	39	4.90
Burger King	445	4.89
KFC	906	4.87
Craff Union	418	4.87
Asda	521	4.86
Chef & Brewer	132	4.86
YO! Sushi	52	4.86
Young's	127	4.83
Beefeater	121	4.83
Harvester	150	4.82
Bill's	56	4.82
Bella Italia	79	4.81
Zizzi	126	4.80
Brewers Fayre	124	4.80
Turtle Bay	44	4.80
Geronimo	35	4.80
Las Iguanas	44	4.79
Subway	1430	4.76
Papa Johns	468	4.76
Café Rouge	37	4.76
Oakman Inns	36	4.75
Caffè Nero	532	4.74
BrewDog	46	4.73
Pitcher & Piano	15	4.73
Loungers/Cosy Club	197	4.65
German Doner Kebab	98	4.65

Information in this table was sourced from www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk on 24/10/22, listing 773 Wetherspoon pubs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with an average food hygiene rating of 4.98. Please note that, where councils are yet to assess or submit their pub inspection, there may be a slight gap in the number of pubs, compared with that in our records. Businesses are rated from 0 to 5 which is displayed at their premises and online. The top score is 5.

TERRIFIC TEAM ENSURES STARRY NIGHTS AT THE OBSERVATORY



Across six, seven, eight and even nine successive annual inspections, many of our pubs (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) have achieved the highest-possible rating of five.

To gain a maximum score is difficult enough; however, to then maintain that highly coveted rating of five requires consistently high standards.

Among our pubs achieving a continuous maximum rating of five for the last seven inspections, since February 2012, is The Observatory (Ilkeston).

The pub, in this bustling Derbyshire town, has been managed by Paul Ellgood for almost 10 years.

Paul originally started as a part-time bar associate at The Union Rooms (Plymouth), when that pub first opened in December 1999.

Before taking on the role as pub manager at The Observatory, he was kitchen manager at The Thomas Leaper (Derby).

A month before Paul first joined the company, The Observatory's kitchen manager, Diane Humphreys (pictured), joined the team as a kitchen associate at the newly opened Ilkeston pub.

Diane, who stepped up to become kitchen manager nine years ago, has worked at The Observatory since its opening day (in November 1999).

She heads a team of 12 in the kitchen, including kitchen shift leader Ian Grafton, who has been with the company 20 years, and kitchen team leader Siobhan Cope, who arrived at the pub almost a decade ago with Paul from The Thomas Leaper.

Paul said: "When I arrived at The Observatory, the standard of service and quality of the food were already high – and Diane's attention to detail and standards remains very high.

"As a team (30 full- and part-time staff), we expect high standards at the pub and work hard to maintain them.

"It's second nature for everyone – and, if we see something which isn't right, we correct it immediately."

Paul continued: "We also have a very good relationship with our local health authority team.

"If there are any customer complaints, which are thankfully few and far between, lines of communication are good, so that we can address any issues.

"They are well aware of our high standards."

Paul concluded: "Customers, these days, are also very aware of the hygiene ratings. If you don't have five stars, people will ask questions."

THE CROWN RIVERS • HEATHROW

NIRMALA AND SEEMA IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL, AT HEATHROW

Two members of the team at The Crown Rivers (Heathrow) will each be marking 20 years' service for Wetherspoon, in January 2023.

That is a great achievement, however, it is quite literally only half of Nirmala Devi and Seema Mann's story.

Between the two of them, they have remarkably clocked up almost 80 years' dedicated service at London Heathrow Airport.

Nirmala, 58, pictured with founder and chairman Tim Martin, on his recent visit to The Crown Rivers, has worked at the airport for 34 years.

She started in 1988, working for Trust Houses Forte, serving hot drinks and snacks to airport travellers, before the company was taken over by Granada.

In January 2003, Wetherspoon took over the site in terminal 2 where Nirmala worked and so she transferred to the company, working at Wetherspools (terminal 2 airside) as a bar associate.

Nirmala, who progressed to team leader and worked at the various Wetherspoon pubs at all of the airport's terminals, said: "It is all very different now – and The Crown Rivers is a big pub, not like the small Wetherspoon Express where I first worked.

"I also now work as a part-time bar associate again. I am unable to do lots of walking, because of a foot problem, yet still enjoy my job – and the shift work helps me.

"Tim Martin is such a nice guy, and Wetherspoon is a good company, having always helped and supported me and my family."

Nirmala's son, Ajay Karan Singh, also worked for the company during summer breaks from university; he's now a chemical engineer.

Seema's working life at Heathrow began in early 1987, serving coffee in terminal 2's Trust Houses Forte Italian coffee shop.

She recalled: "I knew very few words of English, but, within a year and a half, was promoted to cashier, in the days when you had to memorise every item's code and price.

"I was offered a management role – and the training was hard.

"I had had no formal education, yet had the ability to do the job."

Seema and Nirmala met in 1991, when their working paths at the airport crossed at terminal 1, before Seema (like Nirmala) joined Wetherspoon in January 2003.

Seema started in Wetherspools (terminal 1) (now closed) and has worked in most of the company's various pubs across the airport.

Seema, 64, recalled: "It was very different for me, too, working for Wetherspoon, as I had worked before only with food – and there were so many different drinks brands to remember.

"But I never gave up.

"I learned quickly, and the nice management team members were a great support.

"I love my job, have fun, meet people, earn money and come home. I always feel appreciated, and the job keeps me going.

"I always say that, at work, it is my Wetherspoon family."

Seema's own family members have all worked for the company in the past. Daughter Jazz worked in the marketing department at head office, before leaving to have a family; daughter Ricki, now in banking, worked for Wetherspoon while studying; Seema's son Ajay also had a spell with Wetherspoon in terminal 2, before moving into an airport checking and boarding supervisor role at terminal 3.

Seema concluded: "I still work full time and am never going to give up the job. When I do, I will be gone."

Pub manager Graham Farr said: "Nirmala and Seema are a pleasure to have in the team.

"They both work as hard and committed now as when we first met them, almost 20 years ago.

"Both have worked in several units, across multiple terminals, including the original terminal 2 and the now-closed terminal 1, under the guidance of several managers.

"It is such a glowing endorsement for Wetherspoon that both Nirmala and Seema have enjoyed such a successful and fulfilling career with the company.

"Their stories are inspirational."



RAVING REVIEW FROM OFFICIAL LOONY LEADER



The 38th Official Monster Raving Loony Party Conference took place in mid September, in Coalville, Leicestershire.

Alan 'Howling Laud' Hope, the party leader and avid Wetherspoon fan, reported: "Our conference centre was the Victoria Music Rooms, in the town.

"However, what made the location even better was that Coalville also has a Wetherspoon pub – The Monkey Walk.

"I was there for 10 days, ensuring that all went as planned and, of course, it did.

"Reece [pub manager Reece Waugh] and his gang in 'Spoons' made us very welcome, and we spent lots of time there making and meeting new friends.

"It seems that we may win the Coalville seat at the next election," he laughed.

Alan continued: "All of the usual party tricks went to plan – people just love our cabinet reshuffle in a bedroom cabinet, while lots of music and a great sense of humour were abundant.

"The town welcomed us with an open heart and joined in with all we did.

"One of the highlights was our dance team, The Black Pig Morris Side, doing an impromptu dance outside The Monkey Walk, much to the delight of customers. It certainly lit up Marlborough Square.

"Then, we all disappeared inside for lunch. As ever, the food and beer were up to the usual great standard, before we headed back to base for the leader's speech."

Alan (pictured front with party members and supporters) added:

"Two very interesting facts came from this meeting: the first was that we were the first political party to hold a conference in the reign of King Charles III.

"Second, we were also the first political party ever to be invited to hold its conference in 'The House of Commons', as Victoria Music Rooms are owned by a certain John Commons."

Since Alan was last featured in Wetherspoon News, he has added to his Spoon visits, now totalling 725 pubs.

He reported: "Two recent by-elections saw me in Bexley and Sidcup constituency, where I was able to do the Great North Kent Coast run.

"Starting at Royal Victoria Pavilion (Ramsgate), I also visited The Mechanical Elephant (Margate), The Saxon Shore (Herne Bay), The Peter Cushing (Whitstable), The Thomas Waghorn (Chatham) and The Railway (Rainham), all in one day – no... I wasn't driving.

"And, of course, The Furze Wren and The Wrong 'Un (both in Bexleyheath)."

Alan concluded: "The next election was in Birmingham, so I was able to visit The Charlie Hall (Erdington), The Spread Eagle (Acocks Green), The Bishop Vesey (Boldmere), The Bottle of Sack, (Sutton Coldfield), The William Tyler (Yardley) and The Arthur Robertson (Perry Barr) – all of these on my bus pass... what good fun."

ALAN TREKS TO SOUTH WALES PUB TO FIND OUT ABOUT LOST BROTHER



Alan is pictured with his son Tony (left), together with bar associate Marni Goodwin and team leader Kayleigh McGlynn (right)

A family history connection brought Alan Jones and his son Tony on a 185-mile journey to visit The John Wallace Linton (Newport).

The pair travelled from their home in Oldham, Greater Manchester, to south Wales to discover more about Alan's half-brother Norman Edwin Jones, who served with Commander JW Linton VC, after whom the pub is named.

Alan revealed: "We had been told by the curator of the Royal Navy Submarine Museum at Gosport, George Malcolmson, about the Wetherspoon pub and its significance to Norman's story.

"George gave us a photo of the pub, as well as a photograph of my brother, along with John Wallace Linton and the crew of HMS Turbulent.

"We said that we would, one day, visit The John Wallace Linton and see all the photos and history text adorning its walls."

That day came for Alan and Tony this summer when they made the journey south, with a copy of that HMS Turbulent crew photo, together with copies of family letters received from the Admiralty and King George VI, for the pub to add to its own history collection.

Norman, together with his commander, John Wallace Linton, and the entire submarine crew of HMS Turbulent were killed in action on 12 March 1943.

Alan, now 78 and retired, said: "Norman died a year before I was born, so I never knew him. He was a last-minute reservist on that crew and never came home."

Alan concluded: "I visit The Up Steps Inn and have lunch sometimes with my two nieces at The Shay Wake (both in Oldham), so already knew Wetherspoon's pubs.

"But it was really good to go to The John Wallace Linton and see all of the information on the walls there – and to square off the circle on Norman's story."



TOP MARKS FOR GEOGRAPHY AS CRAFT BREWERS GET A LEG-UP

Locally sourced bottled and canned craft beers now being served in 11 regions across the UK

Wetherspoon has been supporting and championing breweries and microbreweries throughout the UK for more than 40 years.

Always committed to serving the best range of beers, locally sourced products are also an important aspect for each pub in its respective community.

There is an increased demand from customers to support locally sourced products and, for the first time, Wetherspoon is introducing a range of three specific craft beers for each area, based on geographical location.

These locally sourced bottled and canned craft beers are being served at the company's pubs, across 11 regions of the UK.

Wetherspoon's marketing executive, Jess Schofield, who has been responsible for the project, said: "As a company, we strive to provide the best products to all of our customers – with craft beer being no different.

Jess concluded: "Demand for quality craft ales continues to grow, so we have put together a wide range of interesting beers for customers.

"The trio of craft beers for every region has been based on current trends, specific requests from each area and beer reviews.

"We have worked with a variety of brewers to assemble this line-up, with the great majority being award-winning independent brewers."

London



Brixton Brewery
London
Atlantic
5.4% ABV 330ml can
A bold, modern and refreshing American pale ale, brewed with extra-pale malt and a deluge of aroma hops.



Redemption Brewing Co
London
Big Chief
5.5% ABV 500ml bottle
An IPA packed full of Kiwi hops, with hints of honey and nectar, plus plenty of tropical citrus and floral notes.



Fourpure Brewing Co
London
Citrus IPA
5.9% ABV 330ml can
A vibrant and zesty citrus IPA, with flavours of orange and mango.

Southeast



Brixton Brewery
London
Atlantic
5.4% ABV 330ml can
A bold, modern and refreshing American pale ale, brewed with extra-pale malt and a deluge of aroma hops.



Siren Craft Brew
Wokingham
Flex
5.3% ABV 440ml can
A crisp, clean and refreshing California pale ale, with a hop combination bringing sticky, tropical and piney notes.



Bedlam Brewery
East Sussex
Wilde
4.4% ABV 440ml can
A fluffy and light east coast-style pale ale, which explodes with passion fruit and tropical juice character.

Home Counties



Mad Squirrel
Hemel Hempstead
Big Sea
5.5% ABV 440ml can
Big citrus, big pine and big bitterness come in waves throughout this west coast IPA.



Windsor & Eton
Windsor
Caught by the Fuzz
5.0% ABV 440ml can
This peachy pale ale is sweet, soft and sharp, with peach undertones.



Siren Craft Brew
Wokingham
Flex
5.3% ABV 440ml can
A crisp, clean and refreshing California pale ale, with a hop combination bringing sticky, tropical and piney notes.

Southwest



The Wild Beer Co
Somerset
Under the Sun
4.7% ABV 440ml can
A hazy, soft, session IPA with a tropical cocktail of aromas and flavours, featuring orange, mango, pineapple and coconut.



Hop Union Brewery
Bristol
Bloody Nora
4.7% ABV 440ml can
A soft, fruity, hazy, blood-orange IPA, with tropical, stone fruit and citrus notes, plenty of body and a touch of bitterness.



Exmoor Ales
Somerset
Urban Fox
6.2% ABV 440ml can
A robust American red IPA, brewed with crystal and Munich malts to give it a distinctive red hue.

Anglia



Nethergate Brewery
Suffolk
Growling Dog
7.5% ABV 440ml can
A tropical IPA with a smack of mango, pineapple and papaya – for a full, tropical taste, with a hoppy bitter finish.



Oakham Ales
Peterborough
Citra T90
4.6% ABV 440ml can
An unfiltered session IPA, exploding with hop character and left unfiltered and naturally cloudy for maximum flavour.



Bishop Nick Brewery
Essex
Cruz'd
6.2% ABV 440ml can
A well-balanced west coast IPA, serving up refreshing notes of melon and pineapple, with a long, hoppy finish.

Midlands



Oakham Ales
Peterborough
Citra T90
4.6% ABV 440ml can
An unfiltered session IPA, exploding with hop character and left unfiltered and naturally cloudy for maximum flavour.



Thornbridge Brewery
Peterborough
Lukas
4.2% ABV 330ml can
A light, crisp and slightly sweet Helles lager, brewed with Bavarian ingredients.



Brewster's Brewery
Lincolnshire
IPA
6.0% ABV 440ml can
Traditional brewing meets the Pacific northwest in this full, hoppy-flavoured west coast IPA.



NEW REGIONAL CRAFT

Yorkshire



Kirkstall Brewery
Leeds
Judicious
4.8% ABV 440ml can
A tropical and hazy juicy pale ale, packed full of pink grapefruit, mango, pineapple, lychee, passion fruit and peach flavours.



Saltaire Brewery
Bradford
Full Tilt
5.2% ABV 330ml can
A juicy Australian and New Zealand pale, with a punchy, hoppy flavour and sweet tropical notes.



Rooster's Brewing Co
Harrogate
Baby-Faced Assassin
6.1% ABV 330ml can
An IPA brewed with 100 per cent Citra hops which create aromas of mango, apricot, grapefruit and mandarin orange – for a lasting tropical fruit bitterness.

Northeast



Camerons Brewery
Hartlepool
Jellyfish Nebula
4.6% ABV 440ml can
A pale ale made with a blend of hops from Australia, New Zealand and the USA, combining to give strong aromas of lychee, stone fruits and resin.



Rooster's Brewing Co
Harrogate
Baby-Faced Assassin
6.1% ABV 330ml can
An IPA brewed with 100 per cent Citra hops which create aromas of mango, apricot, grapefruit and mandarin orange – for a lasting tropical fruit bitterness.



Kirkstall Brewery
Leeds
Judicious
4.8% ABV 440ml can
A tropical and hazy juicy pale ale, packed full of pink grapefruit, mango, pineapple, lychee, passion fruit and peach flavours.

Northwest



Seven Bro7hers Brewing Co
Manchester
Throw Away IPA
5.0% ABV 440ml can
A partnership with Kellogg's, using cereal which didn't make the box, now in a can as a hoppy IPA.



Weetwood Ales
Cheshire
Oregon Pale
4.3% ABV 500ml bottle
A balanced and deep golden American pale ale, with big flavours of citrus and grapefruit.



Kirkby Lonsdale Brewery
Kirkby Lonsdale
Devil's Bridge IPA
5.2% ABV 440ml can
Brewed with New World hops, giving a citrus hit with a bitter finish.

Wales



Boss Brewing Co
Swansea
Boss Brave
5.5% ABV 500ml bottle
A Welsh IPA, brewed with American prized hops, oozing rich, caramelised grapefruit and fresh lemons, with a piney finish.



Glamorgan Brewing Co
Pontyclun
Dead Canary
5.0% ABV 440ml can
A well-hopped amber-coloured west coast IPA, with a properly refreshing bitter finish.



Purple Moose Brewery
Porthmadog
High Hops
5.4% ABV 440ml can
A full-bodied and refreshing hazy tropical IPA, with flavours of mango, grapefruit and lime.

Scotland



Stewart Brewing
Loanhead
Radical Road
6.4% ABV 330ml can
A medium-bodied American triple-hopped IPA, bursting with notes of pine, grapefruit and citrus, with a bittersweet finish.



Williams Bros Brewing Co
Alloa
Tin Man
5.5% ABV 500ml can
A tribal tropical IPA, pale and powerful, with heavy-hitting tropical notes, brewed with fruity hops and sweet Vienna malt.



Innis & Gunn Brewing Co
Edinburgh
Mangoes on the Run
5.0% ABV 440ml can
An IPA with a light, fresh and tropical flavour and silky-smooth finish, along with bitter fruity hops and sweet, fresh mangoes.

CAMRA EXPLAINS WHY THE FULL HOUSE GOT FULL MARKS



Following the success of The Full House (Hemel Hempstead) being named Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) 'pub of the year' champion for 2022, voted by Mid-Chilterns CAMRA, the branch published an article (midchilternscamra.org.uk, July 2022) highlighting its winning pub.

The blog, reproduced here by kind permission of Mid-Chilterns CAMRA, focuses on the Hertfordshire town's establishment, which first opened as a Wetherspoon pub (in a former cinema building) in July 1998.

Named after the building's past use as a bingo hall, The Full House ticked all the boxes in this year's awards, with beer choice, cellar management and support for local breweries each noted as exceptional.

As a J D Wetherspoon pub, The Full House opened its doors on July 21st 1998, serving cask ale, bar snacks and hot meals with clinical service for nearly three decades to come.

The Full House's interior is an eclectic mix of traditional pub and Art Deco, with a decorated carpet and wooden furnishings blending in seamlessly with studded metal pillars, wall murals and a giant canvas painting that depicts the last three films projected during the building's past life as an Odeon cinema.

After thirty-five years as a picture house, the operation was converted to a split of films, food (from an eatery which was attached adjacent to the pub, structure no longer present) and bingo in the early nineties, before its final movie premiere in 1994.

The grand establishment was then reopened as a dedicated bingo hall, for a further two years, before it was taken on by the J D Wetherspoon pub company and repurposed as the on-licence food and drinks premises that stands today.

The Full House has been pouring pints throughout wholesale changes to the UK beer scene, with the emergence of local beer festivals and progressive craft beer breweries each leaving their mark on a 24-year timeline of service that has adapted and evolved to keep pace.

The pub now offers five craft kegs (often from local independents) alongside its large cask ale and real cider range, with regular events such as tap-takeovers, meet-the-brewers and cider festivals often staged for visitors of The Full House.

Today, eight cask lines are ever changing with real ale, commonly occupied by local brewers such as Mad Squirrel, Tring Brewery, Rebellion, Vale and Leighton Buzzard – though it is not unusual for the cellar to be racked with national favourites such as Titanic, Oakham and Thornbridge Brewery too.

Events and products are not alone, as there have been recent upgrades to this spacious town-centre establishment. Renovations to both beer gardens (yes, two!) have accompanied a complete cellar and bar front refit within the last two years. The team here do not rest on their laurels.

Praise for The Full House is undoubtedly thanks to its brilliant team, though Alex [Baker] the cellar manager has been singled out for his eagle-eyed management over weekly ale boards (always keeping a balanced mix of brewers and styles), and the fulfilment of insightful events that have entertained prospective consumers and ale aficionados alike.

The year 2021 saw the pub's first 'Family Fun Day', brainchild of pub manager Steph [Robinson], with free kids' entertainment, fancy-dressed staff, competitions, bake sales and more held to raise funds for charity.

The pub proudly raises money for 'Young Lives vs Cancer', a decades-long relationship that supports the UK's leading cancer charity for young people and their families.

Funds from these family-style events are bolstered by the many brim-full collection pots that adorn the bar front, along with regular raffles run by The Full House team.

These raffles offer drinkers the chance to win hampers of beer and more from local businesses (including breweries) for the price of a small charitable donation.

The term 'great pub' can mean many things to many people, each with their own criteria for a perfect experience.

Some pub-goers may place beer quality and events below factors such as food service, atmosphere, community values and accessibility – we're pleased to say that The Full House shone bright in these areas and more during 2021, leaving the branch unified in our decision.

Alex, who has worked at the pub since 2015, said: "I am delighted that the pub has won the award, which highlights our commitment and passion for real ale.

"It is a labour of love for me to look after the real ale at The Full House – and it is great that the efforts of all the team here have been recognised."

The Mid-Chilterns 'Pub of the Year' award is the branch's highest accolade, lauded even more so as high standards are acknowledged across the board in the local area.

The committee would like to commend the efforts of all pubs in the branch throughout 2021 – you certainly made it a fierce competition. To our overall winner, cheers to being our 2022 champions.

Here's to The Full House in Hemel Hempstead – your Mid-Chilterns Pub of the Year!

THE BROKEN BRIDGE • PONTEFRACT

CIRCULAR JOURNEY TAKES SIMON TO BERTH AT THE BROKEN BRIDGE



When pub manager Simon Barker took over the reigns in January 2020 at The Broken Bridge (Pontefract), he was returning to the pub where he first started his Wetherspoon career.

Pontefract-born Simon joined the team of the newly opened pub in June 2010, already with almost seven years' bar work experience – he was keen to progress within the industry.

Simon said: “My mum and dad ran working men’s clubs, after the pit closed where my dad worked as a miner.

“I learned everything I could from them, including the bar and cellar, but knew I couldn’t go any further.

“I then saw an advert for a new pub opening in Pontefract – Wetherspoon coming soon – and decided to apply for a job.”

Also, on the original new pub-opening team were Simon’s (now) wife Rachel, a kitchen team leader who transferred to The Winter Seam (Castleford) in July 2022, after 12 years at The Broken Bridge.

Team leader Jayne Sandham and bar associate Julie McAuley have also been at the pub since day one.

Simon, pictured with (left to right) Julie, Rachel and Jayne, revealed: “Rachel and I met at The Broken Bridge, and our first pub manager, Andy Haith, who is now at The Red Lion (Doncaster), was also my best man when we married.”

Simon progressed to shift manager at The Broken Bridge, before moving in October 2013 to the new opening The Blue Bell (Hemsworth), then, in December that year, onto The Old Market Hall (Mexborough).

In February 2014, he took over as holding manager at The Six Chimneys (Wakefield) and held a similar position at The Silkstone Inn (Barnsley), before stepping up in June 2014 to pub manager there.

Simon added: “When the pub manager position came up at The Broken Bridge, I applied for it. It is a bigger pub, with a larger team, so a step up for me, career wise, and also closer to home.”

Simon, 34, continued: “When I joined Wetherspoon, it was always my aim to take the experience which I had gained from my parents and make a career for myself, although I didn’t realise how fast the progress could be.

“As well as my Wetherspoon career, Rachel and I got married, bought a house and had our son Mason, who was nine years old in September.”

And speaking of keeping it in the family, Simon concluded:

“My mum, Sam, was a bar associate at The Broken Bridge, although only for around six months, before going back to help dad in the clubs.

“My sister, Chelsea Barker, is currently a shift manager on my team, while my step-son Robert (18) worked at The Glass Blower (Castleford), but has now transferred to The Regal (Cambridge), where he is studying psychology and criminology at university.”

CHERYL VISITS 50 PUBS TO BUILD BIRTHDAY COLLECTION



Wetherspoon customer Cheryl Marland has completed her 50th birthday celebrations with 50 new pub visits.

Cheryl, who has featured before in Wetherspoon News (summer 2022), marked her milestone birthday in August and 'collected' 50 Wetherspoon pubs (not previously visited) as part of her birthday celebrations, ahead of the big day.

Cheryl's local Wetherspoon pubs are The Grey Friar and The Twelve Tellers (both in Preston), although her challenge took her across the UK, with help from her employer, train company Avanti

West Coast, which provides her with a pass meaning that she can travel anywhere in the land.

Her proud dad, Wilf, reported: "Many thanks for publishing Cheryl's feat in the summer edition of Wetherspoon News. She has now completed her mission.

"Before her 50-pub target, Cheryl had already visited quite a few pubs.

"This now makes 134 Wetherspoon pubs and counting. Cheryl also completed the London Marathon to finish her '50' year of challenges."

CLIFTON IS THE PLACE TO BE TO SPY SPEEDING CYCLISTS

Crowds gathered from far and wide outside The Clifton (Sedgley) as Commonwealth Games cyclists raced past.

The pub attracted several large crowds over three days, as it was on the only part of the route which cyclists pass twice.

As knowledge of this fact grew, so did the crowds and the atmosphere.

The pub's manager, Ryan Underhill, said: "Some people told me that they had travelled from Newport (south Wales) just to watch the cycling.

"It was a really good atmosphere, with everyone in great spirits."

The group from Wales had come to support Geraint Thomas, who crashed early on in the time trial race, yet recovered to win a bronze medal.

Ryan added: "It was fantastic to have a live major sporting event happen right outside the pub."



PRESSING MATTER

– THREE NEW CIDERS NOW ON SALE

Sweet and sharp apples provide base for two new bottled options, while dark berries flavour a draught variety

Wetherspoon's pubs are now serving a trio of **NEW** ciders for your enjoyment.

Two new bottled ciders have been added to the range: Bulmers Original (4.5% ABV) and Thatchers Blood Orange (4.0% ABV) – each available in a 500ml serving.

Perfect

Bulmers Original is a light- to medium-bodied apple cider, representing a perfect blend of sweeter eating apples and sharper cider apples, including Dabinett and Michelin, all home grown in Herefordshire orchards.

Thatchers Blood Orange is crafted with naturally juicy, aromatic apples chosen for their sweetness – Braeburn, Fuji and Gala. Bursting with natural blood-orange flavour, this is a vibrant and sparkling cider.

These ciders are both available in the 'any 2 for' mix-and-match drinks deal.

Crisp

Other new additions in that deal, all 500ml bottled cider choices, are Kopparberg Mixed Fruit Tropical (4.0% ABV), Angry Orchard Crisp Apple (5.0% ABV) and Aspoll Apple Cyder (5.5% ABV).

They join Kopparberg Passionfruit Light (4.0% ABV), Kopparberg Strawberry & Lime (4.0% ABV), Kopparberg Mixed Fruit (4.0% ABV) and Bulmers Red Berries (4.0% ABV) in the 'any 2 for' mix-and-match drinks deal.

Also, new on draught, is Stowford Press Dark Berry cider (4.0% ABV), available in either a pint or half-pint serving.

Traditional

This new addition to the Wetherspoon draught range replaces the Stowford Press Mixed Berries cider, supplied by the same Herefordshire-based traditional cider-making company, Westons Cider, established in 1880.

A vibrant, dark-berry-coloured cider, this has a rich, blackcurrant and blackberry fragrance.

A delicious and refreshing drink, it is bursting with the flavour of dark berries.

Stowford Press Dark Berry cider joins Stowford Press Apple cider (4.5% ABV), Kopparberg Strawberry & Lime (4.0% ABV) and Thatchers Gold (4.8% ABV), together with other guest ciders, in Wetherspoon's draught cider range.



BULMERS ORIGINAL
(4.5% ABV)



THATCHERS BLOOD ORANGE
(4.0% ABV)



KOPPARBERG MIXED FRUIT TROPICAL
(4.0% ABV)



ANGRY ORCHARD CRISP APPLE
(5.0% ABV)



ASPALL APPLE CYDER
(5.5% ABV)

PROJECTORS ROLL AGAIN AT THE PICTURE HOUSE



Pub manager Jem Turner (pictured) is thrilled to have the regular film night back up and running at her pub – The Picture House (Stafford).

Customers are able to enjoy, as well as make suggestions for, a different film every Wednesday night from 9pm, without charge.

Jem said: “We project the image onto a large screen above the back bar, which would have been the area of the original cinema screen.

“We have seasonal themed films, for Halloween and Christmas, as well as old classics and musical films like Frozen and The Greatest Showman, to which customers enjoy a sing-along, creating a great atmosphere.

“We also sometimes show the ‘prequels’ to new films coming out, to tie in with screenings at the national cinema chains.”

The original cinema ticket booth, still in situ at the pub, has a display board with the next three to four months’ listings of forthcoming films.

The pub, a grade II listed former theatre and cinema building, first opened as a Wetherspoon in March 1997.

It first opened its doors to cinema-going public on the eve of World War I. On its first day of opening, in February 1914, admission prices to a matinée showing of The House of Temperley ranged from three old pence to one shilling.

The cinema flourished during the 1920s, before a new era was ushered in on 28 April 1930, when The Picture House screened its

first ‘talkie’ – The Last of Mrs. Cheyney, starring Norma Shearer and Basil Rathbone.

The cinema screened films until the 1990s, when it became The Picture House pub it is today.

Jem, who has managed the pub for 13 years, added: “Being able to show films at the pub is always a great talking point. It’s wonderful to be able to use the building for its original purpose, even if just once a week.

“Not many Wetherspoon pubs have the option to do this, and our reinstated film nights are proving a popular event again.”

A refurbishment and restoration project, after a devastating flood had forced its closure back in October 2019, together with enforced closures during the pandemic, saw the pub shut for almost a year.

The refurbishment work, at a cost of £700,000, which included the full restoration of the historic fibrous plaster ceiling, repaired the extensive damage caused as the flood waters washed right over the height of the bar. The stunning iconic ceiling was carefully restored to its former glory.

Stairs were also fitted, where they would once have stood, and the original theatre balcony area offers an additional experience, overlooking the auditorium bar and theatre screen, especially for a great view on film night.

ALFRED HERRING’S STAFF ROLL OUT THE PIZZA AS NIC EMIGRATES

When popular regular Nic Sales announced that he was leaving the UK to live in Spain, his friends and staff at The Alfred Herring (Palmer’s Green) put on a farewell party for him.

The pub served pizzas for around 30 of Nic’s mates, cordoning off a special area of the pub for the party.

Nic said: “All of the staff made it a great evening and send-off for me – the pizzas went down a treat.”

He added: “I will miss the Alfred, the atmosphere, all my mates and the great staff – I’m just waiting for Wetherspoon to branch out into Spain.”

The pub’s manager, Bogdan Huica, said: “Nic has been a popular regular for many years, and we were happy to give him a good send-off before he moved to Spain.”

WETHERSPOON, ITS CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES HAVE PAID £5.8 BILLION OF TAX TO THE GOVERNMENT IN THE LAST 10 YEARS

In Wetherspoon's 2022 financial year (12 months to July 2022), it generated £662.7 million in tax – about £1 in every £1,000 of ALL UK government taxes. The average tax generated per pub in 2022 was £780,000.

The table* below shows the tax generated by the company in its financial years 2013–2022.

During this period, taxes amounted to about 37 per cent of every pound which went 'over the bar', net of VAT – about 20 times the company's profit.

Wetherspoon's finance director, Ben Whitley, said: "Pub companies pay enormous amounts of tax, but that is not always well understood by the companies themselves or by commentators, since most taxes are hidden in a financial fog.

"Wetherspoon has provided a table which illustrates the exact amounts of tax which the company, its customers and employees have generated, highlighting the importance of the hospitality sector to the nation's finances."

Wetherspoon's chairman, Tim Martin, said: "The main long-term challenge to the pub industry is the tax disparity with supermarkets, which pay zero VAT in respect of food sales, whereas pubs pay 20 per cent.

"This disparity enables supermarkets to subsidise the selling price of beer, wine and spirits, to the detriment of pubs.

"Supermarkets also pay lower business rates per pint than pubs.

"A direct consequence is that pubs' share of beer sales, for example, has dropped from 90 per cent to less than 50 per cent, in recent decades.

"In fact, supermarkets are far more profitable than pubs – Tesco is probably more profitable than the entire pub industry.

"Even so, like Monty Python's Dennis Moore, successive governments have robbed the poor (pubs) and given to the rich (supermarkets).

"A core principle of taxation is that it should be fair and equitable.

"Yet most large pub companies in the UK have remained silent on this vital issue, as their most recent trading statements demonstrate.

"However, surveys by Wetherspoon in the past have demonstrated great fervour for tax equality among individual tenants and free traders.

"The lack of vocal support for equality is probably an example of board rooms being out of touch with those on the front line, always a bad sign for any industry.

"Until there is tax equality between different types of business on the High Street, pubs will always be fighting with one hand tied behind their back – and will provide less in the way of jobs or taxes than they otherwise might."

Wetherspoon's tax payments in financial years 2013–2022	2022 £m	2021 £m	2020 £m	2019 £m	2018 £m	2017 £m	2016 £m	2015 £m	2014 £m	2013 £m	2013–2022 £m
VAT	287.7	93.8	244.3	357.9	332.8	323.4	311.7	294.4	275.1	253.0	2,774.1
Alcohol duty	156.6	70.6	124.2	174.4	175.9	167.2	164.4	161.4	157	144.4	1,496.1
PAYE and NIC	141.9	101.5	106.6	121.4	109.2	96.2	95.1	84.8	78.4	70.2	1,005.3
Business rates	50.3	1.5	39.5	57.3	55.6	53.0	50.2	48.7	44.9	46.4	447.4
Corporation tax	1.5	–	21.5	19.9	26.1	20.7	19.9	15.3	18.1	18.4	161.7
Corporation tax credit (historic capital allowances)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-2.0	–	–	-2
Fruit/slot machine duty	12.8	4.3	9.0	11.6	10.5	10.5	11.0	11.2	11.3	7.2	99.4
Climate change levies	9.7	7.9	6.1	10.4	9.2	9.7	8.7	6.4	6.3	4.3	81.8
Stamp duty	2.7	1.8	4.9	3.7	1.2	5.1	2.6	1.8	2.1	1.0	26.9
Sugar tax	2.9	1.3	2.0	2.9	0.8	–	–	–	–	–	9.9
Fuel duty	1.9	1.1	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.9	2.1	2.0	20.2
Carbon tax	–	–	–	1.9	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.7	2.7	2.6	20.9
Premise licence and TV licences	0.5	0.5	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.6	0.7	0.7	8.2
Landfill tax	–	–	–	–	1.7	2.5	2.2	2.2	1.5	1.3	11.4
Furlough tax rebate	4.4	-213.0	-124.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-341.5
Eat Out to Help Out	–	-23.2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-23.2
Local government grants	1.4	-11.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-12.5
TOTAL TAX	662.7	37.0	436.7	764.4	728.8	694.6	672.3	632.4	600.2	551.5	5,784.1
TAX PER PUB	0.78	43	528	871	825	768	705	673	662	632	6.49
TAX AS % OF NET SALES	38.1%	4.8	34.6	42.0	43.0	41.8	42.1	41.8	42.6	43.1	37.4%
LOSS/PROFIT AFTER TAX	-24.9	-146.5	-38.5	79.6	83.6	76.9	56.9	57.5	58.9	65.2	268.7

*Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2013–2022

COMEDIAN BARRY CRYER HONOURED AT HIS LOCAL



A framed tribute in memory of writer, comedian and actor Barry Cryer, who died in January 2022, aged 86, is now on display at his favourite local pub – The Moon and Sixpence (Hatch End).

The permanent tribute highlights Barry’s life in words and photographs. Barry Cryer’s comedy career spanned half a century, including long spells on Radio 4 panel shows, including I’m Sorry I Haven’t a Clue. He also wrote for top comedians, including Dave Allen, Morecambe and Wise, The Two Ronnies, Tommy Cooper, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, George Burns, Frankie Howerd, Kenny Everett and Les Dawson.

After work – and sometimes during it – he enjoyed a quiet pint with friends at The Moon and Sixpence and had been a regular there since it opened in 2009.

Wetherspoon News (summer 2022 edition) described his days there (see inset).

The pub’s manager, Josie Kennedy, hosted an event in tribute to Barry, after consultation with his family and local dignitaries.

The framed tribute was unveiled by Barry Cryer’s widow, Theresa Donovan (also known as Terry), at a charity coffee morning in aid of Macmillan Nurses, who care for families affected by cancer.

A total of £490 was raised, with an additional £155 donated to the Royal Variety Charity, which looks after entertainers suffering from ill-health.

Those attending included Barry and Theresa’s children Jackie and Dave, Hatch End ward councillor Matthew Goodwin-Freeman and friends of Barry, including fellow Moon and Sixpence regulars.

Pub manager Josie said: “I was delighted to be able to host the event at the pub.

“We remember Barry very fondly. He was a great friend of the pub.

“He once opened a beer festival at the pub and regularly signed photographs and autographs for customers and was always happy to chat with staff and customers.”

Pictured (left to right) are Hatch End ward councillor Matthew Goodwin-Freeman, Theresa Donovan, pub manager Josie Kennedy and customers Seema Dutta and Jayne Seager.





COCKTAIL PITCHERS GIVEN A SHAKE-UP

Exciting times as two new exotic recipes thrown into the mix

As the festive fun gets into full swing, cocktail pitchers are the perfect serve for family and friends to share.

And two recipes have been added to the Wetherspoon cocktail lounge range – NEW Bumbu Colada and NEW Tropical Smash.

Both new drinks – together with the dozen or more pitcher selection – are available in either a pitcher to share or by the glass (pitcher contains 100ml spirit, except Classic Pimm's which is 150ml).

NEW Bumbu Colada combines Bumbu rum (with flavours of toffee, spice and banana), Malibu (the original coconut-flavoured Caribbean rum liqueur), pineapple juice and a dash of lemonade, garnished with lime wedges.

An authentic Caribbean drink, Bumbu is blended from fine Barbados rum and hand-selected spices, distilled in small batches, evoking the rich and colourful culture of the West Indies.

NEW Tropical Smash mixes Volare Watermelon liqueur, Jack Daniel's Tennessee Apple liqueur, pineapple juice, orange juice, lemon juice and a dash of lemonade – with lime wedges.

Volare Watermelon is a refreshing, delicate watermelon liqueur – an excellent ingredient for preparing cocktails.

Enjoy a Wetherspoon cocktail, including the two brand-new additions, today.

Also on the cocktail menu

Zombie

The Kraken Black Spiced Rum, Captain Morgan White, pineapple juice, orange juice, lemon juice, lemonade, lime

Hawaiian Pipeline Punch

Captain Morgan Original Spiced Gold, Captain Morgan Tiki, Monster Pipeline Punch, lemonade, lime

Sex on the Beach

Smirnoff vodka, Archers peach schnapps, cranberry juice, orange juice, lime

Porn Star Martini

Absolut Vanilla, mango, passion fruit, orange, lemonade, lime

Mango Monster Mash

Smirnoff vodka, Malibu, Monster Mango Loco, lemonade, lime

Woo Woo

Smirnoff vodka, Archers peach schnapps, cranberry juice, lime

Blue Lagoon

Blue Curaçao, Smirnoff vodka, lime cordial, lemonade, lime

Smirnoff vodka and Monster

Smirnoff vodka, Monster Energy, lime
Add your own Monster twist – swap to Energy Ultra, Mango Loco or Pipeline Punch.

Kopparberg Strawberry Delight

Kopparberg Strawberry & Lime cider, Kopparberg Premium Gin strawberry & lime, lemonade, lime

Bubblegin

Zymurgorium Realm of the Unicorn gin liqueur, bubblegum syrup, lemonade, lime

Purple Rain

Blue Curaçao, Sourz Cherry, lemonade, lime

The Godfather

Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey, Disaronno amaretto, Pepsi Max, lime
...and not forgetting

Classic Pimm's

With lemonade and lots of fruit

WIDOW IRENE CLOSE TO MATCHING LATE HUSBAND'S 1,000-PUB TOTAL



The widow of a Wetherspoon customer who visited 1,000 pubs is close to matching that number herself.

Irene Henderson lost her partner, Adrian Barratt, in 2022.

The couple visited many of the pubs and hotels (including some now closed) together over the previous 14 years.

Irene says that she has visited 997 Wetherspoon pubs and now has to wait for new sites to open before she can match Adrian's milestone.

She said: "We both loved Wetherspoon because it's such good value for money and you know what you're going to get.

"Adrian loved a pint of Black Sheep and would seek pubs with the Cask Marque logo, awarded to recognise good real-ale outlets."

Irene and Adrian, through their tour of Wetherspoon's pubs, got to know Cask Marque inspectors – with the organisation honouring Adrian, after he passed away, with a plaque on the wall of his house.

Irene added: "I plan to carry on the tradition, in Adrian's memory.

"Before he died, he said he was sorry that he wouldn't be there for my 1,000th Wetherspoon visit, but I told him 'you're coming anyway, even if it's in an urn'."

The couple also enjoyed lattes, mixed grills and steaks in the pubs they visited.

Adrian and Irene first met in The Thomas Telford (now closed), in their home town of Ellesmere Port, and his wake was hosted by The Wheatsheaf in the town.

PERFECTION ON TAP AS FESTIVAL BEGINS AT JOHN WALLACE LINTON

Members of Gwent Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch attended the start of the autumn beer festival at The John Wallace Linton (Newport).

Among those attending from the branch was chairman Jon Hallam.

Jon said: "It was great to support the pub's beer festival – and we all had an enjoyable evening.

"The beers were served to perfection."

Jon paid tribute to shift manager Zak Parry, the pub's ale champion, who organised the event.

He said: "Zak is also one of our members, so we were extra proud to come along and support him."

Zak added: "The festival launch went really well.

"It was a pleasure to welcome my fellow local CAMRA branch members."

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Kirstin Drake, Jon Hallam and Zak Parry.



CLEETHORPES

CHLOE OF THE COLISEUM LAUDS JEAN'S GENIUS



Pub manager Chloe Rankin is pictured (fourth from right) outside her pub The Coliseum Picture Theatre (Cleethorpes) receiving a charity cheque from regular customer and fundraiser Jean Madin (fourth from left).

Avid fundraiser Jean and her friends and supporters (also pictured) are well-known local charity fundraisers – and Young Lives vs Cancer has, once again, been the recipient of their dedicated efforts.

Jean and her friends fundraise for local causes with various activities and a donation of £1,000 was also made to Chloe, for Young Lives vs Cancer, in 2021.

Chloe said: "Jean's dedication to fundraising is extraordinary and we thank her, again, for the £1,050 donation to a great charity.

"She has gone through a tough time herself, but always thinks of other people, raising money with her friends to help others."

Jean, a regular customer at the pub since it opened in 2014, was given the all-clear last summer, after years of battling against cancer herself.

She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009, which was successfully treated, before the cancer returned in her lungs six years later. Further surgery has, thankfully, also been successful.

Through her own difficulties, including the death of her father in 2004, Jean turned her depression and anxieties into positive action.

Following her move to Cleethorpes, shortly after her father's death, she ploughed all of her energies into helping other cancer sufferers and charities working to support them, raising funds for several local, as well as national, charities.

Jean said: "We want to continue doing things to help people and are so lucky that we're able to do that living in this area.

"I cannot thank the people and businesses of Cleethorpes and Grimsby enough. We live in such a generous community."

Also pictured (left to right) with Chloe and Jean are fundraisers and customers Alan Wright, Deborah Scott, Charlotte Harris, Penny Rankin, Christie Sinderson and Adelle Sinderson.

BRIGHOUSE

SCOOTER FANS MERGE TO FORM SPOONS COLLECTIVE



Two groups of scooter enthusiasts have merged to form a single collective, with The Richard Oastler (Brighouse) as its meeting place.

Up to 30 riders, with scooters dating back to the 1960s Mods and Rockers era, meet regularly at the pub before setting out to tour the local countryside.

The group is run by Danny Ambler and Richard Crossley, among others. Richard's group formerly met elsewhere, but now the two have joined forces to offer more people the chance to join in.

Scooter models owned by the members of the self-styled 'Spoons Collective' include a 1964 Lambretta Original, a Vespa PX, a TJ Classic, an Armando Special and a Royal Alloy.

Danny said: "We joined forces under the name 'Spoons Collective' because we meet at a Wetherspoon pub and often visit others on our rides.

"We are a collective, rather than a club, because clubs often have too many rules, putting people off."

The group's hoodies and other merchandise also feature the 'Spoons' name.

Danny added: "We like Wetherspoon's pubs because you can get a full breakfast and refills of tea with change from a fiver – and they always have room for us and make us feel welcome."

Lately, the group has toured Wetherspoon's pubs such as The Devonshire Inn (Skipton) and The Miles Thompson (Kendal), enjoying the majestic scenery of North Yorkshire and The Lake District.

The Richard Oastler's manager, Maddison Compton-Page, said: "It's great when the riders come to the pub, because they are always friendly and have some good stories to tell about not only past times, but also their latest rides and other Wetherspoon pubs they have visited."

CRADLEY HEATH

PEAKY PERFORMANCE ON BLACK COUNTRY DAY

Staff at The Moon Under Water (Cradley Heath) flew the flag as the pub joined in the annual Black Country Day.

The event, held throughout the area to celebrate the history and traditions of the Black Country, saw staff dress up as characters from the smash hit BBC drama Peaky Blinders.

The event also raised £550 for Young Lives vs Cancer through a cake sale and a raffle, with prizes donated from local shops and businesses in the Black Country region.

The pub's manager, Nickie Holloway, said: "It's important to celebrate the traditions of the Black Country – and we're very pleased we were able to raise some money at the same time."

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Nickie Holloway, shift leader Ollie Crees, bar associate Phil Hiscox, shift leaders Sydnee Humphries and Lisa Hiscox and bar associate Dominic Crees.



TEARS AND BEERS FLOW AS DAVID TICKS OFF ALL 858 PUBS



Wetherspoon enthusiast David Bingham has completed his quest to visit every Wetherspoon pub in Britain.

He joins an elite band of superfans to have achieved that feat and says that he still wants to visit five airport venues (after security) and also nine pubs in the Republic of Ireland.

First featured in Wetherspoon News (summer 2022) with a pub count of 651, David completed his three-year challenge (visiting 858 pubs) in August 2022.

He was frequently accompanied by his partner, Una Cooper, on the tour and travelled by public transport, wherever possible.

Burton-based David, pictured at his local, The Observatory (Ilkeston), finished his quest at The Robert the Bruce (Dumfries), following a four-day, 46-pub tour of Scotland.

He said: "I got quite emotional when I completed my journey.

"It felt like a real achievement, and the beer tasted even better at the final stop."

Better placed than most to select a top-five favourites, David names The Counting House (Glasgow), The Caley Picture House (Edinburgh), The Winter Gardens (Harrogate), The Corn Exchange (Bury St Edmunds) and Royal Victoria Pavilion (Ramsgate) as his.

David, a retired fork-lift driver and keen trainspotter, said: "What I like most about Wetherspoon's pubs is the buildings: old post offices, theatres, hotels or banks.

"Without Wetherspoon, most of these buildings would have gone to rack and ruin."

He has taken at least one photo of himself in each pub, with a drink, and says that his pictures have a combined total of 26 million views online, including 40,000 views of the photo he took at The Powder Monkey (Exmouth).

David, who plans to write a book about his travels, concluded: "I've really enjoyed doing it. It gets you around, visiting your own country.

"My partner, Una, had travelled widely abroad, but not extensively in the UK, so I wanted to show her how beautiful our country is."

Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, said:

"David is a Wetherspoon enthusiast par excellence – and we salute him."

KILLING OFF AN URBAN MYTH

The ludicrous fairy tale that Wetherspoon sells beer which is close to its sell-by date has never appeared in print, but was seen on a website called Quora, posted by a 'Brian Martin'.

Wetherspoon wrote to Quora and Google, asking them to remove the offending article.

Had the Quora/Google allegation appeared in a newspaper (it never has), there would have been grounds for legal action for defamation.

Giant companies like Google, very controversially, claim not to be 'publishers' and that legal action can be taken against only those making the defamatory post.

Fair play to the journalist, in the article below, who has accurately reported our comments.

By the way, the lowest-priced beer which Wetherspoon sells is normally Ruddles Bitter, brewed by Greene King – brewer of Abbot Ale, IPA, Speckled Hen and other famous beers.

The lowest-priced lager is Bud Light, brewed by Budweiser Brewing Group – the world's largest brewer, which also brews Corona, Stella Artois and many other brands.

Wetherspoon has five- to 10-year contracts with its main beer suppliers which, unsurprisingly, do not allow for 'short-dated beer'.

Indeed, also unsurprisingly, neither Greene King/Budweiser nor their competitors have ever offered Wetherspoon short-dated beer. Sorry to disappoint the conspiracy theorists.

WHY WETHERSPOONS IS SO CHEAP COMPARED TO OTHER LONDON PUBS

The chain's popularity is mainly due to its prices - here's how it keeps them so low

Pubs are arguably the lifeblood of British people's social lives, and since popular chain Wetherspoons opened its doors in 1979 it has taken pub culture to another level.

Wetherspoons has over 870 venues operating across the UK, with more than 100 in London alone.

Whatever draws people to the pub, one clear reason sticks out - and that is the prices.

According to the Mirror, the cheapest pint you can get from the low-cost tavern was £1.89 at The Turls Green pub in Bradford in 2019.

In contrast, according to The Good Pub Guide, the average cost of a pint in London was £4.44 in 2020.

So what makes Wetherspoons so cheap?

People have speculated on user internet forums such as Quora that the reason the pub is able to charge such low prices is because it buys stock that is close to its sell-by date.

However, this is a rumour that Wetherspoons strongly refutes.

A spokesperson for the company said: "The urban myth that Wetherspoon buys out-of-date or short-dated beer, or any other products, is ludicrous.

"Wetherspoon has been trading with most of its beer, wine and spirit suppliers, like Greene King, Marston's, AB InBev, Diageo and Heineken, or their predecessors, and other smaller brewers since opening its first pub in 1979.

"The idea that any of these companies would risk their reputation by permitting Wetherspoon, or any other customer, to sell short-dated beer is preposterous."

Wetherspoon chairman Tim Martin said: "Wetherspoon has more pubs in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide than any other company.

"Wetherspoon's beer is also independently assessed by Cask Marque, which has been inspecting Wetherspoon pubs since 1999, visiting each pub at least twice a year.

"The assessors test temperature, appearance, aroma and taste. Every Wetherspoon pub has passed the Cask Marque assessment.

"Wetherspoon is also the top pub company for hygiene standards, with an average of 4.97 out of a maximum of 5 in the local-authority-run'scores-on-the-doors' scheme.

"Some people believe in conspiracy theories, however, as anyone with genuine knowledge of the pub trade knows, this one is complete nonsense."

The spokesperson for the chain went on to explain how opening hours play a part in the pub chain being able to sell at such a cheap price, and that they were able to sell at competitive prices by "accepting a lower operating margin than most companies."

They said: "Wetherspoon also opens for longer hours than most pubs (eg the pubs open for breakfast) and sell food for prolonged periods – normally until 11pm.

"High sales of a wide range of products and long-term relationships with suppliers are some of the key factors."

By Melissa Sigodo
MyLondon / 3 July 2021

Print credit: MyLondon

THE PRENSE WELL • HESWALL

MANAGER CAROLINE AND HER FIVE CHILDREN ALL FOLLOW SPOON PATH



In August 2023, pub manager Caroline Campbell (pictured) will be marking a decade with the company since she started out as a part-time bar associate at The Master Mariner (New Brighton).

A single mum of five, Caroline juggled her work at the Wetherspoon pub with raising her children and progressed to team- and shift-leader level, all as a part-time employee.

Caroline said: "I joined the full-time staff once all of the kids had left school and was promoted to shift manager at The Master Mariner."

Caroline left the New Brighton pub in October 2021, moving to The Square Bottle (Chester), before taking on, in June 2022, her first role as pub manager at the new opening of The Preanse Well (Heswall).

She reported: "It is going very well, excellent. I have a really great team of more than 70 staff, who are young and vibrant and work well."

Among that team are two of Caroline's five children, both of her daughters, team leader Molly (21) and part-time bar associate Aimee (28). Caroline revealed: "Molly started as a bar associate in November 2019 and was previously at The Clairville (Wallasey).

"Aimee, who previously worked as a retail supervisor, returned to work (after having a baby) by joining the team at The Preanse Well when the pub first opened in June."

And, up until the beginning of September, all three of Caroline's sons also worked for the company.

George, Molly's twin brother, started in July 2018 as a 16-year-old part-time kitchen associate at The Master Mariner and is now a shift manager at The Brass Balance (Birkenhead).

He has also worked at The Square Bottle.

Harvey (22), is a kitchen shift leader at The Square Bottle, having also joined the staff at the age of 16 as a kitchen associate, working every summer during his university studies. He became a full-time team member a year ago.

Charlie (24) was a shift manager at The Clairville, until he left the company in September.

Caroline said: "He wanted to do something different and has embarked on an accountancy apprenticeship, after almost eight years with Wetherspoon.

"Maybe he'll be back with the company, in the future, in another role? The grass isn't always greener. I've seen many employees leave us and come back."

She concluded: "Apart from Aimee, they all joined as a teenager to earn some pocket money... and stayed.

"They have seen for themselves how good the company is for progression.

"And, with George, Molly and Harvey all still living at home, we talk about work all the time. It's a common topic of conversation around the dinner table."

BUTTER CROSS DARTS TEAM CHURNS OUT VICTORIES IN A GOLDEN YEAR



The Butter Cross (Bingham) has been celebrating success in a local darts league, with plenty of silverware for the winning team.

Competing in the Butts Challenge darts league, a Monday-night mixed darts league, the team swept the board during the 2021/22 season.

They were runaway champions, finishing 30 points clear of the second-place side, as well as collecting the league cup winner's trophy.

Captain Alan Baker was crowned 'player of the season', vice-captain Juliette Sheldon won 'highest female check-out', while treasurer Clive Lovell and teammate Paul Smith won the doubles competition.

Clive reported: "The season proved very fruitful, with the loss of only one match during the entire proceedings."

The team members approached the pub management at The Butter Cross initially in the summer of 2019, to ask about representing the pub.

Clive said: "We were extremely surprised with the positive response, as there had never been a team representing the pub before."

"The pub provided an excellent set-up – with a wall-mounted cabinet for the dartboard, chalk board and ceiling-mounted spotlights."

He continued: "Things were going well during the inaugural season. We were in second place and had been on a winning run, to take us just a few points from top spot, when the season was cancelled (March 2020), owing to pandemic restrictions."

"The new season (last season) began later than usual, in November, again owing to lockdowns, yet proved to be a success for us."

The team has started the 2022/23 season where it left off last term, currently sitting top of the league.

Pub manager Sam Hyde said: "We are extremely proud of the team's success last season and wish it every success going forward."

Pictured (left to right) are (back row) Alan Baker, Clive Lovell, Paul Smith and Malcolm Barham, with (front row) Peter Pacey and Gerry Campbell.

NAIRN BRAVER THAN THIS SCOTTISH SKYDIVE TRIO

A brave trio of first-time skydivers from The Robert Nairn (Kirkcaldy) raised £750 for charity.

Shift leader Dana Paterson, kitchen associate Grant Foster and shift manager Kirsten Knox (pictured left to right) all landed safely after an experience they described as "a rush".

Grant said: "Speaking for myself, I was very nervous, but also very excited. That moment when you jump out of a perfectly good aircraft is like entering a different world – and you don't feel you've left that world until you are back on the ground."

The pub's manager, Michelle McCrabbe, said: "We are very proud of all of them. It is an incredible thing they did."

The money will be split between two charities: Young Lives vs Cancer and The Scottish Association for Mental Health.



THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE THREE (OUNCES)

Smaller 3oz beef burger allows customers to opt for a smaller portion - and also double or triple it

All the best things come in small packages (or portions) and the NEW Wetherspoon 3oz beef burger is no exception.

Already proving a hit, the smaller 3oz beef burger allows customers to opt for a smaller portion (one 3oz beef patty) or the usual 6oz serving (two 3oz beef patties).

For larger appetites, a triple burger portion is also available (three 3oz beef patties, for a small extra charge). This menu option can be found in the 'additional toppings and burger patties' section.

British

The style may be American, but Wetherspoon's beef burgers are made from 100 per cent British beef.

All burgers are served with chips (small portion with the 3oz burger meal; standard with other burgers) and there's an added portion of six onion rings with the gourmet burger range, as well as almost any drink* (soft or alcoholic) included in the price.

The 3oz and 6oz burgers are available in the two following styles:

- **The American burger** is served with red onion, gherkin, ketchup and American-style mustard. To add cheese, choose the American cheese burger.
- **The classic beef burger** is served with Cos lettuce, tomato and red onion. This comes with chips or as a skinny option, served with salad, instead of chips.

For an extra charge, customers can add toppings of maple-cured bacon with Cheddar cheese or American-style cheese – or even each ingredient separately, as well as an extra patty, from any of the choices above.

Gourmet

Customers can select from several options in the gourmet burger range too, including the ultimate burger (two 3oz beef patties, maple-cured bacon, Cheddar cheese, signature burger sauce and gherkin) and the Empire State burger (four 3oz beef patties, American-style cheese and maple-cured bacon).

Choose beef (two 3oz beef patties), grilled chicken breast or fried buttermilk chicken, for your Tennessee burger (maple-cured bacon, with Jack Daniel's® Tennessee Honey glaze) and BBQ burger (maple-cured bacon, Cheddar cheese and BBQ sauce).

If beef isn't your thing, there are choices for everyone.

Spicy

The heatwave burger is also among the gourmet burger styles, with options of grilled chicken breast and fried buttermilk chicken. With a three-chilli rating (medium hot), the dish includes Naga chilli mayo, American-style cheese and a hash brown, topped with a spicy chicken wing.

Wetherspoon's range of chicken burgers offers fried buttermilk chicken burger (breaded whole chicken breast escalope), grilled chicken breast burger and skinny chicken burger (grilled chicken breast with salad, instead of chips).

A great selection is available in the meat-free burger range (all served with chips), including the two-chilli-rating (mild) fried halloumi-style cheese burger, served with sweet chilli sauce.

Try the breaded vegetable burger (lentils, carrot, onion, sweetcorn, mushroom, mozzarella and mature Cheddar cheese) or Beyond Burger™ (Beyond Meat® plant-based patty), while the meat-free gourmet burger choice is the fiesta burger (Beyond Meat® plant-based patty, salsa, guacamole, roasted pepper, courgette and onion, served with six onion rings).



3oz American cheese burger; 6oz American cheese burger, with maple-cured bacon

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVERS DO THE LOCOMOTION AT THE RAILWAY



A group of retired Southeastern train drivers and railway workers meets up regularly in a Wetherspoon pub.

All based in the Medway area, in and around Rochester, Gillingham, Strood and Sittingbourne, there is surely only one possible pub at which they can all meet – The Railway (Rainham).

Mark Butler (pictured, standing, centre back) said: “We always meet at The Railway, situated right outside the station.

“They have a screen in the pub showing the train times – and you can be on the platform in under one minute.”

Mark, who organises the Facebook group Gillingham Train Crew Social Club, continued: “We meet every three months now, and are mostly ex-train drivers, although some were conductors and guards.

“The age range is 57–85, with most of us a driver for around 40 years or more. I’m probably one of the younger ones.”

Mark said: “The pub’s manager, Peter (Pethers), is great – and all of the staff are lovely.

“The pub is easy to get to for everyone – and the large area is perfect.

“People like Wetherspoon, too, because the food and prices are good.

“We usually gather from 10.30am and enjoy breakfast and a good ol’ chat, all nostalgic, about how-things-were and it’s-not-like-it-used-to-be stuff.”

Mark, who also organises a once-a-month Wednesday meet-up for another group, yet at the same pub, concluded: “It’s always nice to see everyone and a great chance to catch up, especially for those living on their own now. Long may it continue.”

SPREADSHEET SHOWS HOW STEVE TICKED OFF 924 PUBS

Steve Manning has visited 924 Wetherspoon pubs over the years – and has a spreadsheet to prove it.

Horseracing and football fan Steve has united three of his interests by popping in to Wetherspoon’s pubs each time he goes to watch football or horseracing.

He also recently completed another ambition by visiting York Racecourse, the last on his list of 60.

He said: “I’ve a few more to do in Wales and Scotland – and a few airside pubs at airports, but, over the last 20 years, I’ve visited 814 currently open pubs and 110 which have since closed.”

Steve is a real-ale-drinker and is always interested to discover which guest ales are on in each pub he visits.

He said: “I like the amber ales, stouts and porters.

“On my last trip to York, I enjoyed a pint of Black Sheep’s Riggwelter at The Punch Bowl in the city.”

Steve added: “I went to Ilfracombe in the summer and sat in The Admiral Collingwood’s beer garden, which has wonderful views.

“I also enjoyed visiting The Winter Gardens (Harrogate) – which is housed in a spectacular building.

“You have to be organised to visit all of the pubs.

“That’s why I keep the spreadsheet: it helps me to keep a tally and enables me to plan ahead geographically.”



Steve is pictured outside his local Wetherspoon pub – The Golden Bee (Stratford-upon-Avon)

FESTIVE ALES

PUNNY PECULIAR: FESTIVE ALES DELIVER SEASONAL LEVITY

Give your taste buds a surprise this year with festive-sounding beers

There's **Scrooge's Revenge** and **Evil Elf**, **Plum Pudding** and **Clootie Dumpling**, **Dasher the Flasher** and **Rosey Nosey** – to name just a few... so it must be Christmas.

These are just a few of the two dozen guest ales being served at Wetherspoon's pubs in the run-up to the festive season.

Range

Check out the seasonal range, with plenty to choose from for all tastes and palates, including golden winter ales, ruby-red festive ales, black porters and stouts.

Cambridgeshire-based Elgood's Brewery has brewed **Berry Xmas Everyone!** (3.9% ABV), a light, amber-coloured beer with seasonal berry hints for a subtle fruitiness.

Conwy Brewery's **Hoppy Christmas** (4.3% ABV) is a golden festive ale with malt and wheat notes, leading to a spicy aftertaste and refreshing finish.

Somerset's **Exmoor Ales** brings **Exmas** (5.0% ABV) – a ruby-coloured ale with hints of biscuit malt and chocolate, balanced by its finish of spicy, fruity hop notes.

Fruity

Hook Norton Brewery, in Oxfordshire, has provided **Twelve Days** (5.5% ABV) a red-brown classic seasonal ale, with a fruity nose, malty palate and nutty overtones.

Also, among the Christmas line-up, are the aptly named **Daleside Santa's Progress** (4.2% ABV), **Mauldons Scrooge's Revenge** (4.9% ABV), **Rudgate Evil Elf** (4.0% ABV), **JW Lees Plum Pudding** (4.8% ABV), **Orkney Clootie Dumpling** (4.3% ABV), **Milestone Dasher the Flasher** (4.5% ABV) and **Batemans Rosey Nosey** (4.9% ABV).

The full list, together with tasting notes, can be found at your local Wetherspoon pub, on the website and via the Wetherspoon app.

Pop in for a festive pint.



Elgood's Berry Xmas Everyone! 3.9% ABV

Elgood's Brewery, Cambridgeshire. Est. 1795
This light amber-coloured beer delivers an inviting hop aroma, finely balanced by malt and wheat flavours, while seasonal berry hints add a subtle fruitiness to the refreshing character.

Hops: Cascade, Challenger



Rudgate Evil Elf 4.0% ABV

Rudgate Brewery, North Yorkshire. Est. 1992
This pale golden festive ale has generous tropical fruit notes, balanced by notes of biscuit malt, resulting in a full-bodied, clean, refreshing character.

Hops: Dragon, Summit



JW Lees Plum Pudding 4.8% ABV

JW Lees Brewery, Manchester. Est. 1828
This mahogany-coloured beer is brewed with pale and crystal malts, along with the finest hops, imparting a fruity aroma and ripe fruit flavours, balanced by a subtle underlying maltiness.

Hops: Styrian Goldings



Batemans Rosey Nosey 4.9% ABV

Batemans Brewery, Lincolnshire. Est. 1874
This consistently popular seasonal brew is deep amber in colour, with a seductively spicy aroma and a full-bodied character – which is full of sultana, raisin and roasted dark malt flavours.

Hops: Challenger, Goldings, Styrian



Mauldons Scrooge's Revenge 4.9% ABV

Mauldons Brewery, Suffolk. Est. 1982
This tawny-red seasonal ale has an inviting malt and fruit aroma, leading to a predominantly malty flavour, with balancing hop notes and a full-bodied, yet smooth, finish.

Hops: Bramling Cross, Goldings



Daleside Santa's Progress 4.2% ABV

Daleside Brewery, North Yorkshire. Est. 1992
This well-balanced beer is a burnished gold colour, with its fruity aromas leading to subtle blackcurrant flavours, balanced by warming malt notes in the finish.

Hops: Northern Brewer, Progress



Conwy Hoppy Christmas 4.3% ABV

Conwy Brewery, Conwy. Est. 2003
This golden festive ale has a pleasing hop character throughout, with malt and wheat notes providing a well-balanced character, leading to a spicy aftertaste and a refreshing finish.

Hops: Challenger



Exmoor Exmas 5.0% ABV

Exmoor Ales, Somerset. Est. 1980
This ruby-coloured ale has a flowery, citrus hop aroma, leading to a smooth palate, with hints of biscuit malt and chocolate, balanced by its finish of spicy, fruity hop notes.

Hops: Celeia, Challenger, Fuggles, Goldings, Styrian



Orkney Clootie Dumpling 4.3% ABV

Orkney Brewery, Orkney. Est. 1988
This deep amber beer exhibits all of the renowned Scottish pudding's warming characteristics, with aromas and flavours of fruit, rich malt, cinnamon and ginger.

Hops: Bramling Cross, Celeia, Fuggles



Otter Claus 5.0% ABV

Otter Brewery, Devon. Est. 1990
This dark ruby festive ale has an enticing hop aroma and a well-balanced malty flavour, with a bittersweet chocolate edge, resulting in a dangerously moreish character.

Hops: Challenger, Fuggles, Pilgrim



Milestone Dasher the Flasher 4.5% ABV

Milestone Brewery, Nottinghamshire. Est. 2005
This easy-drinking ruby-red festive ale is rich and smooth in character, with its nutty and winter berry fruit flavours balanced by chocolate, vanilla and roasted notes.

Hops: Brewer's Gold, Magnum, Progress



Hook Norton Twelve Days 5.5% ABV

Hook Norton Brewery, Oxfordshire. Est. 1849
This finely balanced red-brown classic seasonal ale has a fruity nose, leading to a malty palate and nutty overtones, balanced by a gentle hoppiness and a smooth, lingering finish.

Hops: Challenger, Fuggles, Goldings



REAL-ALE TYPES



Pale; very light; blond; straw



Golden



Amber; mid brown



Dark brown; ruby



Black; deep ruby; very dark

ORMSKIRK HIGH-FLYERS HOOF IT TO THE ROOF

A pop-up roof-terrace bar featured in a weekend summer beer festival at The Court Leet (Ormskirk).

Customers chose the festival beers in a poll.

To take part, all they had to do was scan a QR code on a leaflet/poster in the pub and vote for their favourite beers.

The top three chosen were Exmoor Gold (4.5% ABV), a golden ale from Exmoor Ales in Taunton, Kent-based Old Dairy Brewery's Blue Top (4.8% ABV), an India pale ale, and Moose River (5.0% ABV), a pale ale from Bristol-based Hop Union Brewery.

Others included Manchester beers Wobbly Bob (6.0% ABV), a strong ale from Heywood's Phoenix Brewery, and Mancunian Blonde (4.5% ABV) from the city's Brightside Brewery.

The event was organised by shift manager Tom Grice.

He said: "Our customers loved the pop-up bar – and the festival proved very popular, helped by great summer weather.

"We were pleased to serve the beers chosen by our customers."

During the festival, money was also collected for Young Lives vs Cancer and added to funds collected weekly at the pub.

Pictured (left to right) are shift leader Sam Snead, shift manager Tom Grice and bar associate Louise Carmichael.



COFFEE, ALE AND FISH AND CHIPS FUEL ERIC'S EPIC PUB QUEST



Since his retirement seven years ago, Eric Sykes has notched up 510 Wetherspoon pub visits.

Eric travels to the pubs mainly by public transport, often involving overnight stays, and has been to those as distant from his Halifax home as The King's Highway (Inverness), The Joseph Conrad (Lowestoft), The Great Glen (Fort William) and The Green Ginger (Torquay).

His tour began in 1999 at The Regal Moon (Rochdale), followed soon after by The Lord Rosebery (Scarborough).

Since his 2015 retirement from teaching, Eric has found enough time to embark on his chosen hobby with gusto.

He said: "I was impressed with the former cinema conversion at The Regal Moon and wanted to see other examples of Wetherspoon's pubs' architecture."

Eric is a meticulous planner, using bus, rail and tram timetables to get around the UK.

He added: "I want to keep going till I've done them all. As a sole traveller, you see life by visiting the pubs and get a picture of the UK."

Eric sometimes visits three, four or five pubs in a day – his rule is that he has to have at least a cup of coffee in every one, but often has a meal and a pint of ale.

He commented: "I like a local ale, if there is one or, failing that, an Abbot Ale with fish and chips.

"What really interests me are the buildings, many of which are unique.

"It is also a very interesting way of seeing your country."

WEST BROMWICH

MP NICOLA SEES BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE BILLIARD HALL



Duty manager Marie Logan (left) and shift leader Sophia Benbow (right) welcome Nicola Richards MP to The Billiard Hall



Nicola Richards MP is pictured chatting to customers Roy Abraham (left) and Edward Lyons, along with duty manager Marie Logan (right)

Staff at The Billiard Hall (West Bromwich) hosted an official visit at the pub during the summer.

Nicola Richards MP, Conservative MP for West Bromwich East, requested a visit to the Wetherspoon pub in her local constituency.

She met and chatted to pub team members, as well as regular customers, during the afternoon visit to the pub.

A behind-the-scenes walk-through of the premises was also part of the tour.

Pub manager Rachel Donet, who has managed The Billiard Hall for

three years, said: "We were delighted that Nicola Richards specifically requested to visit The Billiard Hall. Staff and customers enjoyed the occasion."

Nicola Richards MP said: "Even though The Billiard Hall is a town-centre pub in the heart of West Bromwich, it really does have a local community pub atmosphere with a fantastically vibrant and characterful customer base.

"Thank you to the wonderful staff who took time out of their busy day to show me around."

GREENOCK

WATT A LOT OF CLIMBING - TEAM HITS THE HEIGHTS

A charity hike saw a team of fundraisers from The James Watt (Greenock) climb Ben A'an and raise money for a local suicide prevention charity.

They trekked 16.5km to the summit (461m) of the peak, and back, at the heart of the Great Trossachs Forest National Nature Reserve.

Organised by shift leader Rebecca Kemp, the sponsored climb collected £2,000, with £290 being donated to Young Lives vs Cancer.

The rest of the money has been given in memory of Rebecca's brother, Ryan Taggart, and Danny Cassidy, a close friend of the team, to Man On!

The young men, both in their early 30s, died in May 2021 and August 2022, respectively.

Man On! is a charity by the people of Inverclyde, for the people of Inverclyde. It exists to prevent suicides and enhance well-being by providing safe, inclusive, relationship-focused and trauma-informed environments which remove the stigma attached to mental health.

Pictured at the top of Ben A'an (back row, left to right) are bar associates Erin Murdoch, Scott McIntosh and Corrine McQuillan, Rebecca's boyfriend Liam Swales, bar associate Leah Rice, team leader Sarah Thomson and former duty manager (at The James Watt) Tam McParland.

Also pictured (front row, left to right) are team leader Yvette Thorpe, bar associate Kyle McPaul, former kitchen associate Brendan Gallacher, Rebecca and team leader Courtney Letson.

Taking the photograph and also part of the fundraising team was Erin's boyfriend Tyler.



MARRIED TO THE JOB - EMILY TIES KNOT AT THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

When shift leader Emily Roche and her husband, Liam, were looking for a wedding venue, they wanted something less formal than a traditional church or register office.

Emily, who works at The Nonsuch Inn (North Cheam), took a shine to The Knights Templar, a Wetherspoon pub in Chancery Lane, London, which is licensed for weddings.

As a result, she booked the pub for both the ceremony and reception.

That was back in 2020. However, Emily's wedding to Liam was delayed by the pandemic – and the nuptials finally happened in October (2022).

Emily said: "It was pure coincidence that I chose The Knights Templar for our wedding, before I started working for the company.

"I was a customer at the pub – and people mentioned that it was a wedding venue.

"It just seemed the perfect place – not too formal, because Liam and I are not that kind of couple."

Emily added: "It was a happy day, with lots of family, friends and colleagues – and we were so pleased to finally be able to get married after all of the pandemic restrictions."

Emily – who has been promoted twice this year, having started as a bar associate, enjoyed a honeymoon in Scotland.

She and Liam met in a queue for a rock concert – and they both work in hospitality, with Liam managing a bar in London.

● **For full details of wedding packages available and booking information, please e-mail the pub: p538@jdwetherspoon.co.uk**



BECKY COOKS UP CASH BOOST FOR CLAIRE HOUSE

Shift leader Becky Doherty (right) and shift manager Vicki Lloyd organised a charity bake sale and fundraising raffle at their pub, The Navigator (Liverpool), to raise money for a local children's hospice.

A total of £761 was collected for Claire House Children's Hospice, which helps seriously and terminally ill children to make the most of the time they have – however long or short that may be.

The hospice continues to help Becky and her family, after she lost her 11-year-old daughter Abigail on Christmas Day 2020.

Becky said: "I know, at first hand, the work and support which Claire House provides, because we lived there for two months, before Abigail died of a brain tumour.

"I wanted to show my appreciation with this fundraiser and thank my colleagues and customers at The Navigator for all of their support too."

Becky and Vicki baked some of the cakes at home, while Dee's Cakes also kindly donated some, with raffle hampers organised at the pub.



THE JOHN FIELDING • CWMBRAN

LUCK LEADS TO DESCENDANTS OF JOHN FIELDING GOING TO WORK IN HIS NAME



A chance meeting at a community event, nine years ago, has led to three members of the same family now working at a Wetherspoon pub named after their ancestor.

Claire Callow met Carol Cooper, pub manager at The John Fielding (Cwmbran), at the annual parade and service held every January to remember her great-great-grandfather.

Part-time kitchen associate Claire remembers: "If it hadn't been for meeting Carol, who always represents the pub's links to John Fielding at the parade, I might not have come to work at the pub."

"Now, both my daughter and son are on the team, so there are three of us working at the pub named after our relative John Fielding, which is amazing."

Private John Fielding, who served as Pte John Williams in the 24th Regiment of Foot, was one of 145 men at the remote post on 22 January 1879 who defended the station against around 4,000 Zulus.

Fielding helped to defend the hospital against heavy odds, until his ammunition ran out. He then held the enemy back at bayonet point, enabling two other soldiers to rescue eight patients.

He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions.

Claire (centre), with Kasey and Owain, who is involved in the John Fielding (VC) Memorial Trust, responsible for organising the annual parade and upkeep of his grave and memorial, works alongside her two children at the pub.

Kasey Clayton, 20, originally joined The John Fielding team as a 16-year-old floor associate.

Now, following her spell at university in Pontypridd and temporary transfer to The Tumble Inn (Pontypridd) during that time, she has returned to The John Fielding as a full-time bar associate.

In June, Claire's son Owain Clayton (16), John Fielding's three times great-grandson, also joined the team on a part-time basis, working with his mum in the kitchen.

Carol added: "It's brilliant to have all three family members working at the pub and to have that connection with John Fielding."

"We continue to support the trust and host a fundraiser at the pub, every quarter, with the Combined Service Personnel of Cwmbran, to collect funds to help with the upkeep of the grave and the costs of the annual parade event."

Private John Fielding died in 1932 at Ty Coch, Cwmbran, and was buried with full military honours.

His headstone, at St Michael's and All Angels' Church, Llantarnam, was erected by his former regiment.

His headstone records:

'As Private John Williams, he received the Victoria Cross, at the defence of Rorke's Drift, during the Zulu War, on 22-23 January 1879.'

STUDENTS FORM A LEARNED CREW AT THE SHEAF ISLAND



Pub manager Mark Barnes has been at the helm at The Sheaf Island (Sheffield) since 2015 and, being a popular university city, has many students on his team.

Mark, who has, himself, worked for Wetherspoon for almost 17 years, has seen numerous student employees move on after completing university. However, many of them remain with the company.

Several staff members from The Sheaf Island have transferred from or to other pubs in the company, as term time begins or ends and students arrive from or return to their home towns.

Mark (pictured) explained: "Most of our student employees are part time, with a lot staying on throughout the holidays, especially during the summer, trying to grab as many work hours as possible.

"Others have finished their course elsewhere, working away from Sheffield at other Wetherspoon pubs, then returned home to Sheffield, continuing their employment with us."

Among those arriving at The Sheaf Island and staying have been bar associates Megan Newitt, Katie Standeven, Rhys Nicklin and Dan Sellers, along with kitchen associate Harrison Tasker.

Part-time shift leader Logan Connell joined the team a couple of years ago, as did Georgia Ward, who arrived as a bar associate and has now progressed to shift leader.

Mark said: "Georgia came from The Wheatsheaf Inn (Wisbech) and is studying at university in Sheffield, although due to finish her course soon. "We quickly realised her potential – and Georgia has progressed well with us."

Making the reverse move away from The Sheaf Island was Barnaby Breen, originally from Sheffield, but who recently moved to London. He is now working at The Half Moon (Mile End).

Mark added: "The fact that we can do this for our staff is very useful for students. The job provides the flexibility to carry on with employment and is a big plus.

"From our point of view, the fact that so many staff members want to continue to work for us, somewhere where they understand and feel valued, is such a great endorsement for the company."



Team leader Ellie Crowe at The J. P. Joule (Sale)

Note from the editor: The article below outlines Wetherspoon's bonus and free shares scheme. No company is perfect, but Wetherspoon believes that it pays a higher percentage of its profits in this way than most, or possibly any, large companies.

£484 MILLION IN FREE SHARES AND BONUSES PAID TO EMPLOYEES SINCE 2006

83 per cent paid to pub staff

Since the early 1980s, Wetherspoon has awarded bonuses, free shares and 'share options' to pub employees.

The current scheme of paying monthly bonuses to all pub employees, subject to certain criteria, started in 1998, with a government-approved free share scheme introduced in 2003.

Bonuses and share schemes provide an extra incentive for people to stay with the company: there are 12 employees who have worked for the company for over 30 years, 494 for over 20 years, 3,434 for over 10 years and 9,767 for over five years.

Since 2006, the company has paid £484 million to its employees in respect of bonuses and free shares.

BONUSES AND SHARES

Of the recipients, approximately 96 per cent were employees below board level, with around 83 per cent paid to employees working in pubs.

Employees are eligible for bonuses from the commencement of their employment and are eligible for free shares after 18 months.

In the financial year ended July 2022, bonuses and free shares of £30 million were awarded (see table* below), with 79 per cent of employees receiving a bonus and/or shares in that period.

At the current time, 14,493 of our 41,948 employees have been awarded free shares in the company.

It's probably true to say that no one earns a vast fortune from these schemes.

However, as far as the company is aware, Wetherspoon consistently pays a bigger percentage of its profits to its employees, by way of bonuses and free shares, than any other large pub/restaurant company or retailer.

Since the share scheme's introduction, Wetherspoon has awarded 23.4 million shares to employees – approximately 18.2 per cent of all shares in existence today.

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, said: "People are vital to the success of the business.

"Our bonus and share schemes are a good way to share in the company's success."

Wetherspoon: Bonuses and free shares v profits, 2006–22

Financial year	Bonuses and free shares	Profit after tax (loss/profit after tax)*	Bonus etc as % of profit
	£m	£m	
2022	30	-25	-
2021	23	-147	-
2020	33	-39	-
2019	46	80	58
2018	43	84	51
2017	44	77	57
2016	33	57	58
2015	31	57	53
2014	29	59	50
2013	29	65	44
2012	24	57	42
2011	23	52	43
2010	23	51	44
2009	21	45	45
2008	16	36	45
2007	19	47	41
2006	17	40	41
Total	484	596	49.3**

*Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2006–22

*Profit after tax from 2020 is post-IFRS 16 accounting.

**Shares and bonus as a percentage of profit excludes 2020 onwards.

PETER CLOCKS UP HIS 400TH SPOON



The 'visiting every Wetherspoon' challenge is continuing in earnest, for self-confessed Spoons fanatic Peter Dobson.

His visit to The Velvet Coaster (Blackpool), at the end of August, marked yet another significant milestone in Peter's ambitious quest.

Peter (pictured) was at the seafront pub to clock up his 400th Wetherspoon visit.

Wetherspoon News first featured Peter in the spring 2020 issue, after he began his quest in October 2019. By November 2021, he had reached 300 pubs, while this summer saw him surpass 400 visits.

The collection having been partly achieved during the pandemic makes it even more remarkable.

Peter added: "Thank you, yet again, to all of the lovely Wetherspoon staff members and customers whom I have encountered along the way and who continue to support me in my crazy challenge."

Peter also decided to spice up his adventures by travelling between two of Wetherspoon's most geographically extreme locations in the UK – in a separate 'ultimate' challenge.

He said: "I wondered whether anyone had ever travelled between the two Wetherspoon pubs the furthest apart in the UK – The Tremeneheere (Penzance) and The Alexander Bain (Wick) (now closed), so I decided to give it a go.

"I managed to visit both in just under 27 hours.

"The scenery was beautiful travelling from Penzance to Wick.

"It's always great to get to meet so many amazing people (customers and staff) on my travels who share in my enthusiasm in visiting every Wetherspoon pub."

CARMEN IN ECCLES-SENT COMPANY ON 5K RUN

A team of fundraisers from The Eccles Cross (Eccles) took part in the Pretty Mudder 5k Race for Life event, raising money for Cancer Research UK.

The nine-strong group competed in the 5k run at Heaton Park (Prestwich, Manchester), collectively raising £442.50 through cash and online charity donations.

Bar associate Carmen Jackson said: "I had never taken part in an event like it before, and it was amazing – so much fun."

Carmen was joined by her pub manager Tasha Harrington and colleagues.

They were shift manager Lewis Modd, shift leader Leon Gillings, team leaders Ethan Evans and Connor Bateman, bar associate Kyle O'Neill, floor associate George Hopkins and Natalia Jagoda Wodecka (now left the company).



LOOKING FOR A LITTLE SPARKLE? WE COME BEARING SPRITZES

Give your taste buds a work-out this season, with three brand-new special cocktails

Enjoy being spritzed this season at Wetherspoon, with three brand-new spritz cocktails.

Taking inspiration from the ever-popular Aperol Spritz, NEW Peach Blush Spritz, NEW Tanqueray Spritz and NEW Mango & Passionfruit Spritz have joined the Wetherspoon drinks menu.

Peach Blush Spritz combines Coldwater Creek rosé wine (175ml), Archers peach schnapps (25ml) and a dash of lemonade – it is served with half a strawberry.

How about the refreshing Tanqueray Spritz, which marries Tanqueray gin (50ml), apple juice (100ml) and a bottle of elderflower tonic (200ml), garnished with a cucumber slice and mint.

For a more tropical taste, why not try Mango & Passionfruit Spritz? This is a mix of Smirnoff Mango & Passionfruit Twist (25ml), Prosecco (200ml bottle) and a dash of lemonade. It is served with a lemon slice.

Aperol Spritz is also still being served at the bar, combining Aperol (100ml), Prosecco (200ml bottle) and soda with an orange slice.

It's time to get a bit spritzzy at your local Wetherspoon.



The NEW spritzes are:

- Peach Blush Spritz
- Tanqueray Spritz
- Mango & Passionfruit Spritz

What are spritzes?

These are defined as any wine-based sparkling cocktail; however, the meteoric rise in popularity by the bitter-sweet Italian aperitif Aperol has provided the springboard for the creation of inventive and less traditional spritzes.

What makes Aperol Aperol (since 1919)?

Its unique bittersweet taste derives from a secret and original recipe, which has remained authentic over time as a result of hard experimentation work.

It's an infusion of selected primary components, including oranges, for its unmistakable and vibrant colour, together with a secret mix of herbs and roots, in a perfectly balanced combination.

KING'S LYNN

GLOBE TROTTERS KEEP BOUNCING



A group of runners which meets on Sunday at Globe Hotel (King's Lynn) has raised more than £1,000 for charity from events starting from the pub.

The self-styled Globe Trotters group meets at 8am each Sunday, regardless of the weather, returning to the pub for a coffee and breakfast around 10am.

They don't always run for charity, but, on two separate events, raised, with others, a combined total of £1,050 for mental health body MIND.

The group is led by Gary Walker and has been meeting at the pub for nine years – they even met during pandemic lockdowns, when possible, subject to regulations at the time.

Gary (pictured front, kneeling) said: "We met in groups of two and later six, whatever was allowed, but, of course, for a lot of that period we couldn't go inside for a coffee afterwards."

"The social side is a huge part of it – people sometimes invite their families along for breakfast after the Sunday run."

He added: "The staff are always friendly and helpful, with the food always good."

"People have everything from just toast to eggs Benedict or a full English."

The pub's manager, Karen Davies, said: "Gary and the Globe Trotters are always welcome here. They encourage local people to keep fit, which is a great thing."

The group is open to all, regardless of ability – and Gary stresses that the weekly run is "not a race".

CAMBUSLANG

CAMBUSLANG BINGO GANG HAS ROSEMARY'S NUMBER

When The John Fairweather (Cambuslang) staged a charity fundraising bingo event, there was only one possible staff member who could be bingo-caller for the night.

Rosemary O'Neill, who works as a cleaner at the pub, was a bingo caller in the same venue almost 50 years ago.

Rosemary said: "I started selling the bingo books and then went on to become the bingo-caller for a couple of years, but that was 48 years ago."

"Although it was such a long time ago, the charity night brought back so many happy memories of when the place was the Savoy Bingo."

"We had a laugh dressing up and it was a lot of fun, raising £50 for Young Lives vs Cancer."

Rosemary, 64, a qualified chef by trade, joined The John Fairweather team almost four years ago, when her former place of work closed. She works four mornings per week, cleaning at the pub, as well as working two other cleaning jobs.

With four grown-up children and nine grandchildren (ranging from three to 21 years old), Rosemary certainly has a busy life.

She concluded: "The pub is a big building, with three of us working on Mondays and two always working the other days, and it takes an hour and a half just to vacuum-clean the place."

"The building always brings back a lot of memories for me, every time I come to work."



KEIGHLEY

THE LIVERY ROOMS GETS LIVELY ON YORKSHIRE DAY

The Livery Rooms (Keighley) celebrated Yorkshire Day in style, with local beers on offer and market stalls with gifts and cakes.

Beers were drafted in from Saltaire and Goose Eye Breweries. Goose Eye's Bitter (3.8% ABV) was available from the Bingley-based brewery, with pale ale Blonde (4.0% ABV) from Saltaire, based in Shipley.

Market stalls featured cakes and other baked delights, as well as a craft stall and gift stall.

The pub's manager, Sophie Turner, is pictured flying the Yorkshire flag, with (left to right) bar associate Millie Layte and shift leader Emma Booth.

Sophie said: "We tried to pull out all the stops, so that customers could mark Yorkshire Day in style.

"The day was a great success."



HAVERFORDWEST

'YARN BOMBERS' SPREAD JOY AT WOOL-IAM OWEN



Pub manager Jon Blayney, who runs The William Owen (Haverfordwest), wanted, via Wetherspoon News, to thank a local craft group for its community and charity efforts.

The pub has supported the Haverfordwest Yarn Bombers, since the group launched in 2015, including the summer town event during the Queen's platinum jubilee celebrations.

Jon said: "The street outside the pub was closed for a street party, organised by Haverfordwest Town Council, and the Haverfordwest Yarn Bombers decorated the town with knitted and crocheted artwork and post-toppers.

"They often place some of their work in the pub, including during that jubilee weekend, and donate pieces for events at the pub, when they can, especially for Halloween and seasonal fundraisers.

"They organise a couple of 'yarn bombs' per year – and it is an incredible effort to brighten up the town and bring people in."

Group co-ordinator Sally Williams, who is also chair of the Haverfordwest Business Circle (a group of which The William Owen is also a member), said: "We are a group of knitters and crocheters always on the lookout for like-minded people to join us.

"After the huge success of the first yarn bomb, in 2015, we create big plans for the beautiful town of Haverfordwest twice a year."

● Visit the group's Facebook page for info and more photos of the jubilee decorations: [tinyurl.com/sbu3a5h3](https://www.facebook.com/tinyurl.com/sbu3a5h3)

TODMORDEN

PUB PIT-STOPPS HELP JANE TO JOURNEY FROM LAND'S END TO JOHN O' GROATS



Wetherspoon customer Jane Crawford has raised £3,000 for a local hospice which cared for a friend of hers who died in 2021.

Jane raised the money by walking from Land's End to John o' Groats, visiting Wetherspoon's pubs and hotels along the way.

Jane and partner Anna Clifford, who walked much of the way together, took the more arduous route along the east coast of Scotland, rather than the traditional route through central Scotland.

Jane said: "Wetherspoon was our saving grace. I'm not sure how I would have completed the walk without them.

"We often ended the day late, but you always know that a Wetherspoon is going to be open, with food and drinks and a warm welcome. They serve food until 11pm, and the prices are so reasonable.

"You are also assured of a warm welcome.

"The staff were really encouraging when we told them what we were doing – some of them even sponsored us."

Jane's last two Wetherspoon pub visits were The Saltoun Inn (Fraserburgh) and The King's Highway (Inverness).

The money raised was donated to Overgate Hospice, in Elland, West Yorkshire, where Jane's friend Linda Holmes passed away after a long battle with cancer.

ALL WELCOME, EVEN TIM'ROUS BEASTIES, AT BURNS' WEEK

Life and poetry of Scottish poet Robert Burns to be celebrated at Wetherspoon's pubs

Wetherspoon's pubs will be celebrating the life and poetry of the Scottish poet Robert Burns, by hosting the annual week-long Burns event.

Burns' week 2023 will be during Monday 23–Sunday 29 January (inclusive), with Burns' Night itself on Wednesday 25 January.

Customers at pubs in England, Wales and, of course, Scotland, will be able to enjoy some traditional Scottish food and drinks.

To mark the occasion, the pubs will be serving two special meals: Scottish haggis, neeps and tatties, as well as Caledonian burger (two 3oz beef patties, with haggis and whisky sauce, served with chips and six beer-battered onion rings).

Among the drinks choices for the Burns event meal deals will be a special Burns ale, Belhaven's Robert Burns (4.2% ABV), a chestnut-brown ale, as well as a range of guest ales, Scottish gins, whiskies and beer.

The range may include Scottish single-malt whiskies, Glenfiddich and Glenmorangie, Scotland's BrewDog Elvis Juice beer, as well as Scottish gins Hendrick's Gin and Edinburgh Gin Rhubarb & Ginger gin liqueur.

Customers taking part in Dry January® can also enjoy BrewDog's Punk AF (0.5% ABV), the low-alcohol beer from the Ellon-based brewery.

Wetherspoon's marketing executive, James Vaughan, said: "Our Burns' week event is a great opportunity for customers to sample some traditional Scottish food and drinks and to celebrate for longer than just the evening of 25 January itself."



Haggis supplier...

Grants of Speyside is a long-established family business which has been supplying haggis to Wetherspoon for more than five years.

Stuart Grant (pictured), the fifth generation of his family carrying on the tradition today, said: "Haggis is popular throughout the year at Wetherspoon's pubs across Scotland; however, during Burns' week, there is a massive increase in demand."

The company was started in 1824, in Sutherland, by Stuart's great-great grandfather, John Grant.

He was a crofter who sold his own meat to neighbours, from a horse and cart, before opening a butcher's in the local village with his son (also John).

It was young John's wife, Jessie, who started, around 1890, making haggis and black pudding – with those same recipes still used today.

Stuart moved the family business in the 1990s to Speyside, to a modern purpose-built factory which employs around 20 staff, making its award-winning haggis and black pudding, as well as a range of meat products, including speciality sausages and burgers.



FILM STAR KIEFER IS IN WITH THE INN CROWD

Staff at The Wibbas Down Inn (Wimbledon) were able to grab souvenir photos when an A-list celebrity became a customer at the London pub.

Actor and musician Kiefer Sutherland was in town performing his live music show at the O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire, as part of his Chasing the Rain Tour 2022 – and enjoyed a couple of visits to the Wetherspoon pub.

The pub's manager, Andy Balastegui Gonzalez, reported: "Kiefer Sutherland and three friends came in for some dinner and a few drinks.

"He was very, very nice to all of the team and thanked us all before he left, even signing an autograph for me."

Andy added: "When he was leaving, he was so happy with everything that he said he would come back, as he was around for a few days. He did, the next day, and brought eight people with him for lunch."

Shift leader Alex Phillips and kitchen manager Monika Puzik are each pictured with Kiefer.



PUDSEY PATRONS PROVE TO BE PROLIFIC PUZZLERS



Rugby league side, Leeds Rhinos, were the theme for a well-attended quiz at The Crossed Shuttle (Pudsey).

The pub hosts small weekly quizzes, yet, each month, a bigger event focuses around a specific subject.

Shift manager James Dunn said: "We chose Leeds Rhinos because we reckoned local people would like to have their knowledge tested on their favourite rugby league side."

Regular quizzes were held before the COVID-19 restrictions and have since bounced back in style, with game show themes including Crack the Safe and Play Your Cards Right.

Prizes include cash and there are often rollover jackpots to be won, drawing in the crowds.

A special monthly quiz last-place prize of a round of drinks encourages all-comers to take part.

James added: "We really have become a great quiz venue locally since we resurrected the quiz nights."

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Chloe Horsfield, quizmaster and kitchen team leader Kieran Whitmore, pub regular Damion Carpenter and bar associates Chloe Harding and Georgia Roberts.

GLASSMAKER GOINGS-ON GET AUTHOR MARK IN THE GROOVE

Mark Fudge has written his debut novel, fuelled by coffee and people-watching at The Glassmaker (Nailsea).

The book, *The Boscombe Boys*, based on Mark's time at Bournemouth University, has already topped Amazon's 'Lad Lit' bestsellers list.

Mark (pictured) said: "I am a great lover of Wetherspoon's pubs.

"I come in for a large breakfast and coffee and just to watch people – I often find, if I'm stuck, that people-watching gives me an idea... and I'll carry on."

He added: "The staff have been so helpful and accommodating. It's always a pleasure to come here – and it does help with the writing."

Mark, 50, left university with a degree in hospitality and became a pub manager for Bass. He remembers his university days fondly and speaks of the "hilarious antics" which he and his mates got up to.

These are described in the book – and there may be a sequel, as *The Boscombe Boys* covers only the first two weeks of the friends' university times.

The pub's manager, Amy Barnes, said: "We know Mark – he is always a pleasure to deal with and sometimes talks to us about his book. We wish him every success with *The Boscombe Boys*."

● **The Boscombe Boys is available to purchase online, priced at £7.99, at [amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)**



FAMILY TREE RESEARCH BRINGS BRUCIE BONUS

When customer Brian Marshall started researching his family history, he had no idea that he was a direct descendant of Robert Bruce – after whom the pub where he drinks is named.

Brian, a customer at The Robert the Bruce (Dumfries) established his lineage through websites, the local library and a local family history shop. He was "astounded" when he found out that he was an 18th-generation relative of the great warrior king, who was crowned King of Scots in 1306.

He said: "I had no idea. I was just researching my family history for its own sake. I have told my friends in the pub – and also my cousins, who, of course, are also descendants."

But the research wasn't always plain sailing. Brian says: "I got back as far as 1591, then became stuck. There were no more clues to follow."

But, like his ancestor, who, according to folklore, returned to defeat the English at Bannockburn after hiding in a cave and watching a spider try, try and try again to spin its web, Brian persevered.

"There was a breakthrough, with all of these aristocrats keeping coming up: Margaret Stuart, the daughter of James II, then George Leslie, the fourth Earl of Rothes, then Marjorie Bruce, whose son was Robert, King of Scots – Robert the Bruce," said Brian.

He added: "I'd encourage everyone to research their family tree – there are plenty of local resources, including old local newspapers available at the library and on [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com).

"You never know what might turn up – but, even if you don't find anyone famous, it's your own family you're discovering."

A plaque at the pub commemorates the building's history and the town's connection with Robert the Bruce.

BEN, BARON OF BREWING, VISITS LORD OF THE ISLES

Ale-drinkers got to 'meet the brewer' when Ben Buchanan of Strathaven Brewery arrived at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew).

The brewery's sales manager was there to answer customers' questions about the brewing process and to offer them samples.

These included Summer Golden Ale (3.9% ABV) and Craigmill Mild (3.5% ABV).

Ben said: "It was a very pleasant evening. I aim to get people interested who have maybe never tried an ale before.

The customers seemed very interested in what I had to say."

The pub's manager, Donna Walker, said: "These evenings really help us to spread the word about local brewing and beers. They always go down well."

Ben is pictured (centre) with regulars Jim McGarvey (left) and Gary Mannion.



DESIGNER WAYNE MAKES A DATE WITH GODFREY MORGAN

Retired designer Wayne Williams enjoys making calendars for The Godfrey Morgan (Newport) - out of the company's own menus and leaflets.

Wayne is a customer at the pub and sometimes asks whether he can take home with him some menus and other marketing material.

It has proven well worth it for the pub, which now has its own calendar, featuring details of the history of the building and its surrounding area.

Wayne said: "Staff are always happy to let me have the material - and I enjoy making the calendars."

The pub's shift manager, Mary Shwartz, said: "What Wayne comes up with, from such simple material, is really very impressive.

"We are glad to have our own calendar made by one of our own customers."



On the following nine pages, we reproduce some important articles from recent editions.

Page 54: Tim reports on the success of democracies throughout the world and why people who live in a democracy should be optimistic, despite problems.

Page 55: Matthew Parris explains his worries about the UK.

Page 56: Professor Robert Tombs says that the UK is a long-term success.

Page 58: Lord Sumption, former Supreme Court judge, explains his scepticism about the views of SAGE expert and 'lockdown hawk' – Sir Jeremy Farrar.

Page 60: Tim explains how COVID-19 was “weaponised and politicised”.

Page 61: Professor Francois Balloux reviews the World Health Organization's investigation and preliminary verdict into governments' reactions to COVID-19.

Page 62: Professor Robert Dingwall reviews the World Health Organization's report on COVID-19.

It's only when the tide goes out that you learn who's swimming naked

“This land is your land and this land is my land... This land was made for you and me.”

Woody Guthrie

The world's greatest investor and, possibly, the world's greatest-ever business person is 92-year-old Warren Buffett of Omaha (Nebraska), known as the 'Sage of Omaha'.

If you'd invested £20 in Warren's company, Berkshire Hathaway, when he took the helm, about 60 years ago, it would now be worth around £500,000.

Confounding the preconception of the rapacious capitalist, Warren is widely regarded as a decent man who lives modestly and emphasises the contribution which his company makes to the US treasury – about one dollar in every thousand collected by the US tax system is from Berkshire Hathaway.

Warren is perhaps unique in regularly complaining that he pays too little tax – and he gives vast sums, annually, to charity.

He is also famous for his pithy investment observations, such as: “Only invest in a company that's so simple it could be run by an idiot – because, one day, it will be.” or... “You only learn who's been swimming naked when the tide goes out.”

Advice

While admitting his own mistakes, Warren's main investment advice is: “Rule No.1 is never lose money. Rule No.2 is remember rule No.1”.

Easier said than done, as the great man admits.

Above all, Warren is a big believer in America.

Don't bet against America, he says, emphasising that it has overcome civil war, world wars, depressions and inflation to become, despite some big problems (who doesn't have problems?), one of the richest and most free countries in the world.

My own belief, not shared by everyone, is that America has grown to be rich, powerful and free as a result of two main

factors: the first is that its population has grown from about 100 million in 1900 to about 340 million today, mainly through a liberal immigration policy. (Please see my 2017 evidence to a House of Lords committee about the advantages of “a North American- or Australian-type” immigration system.)

Second, the economy has flourished because the 1787 American constitution, negotiated over nine months and only four pages long, carefully balances federal and state powers and also achieves reasonable checks and balances among the president, congress (ie parliament) and the courts.

The net result, for all to see, is that as the population has grown, so has what economists call ‘GDP per capita’.

Rather than population growth diluting wealth, it has had the opposite effect.

Make no mistake, without America, democracy in the modern world would have struggled to survive.

Reluctant

In World War I and II, and in the Cold War, America, albeit reluctant to become involved at first and albeit with inevitable self-interest, eventually stepped up to the plate.

In the more recent example of the tragic Ukraine conflict, America has seen fit to offer 10 times as much financial help as has the entire EU.

The current president, despite widespread criticism, has certainly not buckled at the knee.

Warren Buffett's optimistic view about America could surely be extended to most democratic countries.

They are all ruled by fallible humans who, just like us, have many faults.

Yet the democratic system forces politicians to listen – and, in the end, we (the voters) can hold them to account and change governments.

Multiple examples, from Australia and Japan to Singapore and South Korea, demonstrate that, once democracy takes root,

progress invariably follows – not in every month or year, but, inexorably, as time goes by.

Yet this optimistic view of humanity's progress isn't shared by everyone.

Many people, on witnessing at close quarters the chaos, arguments and incompetence which are inevitably part and parcel of human existence, even in democracies, draw pessimistic conclusions and are overwhelmed by a sensation of national decline.

Pessimistic

Former MP and renowned journalist Matthew Parris seems, like Warren Buffett, to be a decent man, yet, unlike Warren's view of America, has a pessimistic view of the UK.

Matthew regards the UK as a “relatively civilised, gently declining manufacturing economy, living slightly beyond our means” (see his article opposite this page).

He feels that UK citizens are “mostly not aspirational” and are people “for whom the word ‘strive’ does not quicken the pulse”.

He fears that “we'll end up like Argentina” and mischievously lumps democratically elected politicians in with despots and the unelected, referring to the shortcomings of “the Trumps, Perons, Galtieris, Berlusconi, Corbys and Manduris, Johnsons and Trusses”.

This dim view of the UK population has led Matthew, and many others among the educated class, to deprecate democracy, perhaps subconsciously, and to yearn for a new system whereby power is transferred to a more refined technocratic elite – to people like them.

Matthew ignores the fact that, in spite of current problems, living standards in the UK have doubled, in real terms, since about 1980 – having already doubled in a few decades before that.

Like America, there have been wars, recessions and inflation, combined (from time to time) with governmental and parliamentary stupidity on an epic scale.

Professor Robert Tombs, of Cambridge University, has investigated the pessimistic views characterised by Matthew and many other intellectuals and refers to them as “declinism”, which, he says, is a factually inaccurate analysis of history.

The UK's economy, says Professor Tombs (see his article on pages 56–57), “has almost exactly kept pace with that of the United States ever since 1945,” based on the growth of GDP per capita.

So, who is right on this point? Matthew Parris or Professor Tombs?

For me, Professor Tombs, echoing the positive views of Warren Buffett, wins the day.

Democracy

Yes, democracy can be chaotic, and we can end up being ruled by idiots, yet we can vote them out.

And the combination of a free press and regular elections creates huge emotion and energy.

“Anger is energy,” as Sir Bob Geldof has said.

Energy, constructively channelled through thought and debate, creates progress.

But who cares what I think?

In a democracy, you're entitled to a view, but, in the end, readers and the public will decide on issues, such as this, through the ballot box.

Wetherspoon News, unlike some of the more sectarian factions of the press, is proud to at least try to present both sides of the argument.

Bravo Matthew Parris – for sticking your head above the parapet and making, as usual, clever and provocative arguments – and for creating this debate.

Bravo Robert Tombs – for your brilliant and thought-provoking historical analysis.

In a democracy, fortunately for those who live in one, the dogs may bark, but the caravan always moves on...

Tim Martin
Chairman

Tim says: “Columnist and former MP Matthew Parris is pessimistic about the UK, calling it a “gently declining manufacturing economy”, whose inhabitants are “mostly not aspirational”.

He worries that the UK will “end up like Argentina” (apologies to Argentinians, who may take umbrage at this comment).

Professor Robert Tombs, of Cambridge University (read his article on pages 56–57), calls the sort of views represented by Matthew “declinism” and argues that they are misleading and factually inaccurate.

Wetherspoon News invites you to read both articles and make up your own mind on this important issue.”

“WE’RE BEING FED FALSE PROMISES FROM ALL SIDES

How refreshing it would be if we had a leader who could provide the country with a dose of careful, sober realism

‘I was received very kindly by the warden,’ records Gulliver in Jonathan Swift’s 1726 satire, “and went for many days to the academy.” Gulliver is visiting laboratories on Laputa, where experts are confidently attempting the impossible.

“The first man I saw was of a meagre aspect, with sooty hands and face . . . He has been eight years upon a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers, which were to be put in phials hermetically sealed, and let out to warm the air in inclement summers. He told me . . . he should be able to supply the governor’s gardens with sunshine, at a reasonable rate.”

And so to the promises being thrown out by aspirant leaders of our country. One woman, Liz Truss, and two men, Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir Starmer, are pitching their proposals. Their apparent differences are conspicuous, but it is what unites them that alarms me. Though in different ways, and with varying degrees of unrealism, they all think the British economy can be “turned around”.

All their plans, all their policies, from defence spending to welfare, from education and Northern Powerhouse rail to the NHS and “levelling up”, from slashing our energy costs to protecting workers’ pay packets from inflation . . . all depend upon one shared assumption that none dare challenge: that Britain’s history of disappointing economic growth — sluggish in a good year, virtually non-existent now — can be overturned by politicians, and a conjectured tiger in our economic tank released to bound around the country, transforming people’s lives. There’s no good reason to believe this.

See what they’re promising. “Labour’s plan,” says Starmer, “will grow our economy, so we can once again afford world-class public services, bring down GP waiting times, tackle crime, and ensure our kids have the best education.”

“Getting people the support they need to help with the cost of living,” says Sunak, “is critical.”

“Labour is ready to reboot our economy,” says Starmer. “We will re-energise communities and spread economic power.”

“Levelling up is not just a slogan for me,” says Truss. “It’s about making sure we unleash private sector investment.”

“Levelling up should mean no matter where you grow up you have fantastic opportunities to fulfil your potential,” says Sunak.

“Economic growth,” says Truss, “is about jobs and opportunities.” Starmer agrees: under Labour, growth will be “strong, secure and fair”. Priorities for the next Labour government will be “growth, growth, growth”.

Truss is not to be outbid: “As prime minister I will unleash the full potential of Britain post-Brexit” and “be laser focused on turbocharging business investment and delivering the economic growth our country desperately needs.”

Sunak is readiest to acknowledge that the headwinds are formidable. “There is no measure any government could take, no law we could pass, that can make these global forces disappear overnight,” he says. “The next few months will be tough.” But even with Sunak it’s just a matter of patience. In time — for Sunak and Starmer a few years, for Truss about ten minutes — the British economy will be “transformed”. Those phials of cucumber essence will release their bounty and the broad sunlit uplands will unroll before our astonished eyes.

The key to these pitches is a single idea. Both as image and as metaphor, the mental picture is potent. With immigration it was the Leave

campaign’s dominating argument. “Britannia Unchained”. We are, apparently, a coiled spring of a nation.

Let me offer you the word-cloud that expresses this best. “Unleash” has already been cited twice above. See also “release”, “untether”, “unchain”, “unbind”, “unshackle”, “untie”, “uncork”, “free up”, “liberate”. Scan the speech and writing of aspirant British politicians for terms that connote taking the brakes off a powerful engine: populist rhetoric of both right and left is peppered with such imagery.

Maybe I’m harsh. For any would-be political leader, “could be” is the only hopeful-sounding answer to “isn’t”. But where is the evidence for such wild economic optimism? In my lifetime governments of the left have tried nationalisation, state-funded investment and simple subsidy to unleash what 60-odd years ago Harold Wilson called the “white heat of the technological revolution”. Governments of the right have lowered taxes, dangled tax breaks, cut red tape and deregulated in order (in the Thatcherite phrase) to “galvanise the entrepreneur” and take “the dead hand of socialism” off the neck of a choked nation struggling for air. Nothing has worked. Or perhaps it would be fairer to say that some measures have at least helped stop us going into reverse. But of the sound of snapping shackles there comes no hint. Friends, the tiger isn’t there.

We remain a relatively civilised, gently declining manufacturing economy, living slightly beyond our means, quite good at R&D but keeping afloat substantially through the efforts of wide-boys in the City of London, a metropolis the rest of the country seems to despise, its politicians too cowardly to explain that the sheep on our hills and pork pies from Melton Mowbray are not what fund our living standards. London does.

Somebody needs to tell the adult populace, as we were told when we were little, that “I want doesn’t get”. Somebody needs to come clean and remind us our nation struggles to pay its way. Somebody needs to square up to a country whose citizens are mostly not “aspirational” and for whom the word “strive” does not quicken the pulse: and to offer us the sober reassurance that they’ll cut our cloth according to our means. Sunak comes closest to this. But is this electorate — high as a kite on social media notions about government by the people — ready to put him in charge? Any former chancellor knows that workable democracy is a negotiation with the people. But who dare say it? I miss Jim Callaghan’s gloomy realism. I miss Denis Healey’s sceptical eyebrows.

So Sunak, Truss and Starmer will promise, and whoever wins must break their promises, and the electorate will shout “liar!” and, starved of trust, the politicians will make wilder promises, then break them; and — mark my words — we’ll end up like Argentina, banging saucepans beneath our leaders’ windows, crying like puppies for the world-class health service, the old-age care, the housing, the mortgage rates, the new schools, the royal yachts, the world-beating defence capabilities we were promised. Such are the leaders — the Trumps, Peróns, Galtieris, Berlusconi, Corbyns and Maduros, Johnsons and Trusses — for whom we’ll whimper. And we’ll get them. Then kick them out. Then get another. And so the vicious cycle will continue until the world begins to titter. And serve us right.

By Matthew Parris

The Times / 29 July 2022

Print credit: © The Times / News Licensing

Tim says: “Professor Robert Tombs, a Cambridge University historian, provides a fascinating insight into Britain’s performance, compared with that of other countries.

He criticises excessive pessimism as “declinism, a periodic fear that the nation has declined, and is declining, from some earlier time of strength”.

Declinism, he says, is “a mixture of illusion and misunderstanding”.

The UK has kept pace economically with the mighty America since 1945, says Professor Tombs – and his article was written before the England women’s team won the Euros...”

“DOWN WITH DECLINISM

Our glory days are not over – they’re in full swing

On the anniversary of Britain voting to leave the European Union, the Principal of Hertford College, Oxford, found some words to sum it up. ‘An entire society crucified by the delusional ambitions of Brexiteers chasing moonshine,’ wrote Will Hutton. ‘An anniversary to mourn.’ One might agree or disagree with his position on the European Union, but has British society really committed suicide? It’s a theme we have heard rather a lot recently: that Britain is a mess, an international laughing stock, leader-less and futureless. The case is normally made by Brits.

Rapid shocks — terrorism, the surprising election result, the Grenfell Tower disaster — have inspired forebodings just as the Brexit negotiations are beginning. This is not just the cry of shellshocked Tories or traumatised Remainers; it goes deeper. We’re seeing the revival of an old and familiar malady: ‘declinism’, a periodic fear that the nation has declined and is declining from some earlier time of strength, cohesion and success. Declinism is a syndrome: it assumes a combination of moral, political and economic failures. Britain suffered a bout of it in the 1880s when German competition in manufactured goods was first felt. It came back in the 1960s and 1970s, coloured by economic worries, rapid decolonisation and a perception of dwindling power and influence in every field.

Today, it has re-emerged as a core anti-Brexit sentiment. With a familiar mixture of despair (from the right) and glee (from the left), we are being told that we must eschew ‘nostalgia’ and ‘post-imperial delusions’, and ‘wake up to reality’ as ‘a small offshore island’, while the big strong powers of the European Union put us in our place, leaving us a stark choice between accepting the terms they dictate or facing economic and political disaster.

Some germ of declinism has been bred into all of us. Who would deny that Britain is no longer the great power it once was? Well, speaking as a

historian, I would. Declinism is at best a distortion of reality, and mostly mere illusion. But so important is it in shaping our view of ourselves and our relations with the world that it demands sceptical scrutiny. It rests, above all, on two assumptions. First, that we have long been failing economically. Second, that we have suffered a loss of sheer power and hence influence in the world.

In the context of the Brexit debate, the conclusions are that the EU, ‘our largest market’, is our economic crutch; and that outside the EU club our feeble power and influence will dwindle to insignificance. We will be comparable, declinists scoff, to Albania or North Korea.

The belief in economic decline is a mixture of illusion and misunderstanding. Britain has been relatively wealthy at least since the Middle Ages, and industrial pioneers gave us a temporary dominance in manufacturing during the mid-19th century. This was a brief and unique episode. Naturally, other countries adopted British technology — helped by British capital and expertise — and began to catch up. This was desirable as well as natural, because it provided richer markets for British goods and services and valuable investment opportunities for British savers.

Since the 1880s, pessimists have always tended to compare British economic performance at any moment with those most rapidly catching up. When postwar European integration began in the 1950s, Italy, France and Germany were the most spectacular catchers-up, recovering from their wartime devastation and shifting their large and relatively unproductive agricultural sectors into industry.

This gave temporary ‘windfall growth’ that Britain could not equal, having no large agricultural sector to modernise. But an uncritical comparison of growth rates was mistaken for evidence of British economic failure. As early as 1953, an official report warned of ‘relegation of the UK to the second division’. This was the prime cause of

our desperate pleas to join the Common Market in the 1960s and 1970s: Britain was 'the sinking Titanic', as one of Edward Heath's advisors put it, and Europe the lifeboat.

Ironically, just as Britain joined in the early 1970s, European catching-up ended, and so did its seemingly superior economic prowess. In short, Britain's long-term economic decline in relation to Europe never happened. Supporters of the EU nevertheless still maintain that membership rescued the British economy in the 1970s and remains vital to shoring it up today.

In fact, British economic performance was never significantly affected by EU membership. Growth did not increase after joining the Common Market, essentially because trade was diverted from other markets to Europe just as Europe's own postwar growth went into long-term deceleration. Despite the hopes and political efforts expended on creating the single market (not least by Margaret Thatcher), it has not proved very successful in increasing internal EU trade, and has never been fully extended into services, Britain's main strength.

Due to both the greater dynamism of global markets and the problems of the EU itself, Britain's trade with Europe has been declining sharply in importance for two decades. This was predicted to continue even if Britain had stayed in the EU. The recent overdue depreciation of an overvalued pound will provide some stimulus to our exports both inside and outside Europe, whatever the nature of the post-Brexit deal, and would more than compensate for possible tariffs.

Over the long term, membership (or not) of the EU has made no discernible difference to our economic performance. Britain's increase in prosperity (growth in per capita GDP using purchasing power parity) has almost exactly kept pace with that of the United States ever since 1945, whether outside or inside 'Europe'. The belief that leaving the EU must mean long-term economic decline therefore has no rational basis, just as the economic reports predicting that a vote for Brexit would mean immediate financial misery had no rational basis either.

The second element of declinism concerns the loss of sheer power and importance in the world. This seems as obvious to the stoutest Tory as to the most mocking Guardianista. After all, Churchill himself was haunted by it. Yet this too is largely, if not wholly, an illusion based on comparing a pessimistic view of our current state (whenever that might be — probably any time since the 1890s) with a highly inflated view of past power: usually the High Victorian age, or else round about the time of the battle of El Alamein.

The story of Britain being on a long slide to irrelevance always revolves round decolonisation. It's quite true that the British empire is 'one with Nineveh and Tyre' — but so are all the other empires. No state has replaced Britain as the great global imperial power: empires are no longer possible or desirable, as Britain realised in the 1960s. Though a source of prestige (and of constant trouble — 'a millstone round our necks,' said Disraeli), it's doubtful whether the empire was a source of wealth or power to Britain. Overall, it cost more than it brought in, especially after Britain turned to universal free trade in the 1840s, and colonies ceased to be an exclusive economic domain.

The empire's power was used up in defending itself: it was, as one historian aptly puts it, 'a brontosaurus with huge, vulnerable limbs which the central nervous system had little capacity to protect, direct or control.' Throughout its imperial heyday, Britain had naval power, but on land was no match for Europe's great powers or even its smaller ones. It was constantly worried by threats from France, Russia, Germany and even the USA to its economy, its empire and its home islands.

What of today? Britain is more secure from major external threat than for half a millennium. Taking a long view (say the last three centuries) it remains what it always has been — one of the half-dozen or so strongest states in the world, and one of the most global in its attachments, its vision, and its trade. Within this leading group of states, Britain has not declined but has actually advanced, being now more powerful than its ancient rivals France, Germany and Russia. The Cambridge international relations specialist Brendan Simms puts Britain even higher. Taking into account economic and military potential, population, 'soft power', diplomatic influence, political resilience and self-determination, he judges it the world's third great power after the USA and China, and Europe's only truly independent force.

Power is also based on intangibles such as self-confidence, a clear strategy and determination, and here we may be lacking. Russia, with an economy the same size as Spain's, behaves like a superpower in the Middle East and is treated as one. But we fear we cannot even negotiate a mutually beneficial trade agreement with the EU. At least as much as by age and education, our attitudes seem to be determined by the division between confidence and self-doubt.

Declinism has always been a form of insularity, obsessed with Britain's failings, but ignorant of those elsewhere. Today, unemployment is lower here than among most of our neighbours. Crime is falling. Schools are improving. We have evident problems too. But to see only weaknesses, and to diagnose them as part of a syndrome of decline, is to cling to a distorted view of the world and of our place within it. At worst, this undermines our position, and risks bringing about the very outcome it fears.

Brexit was a vote of confidence in our ability to shape our future as an independent democratic nation — a choice that few of our European neighbours feel they still have. We should not allow declinist panics to confuse the outcome.



By Robert Tombs

The Spectator / 8 July 2017

Print credit: © The Spectator magazine and Robert Tombs

Tim says: “The Times quotes, at length, former SAGE member and lockdown fanatic Sir Jeremy Farrar. Former Supreme Court judge Lord Sumption criticises Farrar in the article below as representing “most of what has gone wrong”, for speaking well of “Chinese methods of disease control” and for brushing aside “the appalling collateral consequences of lockdown”.

“ TYRANNY OF THE COVID EXPERTS: FINGER-WAGGING SAGE SCIENTIST JEREMY FARRAR PENNED A BOOK ABOUT HOW HE’S THE ONLY PERSON BORIS JOHNSON SHOULD EVER HAVE LISTENED TO, WRITES EX-SUPREME COURT JUDGE JONATHAN SUMPTION

Professor Sir Jeremy Farrar is a distinguished epidemiologist, a member of the Sage scientific committee, the director of the Wellcome Trust health research charity and an influential government adviser. He is also the most hawkish of lockdown hawks, and he has written a book with journalist Anjana Ahuja, called Spike. It is a revealing read.

Spike is basically about Farrar himself: how he saw it all coming, how he personally forced the Chinese government to release the genetic sequence of the Covid-19 virus that allowed scientists to develop a vaccine, how he warned the world of imminent doom, how the Government could have saved lives by treasuring his words more, and how he risked assassination by the Chinese (‘If anything happens to me, this is what you need to know’, he told friends).

The talk is all of wars, battle plans, and people heading for precipices. All this is a bit melodramatic and self-obsessed for my taste. but Farrar is a distinguished scientist who means well. He is terrifyingly sincere and really does have the interest of mankind at heart. Therein lies the problem.

There are few more obsessive fanatics than the technocrat who is convinced that he is reordering an imperfect world for its own good.

If Spike is largely about its author, it also tells us much about those who have been in charge of our lives through Covid-19.

Farrar represents most of what has gone wrong. His main target is the British Government. But he actually agrees with nearly everything they have done.

Farrar’s complaint is that they did not do it quickly or brutally enough when he suggested it, and stopped doing it before he gave them the all-clear.

His views about how governments should deal with public health crises are broadly the same as those of Dominic Cummings. Both men are frustrated autocrats who believed that from Day One we needed ‘a command-and-control structure’. He speaks well of Chinese methods of disease control.

‘Panic was called for,’ in March 2020, he says at one point. At another, he tells us that at a time when governments were panicking all over Europe, there was not enough panic in Britain.

This is all very odd. It does not seem to have occurred to Farrar that the jerky, ill-considered and inconsistent improvisations that passed for policy-making in the Johnson Government, and which he rightly criticises, were the direct result of the panic that he recommends.

The great object is of course to ensure that ‘the science’ is applied. No ifs, no buts and no delay. In Farrar’s world, this is easy as there is only one science, namely his own.

He is convinced he’s right and the Government should listen to no one else. Challenge from other scientists is normally regarded as fundamental to scientific advance. But for Farrar disagreement is a ‘hurdle’. It just gets in his way.

So, serious scientists such as Professors Carl Heneghan, Karol Sikora and Sunetra Gupta, who have had the temerity to offer opinions differing from his own, are dismissed as being ‘responsible for a number of unnecessary deaths’, although Farrar has had a great deal of influence on Government policy and they have had almost none.

This kind of attitude to colleagues is, frankly, unworthy of a scientist of Sir Jeremy’s eminence.

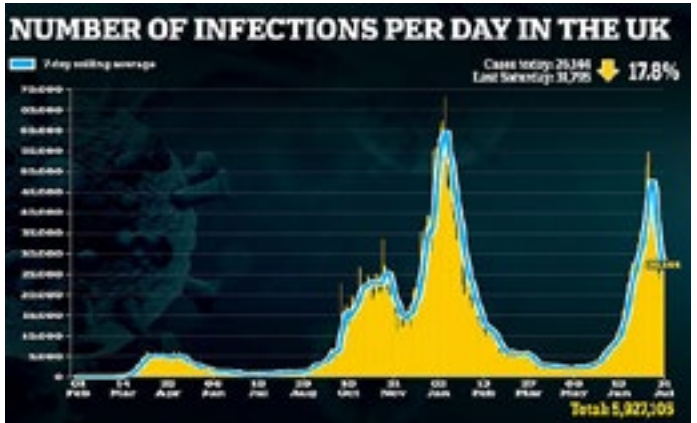
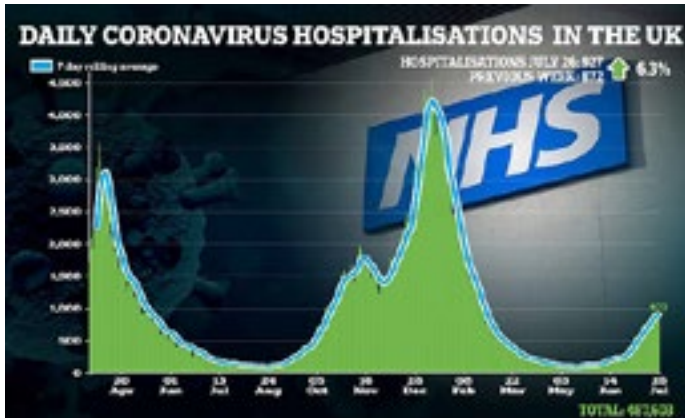
Anders Tegnell, the Swedish state epidemiologist, is dismissed in a brief footnote, although Sweden is a standing repudiation of much that Farrar stands for. Sweden has avoided a lockdown, yet has done much better than the UK.

Like many technocrats, Farrar believes in coercion. Otherwise, people might not do what he wants. ‘You cannot tell people to stay at home only if they feel like it,’ he says.

This is an obtuse misunderstanding of the argument against coercion. The point is that people differ widely in their vulnerability to Covid-19. It causes serious illness among the old and those with severe underlying conditions, but the symptoms are mild for nearly everyone else.

We therefore have to be able to make our own risk assessments. It is simply untrue that the vulnerable would ignore advice ‘if they felt like it’. People have a basic sense of self-preservation.

This was Sage’s consistent advice right up to the first lockdown. Farrar denies it, but the record speaks for itself.



In keeping with this blinkered approach, he refers to the collateral disasters as consequences of Covid-19. They are not. They are man-made consequences of the policy responses he has been advocating.

I shall resist the temptation to apply to him the criticism he gratuitously and unfairly applied to Messrs Sikora, Heneghan and Gupta.

Entirely missing from Farrar's worldview is any conception of the complexity of the moral judgments involved. Of course public health matters, but it is not all that matters.

Interaction with other human beings is a fundamental human need. Criminalising it is a sustained assault on our humanity. Doing so without assessing the wider consequences is irresponsible folly.

Sir Jeremy Farrar adopts the current habit of using 'libertarian' as a word of abuse.

But I am proud to be a libertarian. Personal autonomy is a basic condition of human happiness and creativity. I am a libertarian because the opposite of liberty is despotism.

On March 10 and 13, the minutes record that Sage advised guidance on isolation, selectively directed to the old and vulnerable.

On March 13, they said that the public should be treated as 'rational actors, capable of taking decisions for themselves and managing personal risk.' Farrar participated in both meetings.

Of course, selective coercion would be impractical, as he points out. But universal coercion is pointless, inefficient and wasteful.

It treats people as if all were vulnerable, when only some are. Instead of spending several times the cost of the NHS on paying young, healthy people who were at negligible risk not to work, we should have been pouring resources into protecting the vulnerable.

Interestingly, Farrar accepts that lockdowns only push infections and associated deaths into a future period after they are lifted.

He also appears to accept it would have been intolerable to lock down the whole population until a vaccine was developed and everyone had received it, which would have taken at least 18 months and possibly never happen.

His preferred course seems to be a series of lockdowns starting each time that we look like approaching the intensive care capacity of the NHS. In other words, very much what we have had. However, Farrar has wagged his finger every time that restriction has been lifted.

In theory, we can switch lockdown on and off like a malfunctioning internet router, but in practice it seems that the time is never ripe. We only have to look around us to see that lockdowns have failed to halt the virus, either here or anywhere else in the world. The problem is in the concept, not the application.

This brings me to the most remarkable feature of this book, which is Farrar's brushing aside of the appalling collateral consequences of lockdowns: other illnesses which go untreated such as cancer or accelerate like dementia, impacts on education, equality and public debt, not to speak of the worst recession in 300 years.

Farrar regards all this as a regrettable but unavoidable result of desirable measures, and not as reasons for questioning whether they were ever desirable in the first place.

By Jonathan Sumption

The Mail On Sunday / 31 July 2021

Print credit: Jonathan Sumption : Copyright The Mail on Sunday

The COVID-19 debate was weaponised and politicised

But the evidence is clear: non-lockdown Sweden did very well, relative to most EU countries

At the height of the pandemic, a US politician observed that COVID-19 had been “weaponised and politicised”, making sensible debate, and therefore pragmatic solutions, even more difficult.

However, there is evidence on this side of the pond that some of the main newspapers, or at least their contributors, are starting to shake off their tribal allegiances and are analysing the UK’s COVID-19 record with something approaching an open mind.

Professor Francois Balloux of University College London, writing in *The Guardian* (see the full article on opposite page), points out that COVID-19 statistics are “inevitably political” and that, rather than enlightening, new data are often used to “harden pre-existing positions”.

However, Professor Balloux discusses the recent huge study of COVID-19 mortality by the World Health Organization (WHO) and concludes that it is a “complex picture ... supporting no single straightforward narrative”.

Even so, according to the WHO’s analysis, the professor says that Sweden (which did not lock down) had a COVID-19 fatality rate of “about half the UK’s and, while it was above that of the Nordic nations, it still looks flattering, relative to the majority of EU countries”.

The professor also says that the WHO study shows that “the worst performer, by some margin, is Peru, despite enforcing the harshest, longest lockdown”.

Analysis

The professor’s analysis, perhaps surprisingly, says that “the strength of mitigation measures does not seem to be a particularly strong indicator of excess deaths”.

In other words, the outcome for nations wasn’t as dependent on government action as might be assumed.

However, he points out that famously Draconian New Zealand and Japan, for example, fared very well. The professor believes that “being rich and geographically isolated helps”.

Professor Robert Dingwall of Nottingham Trent University, writing in *The Daily Telegraph* (see page 54), seems to concur with the essence of Professor Balloux’s view regarding Sweden, saying that it “had half the excess death rate of the UK and a quarter of that of many eastern European nations”.

As regards the UK, Professor Dingwall says that it was “mid-table”. He says that “the widely circulated view that the UK had a uniquely bad pandemic” is not supported by the data.



The outcome for nations wasn’t as dependent on government action as might be assumed



Professor Dingwall, like Professor Balloux, says that the WHO’s data “do not support the view that the outcomes have much to do with the restrictions adopted by different governments, how soon they began or the stringency of enforcement”.

Professor Dingwall concludes by asking perhaps the most pertinent question regarding the UK’s response to COVID-19:

Why were the carefully prepared plans for a pandemic, developed over decades and approved by the WHO, which did not envisage lockdowns, thrown in the dustbin at the first sign of trouble?

Abandoned

In the professor’s words: “Why was the experience of two decades of pandemic preparation abandoned everywhere, except Sweden?”

That will be a perplexing question, indeed, for future historians.

In contrast to *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times* newspaper’s report on the WHO study (see page 55) adopted an entirely different tack.

Its review barely mentions Sweden and extensively quoted former SAGE stalwart Sir Jeremy Farrar, described by former Supreme Court judge and libertarian Lord Sumption (see pages 56–57) as “the most hawkish of lockdown hawks”.

Oblivious to the major premise of Professors Balloux and Dingwall, which was that “the stringency of enforcement” did not seem to be a major factor in health outcomes, Sir Jeremy advocated greater stringency – chastising world leaders for a “lack of urgency” and for a failure “to act at the level needed to save lives”.

On the evidence of these articles, *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* are taking a more open-minded and objective approach to the issues, whereas *The Times* appears to be accepting, uncritically, the views of lockdown hawk Sir Jeremy.

The approach of the government during the pandemic has also been perplexing.

Faction

Having torn up our WHO-approved prepandemic plans, the government created SAGE – a narrow faction of

academics – and described its output as “the science”.

Compounding the felony, the government then actively vilified SAGE’s critics, using MPs such as Neil O’Brien (see page 59) and apparently employing anonymous online trolls to terrorise those supporting the contrarian views of respected academics and medics, such as Carl Heneghan and Sunetra Gupta.

The opposition was just as sectarian in its approach, lambasting the government for not making even more restrictive rules.

And parliament’s actions were equally puzzling, handing over emergency powers to Studio 54 (also known as 10 Downing Street), rather than raking over every policy in the House of Commons.

The collateral health damage of prolonged lockdowns has yet to be definitively quantified.

The economic consequences are more obvious, since government debt has increased by half a trillion pounds or so in the last two years, leading directly to the current inflationary crisis.

The lessons of this strange, and often tragic, chain of events will be defined mostly by future historians – but one moral is that a monoculture in parliament, or indeed in science, which actively seeks to shut down contrarian arguments and debate is bound to end in tears.

In the end, it’s not winning arguments which counts – it’s being right. And, to be right, you need to encourage debate.

That is true of science, pandemics and, indeed, almost every other area of life.

Tim Martin
Chairman

Tim says: “Francois Balloux, director of the UCL Genetics Institute, says that the World Health Organization has “ammunition for essentially any narrative”, but that “Sweden’s estimated excess death rate ... is about half the UK’s and, whereas it is above those of the Nordic countries, it still looks flattering, relative to the majority of the European Union”.

A proper examination of the Swedish performance has been dogged by politics, so it’s interesting to see the professor’s view on the issue.”

“ SWEDEN? JAPAN? UK? DEBATES OVER WHO HAD A ‘GOOD’ COVID WON’T END

The WHO has spoken but even its huge new report will not settle arguments about pandemic strategies

National Covid death rates are, inevitably, political. How could they not be when they are viewed as evidence for good or bad government on matters of life or death? How did the UK fare compared with, say, Germany? Should both countries have been more like Sweden? However, when new data arrives, far from settling arguments over which pandemic mitigation strategies worked best, it tends to further inflame disagreements or harden pre-existing positions.

So it is with the much-anticipated report by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Covid-associated deaths, released last week. The WHO estimates that around 15 million additional people died because of the pandemic in 2020-2021, about 2.7 times higher than officially recorded deaths.

While staggering, the estimated excess deaths didn’t really come as a surprise to those who have been closely following the situation. If anything, this estimate is lower than many may have anticipated. Indeed, two previous modelling efforts, by the Economist and the University of Washington, suggested around 18 million excess deaths.

That more people died in the pandemic than have been officially registered as Covid deaths should be largely uncontroversial. Many countries simply did not have the diagnostic infrastructure in place to identify every Covid death. The pandemic – and, to an extent, our response to it – has also been devastating to social and healthcare around the world.

Now the WHO report seems to provide ammunition for essentially any narrative and it is unlikely to check the politicisation of the Covid debate – in the UK or elsewhere.

For example, India’s own official excess death estimate is about 10 times lower than the 4.7 million people reported by the WHO. Indian authorities have vehemently rejected the methodology used by the WHO and its estimate for their country. They even opposed publication of the report and released their own 2020 death figures two to three months ahead of schedule to offer a counter-narrative.

Here, many comparisons have been made with other countries to highlight the UK as either the epitome of failure or a roaring success. In fact, according to the WHO report, the UK has fared fairly unremarkably. An estimated 109 excess deaths per 100,000 people places it at 56th in the global ranking of “best performing” countries, and middle of the table relative to the European Union, coming 15th out of the 27 EU member states. The UK’s estimated excess death toll is below Germany’s and Italy’s, but above France’s. According to the WHO estimates, Germany significantly underestimated Covid deaths, France overestimated them and the UK got it about right, suggesting that the much-criticised “death within 28 days of a positive test” approach was a reasonable proxy for Covid death before the Omicron wave.

Some countries became synonymous in the public imagination with particular pandemic mitigation strategies. Sweden has been criticised by some for the lack of stringency of its measures and hailed by others as a shining example of how to protect the rights of its citizens while navigating a health crisis.

To the possible disappointment of both its supporters and detractors, Sweden’s estimated excess death of 56/100,000 is about half the UK’s and, while it is above those of other Nordic nations, it still looks flattering relative to the majority of EU countries.

An additional reason why the WHO report won’t settle many arguments stems from Covid excess death figures being extremely difficult to measure precisely. Even in the absence of ideological disagreements, they do not offer simple, incontrovertible “follow the science” answers. Pandemic excess deaths represent the difference between the number of people who died, relative to a hypothetical number of people who might have died had the pandemic not happened.

The number of actual deaths is accurately registered in high-income countries but this is not necessarily the case in many parts of the world, where estimates can be crude. Getting an accurate number for the hypothetical number of deaths that might have occurred had the pandemic not happened is even more challenging. (The WHO relied on a fairly complex model and the extent to which some of its estimates may have been coloured by modelling assumptions will be scrutinised and criticised.)

The report paints a complex picture supporting no single straightforward narrative. Which shouldn’t be too surprising. A single number for each country is unlikely to capture the full complexity of vastly different socioeconomic situations and two years of often inconsistent policies. Lower-middle income countries in eastern Europe and South America have been particularly badly affected, probably because of a relatively unfavourable age pyramid, low vaccination coverage and disruption to their economy and healthcare systems. Richer countries tended to do better overall, with the exception of the US, which fared quite poorly with 144/100,000 excess deaths.

A few countries kept excess deaths close to, or even below zero, including Australia, Iceland, Japan, Luxembourg, Mongolia and New Zealand. Being rich and geographically isolated helps.

The stringency of mitigation measures does not seem to be a particularly strong predictor of excess deaths. While countries that achieved low excess deaths tended to have fairly tight measures in place, the worst performer by some margin is Peru, despite enforcing the harshest, longest lockdown. This proved ineffective at reducing viral transmission and probably contributed negatively to the excess death toll.

The results from the WHO report will undoubtedly be analysed extensively by pandemic planners, though they are unlikely to be of much help to inform actionable “one-fits-all-follow-the-science” strategies. The major message is that richer, more insular countries kept excess deaths low by limiting the spread of Sars-CoV-2 until the arrival of vaccines and then achieved high vaccination coverage in elderly people. Those relative success stories largely built on pre-existing geographic and socioeconomic advantages rather than unique, well-thought-out mitigation plans.

Read that way, the main thrust of the WHO report boils down to reducing inequality, improving health and providing a robust social and healthcare system offering the best pandemic preparedness. That would be money well spent, even if the next one takes a while to hit.

Francois Balloux is Director of the University College London Genetics Institute.

By Francois Balloux

The Guardian / 8 May 2022

Print credit: Copyright Guardian News & Media Ltd 2022

Tim says: "Professor Robert Dingwall believes that Sweden stuck to its pandemic plan, rather than adopting the 'novel' approach of a lockdown, initiated by China.

The Swedes made mistakes, especially in respect of care homes, but their strategy which 'invited citizens to co-operate' was more successful than, say, the UK's authoritarian 'top-down' strategy."

“SWEDEN'S WHO FIGURES MUST RADICALLY CHANGE THE TERMS OF THE COVID INQUIRY

Unlike the UK where elites told people what was good for them, Sweden explained its public health thinking and invited people to cooperate

"Judge me in a year" said Anders Tegnell, Sweden's State Epidemiologist, in July 2020, when his country was being attacked for sticking to its pandemic plan rather than adopting the novel intervention of lockdown. The latest World Health Organisation figures add to the evidence that has been accumulating since summer 2021. Sweden managed the pandemic more successfully than most, with much less disruption of everyday life and economic activity.

The WHO has published estimates of excess deaths globally for 2020 and 2021. This approach covers all deaths from Covid, whether formally diagnosed or not, together with collateral damage in deaths from other conditions that went untreated. Looking at Europe, where official data are usually robust, Sweden had half the excess death rate of the UK, Germany or Spain – and a quarter of that of many Eastern European nations.

In turn, the UK tends to be mid-table, in line with other large Western European countries, while Eastern European countries have had much worse experiences. There is a widely-circulated view that the UK has had a uniquely bad pandemic. The data simply do not support this.

Nor do they support the view that the outcomes have much to do with the restrictions adopted by different governments, how soon they began, or the stringency of enforcement. The question, then, is how governments came to adopt highly restrictive policies in the first place. This must be the starting point for any national inquiry. Why was the experience of emergency planners, and two decades of pandemic preparation, abandoned everywhere except Sweden?

Sweden never 'let it rip'. There were restrictions on large gatherings, and on restaurants and some other places of entertainment. Secondary schools and universities switched to remote learning at some points. Masks were never thought to be of benefit but social distancing was encouraged. The approach was based on the minimum intervention necessary to manage the highest risk environments.

Mistakes were made and acknowledged. In the first wave of the pandemic, Sweden had a problem with Covid deaths in care homes, which tend to be larger than in the UK. Once the virus got into a home, it could circulate around a larger number of people than would be possible in UK homes. When additional infection controls were introduced, residents were as

well shielded as anywhere. Unlike the UK where elites assumed that people should be told what was good for them, and then compelled or frightened into doing it, Sweden explained its public health thinking and invited citizens to cooperate.

Many UK problems can be traced to its top-down approach. No-one asked the academics who know about laws and rules whether they would work in this situation. Officials and politicians made those decisions on the basis of their own, often simplistic, beliefs. But rules are inflexible tools, which invite confrontation and dispute. How can anyone comply with a law that cannot differentiate between a party and a work-related gathering? The Swedish approach allowed citizens to think about applying broad public health messages to the circumstances of their own lives.

Sweden shows that there was another path not taken, that could have brought this country through the pandemic in far better shape, socially and economically. The inquiry must not be diverted into the minutiae of arguments about whether we should have locked down a week or two weeks earlier. It must be free to examine the whole strategy - in particular, why robust social science evidence on managing emergencies, and its contribution to pandemic planning since the early 2000s, was abandoned so precipitately.

Robert Dingwall is Professor of Sociology at Nottingham Trent University.

By Robert Dingwall

The Daily Telegraph / 7 May 2022

Print credit: © Robert Dingwall/Telegraph Media Group Limited 2022

THE RED WELL • WELLINGBOROUGH

YEARS FLYING BY FOR KITCHEN GURU ANGIE



At the beginning of September, kitchen associate Angie Haynes celebrated her 'silver' anniversary with the company.

She is pictured receiving flowers, a cake and card from Wetherspoon's regional manager Paul Draper (left) and her area manager Calum Brennan (no longer with the company) to mark her 25 years' service.

It was Paul who first employed Angie, in 1997, as a kitchen associate, when he was then a shift manager at The Earl of Dalkeith (Kettering).

Angie, 56, said: "I spent two and a half years at The Earl of Dalkeith and transferred to The Red Well (Wellingborough), when Paul became pub manager there, and have been there ever since."

Angie is part of an eight-strong team in the kitchen at the Northamptonshire pub, headed by kitchen manager Kevin Gibbon. The pub is managed by Ben Gardiner.

She continued: "I have always worked in the kitchen, never wanting to be on the bar, and am more than happy in my role.

"I have seen a lot of changes, not only staff members who have been and gone, but changes to the menus too.

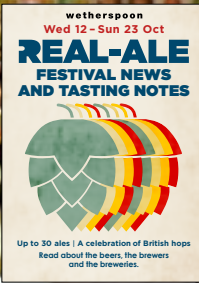
"But I get on with the job, am responsible for the ordering and work the early shift, five days a week.

"I am definitely a morning person and always full of energy.

"The shift times also help personally, as I am my mum's carer.

"At work, it feels like my time to myself. I can relax and get on with my job, which I 100 per cent love.

"I wouldn't work anywhere else and am aiming for 30 years and more."



The Smithy Fold (Glossop) Shift manager Damon Worsley, pub manager Leon Harris and shift manager Kyle Bennett (left to right)

ALE FESTIVAL IS TOP OF THE HOPS

During October, Wetherspoon's pubs hosted the bi-annual real-ale festival, featuring ales brewed using only British-grown hop varieties.

A range of up to 30 real ales was available during the 12-day event at pubs across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

The selection of 30 real ales included three from overseas brewers, who had brewed their beers in England for the festival.

The overseas brewers were from Australia, Norway and South Africa. Several festival ales were also available in the pubs for the first time, including some brewed especially for the event.

The festival line-up included Jester (Green Jack Brewery), Rebel Flame (Shepherd Neame Brewery), All The Leaves are Brown (Brewster's Brewery), Bonkers Conkers (Greene King Brewery), Hoptober (Coach House Brewery), Kaleidoscope (Lancaster Brewery) and Victory Ale (Batemans Brewery).

The overseas ales were Wungong (Nowhereman Brewery, Australia), Rav (Telemark Bryggeri, Norway) and Autumn Amber (Mad Giant Brewery, South Africa).

Wetherspoon's marketing manager and festival organiser, Jen Swindells, said: "The festival is always a great celebration of real ale.

"On this occasion, the real ales were all made using only British-grown hop varieties.

"The hop varieties included First Gold, Fuggles, Godiva, Goldings, Jester and Opus.

"The event allowed us to showcase a selection of superb ales over a 12-day period and support the British hop industry too."

Customers were able to enjoy three third-of-a-pint ales for the price of a festival pint.



The Bear and Ragged Staff (Bedworth) Bar associate Skye Burgess (right) serves customers Frank Jakeways (left) and Edward and Susan Higgins



The Bridge House (Chippenham) Team leader Morgan Johnstone-Mitten, shift leader Zac Clark and bar associate Georgia Stocks (left to right)



The Crown Inn (Knaresborough) Bar associate Izzi Brooke serves customers Joe Edwards (left) and Spike Brownlee with a festival pint each



The Gold Cape (Mold) Customers Ceri Jones and Ray Stead toast the festival



The Central Bar (Carrickfergus) Customers Alex Kelly (left) and Courtney Sharples toast the festival



The Wyndham Arms Hotel (Bridgend) Hotel manager Lisa Driscoll and Wetherspoon's auditor Andrew Coates (standing), pub manager Danielle Phillips (far right) and customers (left to right) Joeli Patterson, Alison Allen and Clare James



The Good Yarn (Uxbridge) Duty manager Ahmed Zormati, kitchen associate Andreaa Hariga and bar associate Maxwell Dodsley (left to right)



The Picture Playhouse (Bexhill-on-Sea) Customers Martin and Sarah Brown are served by shift manager Hugh Brendan Devlin



The West Kirk (Ayr) Customers Bob Bryden (left) and Neil McNaughton sample a festival pint



The Sweyn Forkbeard (Gainsborough) Shift manager Laura Murray serves a festival pint to customer Keith Ruffle



The Prestwick Pioneer (Prestwick) Regular customer Gordon Cowan



The Sir Nigel Gresley (Swadlincote) Shift leader Casey Hale and bar associate Jasmine Carter (right)

NOW OPEN



Leeds

THE SCRIBBLING MILL

Wetherspoon has opened its newest pub in Leeds, The Scribbling Mill.

The company developed the outlet on the site of a former Chiquito restaurant, in the White Rose shopping centre, near Beeston.

The Scribbling Mill was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of Leeds Cllr Robert Gettings MBE JP and Lady Mayoress Cllr Lesley Gettings (pictured).

Managed by Laura Haith (pictured, far left, with some of her team), the pub is named after a textile-industry process – long associated with the local area.

Morley, southwest of the shopping centre, was famous for its textile industry, represented in the town's coat of arms. The 18th century saw the first mills, driven by water wheels.

By 1790, the Crank Mill (now grade II listed) was Yorkshire's first steam-powered woollen scribbling mill, where wool was carded (combed) and prepared for spinning – one of an estimated 170 such mills in and around Leeds.

The Scribbling Mill has a ground-floor customer area and a beer garden at the front of the premises.

The new pub's design is based on a classic Victorian pub, with suspended feature ceiling rafts, roses, warm panelling details and a glazed-tile back bar.

Pub manager Laura Haith said: "We are thrilled to open Wetherspoon's newest pub in Leeds.

"Leeds is a vibrant and dynamic city, and our new pub will be a feature of its lively social scene."

White Rose Shopping Centre, Dewsbury Road
Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS11 8LU





Derby

THE STANDING ORDER

The Standing Order (Derby) has reopened following an expansion and refurbishment project.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in October 1995, is managed by Tom Parfitt.

Mayor of Derby Cllr Robin Wood (centre) opened the pub with (back row, left to right) Mayor's Consort Andy Flint, Cllr Jerry Pearce, pub manager Tom Parfitt, Cllr Jonathan Smale and duty manager Holly Harrison.

In all, 50 new full- and part-time jobs have been created at the newly extended pub, which was closed for 16 weeks for the expansion and refurbishment project to take place.

The customer area inside the pub has been extended by around 2,150 square feet.

A new garden also provides an additional 3,560 square feet of outside customer space.

Designed sensitively and in careful consultation with Derby City Council, the new-look pub incorporates the vacant, adjoining building, previously an estate agent's business, providing a large extension and additional customer area.

This is linked to a newly constructed beer garden, located at the back of the pub.

The pub's interior has been fully refurbished, including the large decorative ceiling of the former banking hall, ensuring the structure of this grade II listed palazzo-style building for future generations.

As part of the development, a newly designed carpet, linked to the history of the building, has been fitted.

Originally, the building started life as the Crompton & Evans' Union Bank Ltd – the bank's cheques and their signatures having been extracted and re-interpreted into the unique floor-covering, as a subtle nod to the bank's head office, established in 1877.

New and refurbished furniture has been installed – and the bar has been upgraded to improve drinks' delivery and speed of service.

A full toilet upgrade has also been completed, including a new accessible toilet, together with a new kitchen, including an open gantry.

The pub's manager, Tom Parfitt, said: "Wetherspoon has spent £1.7 million on the pub, providing further investment into the city, as well as new jobs for local people.

"The new-look, extended pub will also prove a great asset to the business."



28-32 Iron Gate, Derby, DE1 3GL

NEW LOOK



Leicester

THE CORN EXCHANGE

A refurbishment and upgrade project has been undertaken at The Corn Exchange (Leicester).

The Wetherspoon pub, which first opened in July 2000, occupies the former corn exchange, built in 1850.

Originally a single-storey structure, the upper floor was added six years later. This was reached by the triumphal flight of stairs added at the front of the building.

The Corn Exchange has undergone a complete design change and full internal redecoration, with a lighter and brighter colour scheme.

A new bespoke carpet, incorporating a corn motif design, has been fitted throughout. Some new furniture has been added, as well as existing furniture refurbished.

The bar area and dispensing equipment have been upgraded, to improve speed of service for customers, as well as upgrades to the kitchen also.

A full upgrade to, and redecoration of, the toilets, on the ground and first floors, has also been completed.

The pub's manager, Alan Walker (pictured with area manager Catriona Wells), said: "We are thrilled with our refurbished pub and upgraded facilities, with customers enjoying the new-look environment of The Corn Exchange."



**1 Corn Exchange, Market Place, Leicester
Leicestershire, LE1 5GG**

Ellesmere Port

THE WHEATSHAEF

The garden at The Wheatsheaf (Ellesmere Port) has undergone a transformation.

A refurbishment project to upgrade the front of the pub's outside space, together with the redecoration of the premises' exterior, has been completed.

The original garden capacity of approximately 270 covers has been retained, with some new furniture installed, as well as refurbishment work undertaken to the existing garden furniture.

Much of the paving area at the front of the pub, on both sides of the front door, has been replaced with artificial lawns.

New planters have also been added, planted with flowers and shrubs, as well as festoon lighting installed and a new sheltered smoking area added.

The pub's manager, Tiffany Simmonds (pictured), who has been at the helm since June 2022, said: "We are delighted with The Wheatsheaf's refurbished garden, which provides a lovely new-look outside space for customers."

**43 Overpool Road, Ellesmere Port
Cheshire, CH66 3L**



Corby

THE SAXON CROWN

Pub manager Nikki Cameron is pictured in one of the new bedrooms at The Saxon Crown (Corby).

Wetherspoon has added 37 rooms to the hotel, following a £3.4-million investment project.

The hotel now offers 49 bedrooms.

The 37 new rooms, of which 15 pairs can create linked rooms, are located over the first and second floors of the adjacent building.

They comprise eight new double rooms and a further 27 twin rooms (of which 10 are family rooms), as well as two new accessible rooms, suitable for guests with disabilities, complete with full DDA-compliant bathroom facilities.

Each of the rooms features an en suite bathroom, tea- and coffee-making facilities, hair dryer, flat-screen television with Freeview TV and unlimited free Wi-Fi, as well as digital air-conditioning and temperature control.

There is passenger lift access to all levels and a new stairway linking the extension to the original 12 hotel rooms on the first-floor level over the pub.

Year 10 students from Lodge Park Academy, in Corby, provided the artwork on the theme 'visions of Corby' for the hotel's bedrooms and corridors.

Nikki said: "The extra 37 bedrooms are a wonderful addition to the existing pub and hotel – and a boon for Corby too."

100 Elizabeth Street, Corby, Northamptonshire, NN17 1FN



Opening 28 February 2023

The Stargazer, The O2, Peninsula Square, Greenwich, London, SE10 ODX

FANS ROAR AS TRIATHLETES GET WHEEZY AT THE VESEY

Enthusiastic crowds gathered outside The Bishop Vesey (Sutton Coldfield) to cheer on Commonwealth Games cyclists.

Around 2,000 people viewed the live spectacle as the cycling section of the men's triathlon event rode past the pub at pace.

The pub's manager, Siobhan Hayward, said: "There was real interest, as, when an event like this passes your pub, it really brings it to life for you."

She said pub customers also got to see the women's triathlon and the paralympic triathlon events within days of each other.

Siobhan added: "It was a great atmosphere – after the triathletes had passed, we all went back in the pub to watch the games live on TV."



YEARS WHIZZ BY AT THE WHIFFLER



Five team members at The Whiffler (Norwich) have notched up 78 years' service among them.

Kitchen team leader Sara Jeckell and kitchen associate Julie Crooks joined the pub in 2000 and 2006, respectively – being among the pub's longest-serving staff members.

Sara said: "We have a tight-knit team at the pub.

"So many of us have been here for so long that we all work together and get on really well. We make this pub what it is – a real community pub."

Team leader Samantha Jane Dunn joined the pub in 2003 and has now worked there for 19 years.

She met her future husband, Scott, a customer at the pub, and they now have three children.

Samantha said: "I walked in the pub and was offered a job on the spot. "All of the long-serving staff know one another really well – and it's like being around family."

Shift leader Debbie Mackay has worked at two Norwich pubs during her 11 years with the company. She has been at The Whiffler since 2016. She said: "The people at The Whiffler are great, both the staff and customers."

Bar associate Jess Graham, pictured (left) with (left to right) Samantha, Debbie, Sara and Julie, has also worked at the pub for 10 years.

THE RESOLUTION • MIDDLESBROUGH

20-YEAR JOURNEY TAKES PETER TO TOP JOB AT THE RESOLUTION



Pub manager Peter Cope, who runs The Resolution (Middlesbrough), marked 20 years' service for Wetherspoon, in August.

He is pictured receiving a cake and certificate from area manager Emma Harvey.

Peter started his career with the company in 2002 as a bar associate at The Plimsoll Line (Redcar), having already worked in the pub trade with independent establishments.

He recalled: "I had the opportunity to join Wetherspoon and knew that it was a growing company, so thought that I would try it out."

Peter spent seven years at Redcar, working his way up to shift leader, before a promotion to shift manager and a move to The Isaac Wilson (Middlesbrough) (now closed) followed.

He said: "I also worked at different pubs in the area, helping out where needed, before moving to The Angel Hotel (Whitby) as a support manager.

"The pub and hotel had been open only a couple of months, so were relatively new, and to gain experience in the hotel side of the business was also something different."

Peter continued: "I moved back to Middlesbrough for a couple of years before The Ironstone Miner (Guisborough) was newly opened.

"I had never experienced a new opening before, so requested to be involved.

"I ended up staying there for five years, covering maternity leave for the pub manager on two occasions, before the position came up in April 2022 at The Resolution – my first pub as permanent manager."

Reflecting on his 20 years, Peter laughed: "It has flown by, and I have a lot more grey hair now."

He concluded: "My 18-year-old daughter, Mya, now works as a bar associate at the pub in Guisborough. She had not even been born when I started working for the company."

TWELVE TELLERS' BAR STAFFERS PUT HEADS TOGETHER FOR ALOPECIA UK

Brave bar staff Shannon Whiteside and William Curwood of The Twelve Tellers (Preston) had their head shaved to raise £400, split equally between Alopecia UK and Young Lives vs Cancer.

Bar associate Shannon, who has alopecia, was supported by shift leader William, whose head was shaved by Shannon after he had done the honours for her.

Shannon said: "William gave me some good moral support – as soon as I said I was doing it, he said he would do it too. It was quite an exhilarating experience."

She said that she liked her new look and said of William: "Well, it's certainly something different."

Shannon said she decided to go ahead with the fundraiser after chatting to shift manager Kim Parkinson.

She added: "I'm extremely grateful to all of the customers who donated to Alopecia UK and Young Lives vs Cancer."



BAKERS' BAKE-OFF IN BEVERLEY



The Cross Keys (Beverley) organised a baking competition for children, with a prize of 20 per cent off food for a month at the pub.

The idea was the brainchild of shift manager Emily Tomkinson, who organised the event as part of a company training course.

Twenty children submitted their entries, which included cakes, pastries and desserts, to a judging team led by Emily to sample.

She said: "The entries were really imaginative – and really tasty. It was great to see that we encouraged young people to get baking."

There was also a charity bake stall, alongside the competition entries, featuring the entries, but also other goodies, such as decorated iced buns.

Customers also got the chance to decorate buns with icing.

The bake sale raised £50 for Young Lives vs Cancer, and the winning baker was Corinna Matthews.

She is pictured (back left) with team leader Shay Burrell and (front, left to right) bar associate Sophia Bissolati and shift manager Emily Tomkinson.

THE STANLEY JEFFERSON • BISHOP AUCKLAND

HOW MICHAEL FOUND FRIENDS, A WIFE AND JOY AT THE JEFFERSON



Shift manager Michael Gittins has been working at The Stanley Jefferson (Bishop Auckland) for the past year, although no stranger to the pub.

He joined the company 15 years ago as a 20-year-old part-time bar associate, when The Stanley Jefferson first opened in May 2007.

Also starting as a bar associate on that first day was pub manager Carl Maddison (The Half Moon Inn (Billingham)), pub manager Shelle Adams and shift leader Danielle Proud (both at The Grand Electric Hall (Spennymoor)) – and the four colleagues have remained firm friends ever since.

Michael, pictured (second left) with Carl, Danielle and Shell (left to right), said: “We are all at different pubs now, yet still good friends – and they all came to my wedding six years ago.

“We would never have met without working at Wetherspoon.

“The same goes for meeting my wife-to-be Nicola, as she was a customer at The Stanley Jefferson.”

Michael was studying at Sheffield University when he joined the company, working at the pub on his return home during the holidays.

He recalled: “If I’m honest, as a student, I was only looking for a part-time job for my beer money.

“When I graduated, with a business degree, I had planned to move away or travel for a while, but circumstances – including meeting Nicola - led me to stay and I have had a 15-year career so far.”

Michael has worked at several other Wetherspoon pubs in County Durham and North Yorkshire, including the opening of The Horse Shoe Inn (Crook) in 2013, where Carl was his pub manager, two years at The Tanners Hall (Darlington), four years at The Ralph Fitz Randal (Richmond) and two years at The Grand Electric Hall, where Shelle was his pub manager.

He progressed to shift leader in 2010, shift manager in 2013 and has also had experience as a holding pub manager, when the need has arisen.

Michael, 36, added: “I am happy doing what I am doing; however, in a perfect world, I would be interested in moving on to the audit team, at some stage, should the opportunity ever come up.”

HOW BREWER CRAIG EXECUTED BARREL ROLL AT FORMER RAF BASE

Rudgate Brewery started at disused ammunitions building

Brewery's name: Rudgate Brewery, Tockwith, York, North Yorkshire



Pictured (left to right) are head brewer and brewery supervisor Danny Beardmore, driver John Bryce, brewer and managing director Craig Lee and assistant brewer Phil Marsh

Celebrating 30 years of brewing, Rudgate Brewery was established in the autumn of 1992, at the heart of Yorkshire, in the Vale of York.

The original brewery was situated in the former ammunition building of RAF Marston Moor Airfield, once home to the Halifax bombers which helped to defend the country during World War II.

The brewery's name remembers the old Roman road of 'Rudgate', which runs through the disused airfield and once led the Vikings along the vale, defeating the Romans in their steps.

Range

In 2011, the business expanded into a new, modern facility, on the same site, enabling the award-winning brewery to increase capacity (now brewing around 35,000 pints per week) and the beer range to grow.

Brewer and managing director Craig Lee started at the brewery in 1997, as a part-time barrel-washer, while studying for a degree in music at university in Leeds.

Harrogate-born Craig, who grew up in his parents' free house pubs (so already had the brewing industry in his DNA), decided to make music his hobby.

Having gained his IBD (Institute of Brewing & Distilling) certificates, he subsequently, in 2005 and 2008, bought out the original two Rudgate owners.

Champion

In 2009, when Rudgate's Ruby Mild was named 'overall champion' in the Champion Beer of Britain awards, Wetherspoon got in touch to make sure that its pubs were serving the brewery's award-winning brew.

Craig said: "Dave Aucutt, from East-West Ales, rang me on the day we won the award – and we managed to supply a small delivery, most of which went to London pubs where the awards had taken place.

"On the back of that, we have had the privileged opportunity to brew each year for the real-ale festival, as well as delivering regularly to Wetherspoon's pubs in our area – across North and West Yorkshire."

Wetherspoon's customers would have enjoyed Rudgate's Epic Endeavour (3.7% ABV) during the autumn 2022 real-ale festival.

A seasonal golden-brown beer, it celebrated two of the great new British hop varieties, as it was brewed using Endeavour and Epic hops.

Seasonal

Now, during December, Rudgate brings its Evil Elf (4.0% ABV) to Wetherspoon's national listing of seasonal guest ales.

This pale golden festive ale has generous tropical fruit notes, balanced by notes of biscuit malt, resulting in a full-bodied, clean, refreshing character.

Craig added: "We have a great relationship with Wetherspoon – a solid company to work with, a valued customer and very much part of our overall business picture."

Speaking about his music interests, Craig concluded: "I play drums in a covers rock band, with head brewer Danny Beardmore on lead guitar and my 12-year-old son Oliver playing bass.

"It is all good fun."



REAL ALE FLOWING IN ALL DIRECTIONS FROM BREWERY'S STRATEGIC LOCATION

Ken and Fran Munro's Milestone Brewery, sited near the borders of three counties, now produces a million pints per year

Brewery's name: Milestone Brewery, Cromwell, Newark, Nottinghamshire



Husband-and-wife team Ken and Fran Munro started their brewery adventure in 2004, having enjoyed more than 20 years in the pub trade.

They bought a very small brewery business in Nottinghamshire and immediately looked to expand.

With equipment purchased and shipped from Ireland, they set about looking for somewhere to house their new brewery.

Ken (pictured front centre, with some of the team) explained: "The move into brewing was a natural progression for us – and we fell in love with it as soon as we got started. Our pubs always featured heavily on real ale, and it has always been a real passion for us."

Converted

"We found the site at Cromwell and converted it to a brewery.

"It's situated parallel with the A1, on the Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire borders, so an ideal location for distribution."

Since they started selling their ales in 2005, the 12-barrel Milestone Brewery – named after the milestone on the road opposite the brewery – has gone from strength to strength, now producing one million pints per year.

Ken revealed: "During the COVID-19 lockdown, we had the idea of opening a brewery tap, to sell take-away ales... and it is the best thing to happen for us."

"It is extremely busy, and it's great to be able to serve our own beer on the bar."

Learning

Master brewer Rob Handy returned this summer to the 11-strong brewery team, as head brewer, having started originally with Ken before leaving for university and then learning his craft at larger breweries.

Ken works on the administration side of the business, while Fran is responsible for the accounts.

Ken continued: "We have been distributing directly to Wetherspoon's pubs since we launched – and now supply around 80 pubs across the region."

Popular

"Cromwell Best Bitter (4.4% ABV) is probably the most popular, alongside our Honey Porter (4.9% ABV) and Raspberry Wheat Beer (5.6% ABV), as well as seasonal and special ales."

Among the seasonal ales which Wetherspoon's customers can enjoy during December, as a national listing, is Dasher the Flasher (4.5% ABV), a ruby-red festive ale and part of Milestone Brewery's Christmas reindeer range.

Ken concluded: "Wetherspoon has always supported us, and we know that the pubs keep our beers well. They know how to look after real ale very well."

"I also visit some pubs for meet-the-brewer sessions, which always gives me a great chance to meet and catch up with pub managers and staff."

CHEERS FOR THE YEARS – PUBS MARK BIG BIRTHDAYS

During September, October and the first week of November, numerous Wetherspoon pubs celebrated a significant birthday.

Four pubs marked 30 years or more, clocking up an amazing combined total of 126 years' service with their respective communities.

The Moon Under Water (Enfield) celebrated 34 years and The Moon and Sixpence (Hatch End) and The Beaten Docket (Cricklewood) both marked 31 years, while The Whispering Moon (Wallington) celebrated 30 years since first opening in early November 1992.

J.J. Moon's (Hornchurch) marked 29 years and The Last Post (Southend-on-Sea) celebrated 28 years, while seven pubs marked 27 years since they first opened their doors in 1995.

Those pubs were The Sir Henry Segrave (Southport), The Square Bottle (Chester), The John Wallace Linton (Newport),

The Standing Order (Derby), The Richard John Blackler (Liverpool), The Wibbas Down Inn (Wimbledon) and The Exchange (Banbury).

Opening in 1996, so celebrating 26 years, were The King's Ford (Chingford), The George (Staines-upon-Thames) and The Three Magnets (Letchworth).

There were 'silver' 25-year celebrations held at The Coronation Hall (Surbiton), Robert Fitzharding (Bedminster), The Penny Black (Bicester) and Sir John Stirling Maxwell (Glasgow).

Also clocking up 20 years' service during September, October and early November were five other pubs.

They were The Carnival Inn (Bridgwater), The Plough & Harrow (Hammersmith), The King and Castle (Windsor), The Maidenhead Inn (Basingstoke) and The Company Row (Consett).

The Moon and Sixpence, Hatch End

Pictured (left to right) in a sunny and colourful beer garden, marking the 31st birthday of their pub, are floor associate Lola Biggerstaff, shift leader Roisin O'Donnell, bar associate Serena Talwar and shift manager Calvin Mitchell.

Pub manager Josie Kennedy has run The Moon and Sixpence since June 2009 and is one of the company's longest-serving pub managers, with 34 years' service by March 2023.

Originally, like most of the surrounding suburb of Hatch End, built on farmland in the 1920s, this pub was a branch of Barclays Bank.

Collections of old coins and bank notes, on display at the pub, celebrate the former life of the building, which first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in September 1991.



28 YEARS



The Last Post, Southend-on-Sea

This Wetherspoon pub opened in September 1994, in a former post office premises.

A listed building and a typical Edwardian head post office, it was originally built in the years leading up to World War I.

In May 2015, a 14-bedroom hotel was added to this site, on the first and second floor of the building above the pub, with a new beer garden also added.

Current pub manager Steven Clayton has been at the helm for the past six years.

Pictured (left to right) marking 28 years at The Last Post are regular customer Neville Andrews, shift manager Marc Buckingham, shift leader Kye Skilton and shift manager Luke Paul, with bar associate Joshua Crooks (front).

The Sir Henry Segrave, Southport

Pictured (left to right) celebrating the 27th birthday at The Sir Henry Segrave are shift manager Dave Lear, pub manager Danny Litherland and shift leader Joe Connolly.

The pub was opened in September 1995, in the former CF Chinnery's furnishing emporium, which occupied the building (originally built in c1880) until the 1930s.

The pub's name remembers Sir Henry Segrave who, in 1926, raised the land-speed record to 152mph in his 350hp 4.5-litre Sunbeam Ladybird, on Southport's Birkdale Sands.

At the turn of the 20th century, Southport was a leading venue for motor racing.

Henry Segrave was eventually knighted, dying in June 1930, having just set a new world record on Windermere.



The Richard John Blackler, Liverpool

This pub, managed by Mark Lythgoe, first opened in October 1995 and is on the site of the former Blacklers department store.

The store was opened in 1908 by Richard John Blackler, after whom the pub is named, when he was just 36 years old.

It was destroyed in 1941, during the Blitz, but, after 10 years' planning and four years' construction, a brand-new store opened in 1955 – which closed in 1988.

Before the Blitz, it employed 1,200 people.

Pictured (left to right) marking the pub's 27th birthday are bar associate Hayley Doyle, team leader Diane Smith and shift manager Sophie Barends.

The George, Staines-upon-Thames

Pub manager Ashik Bikram Shah is pictured (front) with (left to right) duty manager Niki Sapalidou, shift leader Tamara Williams and duty manager Jaynie Warren, celebrating the pub's 26th birthday.

Ashik will also celebrate 20 years' service with the company, in September 2023, and has been the pub's manager since 2018.

The pub, which opened in September 1996, was previously an indoor market which burned down in 1990, as well as a Tesco store for almost 30 years before that.

The George remembers the old George Inn, which once stood on the same site from at least the 15th century, until it ceased trading in the late 18th century.



MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS

Robert Fitzharding, Bedminster

Shift manager Rob Simpkins (left) and kitchen associate Cameron Reed toast the 25th birthday of Robert Fitzharding, which has been managed by Matt Spencer since the beginning of 2022.

Among the pub's longest-serving staff members are shift manager Kelly Vowels, who has worked here 22 years, and kitchen associate Lisa Reeve, who has been on the team for more than 17 years.

Opened in October 1997, the pub is named after the lord of the manor in Norman times – Robert Fitzharding.

Fitzharding was the king's official representative in Bristol and founded St Augustine's Abbey in c1140, now the chapter house of Bristol Cathedral.



25
YEARS

25
YEARS



Sir John Stirling Maxwell, Glasgow

First opened in October 1997, this pub is named after Sir John Stirling Maxwell, whose family was associated for centuries with this area.

In 1878, Sir John gifted 21 acres of land for the creation of Maxwell Park, now in the care of the City of Glasgow.

Shift managers Lorne MacGillivray and Linda Miller are pictured with a celebration cake, marking the 25th birthday at the pub managed by Ann Jennens since June 2015.

Among the pub's longest-serving staff members are bar associate Sharon Watson (11 years at the pub, this coming January), shift managers Adam Weir (six years at the pub; 10 years with the company, this coming April) and Georgia Bridges (five years at the pub), as well as kitchen team leader Jack Ewen (seven years at the pub, this coming May).

The Carnival Inn, Bridgwater

Pictured (left to right) marking two decades since The Carnival Inn first opened are shift leader Ian Lee, pub manager Seth Moseley, bar associate Keavey Rossiter and area manager Emma Simpson.

Opened as a Wetherspoon in September 2002, part of this pub was a building named Marycourt, said to have been used by Judge Jeffreys, who toured the West Country in 1685, presiding over the trials of those involved in the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion.

The pub takes its name from Bridgwater's famous carnival. First held in 1882, the carnival takes place every year on the first Saturday in November, with its origins in the gunpowder plot of 1605.

The carnival claims to be the largest and most spectacular night-time event of its kind held anywhere in the world.



20
YEARS

20
YEARS



The Company Row, Consett

Staff and customers at The Company Row enjoyed a celebration birthday cake (pictured) to mark 20 years since the pub first opened (October 2002) on the site of the old Market Place.

Among those pictured are Wetherspoon's area manager John Hudson (left) and pub manager Shelley Hobbs (third right).

Also pictured (left to right) are customers Pamela Barrow, Margaret Martin, Edward Farley, Florence Hall and Vicky Scott.

Consett came into being after the chance discovery of ironstone, which led to the formation, in 1841, of the Derwent Iron Company – which constructed, for its workers, rows of houses known as 'company rows'.

They were mostly demolished in 1924; in 1936, the site became a market place, which has since been developed.

The pub's name remembers this local history.

PRESIDENTIAL PUBS – PREMISES WITH LINKS TO PAST US LEADERS

Many of the locales where Wetherspoon trades have connections to esteemed Americans



Unsurprisingly, throughout American history, many of the 46 US presidents can trace their lineage back to either British or Irish ancestry, including the current incumbent, President Joe Biden, who claims Irish roots.

In the early 1600s, communities of European immigrants, including the British in New England and Virginia, dotted the eastern seaboard. Some, including the pilgrims, came for religious freedom, while others sought greater economic opportunity.

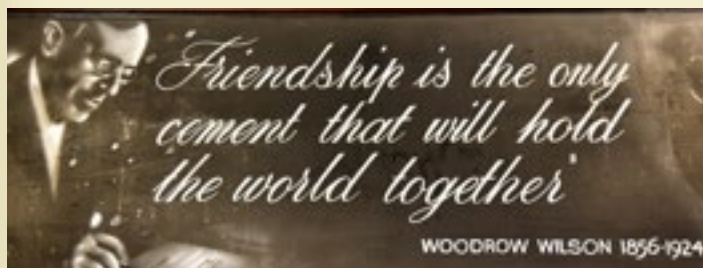
Zachary Taylor, the 12th US president (1849–50), can trace his lineage to John Taylor and Susan Rowland, both born in 15th-century England.

Mayflower

The first of Taylor's ancestors to arrive in America was Elder William Brewster, who made the voyage from Plymouth on the famous ship the Mayflower, arriving in 1620 in Massachusetts.

Among Brewster's fellow passengers was Isaac Allerton, one of the pilgrims' leading figures and direct ancestor of Zachary Taylor, as well as Franklin D Roosevelt (32nd US president 1933–45).

Woodrow Wilson, Wetherspoon's pub in Carlisle, is named after the 28th US president (1913–21), who visited the Cumbrian town in December 1918, on a 'pilgrimage of the heart'.



Irish ancestry

More than 20 US presidents claim Irish roots, including the current incumbent – President Joe Biden.

Probably the most famous, John F Kennedy, has family roots which trace back to Limerick, Cavan, Cork and Wexford.

He visited County Wexford in 1963 – and almost every US president since has claimed Irish ancestry.

Earlier presidents with Irish heritage include James Knox Polk, whose family (farmers of Scottish and Irish descent) moved to the US in the late 1600s; James Buchanan, whose father, James Senior, was from Donegal; Ulysses S Grant, the first US president to visit Ireland, was descended from John Simpson, a native of Ballygawley (County Tyrone).

His mother Janet, of Scottish descent, was born in Carlisle in 1826, the fifth child of Reverend Thomas Woodrow, a minister in Carlisle for 15 years, before emigrating to the 'New World'.

Princetown

It was there that Janet met and married Joseph Wilson, a Presbyterian pastor. Their son, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, became a lawyer, history professor, president of Princetown University and governor of New Jersey, before entering the White House as president.

While in Europe, attending the Paris Peace Conference, Woodrow Wilson was invited by the Carlisle Women Citizens' Association to visit his mother's birthplace. He arrived on the royal train and was granted the 'Freedom of the City'.

The seventh US president, Andrew Jackson's origins can be traced to Northern Ireland, to the town where The Central Bar (Carrickfergus) is situated.

Dubbed the 'people's president' (1829–37), Jackson was born, in fact (so several stories claim), in the County Antrim town before his parents emigrated to the United States in 1765, therefore questioning the legitimacy of his presidency.

Virginia

Of the early presidents, George Washington's great-grandfather was from Hertfordshire and settled in the colony of Virginia in 1657.

John Adams' great-grandfather emigrated from Essex in the mid 1600s to Massachusetts, while Thomas Jefferson is thought to be of English and Welsh descent.

James Madison's great-grandfather, Captain Isaac Madison, emigrated to Virginia from London, while James Monroe's great-great-grandfather, Patrick Andrew Monroe, left Scotland for America in the 1600s.

Ninth US president (1841) William Henry Harrison, who can claim the shortest presidential term (dying in office after 31 days), was born a British subject, before America became independent from Great Britain.

His family moved to Virginia in the 1630s from England.

President Franklin Pierce (1853–57) was the sixth-generation descendant of Thomas Pierce, who emigrated from Norwich in the mid 1600s.

Abraham Lincoln (16th US president; 1861–65) was also descended from his Norfolk-based family, his ancestor Samuel Lincoln emigrating in 1638 from East Anglia to Massachusetts.

James A Garfield's ancestor, Edward Garfield, settled in New England, having left Warwickshire in around 1630, while Grover Cleveland's earliest immigrant ancestor came (ironically) from Cleveland (England) in 1635.

Did you know?

The first New York City Saint Patrick's Day Parade took place in 1762, 14 years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, making the 17 March parade older than the United States itself.

METAL MAESTRO JAMES CLEANS UP AS HE LEADS A DOUBLE LIFE

By night, James Bennett is a music promoter working in the underground rock and metal scene in Manchester – and, by day, he's a cleaner at The Up Steps Inn (Oldham).

James runs 0161 – his own music events and band promotion agency.

The agency started in 2018 as a Facebook page where rock and metal bands could promote their gigs and merchandise.

James said: "We were doing this for a while, until a club called Rebellion called us and asked us to start running events for it.

"Since then, we have started running gigs all over the northwest of England."

The business has expanded into festivals and even runs a battle-of-the-bands competition, with the winner earning a spot at the open-air Bloodstock festival (Derby), which attracts crowds of up to 15,000.

Protégés of 0161 included the young band Tortured Demon, which, following several spots arranged by James, went on to play at well-known underground venues all over the region and at Bloodstock in 2021.

James's wife, Jayne, is also involved in the business, organising sales of band merchandise.

James added: "It's a good partnership – and it allows me more time to focus on the bands and the gigs."

Describing his work at Wetherspoon, he said: "It can be demanding because I often don't get home from gigs until midnight or 1am and then I get up at 4am to go to work.

"But it suits me because I'm finished by nine and the rest of the day is mine – I love it."

The pub's manager, Adam Green, said: "James has a lot of energy and real enthusiasm for the music scene where he's been involved for many years now.

"He's well known in the area and a great worker here too.

"It's good to see his business becoming more and more successful – and we're glad that he's able to work at the pub too."



TRIO FILLS COFFERS WITH CASH ON WAUGH TO WHITE HART WALK

Three fabulous fundraisers from The Edwin Waugh (Heywood) collected £365 in a sponsored walk.

Kitchen manager Wendy Randall, shift leader Jordan Brine and cross-trained associate Freya Gallaher (pictured left to right) completed a 22.7km charity walk in four hours and 56 minutes.

Wendy said: "We set off from our pub, The Edwin Waugh, and walked to one of our sister pubs, The White Hart (Todmorden).

"We managed to raise £300. Then, the residents on the street where I live in Rochdale had a collection, adding another £65 to the total.

"Through the generosity of our customers and friends, we collected £365 for Young Lives vs Cancer and Springhill Hospice."

Springhill Hospice, in Rochdale, offers a wide range of nursing, medical and other support services to its patients, their families and carers.



OLD BOROUGH HOTEL IS PERFECT LOCATION FOR A DUBLIN CITY BREAK



Located just eight miles north of Dublin city centre and just a 10-minute drive from Dublin Airport, The Old Borough pub and hotel is ready to offer you a warm Wetherspoon welcome.

Opened in August 2018 in Swords, the 14-bedroom hotel was Wetherspoon's first in the Republic of Ireland.

Situated on the first floor, above the Wetherspoon pub, this boutique hotel comprises six double rooms, six twins, one family room and one accessible room, complete with full DDA-compliant bathroom facilities.

The accessible room, suitable for guests with disabilities, has its platform-lift access at the rear of the premises.

Each of the bedrooms features an en suite bathroom, tea- and coffee-making facilities, hair dryer, flat-screen television with Saorview Freesat TV and unlimited free Wi-Fi, as well as digital air-conditioning and temperature control.

Originally opened as a Wetherspoon pub in July 2015, the building is one of Swords's best known, designed by noted Irish architect Francis Johnston.

A school opened on the site in 1809 and continued to run for 191 years until its closure in 2000.

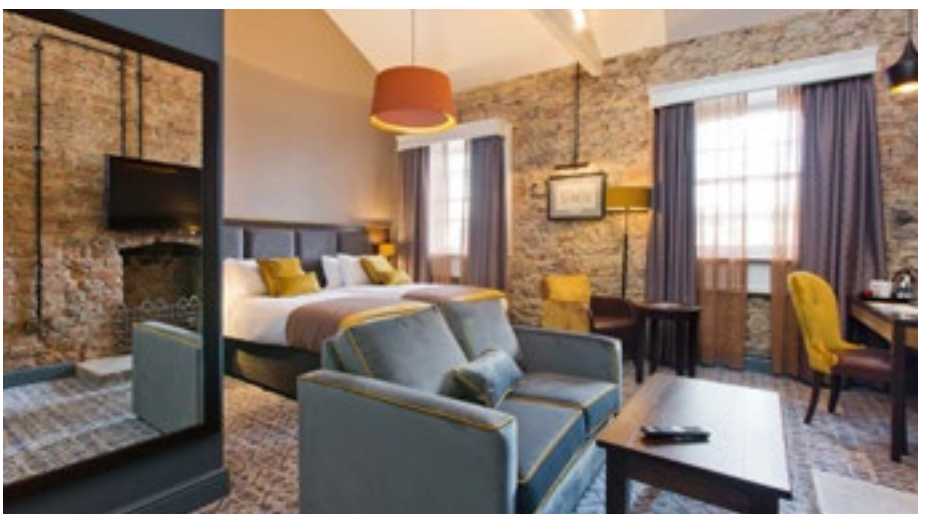
The building's interior has been altered over the years, but the outside is much as it was when designed by Johnston, more than 200 years ago.

The hotel's interior design scheme is sympathetic to the age and style of the building, using vintage-inspired choices and heritage tones, as well as current trends, to complement the traditional design and to suit the historical period of the building.

Pub manager Stephen Barr said:

"The Old Borough is ideally located for Dublin Airport and the city centre, so perfect for a city break.

"The pub, a popular asset in a great town, is also a focal point for the local community and the people of Swords."



Historic Swords dates from AD 560 and sits on the river Ward.

The bustling shopping town is close to Dublin Airport, with fast, frequent transport links (Dublin Bus and Swords Express services run from outside the hotel) to and from Dublin Airport and the city centre.

The town has a great range of shops and restaurants. Swords Castle, the Holy Well and Round Tower historic tourist attractions are all within walking distance of the hotel.

It is also close to Malahide – with its marina, parks and coastal views.

● For bookings, please visit: www.jdwetherspoon.com/hotels



wetherspoon
 Wed 12 - Sun 23 Oct
REAL-ALE
 FESTIVAL
 Up to 30 ales
 All festival ales are available on the app.

GREYNE KING
Abbot

AUTUMN AMBER
 4.5% alc/vol

EXMOOR
Oatmeal STOUT
 brewed with chocolate and coffee notes

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY
£2.69

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY
£2.49

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY
£2.49



COUNT ON THE COUNTING HOUSE FOR GREAT REAL ALE

Glasgow pub in stunning old bank building has featured in The Good Beer Guide for at least 10 years

Wetherspoon is proud of the quality of the real ale served in its pubs.

Its staff work hard to offer first-class beers at all times.

This is evident in the high number of Wetherspoon pubs listed, over many years, in the Campaign for Real Ale's (CAMRA) publication The Good Beer Guide.

In the latest issue (2023, the 50th edition), there are 200 Wetherspoon pubs listed.

Excellent

In this regular feature, we highlight those pubs and staff who serve an excellent range of real ales from brewers across the UK.

Mick Murphy has been pub manager at The Counting House (Glasgow) for the past 14 years. His pub has been present in the guide for at least 10 years.

Mick is pictured (right) with cellar champion Scott McKenzie, who joined the team six years ago as a bar associate and has worked his way up to shift manager.

Mick's team of 210 full- and part-time staff is one of the largest in the company, serving the good people of Glasgow at the pub housed in an iconic building on George Square, in the city centre.

Mick reported: "Since the lockdowns and reopening, the council has encouraged more outdoor hospitality areas, which has really enhanced the city, and our space can accommodate 350 customers. It's a huge beer garden, almost a second pub.

Gazebos

"As well as furniture, we have gazebos for sheltered areas and can set up as the weather dictates."

Housed in the stunning former Bank of Scotland building, designed during 1867–70, The Counting House's bar, which dominates the centre of the pub, has 18 hand-pumps serving real ale.

During the bi-annual real-ale festival, each of the 18 offers a unique beer.

At other times, there are six or seven guest ales regularly available, as well as the three permanent ales, being Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Belhaven 80 Shilling.

Mick continued: "For our guest ale selection, we regularly alternate among several Scottish breweries, whose real ales are popular with customers.

"These include Edinburgh-based Stewart Brewing Jack Back (3.7% ABV), Stewart's 80/- (4.4% ABV) and Edinburgh Gold (4.8% ABV); Innis & Gunn-owned brewery Inveralmond Ossian (4.1% ABV), as well as March of the Penguins (4.9% ABV); Alloa-based Williams Bros. Brewing Joker IPA (5.0% ABV).

Draught

"Our craft keg choices from Innis & Gunn, including The Original (6.6% ABV) and Session IPA (4.2% ABV), are also very popular and available on draught."

The Counting House held regular meet-the-brewer sessions before the pandemic – and Mick is looking to reinstate these events in the coming months.

He said: "They were always very well-attended events and something we want to build again.

"Our regular real-ale crowd can also offer suggestions (via a box on the bar) for ales which they would like us to stock, and we list all of our forthcoming guest ales on the Wetherspoon app, featured as 'coming soon'.

"Customers can receive a notification, when certain ales are on the bar, so that they can see from home 'what's on' at The Counting House."

What The Good Beer Guide 2023 says:

THE COUNTING HOUSE

A busy Wetherspoon conversion of a bank's provincial head office, in the centre of the city overlooking George Square.

It has many fine features, including a central dome and surrounding sculptures.

As well as the regular cask beers, there is a wide selection of guest ales, sourced UK-wide.

A bottle store in one of the old strong rooms holds a large range of bottled and canned beers.

Meet-the-brewer events are held regularly.

● 2 St Vincent Place, Glasgow, G1 2DH

What CAMRA says:

CAMRA Glasgow and West of Scotland branch's chairman John McKenna said: "Great to see Mick and the team back in The Good Beer Guide – 10 years out of 14 is a great achievement and goes to show the quality of ales which the pub is selling."

WIBBAS DOWN ON THE UP AS PLAYERS CLAIM FOOTBALL CROWN



Goals (Wembley) Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2022 winner The Wibbas Down Inn (Wimbledon) – with (left to right) shift leader Alex Phillips, floor associate Ciaran Rough, shift leader Christian Cittie, bar associate Billy Carney, team leader Max Wilkins and shift manager Callum Cairns

Staff from The Wibbas Down Inn (Wimbledon) were named champions at the company’s annual five-a-side football tournament – Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2022.

The UK-wide tournament first started in 2002.

The 2022 tournament, featuring players from more than 300 pubs across the UK and Ireland, raised more than £364,000 for the charity.

Heats took place at 15 venues, including those in Bristol, Glasgow, Manchester and Southampton, with the final taking place at Goals in Wembley.

Eleven teams, consisting of regional heats’ winners, competed in the final (unfortunately, a further four teams were unable to compete in the finals, owing to the summer’s rail strikes).

In the final, The Wibbas Down Inn beat the team from The Standing Order (Southampton).

In the third-versus-fourth play-off, The New Crown (Southgate) beat The South Strand (Dublin).

The Wibbas Down Inn’s team captain, Alex Phillips, said:

“We enjoyed every minute of the tournament and were thrilled to win.

“We took pride in fundraising in our pub for such a great charity.”

Sam Hughes-Smith, Young Lives vs Cancer’s partnership fundraiser, said: “We want to say a big thankyou to all of the staff involved in this year’s Kick tournament.

“It was wonderful to see so many teams from across the UK and Ireland competing and raising so much money for their chosen charity.

“Our congratulations to the winning team from The Wibbas Down Inn.”

Wetherspoon’s general manager, Richard Marriner, one of the organisers of the tournament, added: “The Kick annual five-a-side football tournament is thoroughly enjoyed by all of those taking part.

“Our staff look forward to it each year – and it is a much-loved feature of our charity’s calendar.”



Goals (Wembley) Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2022 runner-up The Standing Order (Southampton)



Goals (Wembley) Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2022 plate competition winner The New Crown (Southgate)



Goals (Wembley) Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2022 plate competition runner-up The South Strand (Dublin)



Goals (Wembley) Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2022 finalists



Goals (Wembley) Action from the final



Goals (Wembley) Action from the final



Astropark (Dublin) Regional heats' competing teams



Goals (Norwich) Regional heats' competing teams



Goals (Birmingham) Regional heats' competing teams



Goals (Chester) Regional heats' competing teams



Goals (Dartford) Regional heats' competing teams



Goals (Glasgow) Regional heats' competing teams



Powerleague (Manchester) Regional heats' competing teams



Goals (Sheffield) Regional heats' competing teams



Goals (Bristol) Regional heats' competing teams



Goals (Southampton) Regional heats' competing teams

ROMANIAN RED AND FRENCH ROSÉ ADDED TO WINE LIST

Bottle-only offerings from Transylvania/Banat and Provence join Wetherspoon's ever-growing array

Wetherspoon has added two **NEW** wine choices to its range, just in time for seasonal celebrations and get-togethers.

The Pale Rosé (12.5% ABV) by Sacha Lichine and Zana Pinor Noir (12.5% ABV) join the ever-growing wine list.

Served only by the bottle (750ml), these two wines, NEW to Wetherspoon, are ideal to complement snacks or a meal or, equally, can be enjoyed without food, sharing with friends and family.

Greatest

In 2006, Sacha Lichine took over Château d'Esclans, in Provence, France, with the goal of creating some of the world's greatest wines.

The Pale Rosé is crafted with grapes from the Vin de Pays Du Var region of Provence and is a classic Mediterranean rosé, with a twist.

It is an expressive, aromatic and elegant blend of grenache, cinsault and syrah grapes grown parallel to the Mediterranean coast, where the salty and sun-drenched soil gives the wine a dry and refreshing taste, yet with subtle fruity notes of peach and pink grapefruit.

Vibrant

Zana Pinor Noir is a fresh and juicy classic Romanian dry red wine.

With a wonderfully vibrant and light expression, it is packed full of raspberry and black cherry fruit character, making it easy drinking and suitable to enjoy with or without accompanying food.

This premium wine is produced by Cramele Recas, a private Romanian/British company founded in 1998. It is made with grapes grown on the Dealul Uberland vineyard, an estate located on the far western fringes of the Romanian region of Transylvania/Banat, near Timisoara, with documents dating from 1447.

A zâna (pronounced 'zuh-na') is a word from Romanian mythology, in essence a fairy godmother, keeping safe watch over travellers.

They blend into their surroundings, for protection and cover, while quietly guiding those who need help.

Wine-loving customers may or may not, however, require guidance regarding their drinks choice.

Ensure that you check out the Wetherspoon wine list this season and beyond.

Also on the wine list

..by the bottle

White wine

Hardys Chardonnay South Eastern Australia 12.5% ABV

Hardys Pinot Grigio South Eastern Australia 12% ABV

Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough, New Zealand 13.5% ABV – also available by the glass (125/175/250ml)

Red wine

Hardys Shiraz South Eastern Australia 13% ABV

Trivento Malbec Mendoza, Argentina 14% ABV

Rosé wine

Hardys Rosé South Eastern Australia 11.5% ABV

Belle Année by Maison Mirabeau France 12.5% ABV – also available by the glass (125/175/250ml)

..by the glass

(125/175/250ml)

– 250ml serving available (in selected pubs) as a multibuy deal

Concha Y Toro Coldwater Creek Wine from Chile

Chardonnay 12.5% ABV

Pinot grigio 11.5% ABV

Merlot 12% ABV

Rosé 12% ABV



ZANA
ROMANIA
PINOT NOIR

THE PALE
ROSÉ by SACHA LICHINE

The Bourtree (Hawick)



Well Done Folks!
£950
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

A charity 'race night' at The Bourtree (Hawick) raised £950 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Approximately 50 customers took part in the event, in which they paid £2 per ticket to place a bet on one of the horses featured in a prerecorded DVD of an actual race.

The event was organised by the events manager Jamie Gent, who also organises the pub's weekly bingo night.

He said: "It went really well and we did a lot of work to promote the night to get a good crowd in. The customers really enjoyed it."

Every time a customer won on a bet, half the money was donated to charity.

Pictured with Jamie are shift leader Stacey Palmer (left) and kitchen associate Heather Mirk.

The John Fairweather (Cambuslang)



Well Done Folks!
£270
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Bar associate Sean-Paul Brennan hosted a drag bingo night at The John Fairweather (Cambuslang) to raise £270 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Sean-Paul had never hosted an event in drag before, but bravely took on the challenge when colleagues suggested it to him.

He spent hours doing his own hair and make-up and choosing his outfit, before appearing in front of an audience of 50 customers at the pub.

He said: "It went really well. I was very nervous, as I'd never done anything like this before, but people enjoyed it and so did I. I tried to be as outrageous as I could, so it would be a laugh for everyone."

Since his bravura performance, Sean-Paul has now been booked by a local restaurant to host another drag event.

The pub's manager, Michael Easton, said: "I just asked him to host a bingo night – then the team started talking and suggested he did it in drag – and he decided to do it."

The Picture House (Sutton-in-Ashfield)



Well Done Folks!
£660
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Pub manager Gary Brooks sportingly put himself forward to get a good drenching.

Gary, who manages The Picture House (Sutton-in-Ashfield), was picked after customers paid £1 each to choose which of the management team they'd like to see soaked.

Gary was more than happy to oblige – especially as the funds raised went to Young Lives vs Cancer.

He achieved 125 votes, with one punter paying £20 to put him in the stocks.

He said: "I actually quite enjoyed it – once you're wet, you're wet – and it was a sunny day, so it was nice to see the laughter and smiles on children's faces."

Charity funds were boosted on the day by a raffle featuring barbecue equipment and accessories as prizes, with the total raised being £660.

Staff did their bit by dressing to a Hawaiian theme on the day.

The Counting House (Dundee)



Well Done Folks!
£150
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

The Counting House (Dundee) used its 25th birthday celebrations to raise £150 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Shift leader Erin Willox (pictured) took charge of the event and organised a raffle and two competitions for kids – one to 'guess the bear's age' and the other to 'guess the number of sweets in the jar'.

Raffle prizes included £25 worth of vouchers to spend at the pub.

She said: "It was a lovely day – and we gave away the bear and the sweets as prizes to the nearest guessers. It was good to raise so much money for charity."

The pub's manager, Stevie Reid, said: "A big well-done to Erin for managing the event and a huge thankyou to all of the customers who took part or donated money."

The Twelve Tellers (Preston)



Well Done Folks!
£900
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

A group of 20 staff and customers from The Twelve Tellers (Preston) walked 20 miles in gruelling heat to Blackpool to raise funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

They took six hours to complete the walk and raised £400 for the charity.

An online fundraising page raised £500, topped up with extra donations from customers.

The pub's manager, Adam Coulson, said: "It was very hot, over 30°C, so plenty of water was taken on board and lots of sun cream applied."

He added: "We are so grateful to all of those who took part and donated money. It was a lot of fun, despite the heat."

The Calverts Court (Stockport)



Well Done Folks!
£250
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

The Calverts Court (Stockport) raffled 21 prizes as it celebrated its 21st birthday to raise £250 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

At the same time, the pub joined in the town's pride celebrations. Staff wore rainbow face-paint as they raffled the prizes, including Champagne, a Teddy bear and skate park vouchers.

There was also a bake sale, featuring rainbow cake and other goodies made by team members Claire-Louise Brown and Liv Keeble.

The pub's manager, Rachael Brown, said: "Pride is held every year, right opposite the pub in Market Place. The parade ends here, so it's a big day for us.

"It was great that it coincided with our 21st birthday – and we just thought we'd make the most and put on some events for charity as well."

Pictured (left to right) are kitchen associate Liv Keeble, shift leader Adam Dale, pub manager Rachael Brown, floor associate Leah Owens-Brown and bar associate Alex Lloyd.

The Court Leet (Ormskirk)



Well Done Folks!
£1,200
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

The intrepid team of climbers from The Court Leet (Ormskirk) which conquered Ben Nevis earlier this year has now added Snowdon to its mountaineering conquests.

Fourteen staff from the pub turned out for the arduous walk and chose the challenging Watkin Path to reach the 1,085m summit. They raised £1,200 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Earlier this year, staff from the same pub climbed Ben Nevis, near Fort William in Scotland.

The pub's manager, Lisa Newton, said: "Everyone wanted to go – it was so good to have that level of enthusiasm – but, of course, we had to keep the pub open."

She added: "I'm so pleased that we raised so much for charity."

Kitchen manager Jelena Aleksejenko said: "We had good weather, but the Watkin Path is the hardest to climb in Snowdon. The views were incredible."

Pictured (left to right) are (top row) kitchen team leader George Wood, shift leader Lewis Heart, bar associate Richard Coney, team leader Will Foulks, kitchen associate Stephen Hamner, shift leader Sam Snead, door staff Sean Carlin, bar associate Dan Welsh and shift manager Joshua Bottomly; (bottom row) bar associate Louise Carmichael, kitchen manager Jelena Aleksejenko, pub manager Lisa Newton and bar associates Megan Brookfield and Molly Cutler.

The Glass Blower (Castleford)



Well Done Folks!
£800
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Pub manager Sarah Heppinstall and shift manager Katy Walker took on the might of the British weather and the Yorkshire Dales National Park to take part in the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge.

The pair, from The Glass Blower (Castleford), successfully completed the classic 38.6km circular route, taking in the summits of Pen-y-ghent, Ingleborough and Wharfedale, in 11 hours (under the official 12-hour maximum time limit for the challenge).

Despite the driving rain, they grabbed a photograph at the top of each of the three peaks, flying the Young Lives vs Cancer banner, jointly raising £800 for the company's charity coffers.

The Gate Clock (Greenwich)



Well Done Folks!
£1,122
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

The Gate Clock (Greenwich) was the venue for two nights of local comedy drama, helping to raise funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The rescheduled event (previously postponed in the pandemic) was held in association with the South London Players (SLP). It showcased eight original short plays, written and performed by the south London-based theatre company, well known for original comedy and drama.

With all proceeds going to Young Lives vs Cancer, tickets for the two-night 'Whither, Spoons' event, staged upstairs at The Gate Clock, sold out at £10 per person.

Audiences enjoyed eight short plays, titled Daylight Robbery, Don't I know you from somewhere?, Jesus Lives... (in Deptford), A Glitch in the Matrix, It's short for James..., What is it you do?, A Valuable Asset and The Concierge.

A special comedy guest star, Steve Best was also on the bill.

The pub's manager, Philip Parkins, who organised the event, along with shift leader Ollie Emslie, said: "We were thrilled to host the SLP and this amazing two-night comedy drama event, which was a huge hit with all who came to support it.

"A massive thankyou to everyone who performed, bought a ticket and donated generously to our great charity, to the tune of £1,122."

The Moon Under Water (Wigan)



Well Done Folks!
£295
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

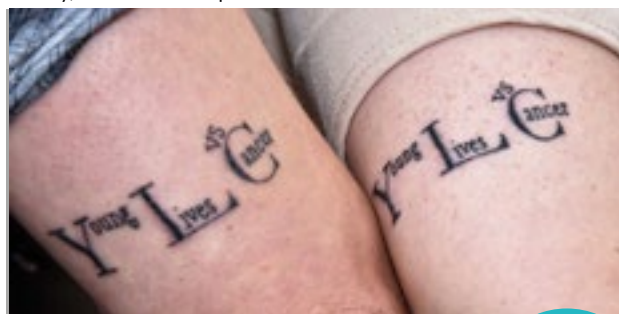
Two staff members at The Moon Under Water (Wigan) decided to display a permanent commitment to Young Lives vs Cancer by having the charity's name tattooed on their arm.

Shift manager Emma Ford and team leader Harry Pickavance now proudly wear the matching tattoos, designed by Emma herself.

The work was done, free of charge, by the local Butcher's Block tattoo shop.

The pair, through sponsorship and donations from customers, raised £295 for charity.

Harry said: "We wanted to do something different and knew that people like to see others doing something unusual for charity, so we came up with the tattoo idea."



The Society Room (Glasgow)



Well Done Folks!
£1,045
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Managers and staff at The Society Room (Glasgow) raised more than £1,000 in a charity walk.

The 10 fundraisers are pictured heading off from The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew) to make their 12-hour (50km) journey, by foot, to The Paddle Steamer (Largs).

They are shift managers Ryan Gallacher and Michael Dolan, shift leaders Nathan McGowan and Ami Ker, team leaders Keira Cryans, Nicole Barclay and Ben Walker and bar associates Lee Fell, Chloe McBride and Daniel Lockie.

Six group members managed an impressive 33km, before calling it a day, while a fabulous four fundraisers (Ryan, Nathan, Ben and Lee, also pictured in Largs) made it the full distance to complete the challenge.

The team raised a massive £1,045 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Ryan said: "Typically, after the heatwave of nearly 30°C the day before, we had planned for the walk day to be when a yellow weather warning for storms and heavy rain came into force.

"However, being from Scotland, this was a typical day for us, so we persevered, even with blisters on our feet, and got the job done."

The Society Rooms (Stalybridge)



Well Done Folks!
£560
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Kitchen manager Nik Earnshaw bravely stepped up to the stocks for a public soaking to raise funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The stocks were the centrepiece of a fun-day at The Society Rooms (Stalybridge) which also featured market stalls run by local businesses, glitter tattoos, a tombola and cake stalls.

The event was organised by shift manager Corrina Bates.

She said: "Nik got a thorough soaking, which everyone enjoyed."

Early on in the day, a stag party arrived on its way round the town and paid to have the stag put in the stocks for a short while.

Local businesses hosted stalls selling personalised gifts, crafts and jewellery. A total of £560 was raised for charity.

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Lisa Fulham, kitchen manager Nik Earnshaw, shift manager Corrina Bates and bar associate Morgan Rooke.

The Foxley Hatch (Purley)



Well Done Folks!
£1,080
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Some deft charity marketing helped shift leader Darren Vincent to raise £1,080 for Young Lives vs Cancer at The Foxley Hatch (Purley).

Colleagues helped Darren to advertise the live head-and-beard-shave event three months in advance, giving him plenty of time to grow a full head of hair and whiskers.

Darren said: "It went really well – and I'm pleased with my new look. There certainly was a lot of hair on the floor afterwards."

"It's a lot of money to raise for a head-shave – I'm very grateful to our generous customers here and to my colleagues for all of their help."

The shaving itself was undertaken by local hairdresser Fay Holley. Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Shauna Hill, customer Ajay Hirani, hairdresser Fay Holley, Darren Vincent (front) and team leader Olivia Opalinska.



The Liquorice Gardens (Worksop)



Well Done Folks!
£600
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

The team at The Liquorice Gardens (Worksop) turned Team Rocket (pictured) for a charity fundraising day at the pub.

Organised by shift manager Shelley Bown, the Pokémon-themed day saw the staff dress up as game characters, including a charity cash-collecting giant Pikachu mascot.

Shelley said: "We also teamed up with the owner, Peter Jones, of our local gaming shop at Dragon Cavern, who donated some amazing Pokémon raffle prizes and had a table of Pokémon merchandise for customers to buy."

"He also spent time teaching the trading card game to anyone who wanted to learn... which was a fabulous addition to the day."

The event, which also included face art, a bake sale and ended with a Pokémon quiz, raised £600 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The Bankers Draft (Sheffield)



Well Done Folks!
£861
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Members of the team at The Bankers Draft (Sheffield) completed a 30km sponsored hike, from the pub in Sheffield's city centre to Edale railway station in the Peak District.

Pub manager Jonathan Atkinson's eight-year-old son, Max, also completed the entire walk, along with Jonathan's sister Kasia, who also works at the pub.

Jonathan said: "We raised £861 through cash donations in the pub and a JustGiving fundraising page, shared with friends and family. We're very grateful to all of our sponsors, who donated to Young Lives vs Cancer, providing extra motivation to complete the course."

"Thanks also to bar associate Carter Cronin who helped to plan the route and guide us on the day."

Pictured at the end of the challenge (back row, left to right) are Emilia Kicinger, Carter Cronin, Kyle Armsby, Kasia Brown, Chloe Thompson, Kelsey Young and Bethany Robertson; (front) Max Mchale Atkinson with dad Jonathan Atkinson.

The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield)



Well Done Folks!
£92
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Staff at The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield) raised £92 for Young Lives vs Cancer as the pub celebrated its 21st birthday.

Shift manager Sophia Salvati baked a cake for the coming-of-age anniversary of the pub which she used to visit as a customer. She has since worked for Wetherspoon for 11 years.

The cash was raised through a bake sale to which, through homemade offerings, Sophia and colleagues contributed.

She said: "It was a good day. The customers enjoyed themselves and we were all proud to celebrate the occasion."

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Hayley Martin, pub manager Ricky Brown, shift manager Sophia Salvati and floor associate Kay Slater.

The Sir Thomas Gerard (Ashton-in-Makerfield)

Well Done Folks!
£1,410
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY



A team of novice netball players from The Sir Thomas Gerard (Ashton-in-Makerfield) helped to raise £1,410 for Young Lives vs Cancer. Netball-playing pub manager Nicola Wadsworth already plays in a league and recruited enough players to make a tournament of 10 teams.

One of the teams was recruited from her own pub's staff, many of whom had never played the sport before.

Nicola said: "They did brilliantly, considering they hadn't played before and had to be taught the rules before the first game."

Money was raised through an Internet charity page created especially for the event, with raffles and a tuck shop boosting charity coffers on the day of the tournament.

Nicola added: "The tournament was a great success – and we'll be doing it again."

Pictured (left to right) are (back row) kitchen shift leader Jemma Edwards, bar associate Gabby Macar, shift leader Nathan Williams, floor associate Ellie Goldthorpe and bar associate Callum Lever, with (front row) kitchen associate Megan Edwards, pub manager Nicola Wadsworth and kitchen associate Beth Kelly.

The Steel Foundry (Sheffield)

Well Done Folks!
£1,275
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY



A team from The Steel Foundry (Sheffield) raised £1,275 for Young Lives vs Cancer by climbing to the top of Wales' highest mountain – Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa, in Welsh).

The team took four and a half hours to reach the summit, 1,085 metres above sea level, despite very cold weather and a persisting mist.

The crew was led by the pub's manager, Liam Costello, who said: "Everyone who took part deserves credit. We took it at the pace of the slowest – with the weather not helping at all."

However, the six who reached the top were rewarded for their efforts, as the mist suddenly lifted to afford them Snowdon's spectacular views.

"Everyone got their camera out and took pictures," said Liam. "After all that mist, it was great to be able to enjoy the views of rivers, fields and surrounding hills."

Money was raised through an Internet sponsorship page and donations at the pub.

Pictured at the summit are Liam Costello, bar team leader Aimee Drake, shift managers Alex Wood and Sophie Robinson, bar associate Lily O'Keeffe and kitchen team leader Daniel Hetherington.

The Queens Hotel (Maltby)



Well Done Folks!
£357
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Alpacas from a local farm stole the show as The Queens Hotel (Maltby) held a fun-day for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Plucky pub manager Beth Burns approached the farm, Tickhill Alpacas, to ask whether she could borrow some alpacas – and they agreed.

She said: "I just thought, 'no harm in asking', and I'm glad I did – the kids loved them and it made everyone's day."

Local football team Maltby Main turned up to host a penalty shoot-out competition – and there were cake stalls and a tombola.

In total, £357 was raised for the charity.

Pictured with two of the alpacas are bar associate John Skidmore, team leader Sam Riley and her son Theo.

VENUE STAFF JOIN FORCES TO GUARD AGAINST VIOLENCE



Pub manager Ashik Bikram Shah is a key local pubwatch scheme member.

Ashik, who, in September 2023, celebrates 20 years with Wetherspoon, manages The George (Staines-upon-Thames).

He has more reason than most to believe in the pubwatch scheme, which aims to help in achieving a safe, secure and social drinking environment in all licensed premises across the UK.

In 2021, he was assaulted by a customer at his pub, which left him with an eye injury.

He has turned that negative experience into a positive change.

He said: "When I started in 2018 at The George, there was a pubwatch scheme in place, but it wasn't very effective.

"A pub manager from the town and I started to become more involved – and the pubwatch scheme grew in stature.

"It was stopped during the pandemic – however, it is now running once more and proving a great asset for publicans in the area.

"Our local Surrey police licensing manager, Jacquie Clark, was very

supportive when I was assaulted and is also likewise with pubwatch."

Jacquie continues her regular involvement with The George, together with six other pub venues in the town, through the Staines-upon-Thames pubwatch scheme.

Spelthorne Borough Council's principal licensing officer, Lucy Catlyn, is also part of the pubwatch group.

Ashik (pictured front right), whose injury has thankfully now fully healed, continued: "Jacquie is always involved in our now-monthly to six-weekly meetings, which we take it in turn to host.

"Communication among us all is now a lot better, sharing information and ideas through a WhatsApp group chat.

"We are also now trying to encourage restaurants, as well, to join the group, so that, when situations arise, we can support one another.

"We know that things can happen at any time – and the whole hospitality community needs to be aware and careful.

"Pubwatch is an excellent organisation – and licensees are much stronger when we work together."

RENFREW BAKERS SERVE UP COOKIES, INSTEAD OF COCKTAILS

Team leader Andrew Penman is pictured at a charity bake sale at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew).

Pub manager Donna Walker and colleagues contributed baked goods and raised £437.27 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The bakes on offer included gingerbread men, cookies, cupcakes, sponges and tarts.

Donna said: "My staff and I did all of the baking. It was a total team effort – and they did a great job.

"I'd like to thank the customers – they were very generous."



STUDENTS LAZY? THAT'S JUST A LAZY STEREOTYPE

Many of our pubs' part-time staff are also studying - and work hard for us, as well as for their qualification

Wetherspoon is proud to employ a host of students in its pubs.

There are opportunities for students to work on a part-time basis, while they study.

Here, we feature four part-time employees who are also students and managing to work hard on two fronts: learning and earning.

For details about career opportunities with Wetherspoon, visit jdwwetherspooncareers.com or scan this QR code:



The job is very flexible and really ideal as a student



Name: **Tom Stevenson**

Position: **Shift manager** Pub: **The Lady Chatterley (Eastwood)**
Studying for a PhD in theatre sound at Loughborough University

Tom first joined the company 10 years ago at The Pilgrim Oak (Hucknall), near to his home, having completed a music degree.

He left Wetherspoon three years later to take on a role as a primary school teacher, although soon realised that teaching was not his vocation.

Tom, 29, said: "I then used my savings to open a bar in Louth, but the pandemic unfortunately took its toll on my business, so I turned to my next love - the theatre."

He returned to Wetherspoon as a part-time employee at The Lady Chatterley (Eastwood), while embarking on a master's degree in theatre, and was promoted in just over a year from bar associate to shift manager. During that year, Tom also took on various acting roles and writing projects.

Having become a shift manager in September and embarked on his PhD in October (2022), Tom added: "I think being a performer helps in working in a pub, while listening and talking to customers is one of the best parts of the job.

"It's the people who make the job so great."





Name: **Hannah Convery**

Position: **Receptionist** Pub: **The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury)**

Studying primary education at the University of Gloucestershire

Hannah started her three-year course in September 2022, with the aim of becoming a primary school teacher. She has been juggling course work with a school placement role, alongside her part-time job with Wetherspoon.

She joined the team at The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury) in 2015, in her home town, working for three years as a bar associate, before switching to the hotel side of the business, where she has worked as a receptionist for the past four years.

Hannah, 25, said: "When I first joined Wetherspoon, I was working as a teaching assistant, so the part-time role alongside that was helpful.

"Now, I am very busy at university and, before the school placement, had been working two shifts per week at the hotel, mainly at weekends.

"I love working for the company. The job is flexible, which suits me really well, and everyone is so helpful and supportive.

"The different roles and responsibilities which I have experienced have also boosted my CV – which is great."

Name: **Alex Seekings**

Position: **Kitchen team leader** Pub: **The West Quay (Brighton)**

Studying mechanical engineering at the University of Brighton

Alex is in his final year of a four-year university degree course and works part time, three days per week, in the kitchen at The West Quay (Brighton).

He started in February 2018 with the company, at The Tailor's Chalk (Sidcup), near to his home, working as a cross-trained associate on the bar and kitchen.

Alex then moved in September that year to Brighton for uni, transferring to The Post & Telegraph (Brighton) before joining the team in March 2022 at The West Quay.

He said: "Wetherspoon has always been very flexible – and my transfer from Sidcup to Brighton was organised within an hour of applying.

"When I have looked at other working opportunities, nothing comes close to what Wetherspoon has to offer."

Alex, 23, added: "My degree is more about the interest and knowledge of the subject, rather than work, and there is an outside chance that I would consider a career with Wetherspoon.

"I am certainly happy to stay with the company after my degree finishes, before considering future options."



Name: **Flora Colton**

Position: **Shift leader** Pub: **The Counting House (Dundee)**

Studying for a degree in English and creative writing at the University of Dundee

Flora, 25, joined the company in September 2015 as a part-time bar associate, at the age of 18, at Hunters Hall (Galashiels).

She moved to The Counting House (Dundee) when moving from her home in the Borders to start university in the city.

Now in her third year of a four-year course, Flora works at least 25 hours per week at the pub.

Flora said: "The job is very flexible and really ideal as a student, with available set shift patterns and the opportunity of weekend working.

"Wetherspoon is a very good company to work for, with incentives and bonuses also available, and I definitely get a sense of security and stability with my job.

"When I have finished my degree, I am keeping my options open and could potentially work full time for Wetherspoon, but, at the moment, with my studies, being a part-time shift leader suits me."

SEDGLEY

PLAQUE PLACED IN MEMORY OF REECE

A memorial plaque has been placed at The Clifton (Sedgley) to mark the anniversary of the death of customer and dedicated Wolverhampton Wanderers supporter Reece Cox. Young dad Reece died after he was attacked outside the pub in August 2020, in an incident unrelated to the pub.

Reece's father, Darren Cox, was accompanied by former Wolves players Mel Eves and John Purdie as the plaque was erected on the wall of the pub.

To mark the occasion, the pub was decorated in gold and black, the colours of the Wolverhampton Wanderers kit.

After the brief ceremony, Reece's family members conducted a memorial walk to Molineux, home of Wolverhampton Wanderers FC, raising £540 for Victim Support.

The pub's manager, Ryan Underhill, said: "It was a fitting and respectful tribute to Reece, who was a massive Wolves fan."

Pictured (left to right) are team leader Sarah Foster, Mel Eves, bar associate Victoria Shuker, Darren Cox and (from Victim Support) Becky Ball.



SHEFFIELD

SCARSDALE HEROES HELP TO RAISE FUNDS FOR JUDE

The team at The Scarsdale Hundred (Sheffield) has supported a local family by holding a charity day at the pub.

Organised by shift manager Jake Hartley (back left) and kitchen shift leader Belle Astle, the event was to raise money for four-year-old Jude Mellon-Jameson, for his neuroblastoma maintenance therapy, following diagnosis in July 2021.

Young customer Paige Mercer is pictured (centre) with Jake and Spider-Man (aka bar associate Mark Warwick).

The event included costumes and face-painting by bar associate

Amber Mae Fox (front right), thanks to her own company – A Whole New World Event Entertainment.

Also pictured (back row) are team leaders Michael Morris and Millie Wicken.

Other activities during the fundraising afternoon included a bake sale, raffle, tombola and lucky dip, which helped to raise £430 towards Jude's continuing treatment.

The pub's manager, Emma Walker, said: "We were only too happy to help to support Jude and his family to raise money for his ongoing treatment."



SHEFFIELD

BANKERS DRAFT HELPS TO KIT OUT YOUNG FOOTBALLERS

The Bankers Draft (Sheffield) raised almost £400 for a local mixed under-9s football team.

Team leader Alan Harrison organised a scratchcard competition during the Women's European Championships (won by England) to raise most of the £392 total – to be used by Treeton Terriers FC to provide new kit and football equipment.

Jonathan Atkinson is the pub's manager, with his son Max playing for the team.

He said: "They are all in the same class at school. Max's friend Maisy plays for the team and, like other teams in the league in which they play, the Terriers encourage mixed teams, in the wake of the women's success at the Euros."

Dave Steen, head coach, said: "We are very grateful to Alan, Jonathan and the team at The Bankers Draft for their efforts. We will try to pay it back with success on the pitch."

Pictured are the Treeton Terriers with (back row, left to right) assistant head coach Matthew Ortell, head coach Dave Steen, Jonathan Atkinson and Alan Harrison.



CASTLEFORD

THAT'S NEAT, THEY REALLY LOVE GARETH'S TIGER FEAT



One man's love for his local rugby team resulted in a great celebration of all things Yorkshire at The Glass Blower (Castleford).

Shift leader Gareth Brookes invited rugby players George Griffin and Callum McLelland, from his beloved Castleford Tigers, to the pub to celebrate Yorkshire Day.

They were accompanied by the team's mascot, Rob Lilley, known by fans as 'JT'.

The visit was part of a local Ambassador Scheme partnership between the Super League rugby football club and the pub.

The pair signed autographs and chatted to staff and customers.

As well as the players' visit, The Glass Blower brought in ales from Yorkshire brewers Acorn, Osset, Rudgate and Leeds.

These included Rudgate's Viking and Jorvik ales and Yorkshire Blonde from Osset, as well as Acorn's Yorkshire Pride.

A charity tombola, featuring prizes including bottles of whisky and Prosecco, cuddly toys and toiletries, raised £205 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The pub's manager, Sarah Heppinstall, said: "It was a great day – and we are especially grateful to George and Callum for coming down to help us to celebrate Yorkshire Day in style."

Pictured (left to right) are George Griffin, Callum McLelland, Sarah Heppinstall, Gareth Brookes and 'JT' (Rob Lilley).

PEDALLING PAUL STORMS PAST HIS 8,000-MILE TARGET



Keen cycling enthusiast and Wetherspoon customer Paul Downs is putting his personal pedal power to great use – helping young cancer patients.

Paul, who lives in Southampton and is a customer at The Bright Water Inn (Shirley), his local Wetherspoon pub, embarked on a charity challenge throughout 2022 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Paul, 46, has been clocking up the charity miles in his bid to complete 8,000 miles during the calendar year, while raising £625 through sponsorship and donations on his online fundraising page (www.justgiving.com/fundraising/paul-downs6).

Paul said: “I really pushed myself hard in September and completed my challenge on Sunday 2 October, live on YouTube.

“I’ll still continue to cycle and won’t stop until 31 December, since the challenge was for the whole year.”

Paul, who works as a cleaner, commuting to work by bike, settled on the target of 8,000 miles, having clocked up 6,700 cycle miles during 2021.

He said: “I wanted a challenge, so upped the total to a significant, yet still achievable, target.”

Paul’s cycle challenge has taken him all over the south coast, in and around the New Forest and as far as Cardiff (130 miles in one day).

He also clocked up 100 miles on a static bike, during a summer fundraiser at The Bright Water Inn, adding £250 to his charity collection.

On his trips around the New Forest, The Six Bells (Lymington) is one favourite refreshment stop, while The Great Western and The Prince of Wales (both Cardiff) provided breakfast venues during his two-day stay in the Welsh capital.

Paul added: “I wanted to raise money for Young Lives vs Cancer because cancer is a terrible disease so close to all our hearts.

“I lost my grandad to cancer when I was eight years old – and still remember him very fondly.

“The pandemic also had such an impact on the younger generation – I just wanted to help in some way.”

MICHAEL KEEPS FUNDS FLOWING AT THE JOHN FAIRWEATHER



Pub manager Michael Easton and his team have been supporting local charities, with fundraising events at his pub.

Michael, who took over at The John Fairweather (Cambuslang) in January 2022, hosted his third fundraiser in eight months for customer David Weir (pictured right).

Shift leader Steven Glancy is also pictured helping David with the tombola stall.

David raises funds for the National Autistic Society (www.autism.org.uk) and asked Michael whether he could set up his fundraising tombola at the pub. All prizes were supplied by the charity, and the event raised £142.88.

Michael, who was previously at The Vulcan (Coatbridge) (now closed), said: "I have always been a keen fundraiser – and word has obviously spread locally here too.

"I have been approached by several local charities and was only too happy to support David on this occasion, as we have the space at the pub."

Michael and his team have also raised in excess of £1,000 for local causes, including Cambuslang Rangers Football Club and Cambuslang Out of School Care, as well as continuing to fundraise for Young Lives vs Cancer.

MANNAMEAD HAS ALL I NEED, SAYS CHILDREN'S AUTHOR SARAH

Children's author Sarah Adams advocates two things to help in improving mental health and well-being: creativity and community. Plymouth-based Sarah often visits her local Wetherspoon pub, The Mannamead (Plymouth), and, although she isn't a drinker, enjoys the hot drinks on offer.

Sarah said: "The Mannamead has been a great help to me in recent times, health wise. I have found my visits there helpful because it is a good and safe environment.

"The staff are understanding and, if they see that I'm feeling a bit wobbly or low, they are always very kind. I am really impressed.

"It is very easy for people to dismiss a big chain like Wetherspoon as a faceless company, yet my visits have made me realise that it is not like that. The pub is an essential part of the local community."

Sarah added: "I also love the local history information which Wetherspoon's pubs have on the walls. It is always very interesting to read about the local area and its past."

Sarah published a fully colour-illustrated (by James Fletcher) children's book in autumn 2021, aimed at 5- to 6-year-olds, entitled *Once Upon a Munchtime There Was a Cow Called Munch*.



And, as well as volunteering for a charity, distributing food and items, she has also run creative writing workshops.

She said: "With the support services in such a pickle at the moment, more and more people are using creativity and arts to help with mental health and well-being.

"I have always enjoyed writing, mainly poetry, which has been published online and locally, but decided to write the book, which I finished during lockdown."



The Bell Hanger (Chepstow) Enjoying lunch and a cocktail are customers Lauren Letheren (left) and Georgia Rolfe

ONE-DAY PRICE CUT SHOWS THE UNFAIR EFFECT OF VAT

Customers at Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK enjoyed a price reduction on all food and drinks to mark Tax Equality Day.

The pubs cut prices by 7.5 per cent to highlight the benefit of a permanent VAT reduction in the hospitality industry.

Prices at the company's 851 pubs (not including the Republic of Ireland) were reduced for one day only.

In Scotland, prices were reduced on meals and non-alcoholic drinks only, owing to licensing restrictions.

For example, a customer spending £10 on food and drinks paid only £9.25 on Tax Equality Day.

All food and drinks in pubs are subject to 20 per cent VAT.

By comparison, supermarkets pay zero VAT on food and are able to use that saving to sell alcohol to their customers at a discounted price.

Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, said: "We were delighted to host Tax Equality Day in our pubs to highlight the unfair tax system between pubs and supermarkets.

"Taxes should be fair and equitable.

"It doesn't make sense for the hospitality industry to subsidise supermarkets.

"It is unfair that supermarkets pay zero VAT on food, yet pubs and restaurants pay 20 per cent.

"Pubs have been under fantastic pressure for decades because of the tax disadvantages which they have with supermarkets.

"We applauded the chancellor when he reduced the level of VAT to five per cent and then to 12.5 per cent (for food and drinks served in pubs) and urge the new chancellor, once again, to reduce VAT, thereby creating tax equality between pubs and supermarkets.

"The chancellor should also note that the main impact of tax inequality is on high streets and town and city centres, which depend heavily on a diversity of prosperous hospitality businesses for economic, social and employment success.

"Government does best when it does not discriminate among various types of business selling the same products."



The Humphrey Bean (Tonbridge) Customers Chris and Kim Bellward



The Grand Electric Hall (Spennymoor) Enjoying a cuppa together (left to right) are customers Ruth Wareham, Margaret O'Hare, Val Johnson and Sandra Carr



The Moon on the Hill (Harrow) Customers Chris Carter and Lorraine Bullous tuck in to breakfast



The Savoy (Swindon) Customers Gregory Jackowski (left) and John Steel enjoy a glass of wine



The Brandon Works (Motherwell) A family celebration for customers Brian Cannon, Marion Cannon, Jim Cannon, Margaret Murray and Monika Cannon (left to right)



The Sussex (Rhyl) Shift leader Karen Walsh (centre) serves drinks to customers Gordon Scott and Marion Smith



The Esquire House (Annisland, Glasgow) Customers Mary Wright and Joan McReynolds (right) enjoy a light lunch



The Market Cross (Holywell) Shift leader Gemma Cunningham serves customers Doreen Needham (centre) and Laura Jackson



The Regent (Kirkby-in-Ashfield) Customers (left to right) Danielle Gore, Keeley Sankey and Holly Rogers-Day



The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield) The Woodseats Ramblers group gathers to enjoy a pint or two

**TAX
EQUALITY
DAY**
Round-up



The Wheatsheaf Inn (Kilmarnock) Celebrating 57 years' marriage and enjoying breakfast together are James and Florence Kyle



The Central Bar (Carrickfergus) Customers Karen McArthur (left) and Rebecca Brown share a bottle of wine



George Hotel (Bewdley) Customers Ron and Maggie Page enjoy fish and chips and a pint



The Bridge House (Belfast) Bar associate Georgia Carroll serves customer Eddie Brown a pint



The Tim Bobbin (Urmston) Customers Brian and Cheryl Goodwin 'toast' Tax Equality Day



The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards) Customers Billy James (left) and Andy Waghorn

WIN A £30

WETHERSPOON GIFT CARD

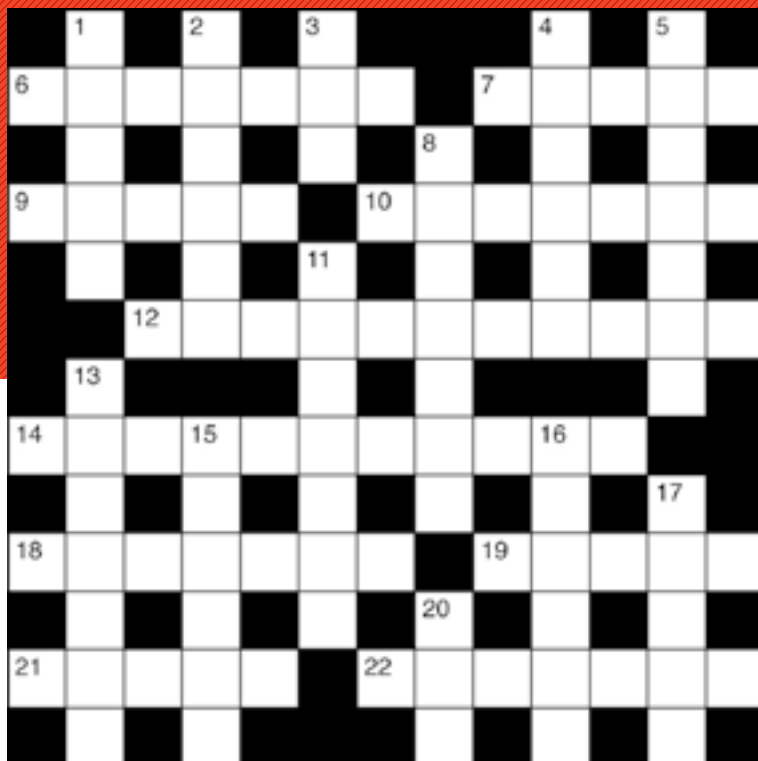
The first four correctly completed crosswords to be pulled out of the hat will win each of those entrants a Wetherspoon gift card worth £30.

Closing date for entries: 6 March 2023

Post to:

Wetherspoon News Magazine Competitions
PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

4 X £30 PRIZES TO BE WON



Across

- 6. 17c French playwright whose works include Tartuffe (7)
- 7. Ken, film director whose works include the 1993 Cannes Film Festival Jury prize-winning Raining Stones (5)
- 9. Asian kingdom whose capital is Kathmandu (5)
- 10. Volelike rodent of the genus Lemmus (7)
- 12. 1974 William Goldman novel (8,3)
- 14. Scottish cricketer who captained England 1973-5 (4,7)
- 18. Genus of plants with red, white or purple fragrant flowers which are cultivated as garden plants (7)
- 19. In Greek mythology, a princess of Colchis who assisted Jason in obtaining the Golden Fleece (5)
- 21. See 20 Down.
- 22. Immortal winged horse in Greek mythology (7)

Down

- 1. Hebrew prophet who led the Israelites out of Egypt (5)
- 2. Capital of Albania (6)
- 3. Joan of ---, Saint known as the Maid of Orleans (3)
- 4. Greg, golfer nicknamed 'The Great White Shark' (6)
- 5. 1989 film with Joanne Whalley-Kilmer based on a 1963 British cabinet minister's resignation (7)
- 8. Colourless odourless gas, the main constituent of natural gas (7)
- 11. Capital of French Guiana (7)
- 13. The Roman goddess of wisdom (7)
- 15. See 16 Down.
- 16 & 15Dn. 1985 Australian Open men's singles champion (6,6)
- 17. Puzzle consisting of pictures representing syllables and words (5)
- 20 & 21Ac. American animated cartoon director who created Daffy Duck (3,5)

SOLUTIONS (autumn 2022 issue)

Across: 1 Chesterton; 7 Amber; 8 Electra; 10 What's new; 11 Bath; 13 Ossian; 15 Malawi; 17 Name; 18 Pussycat; 21 Mermaid; 22 Aorta; 23 Little Nell.
Down: 1 Cobra; 2 Etruscan; 3 The Men; 4 Reed; 5 Ostrava; 6 Ian Woosnam; 9 A Christmas; 12 Rat snake; 14 Samurai; 16 Dundee; 19 Carol; 20 Bart.

The autumn 2022 crossword winners were:

- MH, London • MP, London • SS, Chard • AJ, Keynsham



Please complete the answers and your details, as shown, and send the completed page to:

Wetherspoon News Magazine Competitions
PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

Your details:

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

I am over 18 years (signature):

Age:

Year of birth:

Terms and conditions: The crossword is open to all UK residents over the age of 18, excluding employees of the promoter, their respective families and agents or anyone directly connected with this competition. Acceptance of the rules is a condition of entry. No purchase necessary. Entries must be received no later than 6/3/23. Proof of dispatch is not proof of receipt. The winners will be the first correctly answered entries drawn. Where multiple prizes are offered, the winners will be the first relevant number of correct entries drawn. The judge's decision is final; no correspondence will be entered into. One entry per household. The winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative available. The promoter reserves the right to cancel or amend this promotion, owing to events arising beyond its control. The promoter is not responsible for any third-party acts or omissions. Once the competition has been drawn all entry slips and information provided therein will be securely destroyed and shall not be retained by J D Wetherspoon plc or its affiliates.

Promoter: J D Wetherspoon plc, Wetherspoon House, Central Park, Reeds Crescent, Watford, WD24 4QL



Nik Antona is national chairman of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

Cheers

CASK AND GLASS – THE GREENEST WAY TO DRINK

Reusable containers, along with local production and consumption, make cask-conditioned ale the best environmental choice, says CAMRA's national chairman Nik Antona

I'm incredibly proud to announce that the 50th edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, showcasing the very best pubs serving real ale, is now on sale.

CAMRA's publication, The Good Beer Guide, builds on decades of experience to give readers an overview, across each region of the UK, of the beer and pub scene – so serving as an incredibly useful barometer for the industry.

There have been significant changes since it was first printed, covering just 1,500 pubs and 105 breweries.

Today, it features 1,864 breweries and 4,500 of the nation's best pubs – including 200 Wetherspoon venues.

As the guide has grown, so has the scope of CAMRA's campaigning.

This year's guide shares an incredibly important message to the nation's beer-drinkers – and that is to 'drink greener'.

OBVIOUS

While the environment might not seem like an obvious subject on which a consumer organisation of pub- and beer-lovers might campaign, it's clear that the environment touches every part of CAMRA and the licensed trade. The question we face is: what can we do about it?

It's often the case that simple questions come with complicated answers. Environmental campaigning can be fraught with ideological and politicised debate, overwhelming statistics and a nagging sense of guilt that not all of your lightbulbs are energy-efficient.

However, the reality is that many of these issues are practical problems, with equally practical solutions.

Luckily, there is a simple way to make a greener choice at the bar – and one which tastes great too.

Cask-conditioned ale – beer sold predominantly through hand-pulls and which is naturally carbonated, rather than artificially injected with CO₂ – forms the ultimate circular economy from grain to glass, according to this year's Good Beer Guide, making it the most eco-friendly choice at the bar.

Alongside being stored and served in reusable containers from barrel to glass, cask is usually brewed locally and served locally – cutting down on beer miles and helping drinkers to discover new flavours with a local provenance.

TIPPLE

It's clear that, at some level, most consumers already know this – our recent YouGov research has shown that 70% of consumers in the UK believe that having a draught beer or cider in a pub is the greenest way of enjoying a tittle, underscoring our call to choose cask.

While not every cask beer served will have been brewed locally, we're urging publicans to make a conscious effort to stock locally produced beer.

There are many benefits to stocking local brews. Not only do pub-goers get to enjoy distinctive local beer styles, but publicans can support brewers with increased sales which, in turn, creates more local jobs and increases the local economy's resilience, with more money being generated and spent in the area.

To help to promote pubs serving at least one local ale, we have updated our LocAle accreditation materials, so that consumers can seek these outlets.

There is, of course, a huge amount of work which needs to be done, across the industry, to become more environmentally friendly, with more complex answers than just choosing cask. CAMRA is throwing its weight behind a range of initiatives to improve sustainability throughout the sector.

One of the first areas identified was that of business rates – a tax based usually on the value of the building which a business occupies.

The value of a pub is calculated in a slightly different way, meaning that pubs pay a disproportionately high amount of tax – and campaigning to make this system fairer is one of CAMRA's long-standing goals.

TECHNOLOGY

However, there is a second issue with this legislation. The calculation of a building's value currently includes technology like solar panels, heat-recovery systems and some types of battery bank, meaning that any business installing this technology will be hit with a higher tax bill for doing so.

In response to this, CAMRA has called for this technology to be exempt from business-rate calculations – a simple change which would make it easier for businesses to invest in innovative energy generation and storage.

We have also joined the call for an urgent ban on single-use plastic pint cups, emphasising the importance, across the industry, of alternatives.

With 75% of consumers agreeing that plastic ruins the taste of beer, we'd like to see the government not only ban single-use plastic pint cups, but also support the development and adoption of solutions for a better pint.

There's a huge amount of work to be done, yet every single one of us can make a difference – and that difference starts at the bar.

I'd urge all pub-goers to 'drink greener' this winter and use their copy of The Good Beer Guide to seek their next great pint.

● **To join CAMRA, visit: join.camra.org.uk**

● **To order your copy of The Good Beer Guide, visit: shop.camra.org.uk/product/the-good-beer-guide-2023/**

TOP BRANDS

SENSIBLE PRICES

Number one world beer in the UK

Crafted by Westons Cider, Much Marcle, Herefordshire

Number one speciality beer in Europe

Number one beer brand in the world

Worthington Brewery: 260 years of heritage

NEW



**Leffe
Blonde**

6.6% ABV

**Corona
Extra**

4.5% ABV

Budweiser

4.5% ABV

**Stowford Press
Apple Cider**

4.5% ABV

NEW

**Stowford Press
Dark Berry**

4.0% ABV

**Worthington's
Creamflow**

3.6% ABV

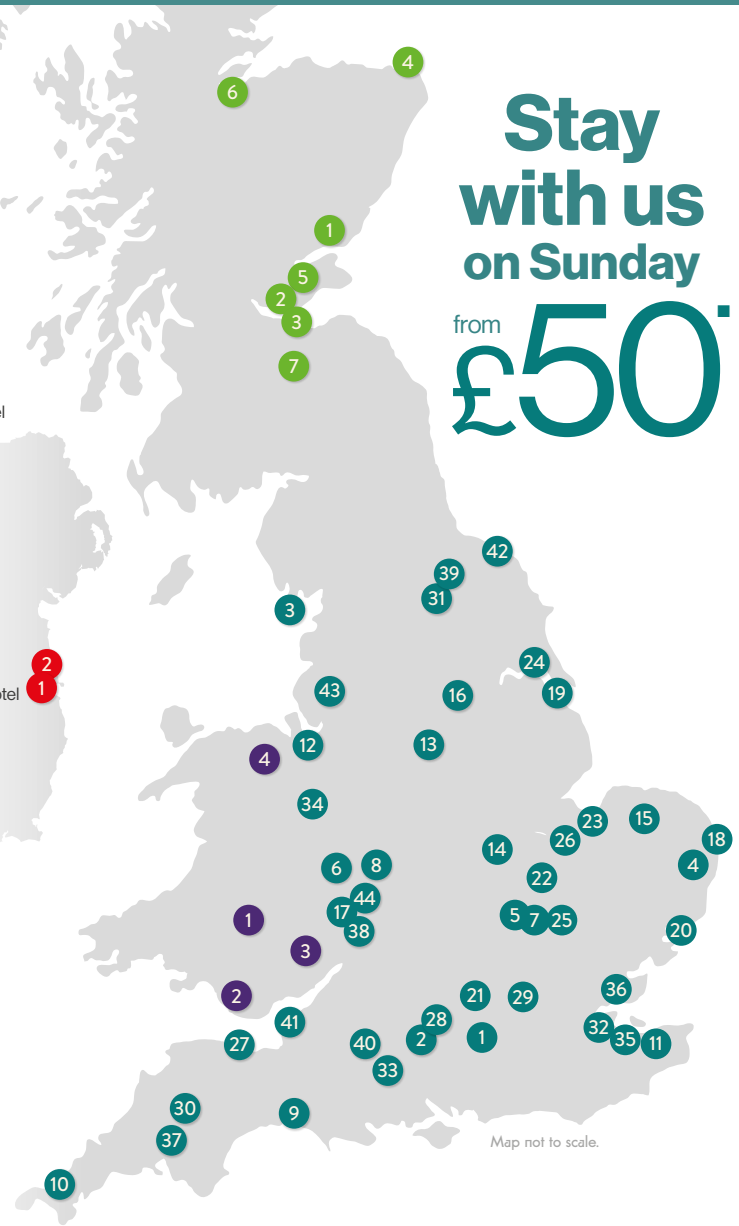
wetherspoon hotels

57 hotels in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales

England

- 1 Aldershot**
The Queen Hotel
GU11 1BH
01252 361770
- 7 Andover**
The John Russell Fox
SP10 1NY
01264 320920
- 3 Barrow-in-Furness**
The Furness Railway
LA14 5UB
01229 824758
- 4 Beccles**
The Kings Head Hotel
NR34 9HA
01502 718730
- 5 Bedford**
The Pilgrim's Progress
MK40 1QB
01234 344566
- 6 Bewdley**
George Hotel
DY12 2AW
01299 406970
- 7 Biggleswade**
The Crown Hotel
SG18 0JE
01767 310510
- 8 Birmingham**
The Briar Rose
B2 5RE
0121 634 8100
- 9 Bridport**
The Greyhound
DT6 3LF
01308 421905
- 10 Camborne**
The John Francis Basset
TR14 8JZ
01209 613230
- 11 Canterbury**
The Thomas Ingoldsby
CT1 2HG
01227 463339
- 12 Chester**
The Bull and Stirrup Hotel
CH1 4EE
01244 394840
- 13 Chesterfield**
The Portland Hotel
S40 1AY
01246 293600
- 14 Corby**
The Saxon Crown
NN17 1FN
01536 203672
- 15 Dereham**
The Romany Rye
NR19 1DL
01362 654160
- 16 Doncaster**
The Red Lion
DN1 1NH
01302 732123
- 17 Great Malvern**
The Foley Arms Hotel
WR14 4QS
01684 580350
- 18 Great Yarmouth**
The Troll Cart
NR30 2AF
01493 332932
- 19 Grimsby**
The Yarborough Hotel
DN31 1JN
01472 361924
- 20 Harwich**
The Bottle Kiln
CO12 3JR
01255 245400
- 21 Henley-on-Thames**
The Catherine Wheel Hotel
RG9 2AR
01491 848484
- 22 Huntingdon**
Sandford House
PE29 3BD
01480 432402
- 23 King's Lynn**
Globe Hotel
PE30 1EZ
01553 668000
- 24 Kingston Upon Hull**
The Admiral of the Humber
HU1 2NR
01482 324030
- 25 Leighton Buzzard**
The Swan Hotel
LU7 1EA
01525 380170
- 26 March**
The Hippodrome
PE15 8AQ
01354 602980
- 27 Minehead**
The Duke of Wellington
TA24 5NH
01643 701910
- 28 Newbury**
The Hatchet Inn
RG14 5BD
01635 277560
- 29 Northolt**
The Greenwood Hotel
UB5 4LA
020 8423 6169
- 30 Okehampton**
The White Hart Hotel
EX20 1HD
01837 658533
- 31 Ripon**
The Unicorn Hotel
HG4 1BP
01765 643410
- 32 Rochester**
The Golden Lion
ME1 1EL
01634 405402
- 33 Salisbury**
The King's Head Inn
SP12ND
01722 438400
- 34 Shrewsbury**
The Shrewsbury Hotel
SY1 1PU
01743 236203
- 35 Sittingbourne**
The Golden Hope
ME10 1DR
01795 476791
- 36 Southend-on-Sea**
The Last Post
SS1 1AS
01702 337860
- 37 Tavistock**
The Queen's Head Hotel
PL19 8AQ
01822 612455
- 38 Tewkesbury**
The Royal Hop Pole
GL20 5RS
01684 274039
- 39 Thirsk**
The Three Tuns
YO7 1LH
01845 524605
- 40 Warminster**
The Bath Arms
BA12 9AZ
01985 853920
- 41 Weston-super-Mare**
Cabot Court Hotel
BS23 2AH
01934 427930
- 42 Whitby**
The Angel Hotel
YO21 1DH
01947 824730
- 43 Wigan**
The Bocket Arms
WN1 2DD
01942 823800
- 44 Worcester**
The Crown
WR1 3LL
01905 617578

Stay with us on Sunday from **£50***



Map not to scale.

Scotland

- 1 Broughty Ferry**
Jolly's Hotel
DD5 2BJ
01382 734910
- 2 Dunfermline**
The Guildhall & Linen Exchange
KY12 7DR
01383 724060
- 3 Edinburgh**
The White Lady
EH12 8AT
0131 314 0680
- 4 Fraserburgh**
The Saltoun Inn
AB43 9DA
01346 519548
- 5 Glenrothes**
The Golden Acorn
KY7 5NA
01592 751175
- 6 Inverness**
The King's Highway
IV1 1EN
01463 251800
- 7 Peebles**
The Cross Keys
EH45 8RS
01721 723467

Wales

- 1 Brecon**
The George Hotel
LD3 7LD
01874 403231
- 2 Bridgend**
The Wyndham Arms Hotel
CF31 1JE
01656 673500
- 3 Monmouth**
The Kings Head
NP25 3DY
01600 710500
- 4 Ruthin**
The Castle Hotel
LL15 1AA
01824 708950

Republic of Ireland

- 1 Dublin**
Keavan's Port Hotel
D02 K854
+353 1405 4790
- 2 Swords**
The Old Borough
K67 E6W7
+353 1 808 4103

Key

- 39** Number of bedrooms
- 31** Location on map

BOOK DIRECT FOR THE BEST RATES*

use the app or the website

jdwetherspoon.com

*Price shown is per room, per night, on a Sunday, and is subject to change.