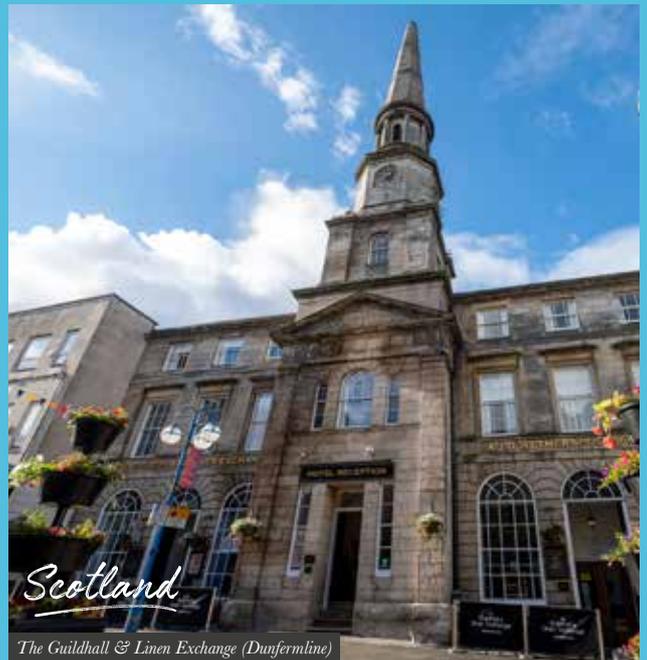


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WETHERSPOON NEWS

UK EDITION

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NEW HOTEL IS A BOON FOR THE TOON

Four floors of accommodation in new building adjoining established pub - The Mile Castle



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The Perfect Serve



INSIDE

FEATURES

Tim's viewpoint Piping pub news and common-sense opinion directly to customers for 34 years	4
New hotel is a boon for the toon Four floors of accommodation in new building adjoining established pub – The Mile Castle	8
£569 million in free shares and bonuses paid to employees since 2006 86.3 per cent paid to pub staff	14
The Great Kent Wetherspoon's Walking Challenge Chris and friends complete 23-pub 230-mile challenge	20
Energetically working to reduce energy use Aiming to reduce all pubs' electricity, gas and water consumption substantially	24
Pubwatch Wetherspoon's pubs participating in more than 500 UK schemes	26
When Wednesday comes... New Ale Wednesday offer means lower midweek pint prices at vast majority of pubs	28
CAMRA's cognoscente hail the ale at 251 pubs 251 pubs are listed in CAMRA's publication The Good Beer Guide 2025	30
£6 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	32
Consistently mighty marks Wetherspoon's pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales clock up an average food hygiene rating of 4.99 out of 5	38
The unsung heroes who keep our pubs shipshape Maintenance associates carry out countless tasks, ensuring that premises are in their very best shape	43
The pub now arriving at London Waterloo... The Lion & The Unicorn becomes eighth Wetherspoon venue located at a railway station	44
Real ale – The Linford Arms Staffordshire pub continues winning streak with yet another entry in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide	48
Food answers at your fingertips App, website and customer information screen assist customers to customise meal choices to exclude any unwanted ingredients	51
Tim's articles Highlighting some of the main issues facing the pub industry	52
International female brewers bring us their festival brews Ready to spring into action for 12-day spring beer festival	61



Trusted experts who keep pubs tip-top Building relationships with professionals	62
Selection of low- and no-alcohol drinks just got even bigger How to score zero in our multiple choice	64
Pub design – The Ivy Wall Lincolnshire pub opened in 2005, following redevelopment project	66
Try the Christmas menu Give yourself, and your friends and family, a present, with a helping of festive food	69
App users pay tribute to Payit Secure, simple, fast and flexible way to pay	74
A meal deal with even more appeal Price now includes expanded choice of drinks, including a range of cocktails	77
Craft ale range is all the rage New additions to locally sourced craft beer line-up	82
Spicing up your life since the 1990s Curry Club®, hotly supported by customers since its inception	84
Birthday cake galore Pubs' birthdays aplenty as milestones whizz by	114

THE REGULAR STUFF

Letters	6
Meet the brewer	70
Now open	12, 56
New look	58, 60
People	16, 50, 71, 76, 79, 80
Community	68, 72, 75, 78, 81, 88, 107, 108, 116
Young Lives vs Cancer	90, 92, 94
CAMRA's bar talk	118

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.

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wetherspoon in numbers

56

hotels in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

251

pubs in CAMRA's The Good Beer Guide 2025.

99.59 per cent

of pubs achieving a top hygiene rating of five stars.

19 years

as a Top Employer United Kingdom.

£23.5 million

raised for Young Lives vs Cancer since 2002.

£569 million

in free shares and bonuses paid to employees since 2006.

£6 billion

generated in tax in the last 10 years.

Customers and the public should question the government's future plans for pubs

Because some of them are daft...

Like all public companies listed on the stock exchange, Wetherspoon produces an annual report detailing its financial performance and other important information.

Wetherspoon's report for 2024 was published in October and raises several points of likely interest to customers, employees and the public.

For example, under the heading 'Further progress' (see extract 2, opposite page), the report outlines some notable successes: 251 pubs listed in CAMRA's publication *The Good Beer Guide* – more listings, we think, than any other company; 24,500 employees who are also shareholders – quite possibly more than any other UK company; 677 pubs achieving platinum or diamond status in the National Loo of the Year awards – definitely more than any other company; top performances in both the Guinness accreditation scheme and Cask Marque's real-ale inspections... among many other achievements.

In addition, annual reports provide companies with an opportunity to comment on issues such as taxes and regulations.

In this context, under the heading 'You cannot be serious' (see extract 1, below), Wetherspoon has a dig at rather daft proposals from government ministers and Cambridge University academics to discourage drinking by reducing not only pubs' opening times, but also pint glasses by about one-third – to a 'schooner' size.

Readers will hope, to paraphrase the great John McEnroe, that these proposals were not serious, but our great fear is that, indeed, they were serious...

Wetherspoon also took the opportunity to renew a plea for tax equality between pubs and supermarkets (extract 4, opposite), where the current disparity is causing pubs to be far more expensive than the 'off-trade', driving people away from the supervised pub environment to unsupervised locations elsewhere.

In addition, Wetherspoon makes the case for a local pubwatch in every town (extract 3).

Pubwatch is a committee of local licensees and the police, meeting regularly in many, but not all, towns and cities to address issues affecting the hospitality trade and the broader town environment.

Wetherspoon's observation is that towns and cities where pubwatch operates have higher standards of general public order than those which don't (532 of Wetherspoon's 800 pubs have a pubwatch scheme in the locality).

So, we say that it's a no-brainer to have pubwatch everywhere!

In the annual report, we make several other points, shared with you on the opposite page.

As always, you may not agree with every point, but it's only through wider public debate that sensible decisions can be made.

The ivory towers of academia and Downing Street are all too fallible, with poor decisions often being the result, in the absence of public debate.

The existence of public debate, in parliament, in the press and across every other forum, is, of course, why democracy is far more successful, despite inevitable mistakes, than any other system.

Tim Martin
Chairman



PHOTO CREDIT - FRANK TEWESBURY / STRINGER, GETTY IMAGES

Note from the editor: Here, we highlight six extracts from Wetherspoon's annual report. Additional commentary on Tim's views from the annual report and those of *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* can be found on pages 52–54.

Extract 1

You cannot be serious

“Pubs are highly regulated businesses, controlled by licensing laws which originate in parliament.”

In recent weeks, according to press reports, government ministers and academic researchers have aired two potential changes to licensing regulations, both aimed at lowering alcohol consumption.

The first is that pub and hospitality licensing hours might be reduced.

Since 1988, pubs have been able to open all day, having previously been required to close for around two or three hours each afternoon.

In addition, in 2005, the government at the time further liberalised licensing laws, resulting in many pubs opening an hour or two more of an evening – in Wetherspoon's case, usually until midnight on weekdays and until 1am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Since these liberalisations, counterintuitively, the share of alcohol consumption of the 'on-trade' (pubs, clubs, restaurants etc) has plummeted.

In the early 1980s, for example, the on-trade accounted for about 90% of beer sales.

This dropped to about 50% before the pandemic and is now about 40%, probably owing to the increase in the price disparity with supermarkets, which stems from the tax disadvantage referred to in the section opposite titled 'VAT equality'.

Reducing pubs' opening times would certainly further reduce on-trade consumption, yet that reduction is likely to be replaced by 'off-trade' consumption at home and in other 'unregulated' environments.

Among the advantages of the on-trade, linked to regulation, are that consumption is supervised by trained licensees, police and local authorities, in many cases including CCTV coverage of premises – and so on.

This does not mean that pubs are invariably oases of tranquillity, but, in general, pub behaviour is good, with pubs valued by communities.

The second, slightly daft, proposal is reported as emanating from Cambridge University – that pubs should sell beer in quantities of two-thirds of a pint (sometimes called a schooner), rather than the traditional pint.

Common sense indicates that reducing glass sizes is, because of human nature, unlikely to reduce alcohol consumption in pubs and would also have no effect whatsoever on drinks bought in supermarkets, unless container sizes in supermarkets were also, unrealistically, reduced.

For example, our Aussie cousins, notorious guzzlers, already use schooners... without any noticeable reduction in consumption.

Both of these proposals seem likely, if implemented, to encourage off-trade consumption at the expense of the on-trade, thereby exchanging the relatively highly priced and supervised pub environment for the inexpensive and unsupervised alternative of home, park and party consumption.

The word 'pub' may have a misleading connotation for some ministers and researchers.

For example, Wetherspoon's highest-selling draught product, by far, is Pepsi. Coffee and tea volumes, which are not in the draught category, are approximately double those of Pepsi.

The reality is that products sold in pubs have radically changed in recent decades.

In summary, neither of these proposals would seem to pass the commonsense test, as John McEnroe (see above) would, no doubt, aver. 99

Extract 2

Further progress

66 In the period, Wetherspoon awarded £49.0 million of bonuses and free shares to employees, of which 96.5% was paid to staff below board level and 86.3% to staff working in our pubs. Approximately 24,500 of our 42,300 employees are shareholders in the company.

The average length of service of a pub manager increased to 14.9 years, while that of a kitchen manager is 10.9 years. There are 26 employees who have worked for the company for more than 30 years, 662 for more than 20 years, 4,056 for more than 10 years and 11,444 for more than five years.

Wetherspoon has been recognised by the Top Employers Institute as a Top Employer United Kingdom 2024. It is the 19th time that Wetherspoon has been certified by the Top Employers Institute.

251 pubs feature in the 2025 Good Beer Guide, an increase of 15, compared with last year.

In November 2023, Wetherspoon was voted the Best Airport Retailer for Food & Beverages at the British Travel Awards.

In August 2024, our national distribution centre in Daventry, operated by DHL, had its 20th anniversary. Of the original colleagues from 2004, 27 are still working there. In addition, we opened a secondary warehouse in Rugby which, as well as acting as a business continuity solution, will allow for further company volume growth.

The company has an extensive training programme for its employees, including 'kitchen of excellence' training, as well as cellar, dispense and coffee academy training.

Wetherspoon has recently been included in the Financial Times 'FT – Statista Leaders 2024' report, highlighting Europe's leading companies in diversity and inclusion.

The company's UK nominated charity is Young Lives vs Cancer (previously CLIC Sargent). It supports children and young people with cancer. Since our partnership began in 2002, Wetherspoon has raised over £23.5 million for the charity, thanks to the generosity and efforts of customers and employees.

Of the company's toilet facilities, 677 have been awarded the highest platinum or diamond status by the National Loo of the Year awards.

The awards are aimed at highlighting and improving standards of away-from-home washrooms across the UK. The toilets are judged against numerous criteria, including décor and maintenance, cleanliness, accessibility, hand-washing and -drying equipment and overall management.

In January 2024, the company was awarded the highest rating by The Sustainable Restaurant Association – the world's largest accreditation scheme for pubs and restaurants.

Wetherspoon came first in the 'Out to Lunch' league table, compiled by the Soil Association, when last awarded, in 2019 and 2021. Restaurants and pubs are judged and scored on a range of criteria: family

friendliness, healthy options, food quality, value, sustainability and ingredients' provenance.

Wetherspoon is seeking to extend the appeal of its menu. For example, 39% of the dishes on the menu available in the majority of pubs are vegetarian, 11% are vegan and 24% are under 500 Calories.

Cod and haddock are sourced from fisheries which have been certified to the Marine Stewardship Council's standards for well-managed and sustainable fisheries.

Guinness has a quality accreditation programme. Independent assessors review 17 aspects of quality. All pubs have passed this Guinness accreditation.

Since 2008, Wetherspoon has invited brewers from overseas to feature their ales in its real-ale festivals. To date, these brewers have contributed 234 ales, from 147 breweries across 29 countries. In addition, the company works with over 250 UK brewers, mostly small or microbrewers.

Since 1999, Wetherspoon has worked with independent real-ale quality assessor Cask Marque to gauge the quality of ale being served in its pubs. Cask Marque carries out an 11-point audit, covering stock rotation, beer lines' cleanliness, equipment's maintenance, glass-washing cleanliness and hygiene. A star rating is awarded from one to five, with a target of four to five stars for all pubs. Cask Marque states that 66% of UK pubs achieve four or five stars. Of Wetherspoon pubs, 98% have achieved four or five stars. 99

Extract 3

Pubwatch

66 As Wetherspoon has previously highlighted, pubwatch is a forum which has improved wider town and city environments by bringing together pubs, local authorities and the police, in a concerted way, to encourage good behaviour and to reduce antisocial activity.

Wetherspoon's pubs are members of 532 schemes countrywide, with four new schemes and (through pub disposal) 10 fewer schemes elsewhere.

The company also helps to fund National Pubwatch, founded in 1997 by licensees Bill Stone and Raoul De Vaux, along with police superintendent Malcolm Eidmans. This is the umbrella organisation which helps to set up, co-ordinate and support local schemes.

It is our experience, in some towns and cities, where authorities have struggled to control antisocial behaviour, that setting up a local pubwatch has been instrumental in improving safety and security – of not only licensed premises, but also the town and city in general, as well as assisting the police in bringing down crime.

Conversely, we have found, in several towns, including some towns on the outskirts of London, that the absence of an effective pubwatch scheme results in higher incidents of crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour.

In our view, pubwatch is integral to making towns and cities a safe environment for everyone. 99

Extract 4

VAT equality

66 As we have previously stated, the government would generate more revenue and jobs if it were to create tax equality among supermarkets, pubs and restaurants.

Supermarkets pay virtually no VAT in respect of food sales, whereas pubs pay 20%. This has enabled supermarkets to subsidise the price of alcoholic drinks, widening the price gap, to the detriment of pubs and restaurants. Pubs also pay around 20 pence a pint in business rates, whereas supermarkets pay only about 2 pence, creating further inequality.

Pubs have lost 50% of their beer sales to supermarkets in the last 35 or so years. It makes no sense for supermarkets to be treated more leniently than pubs, since pubs generate far more jobs per pint or meal than do supermarkets, as well as far higher levels of tax. Pubs also make an important contribution to the social life of many communities and have better visibility and control of those who consume alcoholic drinks.

Tax equality is particularly important for residents of less affluent areas, since the tax differential is more important there – people can less afford to pay the difference in prices between the on- and off-trade.

As a result, in these less affluent areas, there are often fewer pubs, coffee shops and restaurants, with less employment and increased high-street dereliction. Tax equality would also be in line with the principle of fairness – the same taxes should apply to businesses which sell the same products. 99

Extract 5

Sustainability, recycling and the environment

66 Wherever possible, Wetherspoon separates waste into eight streams: glass, tins/cans, cooking oil, paper/cardboard, plastic, lightbulbs, food waste and general waste.

In partnership with Veolia, our waste service provider, 99.8% of general waste was diverted from landfill in FY24.

Last year, 9,324 tonnes of recyclable waste were processed at our national recycling

centre. In addition, food waste is sent for 'anaerobic digestion' and used cooking oil is converted to biodiesel for agricultural use.

Smart meters are installed in the majority of pubs (and are being installed into the rest of pubs) to facilitate energy consumption reporting.

According to ISTA, a leading company providing energy services, Wetherspoon has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 66% over the last 10 years, after adjusting for sales growth. During that time, the company has also contributed £108.1 million in climate change levies and carbon taxes. 99

Extract 6

Food hygiene ratings

66 Wetherspoon has always emphasised the importance of hygiene standards.

We now have 736 pubs rated on the Food Standards Agency's website. The average score is 4.99, with 99.59% of the pubs achieving a top rating of five stars. We believe this to be the highest average rating for any substantial pub company.

In the separate Scottish scheme, which records either a 'pass' or a 'fail', all of the 56 pubs in Scotland have passed. 99

YOUR SAY

Write: The Editor, Wetherspoon News, J D Wetherspoon plc
Central Park, Reeds Crescent, Watford, WD24 4QL

E-mail: editor@jdwetherspoon.co.uk

Should you have any specific feedback, to which you wish to receive a reply, please write to the customer services team at the postal address above or use the customer feedback form on our website.

There's £20 of Wetherspoon gift cards for every letter we print

All letters and e-mails to the editor are read, considered and also passed onwards (if appropriate), yet, owing to correspondence volume, not all may be answered.

Write to us

Your letter or e-mail really can make a difference. So, please do keep writing. Should you have any suggestions on how we can improve our service, please let us know.

Thank you

wetherspoon



FOOD & DRINKS GIFT CARD

THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING MARTINI

Dear editor

My wife enjoys Martini and lemonade or Cinzano and lemonade. However, when asking for this at The Imperial (Exeter), we were informed that the pub did not serve it.

You serve Martini in your cocktails, so why not in a separate drink? Most pubs serve this.

Yours Gordon Kelly

Exeter, Devon

Tim replies: Of the drinks we sell, 80 per cent (we estimate) were sold many years ago. However, there is a fashion element in the pub world – with Cinzano and Martini, popularised by Joan Collins (time for a comeback, Joan...) and Leonard Rossiter in famous TV adverts, rarely requested.

However, I will ask the pub team at The Imperial whether they can get a bottle or two on the shelves to keep the missus happy.



Leonard Rossiter and Joan Collins

PHOTO CREDIT: MIKE LAMM/STRINGER GETTY IMAGES

SENDING LOVE FROM SACRAMENTO

Dear Tim

My husband and I are both senior citizens, originally from England, but now living in the United States – California to be precise.

During the last 13 years, we have returned to Britain twice a year, during spring and autumn.

Over those years, we have spent a lot of time at various Wetherspoon pubs, initially at The Toll Gate (Harringay), as my sister lives in Wood Green. It was truly a sad occasion when we found out that it had closed – and another publican had taken over.

We did find another Wetherspoon pub, Spouter's Corner (Wood Green), which has since become our local.

Over the years, we have also stayed at two Wetherspoon hotels – those in Monmouth and Tewkesbury, at both of which staff were very helpful.

This letter is essentially to thank you for the wonderful job which you and your staff have done in providing the public with affordable pricing for beverages, food and accommodation, especially for OAPs.

We also enjoy reading your magazine, often picking one up to take back to California for our friends to read.

We definitely recommend that all of our friends visiting Britain should ensure that they stop at a Wetherspoon at least once during their visit, whether it be at the Liverpool Street station pub or in Bournemouth at The Moon in the Square.

Feel free to use my letter of thanks in the testimonials for Wetherspoon.

Sincerely Jennifer and Mike Szavek

Sacramento, California, USA

Tim replies: Very many thanks indeed for your comments, which are sincerely appreciated. Before opening the first Wetherspoon pub in nearby Muswell Hill, I lived in Wood Green, probably near your sister, and worked behind the bar at the Duke of Edinburgh in Mayes Road, a Bass Brewery pub. So glad to hear that you all frequent Spouter's Corner. Thanks also for recommending Wetherspoon to our American cousins. Amazing country, amazing people, incredible democracy, in spite of high tensions from time to time...

FAKE FRY-UP IS A SWEET DREAM



Dear Sir

I saw the wonderful cake in the summer/autumn 2024 edition of Wetherspoons News (page 27).

I would love to share the cake which I made for my friends Tim and Martin (no relation to the knight of the realm who made this cake possible), who share a birthday in September.

We brought it to Woodrow Wilson (Carlisle) and, after tucking in to a real-life Wetherspoon breakfast, ate it.

From Joe Stephenson

Carlisle (via e-mail)

Tim replies: You can't have your cake and eat it, but you can buy a Wetherspoon breakfast then eat it. So glad that Wetherspoon is bringing out customers' artistic side.

We need Damien Hirst to take up the cudgels. He is sure to find inspiration if he uses our pubs for breakfast.

UNIQUE FITTINGS... OR ARE WE BEING GASLIT?

Dear Sir

I first attended The Commercial Rooms (Bristol) in the 1970s for a seminar, long before it became what is now my favourite Spoons.

Amazingly, gas lighting is still in use and doesn't look at all out of place in this wonderful old building.

Does any other outlet in your chain retain gas lights or is this a unique situation?

Yours faithfully

Mr David Box

St George, Bristol

Tim replies: It had escaped my notice that the fantastic Commercial Rooms used gas lighting. I shall make enquiries as to which other pubs, if any, have the same system.

Maybe The Commercial Rooms is responsible for the modern expression to 'gaslight' someone – actually, hope not...

SOYA MILK OUSTED BY OAT CUISINE?

Dear Sir Tim

We love Spoons' brekkie, but what's happened to the soya milk for my partner's cuppa?

She who controls the purse strings tells me that oat milk is more expensive than soya milk.

Why the change?

Help to save my breakfast please.

Thanks

Tom Payne

Bexhill, East Sussex

Tim replies: I've had a chat with the team – and oat milk is, apparently, the number-one alternative to dairy milk.

We did look at soya milk, but were unable to obtain it in the sachets which we prefer. Many people, in our experience, prefer their oats before breakfast...

Sorry about the soya.

COVENTRY

FOUR OUT OF FOUR... WHO COULD ASK FOR MORE?



Pictured (left to right) are pub managers Mark Rutherford (The Earl of Mercia), Gavin Healy (The Flying Standard), Tom Clarke (The Spon Gate) and Jaz Marriott (The City Arms)

All four Wetherspoon pubs in and around Coventry have achieved Best Bar None accreditation for 2024.

The Flying Standard, The Earl of Mercia and The Spon Gate in The Skydome, all in Coventry, together with The City Arms (Earlsdon) were among just 11 venues recognised across the city.

The Flying Standard and The Spon Gate also won the 'best venue management' category prize, from four additional category awards presented at a special ceremony.

Wetherspoon's area manager, Richard Tandy, responsible for the Coventry pubs, said: "Huge congratulations to all four pub managers and their teams for achieving recognition in the Best Bar None awards 2024.

"This highlights the hard work and dedication which they all show in their commitment to both the high standards which the company expects and ensuring that the pubs are a safe environment for staff and customers to enjoy."

Best Bar None is an accreditation scheme supported by the Home Office and the drinks industry, aiming to improve standards in licensed premises.

Venues seeking to receive accreditation commit significant time and resources to achieve the standards required, demonstrating commitment to demanding excellence in safety, training, management and customer experience.

A nationwide initiative, in Coventry, it is delivered by Coventry Business Improvement District (BID) and Coventry City Council.

An awards ceremony was held at Drapers' Hall, in Coventry, to bring together venues and their teams from around the city to celebrate their achievements and work to improve safety and standards.

Coventry BID manager Joanne Glover said: "The awards ceremony marked the culmination of months of hard work from venues in the city to achieve what really is the gold standard in health, safety, safeguarding and well-being.

"We have a thriving hospitality community in Coventry dedicated to upholding high standards and contributing to a safer and vibrant city centre.

"We'd like to thank everyone who joined us on the evening to celebrate those venues which have gone above and beyond to achieve Best Bar None Accreditation for 2024."

NEW HOTEL IS A BOON FOR THE TOON

Four floors of accommodation in new building adjoining established Mile Castle pub

Wetherspoon will open its latest hotel at **The Mile Castle (Newcastle upon Tyne)** in late November.

Located in the building adjoining the existing pub, which first opened in 2009, the brand new 26-bedroom hotel occupies four floors of the building (lower ground, ground, first and second floors).

All rooms offer an en suite bathroom, with two rooms designed specifically for guests needing accessible facilities.

This new hotel, one of 56 Wetherspoon hotels, is available only by booking directly – at jdwwetherspoon.com, on the Wetherspoon app or by phone.

Visit the website (jdwwetherspoon.com) and simply navigate for quick and easy booking options.

To find the right accommodation for your needs, the website gives information about all 56 Wetherspoon hotels, located in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Each of the hotels, situated above or near a Wetherspoon pub serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, has its own unique character, with many in restored historic buildings, including at The Mile Castle, in the grade II listed Gibb Chambers building.

Each hotel room features an en suite bathroom, complimentary tea- and coffee-making facilities, hair dryer, flat-screen television with Freeview TV (Saorview Freesat TV in Ireland) and unlimited free Wi-Fi.

During their stay, hotel guests can use the coffee machines in the bar for free refills of coffee, tea and hot chocolate.

The rooms can accommodate a mixture of double, twin and family occupancy, many being interconnecting.

There are also accessible bedrooms, with wet-room facilities, suitable for guests needing accessible facilities.

Whether it's a convenient one-night stay or a short break, Wetherspoon has a great selection of hotels in city, coastal and countryside locations, offering the perfect accommodation.



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The Greenwood Hotel

674 Whitton Avenue West, Northolt
London, UB5 4LA

This grade II listed hotel has 12 en suite rooms, including double, twin and family accommodation.

A warm and inviting pub forms part of the hotel, alongside a beautiful beer garden, making this hotel a perfect stay for families, leisure or business.

Direct rail links from nearby Northolt Park station mean that Wembley Central can be reached within 10 minutes' travel and Marylebone (central London) within 20 minutes, making it the perfect location for those wanting to explore the sites of London or attend events at Wembley Stadium/Arena.

The hotel is also around a 20-minute drive from Heathrow Airport.



The White Lady

98 St John's Road, Corstorphine
Edinburgh, EH12 8AT

This hotel is located in Edinburgh's fashionable Corstorphine area, a short drive from the city's airport.

Once a small village on the outskirts of Edinburgh, it is now renowned for its boutique shops and lively social scene.

The hotel offers 30 bedrooms, five of which are family rooms, with five twin rooms and 20 double bedrooms.

Just off the city bypass and 10 minutes from Edinburgh International Airport, it is close to Murrayfield, Edinburgh Zoo and all city-centre attractions, with regular bus services to the city centre (about 20 mins) and a bus stop just in front of the hotel.



Scotland

Wales



The Wyndham Arms Hotel

Dunraven Place, Bridgend, CF31 1JE

With 26 bedrooms (one of which is accessible), located in Bridgend's town centre, this hotel, which has been welcoming guests for 25 years, is perfect for both leisure and business.

Originally The Wyndham Arms of 1792, named after a centuries-old local family connected with the Bridgend area for many years, the building incorporates part of a structure previously on the site.

A section of the building was used formerly as a courthouse and jail.

With easy access to both Cardiff and Swansea, the hotel is ideal for those attending events in the region, along with enjoying its beaches.

The hotel is a short drive from some stunning beaches: Rest Bay, Ogmore and Newton.

Porthcawl is only a 10-minute drive away and a favourite with guests.

Keavan's Port Hotel

1 Camden Street Upper, Dublin, D02 TC61

This hotel is set in Dublin's 'village quarter' and housed in a redeveloped series of eight Georgian townhouses (seven of which are protected), in Dublin's city centre.

Several historical aspects of the old buildings have been retained and restored, including a circular stained-glass window and the preserved former chapel of the convent of the Little Sisters of the Assumption – from 1890 until the 1940s.

This hotel has 89 en suite rooms, including five accessible rooms, complete with full DDA-compliant bathroom facilities.

The hotel is located on regenerated Camden Street Upper, 1km from the city centre and Grafton Street.

It is located within a short distance of many of Dublin's attractions.



Ireland

JEAN, 90, STOPS WORKING LONG ENOUGH TO BITE INTO BIRTHDAY CAKE AT SURREY DOCKS



Colleagues and family members, friends and former workmates gathered for a very special occasion at The Surrey Docks (Surrey Quays).

They were all there to surprise a much-loved staff member, kitchen associate Jean Oliver, who celebrated her 90th birthday in August.

There were also video messages from those unable to attend.

Jean has worked at the pub in southeast London since it first opened more than 27 years ago, along with fellow long-serving staff member kitchen shift leader Pauline Curtis.

Great friends, they met back in 1997, on the first day of training.

Now, at 90, Jean is Wetherspoon's oldest employee.

Her role is part time, helping out in the kitchen, with two four-hour day shifts per week, on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Pub manager Kylee Garwood, who has since moved to become manager at The Stargazer (The O2, Greenwich), said: "Jean is a well-loved and valuable team member, as well as being very well known in the area and by all regular customers."

Kylee, who made the special 90th birthday cake for Jean, continued: "She didn't have a clue about the party. It was a complete surprise.

"She had a lovely day and didn't stop smiling.

"All of the staff absolutely love her.

"She is like a grandma to a lot of them, especially the younger members.

"Jean is an absolute legend, a real gem, and it's a pleasure to have her working as part of our diverse team. In fact, she is the real boss!"

Originally from Old Kent Road, Jean moved to Rotherhithe at the age of 11 and has remained ever since.

She previously spent 36 years working for the home help service, in Southwark, before applying for a job at the pub, at the age of 63, after she had lost her husband Ted.

Kylee concluded: "Jean is a real inspiration.

"To live the life that she still leads, aged 90, including still working with us, is fantastic.

"It's definitely something to shout about and celebrate."

Jean, pictured (centre) with Pauline (left) and Kylee, said:

"Thank you to Kylee, Pauline and everyone for a very special surprise birthday celebration."

Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, added: "Many congratulations to Jean on her 90th birthday. We all look forward to many more celebrations with such an inspirational Wetherspoon team member."

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME

ARNOLD MACHIN IN LYME LIGHT, AFTER WINNING AWARD



The Arnold Machin (Newcastle-under-Lyme) was voted by local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) members as winner of the 'pub of the month' September 2024 award.

Pub manager Cassie Leech is pictured (second right) with shift managers Ellie Bradeley and Mark Sinfield (far right) receiving the award and certificate from Potteries Branch CAMRA pubs officer Rob Jackson (left).

Cassie said: "We are thrilled to be voted as winner of this award by our local CAMRA branch members and thank them for their continued support."

Rob said: "Many congratulations to Cassie, Mark and the team on the award."

He added: "The Arnold Machin is located in a building converted from the town's former post office. It has a ground-floor terrace which overlooks the superb floral display of the Queen's Gardens."

"It serves at least six cask ales at any time, with a selection of bottled beers and cans also available."

The pub usually serves up to four ever-changing guest ales, at all times, in addition to Wetherspoon's three permanent beers – Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles.

The guest ales include those from Titanic Brewery, Spitting Feathers Brewery, Burton Bridge Brewery, Black Hole Brewery, Limestone Brewery and Coach House Brewing Company.

Among customers, the most popular of those breweries and their ales are Titanic Plum Porter (4.9% ABV), Titanic Last Porter Call (4.9% ABV) and Titanic Iceberg (4.1% ABV), as well as Coach House Brewing's three beers Cheshire Gold (4.1% ABV), Blueberry Classic Bitter (5.0% ABV) and Post Horn (5.0% ABV).

BOSTON

THE MOON UNDER WATER SHINES BRIGHTLY IN BOSTON

The Moon Under Water (Boston) was recognised as a nominee in a town-centre business annual awards initiative.

The Boston Preservation Trust, Civic Group, named the Wetherspoon pub among the shortlisted venues in its Pride of Boston Awards 2024.

The annual ceremony aims to recognise the efforts of shops, offices and other businesses in the Lincolnshire town in maintaining and enhancing their premises' frontages.

The High Street pub, which opened in July 1998 and was once the town's post office, later Brenner's Bazaar and then government offices, was among 16 shortlisted finalists.

Pub manager Andy Sands said: "We're delighted that the pub was recognised and shortlisted for the awards."

The mayor of Boston, Councillor Helen Staples, said: "I am immensely proud to be part of an event which showcases the dedication and passion of our community in preserving our beautiful town's heritage."

"Each of these remarkable buildings tells a story, and through the hard work of their owners and businesses, we ensure that these stories continue for future generations."

"Congratulations to all of the nominees and winners for their commitment to safeguarding Boston's unique character and history."



Kitchen manager Amy Hall

NOW OPEN

London Waterloo station

THE LION & THE UNICORN

Wetherspoon has opened its new pub at London Waterloo station. The company has spent £2.8 million developing the pub, The Lion & The Unicorn, in The Sidings, within the former Eurostar terminus (based directly underneath platforms 20-24, adjacent to BrewDog).

The pub is open Monday – Thursday, 7.30am – midnight; Friday, 7.30am – 1am; Saturday, 8am – 1am; Sunday, 8am – midnight.

Food is served from opening until 11pm every day.

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

The new pub specialises in real ales and traditional ciders, as well as craft and world beers, serving a wide range of draught ales, along with bottled beers, including those from local and regional brewers.

Among the craft draught beers at the Waterloo pub are two bespoke choices. Customers at The Lion & The Unicorn can enjoy Signature Brew Roadie (4.3% ABV) and Anspach & Hobday London Black (4.4% ABV).

The pub is wheelchair accessible, with specially adapted toilet for customers needing accessible facilities.

The new pub's interior design is inspired by the historic architecture which once made The Lion and The Unicorn Pavilion the fans' favourite at the Festival of Britain.

The attitude to light, colour and innovation at the festival (the complete opposite to pre-1951 Britain) has been adopted in the design.

Family members of the 1951 pavilion architects and the festival's graphic designers have also shared original drawings and sketches, which have been incorporated in the new pub's design.

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, some following collaborations with local artists, as well as the Southbank Centre, with other connections to the key figures which once brought the 1951 festival to life.

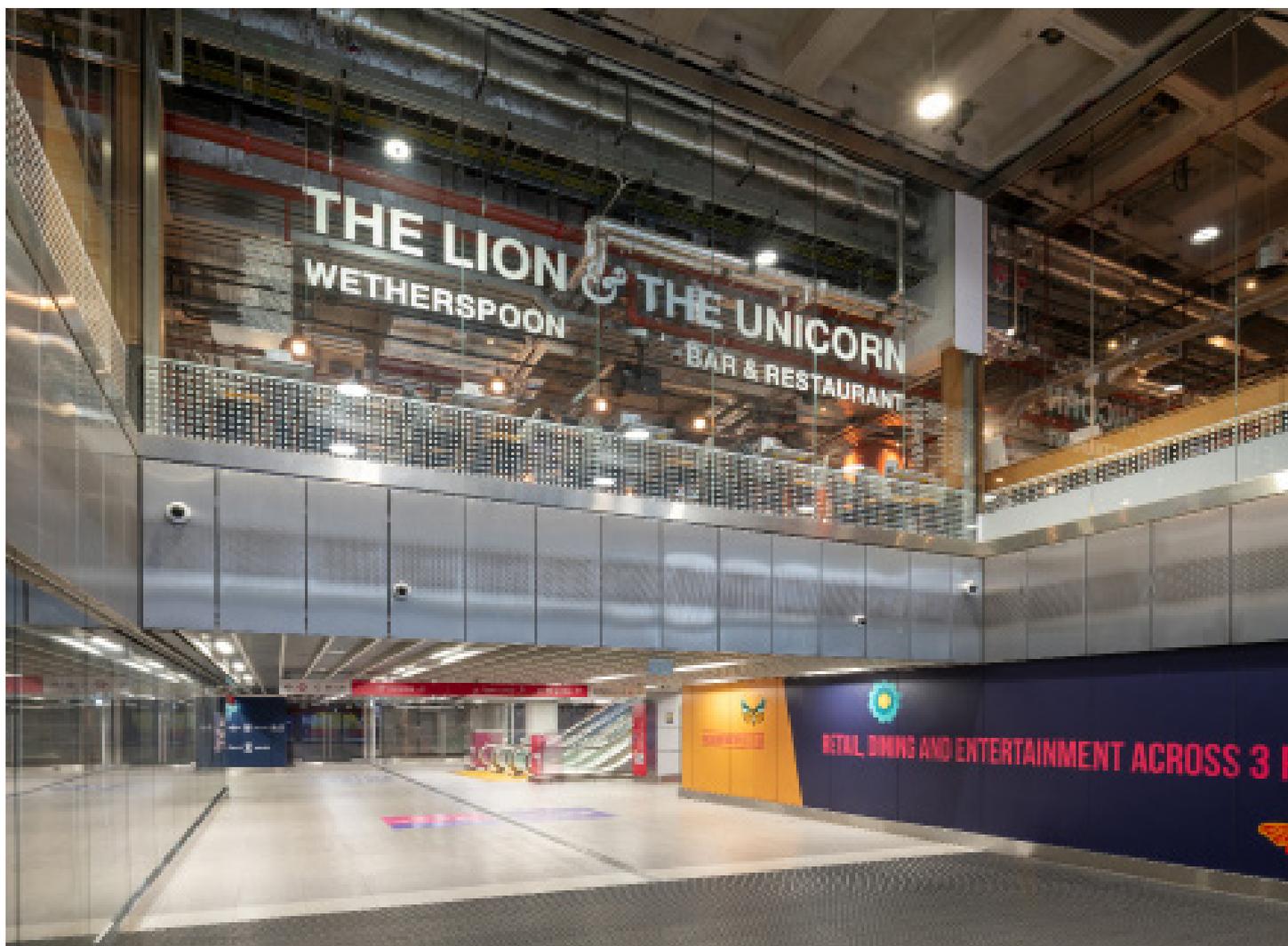
Royal Festival Hall is the only building remaining from the Festival of Britain, held from May to September 1951, on the South Bank.

The 27-acre Festival of Britain site extended along the riverfront from Westminster Bridge (past Hungerford Bridge) to Waterloo Bridge.

In 1951, more than 8,000,000 people paid to see the ultra-modern Dome of Discovery (then the world's largest dome), the 90-metre Skylon tower and The Lion and The Unicorn Pavilion, from where the new pub takes its name.

Wetherspoon's regional manager, Barry Brewster, said: "We are delighted that The Lion & The Unicorn is open and already proving popular."

Upper-Ground Floor, The Sidings, Waterloo station, London, SE1 7BH





The Lion and The Unicorn pavilion at the Festival of Britain in 1951



Bar associate Kelsey-Jo Perry at The Tim Bobbin (Urmston)

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.

£569 MILLION IN FREE SHARES AND BONUSES PAID TO EMPLOYEES SINCE 2006

86.3 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 26 employees who have worked for the company for more than 30 years, 662 for more than 20 years, 4,056 for more than 10 years and 11,444 for more than five years. Since 2006, the company has paid £569 million to its employees in respect of bonuses and free shares.

BONUSES AND SHARES

Of the recipients, approximately 96.5 per cent went to employees below board level, with around 86.3 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 2024, bonuses and free shares of £49 million were awarded (see table¹ below), with 96 per cent of employees receiving a bonus and/or shares in that period.

At the current time, 24,510 of our 42,300 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 was introduced, Wetherspoon has awarded 30 million shares to employees – approximately 25 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 vs profits, 2006–24

Financial year	Bonuses and free shares	Profit after tax (loss/profit after tax) ²	Bonus etc as % of profit
	£m	£m	
2024	49	59	86
2023	36	34	129
2022	30	-25	-
2021	23	-146	-
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	569	690	53.7³

¹ Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2006–24

² International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) 16 was implemented in the year ending 26 July 2020 (FY20). From this period, all profit numbers in the above table are on a post-IFRS-16 basis. Before this date, all profit numbers are on a pre-IFRS-16 basis.

³ Shares and bonus as a percentage of profit excludes 2020, 2021 and 2022.

THE BELLE AND LION • SHEERNESS

DAUGHTERS FOLLOW MOTHERS IN RINGING ENDORSEMENT FOR BELLE



Pictured (left to right) are Zoey Cross, Amelia Smith, Kelly Smith, Claire Smith and Madison Newnham

In July 2024, The Belle and Lion (Sheerness) celebrated a decade since first opening its doors.

Pub manager Kelly Smith has been at the helm for those 10 years, along with several staff members who are original team members.

Part-time bar associates Zoey Cross and Claire Smith, with Kelly, have formed a great friendship, having worked together for 10 years and they now have a further bond at work.

Each of their daughters are also now working at The Belle and Lion, following their mums into the job.

Kelly's daughter Amelia (just 16) joined the team as a floor associate at the beginning of July, having just completed her GCSEs and is also now studying A levels in criminology, English literature and applied science.

Kelly, who has worked for the company for 22 years and was previously pub manager at The Paper Moon (Dartford) (no longer a Wetherspoon pub) for seven years, said: "Amelia has lived and breathed Wetherspoon, through me, all her life and has taken to it like a duck to water.

"The company is great to work for and, if we think it is also good enough for our kids, then it must be good."

Zoey's daughter, Tamuka, and Claire's daughter, Madison, also both started as 16-year-old floor associates.

Tamuka has been on the team for three years and has now progressed to bar team leader.

Bar associate Madison joined two years ago, but has now moved to Greenwich to attend university, transferring to The Gate Clock (Greenwich).

Kelly continued: "The mums and daughters occasionally work the same shifts at the pub, and it is fantastic to see the next generation coming through.

"Zoey, Claire and I have been friends, as well as colleagues, for 10 years – and the girls have grown up together as friends, so it's lovely to see them working together."

There are also two other staff members who were on the original team, as bar associates, a decade ago, who are still working at the pub as part of the management team.

Shift managers Chris Drummond and Sophie Shelley met in those first weeks at the new pub and have now been together for 10 years.

The couple have two children and have recently got engaged.

FUTURE LEADERS LINE UP FOR DIPLOMAS IN LEEDS



This is the Wetherspoon 'class of 2024' – all of whom have successfully graduated from Leeds Beckett University.

Congratulations to everyone pictured, together with several others (not pictured) who were unable to attend the event, on gaining their new qualification.

They graduated with a level 5 operations/departmental manager apprenticeship (with diploma in higher education) – a leadership and management qualification.

They are part of the first cohort to have completed this qualification through Wetherspoon, in partnership with Leeds Beckett University.

The apprenticeship comprises knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs), with a focus on: organisational performance; delivering results; interpersonal excellence; managing people; developing relationships; personal effectiveness; managing self.

The graduation event, held at Leeds Arena, was preceded by a celebration breakfast at The Hedley Verity (Leeds) to mark their achievement.

Wetherspoon's general manager, Will Fotheringham, and training, recruitment and qualifications manager Michelle Crooke, together with some of the team at the university and friends and family members, all attended.

Michelle Crooke said: "Many congratulations to all of our graduates who have worked extremely hard to reach this point.

"It is certainly no easy feat achieving any qualification, let alone while working in an often-demanding, fast-paced, full-time job, with a full action-packed home life too.

"So, well done, once again, to everyone."

Michelle concluded: "We look forward to welcoming back three of the achievers, as members of a bigger group to complete the level 6 chartered manager apprenticeship, as part of their continued professional development."

Pictured (left to right) are projects and roll-outs team leader (head office) Chris Smith, The Henry Bell (Helensburgh) pub manager Lynne Day, The George Inn (Sandbach) shift manager Josh Jones, The Battersford Court (Witham) pub manager Nicole Arnold, The New Crown (Southgate) kitchen manager Michael Williams and distribution manager (head office) Trish Burley.

CHESTERFIELD

JUDGES FIND NO FAULTS AT SPA LANE VAULTS



Spa Lane Vaults (Chesterfield) was awarded the title of 'best managed' venue at the first Chesterfield's Best Bar None awards.

The Wetherspoon pub was also one of 22 venues to receive accreditation to the scheme, launched by Chesterfield Borough Council, in partnership with Best Bar None, Chesterfield pubwatch and Derbyshire Constabulary.

Pub manager Lou Evans and members of the Spa Lane Vaults team attended the special awards ceremony at the SMH Group Stadium, home to Chesterfield Football Club.

Lou is pictured (far right) with (left to right) shift manager Dawn Sales, kitchen shift leader Steph Beer, shift leader Tom Hoddinott and shift managers Arron Johnson and Adele Wagstaff.

Adele said: "This is a fantastic achievement for the whole team, as well as the pub, and we're all thrilled to have been named as 'best managed' venue."

Roger Butler, the chair of Chesterfield pubwatch, told the Derbyshire Times newspaper: "Chesterfield has many great pubs, restaurants, bars and clubs. It is a great place to enjoy an evening out.

"We're really pleased that a huge number of businesses has been awarded the Best Bar None accreditation."

Best Bar None is an awards and accreditation scheme supported by the Home Office and drinks industry.

It was developed to recognise and reward responsible premises and to improve operating standards in the evening and night-time economy.

Best Bar None-accredited venues have been assessed for their commitment to excellence in staff and customer safety, customer service, responsible alcohol management practices, staff training and care.

DUMFRIES

HEROIC PERFORMANCE BY ROBERT THE BRUCE

A Wetherspoon pub has been recognised at the first-ever Drink Awards Scotland 2024.

Robert the Bruce (Dumfries), now managed by Andrew Daish, received a 'highly commended' (runner-up) award, in the 'best of south' category.

Former pub manager Chris McKenna said: "Although we didn't win the category's top prize, at this inaugural award event, it was a great accolade to receive a nomination.

"To also be 'highly commended' is testament to the hard work of the team at Robert the Bruce."

Organised by Creative Oceanic (also Food Awards

Scotland organisers), the awards look to celebrate the very best pubs, bars, gastropubs and retailers from across Scotland.

A spokesperson for Drink Awards Scotland said: "These awards have helped to showcase the exceptional talent and creativity which define our vibrant drinks industry.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the dedication of the bars, pubs and restaurants which continuously raise the bar for exceptional service.

"We congratulate all of our winners and highly commended participants on their remarkable achievements."



Shift manager Sean Robson is pictured with shift leader Lisa Haxton

EXETER

MINT IMPERIAL: EXETER EXCELLENCE EARNS EMMA 'URBAN PUB OF THE YEAR' AWARD



The Imperial (Exeter) has been recognised for the first time by its local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch with an award.

Pub manager Emma Gibson is pictured with shift manager and ale champion Danny Hembrow (front left) at a special presentation evening held in the pub's orangery, attended by numerous CAMRA branch members, resplendent in orange.

The Imperial was voted winner of the 'urban pub of the year 2024' award, by members of the Exeter & East Devon CAMRA branch. Branch chair James Kirkcaldy (right) presented the award.

Emma, who has been pub manager at The Imperial for eight years and has worked for Wetherspoon for 20 years, said: "I was beside myself, thrilled and super chuffed with our first award from CAMRA."

She continued: "We have a great relationship with the members – and the support works both ways. They hold their branch meetings at the pub and are grateful for that, while we learn a lot from the members, who are very knowledgeable.

"We listen to their suggestions about which ales they would like to have and try, wherever possible, to accommodate those suggestions."

The Imperial usually serves up to eight ever-changing guest ales, at all times, in addition to Wetherspoon's three permanent beers – Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Greene King IPA.

For the special presentation evening, a mini stillage was set up at the pub, serving a selection of 'firm favourite' ales, including Exeter Brewery's Darkness (5.1% ABV), as well as cider from Sandford Orchards.

James Kirkcaldy added: "The Imperial is our 'urban pub of the year 2024', the first of five award categories to be decided this year.

"In total, 24 pubs across the branch were nominated and, from a shortlist of five, The Imperial was the clear winner.

"The presentation took place in the pub's impressive orangery, with many members dressed in the orange shirts from our Exeter Festival of Beers, featuring The Imperial's logo as a co-sponsor of the event.

"A very convivial evening was enjoyed by all at the pub, enhanced by a small beer and cider festival, together with complimentary canapés. Thank you to Emma and her team."



Pictured outside The Railway are pub manager Rosie Leibo (front right), with shift manager Rachel Finneral and a map and walking friends (back row, left to right) Steve Winter, Keith Benham, Chris Strachan, Nick France and Andy James

CHRIS AND FRIENDS COMPLETE 23-PUB 230-MILE CHALLENGE

Customer Chris Strachan, a regular at The Railway (Rainham), together with various friends, has completed an epic pub crawl.

The Great Kent Wetherspoon's Walking Challenge, which began in January 2022 and was completed by June 2024, encompassed 19 walks, totalling 230 miles and taking in visits to all 23 Wetherspoon pubs in Kent.

Chris explained: "After some research and mentioning the idea to a few ale-drinking friends, who are incidentally also CAMRA members, our mission began on 15 January 2022.

"We are mostly of working age, meaning that weekends were best and, to agree on mutually convenient dates, it meant that the challenge would probably take a while.

"Still, there was no rush – and, by 27 June 2024, four of us had walked to every Wetherspoon pub in Kent, from another.

"Many others joined us along the way, adding to the enjoyment, and all with something in common: we all love a few pints of ale after a walk."

He added: "There are many beautiful walks in Kent, usually well signposted. Some walks were devised using the huge network of public footpaths, allowing us to keep road-walking to a minimum.

"Wetherspoon provides most of the bigger towns and cities in the county with excellent-value food and drinks, with the real-ale range and quality surprisingly good for the money, especially if you're a CAMRA member and use your vouchers."

Chris concluded: "Four people, including me, completed the whole challenge.

"Twenty people joined in at some point along the way, with only one rainy day and no arguments.

"Several 'Spoon's breakfasts and quite a few gallons of real ale were also consumed throughout the challenge."

The participants were Chris Strachan, Keith Benham, Nick France and Andy James, joined along the way by James, Dan, Jane, Paul M, Steve, Richard, Paul H, Paul B, Paul (shorts), Dave (the hat), Karl, Chris B, Ken, Mark, Rich and Gary.

The Great Kent Wetherspoon's Walking Challenge:

Walk 1 – The Robert Pocock (Gravesend) to The Golden Lion (Rochester) 11.5 miles.

At least seven of us trekked along the Saxon Shore Way from Gravesend to Rochester.

Walk 2 – The Golden Lion to The Railway (Rainham) 8.4 miles. Between Rochester and Rainham is The Thomas Waghorn (Chatham), but, alas, the weather wasn't on our side, so we saved that for another day.

Walk 3 – The Railway to The Golden Hope (Sittingbourne) 9.3 miles. We followed parts of the Saxon Shore Way and several footpaths across fields to Sittingbourne.

Walk 4 – The Golden Hope to The Leading Light (Faversham) 14.1 miles. A longer walk, with a short diversion, since a 300-year-old alehouse lies on the Saxon Shore Way.

Walk 5 – The Leading Light to The Peter Cushing (Whitstable) and The Saxon Shore (Herne Bay) 15.1 miles. The original plan was to walk from Faversham to Whitstable, but, with the weather and daylight hours now on our side, we decided to press on for another few miles to Herne Bay.

THE GREAT KENT WETHERSPOON'S WALKING CHALLENGE

Walk 6 – The Saxon Shore to The Mechanical Elephant (Margate) 13.6 miles. Now following the coastline from Herne Bay to Margate, with near-perfect weather conditions.

Walk 7 – The Mechanical Elephant to Royal Victoria Pavilion (Ramsgate) 10.3 miles. Around 10 of us set off from Margate in the late afternoon, passing through Broadstairs, to finish at one of the most iconic Wetherspoon pubs in the country.

Walk 8 – Royal Victoria Pavilion to The Sir Norman Wisdom (Deal) 15.8 miles. A long walk, with a good few miles of road-walking, stopping off in Sandwich, before crossing The Royal St George's Golf Course to get back to the coastal path into Deal.

Walk 9 – The Sir Norman Wisdom to The Eight Bells (Dover) 11.3 miles. The coastal path between Deal and Dover has to be one of the most spectacular walks in Britain, with absolutely breath-taking views.

Walk 10 – The Eight Bells to The Samuel Peto (Folkestone) 11.5 miles. Dover to Folkestone, on what was the last leg of the original 120-mile journey idea from Gravesend to Folkestone, until deciding to walk to every Wetherspoon pub in Kent (from one pub to another).

Walk 11 – The Peter Cushing to The West Gate Inn and The Thomas Ingoldsby (both Canterbury) 7 miles. Ordnance Survey maps provided suitable inland routes, including The Crab and Winkle Way from Whitstable to Canterbury.

Walk 12 – The Robert Pocock to The Flying Boat (Dartford) 13.8 miles. From Gravesend on the England Coast Path into Dartford, following the contours of the River Thames and Darent Valley Path.

Walk 13 – The Railway to The Society Rooms and The Muggleton Inn (both Maidstone) 10.9 miles. Using a network of public footpaths and crossing the North Downs Way to descend into Maidstone.

Walk 14 – The West Gate Inn to The County Hotel (Ashford) 19.5 miles. The longest walk, navigating the Stour Valley Path from Canterbury to Ashford.

Walk 15 – The Golden Hope to The Belle and Lion (Sheerness) 12.2 miles. Following the Saxon Shore Way from Sittingbourne via the Sheppey Crossing and Queenborough to Sheerness.

Walk 16 – The Muggleton Inn to The Humphrey Bean (Tonbridge) 16.6 miles. From Maidstone following the Medway Valley Walk to Tonbridge.

Walk 17 – The Flying Boat to The Sennockian (Sevenoaks) 17.9 miles. A return to Dartford for the long walk along the Darent Valley Path all the way to Sevenoaks.

Walk 18 – The Humphrey Bean to Opera House (Tunbridge Wells) 10.1 miles. Mostly following the Wealdway to Tunbridge Wells, which was surprisingly hilly, but well worth the effort to visit this amazing venue.

Walk 19 – The Golden Lion to The Thomas Waghorn (Chatham) 1.1 miles. In February 2022, inclement conditions caused us to miss out The Thomas Waghorn – mission accomplished.



MANAGERS' OWN BREW IS A HIGHLIGHT OF FESTIVAL FRINGE

All Wetherspoon pubs in Edinburgh, as well as The Robert Nairn (Kirkcaldy), celebrated the city's annual Festival Fringe with a special beer which they made themselves with the help of a local craft brewery.

A group of managers spent a day at Stewart Brewing, under the expert tutelage of head brewer Nathan Vickers.

The result was Hop Haze, a 5.0% ABV hazy pale ale which was sold for the duration of the Fringe.

Pub manager Mark Brown (right), of The Caley Picture House, said: "We had a great day at the brewery – and it was fantastic to have a beer brewed especially for our pubs."

"We know the brewery reps quite well and have been talking about doing something like this for a while – the Fringe provided the right opportunity to make our own beer."

Mark added that he expects the feat to be repeated next year.

Stewart Brewing's business development manager, Michael Lakomy (left), said: "It was great to have the pub managers here – we looked at various ale styles and hop profiles, and the group decided what they thought their customers would enjoy most, and then we went and brewed it."

"We're delighted that the beer proved so popular with festival-goers and locals alike."



ART CLASS GETS PUB-GOERS PAINTING LIKE FRIDA KAHLO



Would you like to know how to paint in the style of Frida Kahlo? Then, look out for art classes at The James Watt (Greenock).

The class, named Palette and Pour, offers customers the chance to learn new art skills while enjoying a coffee or a glass of wine.

The first class was conducted by local artist Nicola Young and attracted 14 participants, including the pub's shift manager Amanda McLellan.

Amanda said: "I don't have an eye for painting, but Nicola took us through it step by step and, by the end of the class, we were painting portraits in the Frida Kahlo style. It was amazing."

She added: "Those who took part thoroughly enjoyed the class."

"There is a demand for more classes – and we are aiming to do more in the pub."

"We wish to encourage and help to raise awareness for local businesses, like Nicola's, as well as to have fun."

Pictured (left to right) are local artist Nicola Young, customer Beth Duffy, shift manager Amanda McLellan and customer Andrea Bignall.

JOY AT THE IMPERIAL AS BEN AND CANDICE TIE THE KNOT



Congratulations to floor associate Ben Shaxton and part-time cleaner Candice Bower on their marriage.

The couple, who both work at The Imperial (Exeter), met at the Devon Wetherspoon pub.

Pub manager Emma Gibson explained: "Ben has worked at The Imperial for 13 years, celebrating that milestone during the summer and now celebrating his wedding.

"Ben, who has Down's syndrome, is such an inspiration to the whole team."

Emma continued: "Candice works as a part-time cleaner with us, a couple of hours per week.

"Candice and Ben have known each other for more than 13 years.

"She has now been on the team for six years."

Emma concluded: "We all wish Ben and Candice many congratulations on their wedding and many happy years together."

BIG ALE-HUNTERS BAG A BROTHER RABBIT

The Yarborough Hotel (Grimsby) hosted a meet-the-brewer event featuring ales from Thornbridge Brewery.

Customers, including those from the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), sampled Astryd, Brother Rabbit, Crackendale, Jaipur, Lord Marples, Market Porter and White Swan.

Brewery sales manager Philip Taylor answered questions from customers about brewing and ale styles.

Shift leader Michael Evans said: "It was a very successful evening, with a good attendance from CAMRA members."

Pictured (left to right) are Grimsby and Northeast Lincolnshire CAMRA branch chair Kevin Donovan, Thornbridge's Philip Taylor and shift leader Michael Evans.



ENERGETICALLY WORKING TO REDUCE ENERGY USE

Company aiming to reduce all pubs' electricity, gas and water consumption substantially

Wetherspoon is committed to operating ethically and sustainably and to finding ways, over time, to reduce carbon emissions.

As well as promoting recycling throughout the business, the company is actively trying to reduce energy consumption at its pubs.

Wetherspoon's target is to reduce all pubs' electricity, gas and water consumption substantially.

This will be achieved through a combination of operational initiatives and the introduction of more energy-efficient technology.

The company has an established energy and environment working group, meeting regularly.

Every pub also has its own energy, environment and recycling champion, with the objectives of this role, for the nominated staff member, being:

- complete regular checks on energy usage across the pub
- assist with communication about focus areas and performance with the team
- ensure that relevant stickers/posters are displayed
- review monthly energy consumption reports
- encourage and motivate the whole pub team to change behaviour to save energy

Most Wetherspoon pubs have a water-management system for the urinals in the gents' toilets, saving approximately 80 per cent of the water.

Wetherspoon's senior facilities manager, Mark Miller, said: "The company is nearing completion of rolling out smart meters for electricity and gas, to enable the business to provide pubs with reports.

"These individual reports will highlight any excessive consumption and situations where equipment might have been left on unnecessarily, particularly overnight when pubs are closed."

Mark added: "Wetherspoon is also due to launch trials involving voltage-optimisation equipment, to help to reduce energy consumption, as well as solar technology."

What are pub teams doing to reduce their electricity, gas and water consumption?

The pub teams complete regular procedures, checks and tasks including:

- ensuring that fridge vents are cleaned and unblocked
- checking that air-conditioning filters are clean and free from dust
- checking for draughts from doors/windows
- ensuring that overdoor heaters are on/off, as appropriate
- switching TV screens off, when not required
- identifying any leaking taps and reporting for repair
- checking that all taps in toilets run for a maximum of 8–10 seconds and hot taps at approximately 40°C maximum
- ensuring that staff are segregating waste correctly
- checking that outside lighting timers are set to correct (seasonal) times

It is the aim of Wetherspoon to:

- increasingly minimise environmental impact and reduce carbon emissions.
- minimise energy consumption and maximise efficiency.
- promote efficient purchasing to minimise waste and allow for material-recycling.
- adopt efficient waste-management strategies, to maximise reuse and recycling and minimise general waste.
- minimise any emissions or effluents which may cause environmental damage.

Comparison of electricity and gas used by Wetherspoon during the last financial year (August 2023 – July 2024) against 2018/19 financial year (August 2018 – July 2019):



Electricity used **38**-per-cent reduction



Gas used **21**-per-cent reduction

RUGBY STAR JASON SWAPS THE LIVERY ROOMS FOR ENGLAND LIVERY

Part-time kitchen associate Jacob Haigh (pictured) has worked at The Livery Rooms (Keighley) for three years.

Still only 19, he has also been a Siddal Rugby League Club member, in Halifax, for the past two and a half years.

In the summer, he was selected by the England Community Lions under-19s rugby team to play in the European Championship 2024.

Jacob, who enjoyed his first tour with the team, reported: "I was over the moon to be picked for the squad – and to play in two of the three matches was an unreal, amazing experience.

"I would give anything to be able to do it again."

The Lions under-19s rugby team, 2022 European champions, was defending its title in the 2024 tournament in Belgrade, Serbia.

Jacob, a full back/winger, played in the warm-up game against Serbia under-21s, before being named in the starting line-up against Ukraine in the semi finals (Lions' entry match as holders).

The Lions were convincing 58-4 victors in that match, to set up a final clash with France and, despite being underdogs to retain their title, successively beat the French 15-8.

Jacob, who grew up watching most of his family playing rugby, started as a six-year-old player with Keighley Albion.

He concluded: "As well as my family and friends, everyone at the pub has been so supportive.

"I'm lucky enough to be well thought of – they have all got my back and are proud of me."



GLENYS PAVES PATH FOR PUB STAFF TO BRAVE A CLOSE SHAVE



After pub regular and cancer patient Glenys Lucas donated her pony tail to help children with the same condition, other staff stepped forward to have their legs waxed and head shaved.

Glenys had her pony tail chopped off at The Sir Nigel Gresley (Swadlincote), where she and her family are customers.

It has been donated to The Princess Trust, collecting hair to give to children who have lost theirs through chemotherapy.

The pub's team leader and charity champion, Rene Harrison, said: "It was such a generous act from Glenys."

Rene persuaded colleagues shift manager Saul Clarke, kitchen manager Cameron Ashmore, shift leader Brandon Shirley and maintenance associate Caroline Johnson to have their head shaved.

In addition, bar associate Kian Olnier and cleaner Steven Sidwells had their legs waxed.

The event raised £1,500 for Young Lives vs Cancer, with £660 of the total raised by Glenys herself.

Rene added: "Glenys is amazing. We all know her in here, as she comes in with her family most days for a soda and lime.

"We were delighted to be able to support her in this way."

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Saul Clarke, kitchen manager Cameron Ashmore, shift leader Brandon Shirley, maintenance associate Caroline Johnson; (front) bar associate Kian Olnier, team leader Rene Harrison and cleaner Steven Sidwells.

PUBWATCH, KEEPING US ALL SAFE ACROSS THE LAND

Wetherspoon's pubs participating in more than 500 UK schemes

National Pubwatch, the licensed trade's equivalent of neighbourhood watch, has been in existence for more than 30 years, throughout the UK.

The local schemes range in size from more than 200 premises in cities to small rural schemes with just a handful of premises involved.

As at November 2024, Wetherspoon's pubs were confirmed to be participating in 532 local pubwatch schemes, across the UK.

Many of these local initiatives are chaired by Wetherspoon's pub managers.

Pubwatch schemes are local, independent groups, comprising those working in licensed premises. They often take part in safety and alcohol-awareness campaigns.

Safe

The groups' objectives are to tackle and prevent antisocial behaviour and criminal activity, to promote safe drinking environments for customers and secure working environments for staff and to improve communication and information-sharing among licensees.

The basic principle involved in a pubwatch is that the licensees of the premises involved agree on several policies of action aimed at those who cause or threaten damage, disorder or violence and/or use or deal in drugs on their premises.

Usually, this action means refusing to serve those causing, or known to have previously caused, these types of problem.

Having agreed on these policies, the premises then publicise them and stick to them.

The publicity alone can have a very notable effect on such problems, yet refusing admission and service to those who cause trouble has proven to have a significant impact on antisocial behaviour.

To operate most effectively, any pubwatch scheme must work closely with the police, local authorities and other agencies.

By working together and keeping problems outside of their premises, licensees will make it easier for the police to identify troublemakers and deal with them.

Among Wetherspoon's pubwatch successes are Wembley pubwatch, where pub manager Lily Capillo (J.J. Moon's, Wembley) has created what we believe to be one of the country's largest pubwatch schemes.

Here, we highlight one pub and its involvement in a successful pubwatch scheme in Kent.



Pictured (left to right) are licensing team leader Trevor Ford, Ashford Partnership Against Crime (APAC) director and chairman Mark Mitchell, licensing officer Glyn Walker, APAC scheme manager Di Walker, licensing officer PC Alistair Pringle, shift manager Connor Walmsley and pub manager Tom Hill

The County Hotel (Ashford)

Pub manager Tom Hill has been running The County Hotel since January 2018, having now worked for Wetherspoon for 17 years.

He was previously pub manager at The Sun (Redhill) for seven years, having started as a shift manager there in 2007 and was a co-chair of the local pubwatch scheme in the town.

Tom recalled: "I know how hard it can be to make a success of the pubwatch schemes, especially when they are not supported very well. That is also how I know why the Ashford pubwatch works so well."

The County Hotel was already a pubwatch initiative member when Tom took over.

For the past six months, he has been encouraging shift manager Connor Walmsley to become more involved with the scheme.

Tom reported: "The Ashford pubwatch has great support and help from the local police, with our licensing officer PC Alistair Pringle very involved in things."

Knowledge

"But the main reason for its success is that it is very well organised and run by really good people, with a lot of knowledge and experience, including licensees who are ex-police and still involved in running the security for the town and many venues."

The Ashford Club, located next to The County Hotel, is owned and run by Mark Mitchell, who also provides door security for several venues in the town.

He is also chairman of Ashford Partnership Against Crime (APAC), the committee responsible for the town-centre pubwatch and shopwatch schemes.

Tom said: "Mark is very involved in running pubwatch. He is very knowledgeable, knows the town and is the eyes and ears for us all."

"When you have people like Mark helping, then everything comes together."

Around 25 venues are scheme members, including pubs, clubs, nightclubs and even the cinema and bowling alley.

Most venues are linked by the APAC-provided town radio system, which is also linked into the town-centre CCTV camera system.

Its pubwatch platform is an application called DISC, run by APAC, which has a watchlist, images of known individuals and an instant-messaging service, with personal logins for all involved.

Tom added: "When we have so much great support and involvement, in a highly organised scheme, that's why everything comes together and works so well."

"On Friday and Saturday nights, the Ashford Street Pastors also provide additional assistance, so everyone pulls together to help in making the town a safer and more enjoyable place to socialise."

FRIENDS FLOCK IN FROM FAR AND WIDE FOR RUSTY'S 100TH BIRTHDAY



Wetherspoon customer Thomas 'Rusty' Hood enjoyed a surprise birthday celebration at his local Wetherspoon pub to mark a very special milestone.

His friends and former charity volunteer colleagues travelled from far and wide to gather at The William Morris (Hammersmith) to mark Rusty's 100th birthday.

Rusty is pictured (front right) with friends (back row, left to right) Tim Soule, Nisha Kotecha, Jonathan Hart, Kat Davis (with daughter Addie), Alex Swallow; (front, left to right) Rebecca Soragni and Val Davis.

Alex said: "Rusty thought he was just meeting my wife Nisha and me (from Sheffield) for lunch, but people came from all over for the

surprise party, including Rebecca, who travelled from Italy especially for the occasion."

Alex continued: "We all know Rusty from a (now closed) charity called NBFA, where he was a volunteer already in his 80s.

"He still volunteers for a local charity, keeps active and is an amazing person.

"He is a humble, kind and sweet man – and it was lovely to make a fuss of him.

"When we meet up, we always meet him in a Wetherspoon pub, usually The William Morris.

"He loves them, and we are fans too."

CYCLING WHIZZ PAUL HAULS IN HUGE SUM

Wetherspoon employee and avid cyclist Paul Downs is continuing to help young cancer patients, through his personal cycling challenges.

First featured as a customer in the Wetherspoon News winter edition 2022/23, then again in autumn/winter 2023, cleaner Paul has been pedalling the miles and raising funds, once again, for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Along with his static bike 'live display' challenge (up to 100 miles) at both The Bright Water Inn (Shirley, Southampton) near his home and The Red Lion (Bitterne), Paul has also been out on the road.

His summer cycling challenges saw him cycle from Southampton to Cardiff, then Southampton to Newquay, visiting Wetherspoon's pubs en route, including those at Warminster, Bath, Chipstow and Cardiff, as well as at Bridport, Okehampton, Dorchester, Exeter and Newquay.

Paul, who designed his own cycling jersey to raise awareness for the charity, reported: "I love cycling and raising money for the company's charity, and I have enjoyed all of my cycling challenges in support of Young Lives vs Cancer.

"I have now collected almost £3,000 over the last two years, which means a lot to me."



Paul is pictured with his proud parents, Maureen and Robert

WHEN WEDNESDAY COMES...

New Ale Wednesday offer means lower midweek pint prices at vast majority of pubs

Every day, Wetherspoon's customers enjoy great choice and value-for-money on food and drinks.

Now, in addition, real-ale enthusiasts can enjoy even lower prices every Wednesday, with the NEW Ale Wednesday offer (excluding Ireland).

Every Wednesday, real ales' prices will be reduced (at the vast majority of pubs) across Wetherspoon's guest ales, so that customers can enjoy their favourite guest ales at a lower price.

As well as the regular Wetherspoon real-ale choices of Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles (or regional variations), pubs offer a huge and varied range of guest ales from breweries and microbreweries throughout the UK.

Pubs serve an ever-changing selection of real-ale styles and strengths, with many beers sourced locally from nearby breweries, as well as a range of national beers.

The guest ale range changes every three months, carefully sourced to offer the very best selection of beers available.

Wetherspoon's pubs across England, Northern Ireland and Wales will offer Ale Wednesday, as well as the existing Monday Club offer, which also includes lower prices on real ale.

Pubs in Scotland will operate an Ale Monday-to-Wednesday offer.

Ask at your local Wetherspoon pub for details.



W E D N E S D A Y

Guest ales – lower price – every Wednesday

VISIT FROM DUNDEE'S MÒR BREWERY HAS CUSTOMERS ROLLING IN THE ISLES



A meet-the-brewer event at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew) saw customers, including Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) members, sampling the wares of Dundee's Mòr Brewery.

Head brewer Dominic Hughes fielded questions from the audience, which included Renfrewshire CAMRA branch secretary Tracy Cassidy and branch chair Peter Cassidy.

As customers enjoyed free pizza bites laid on by the pub, they also tasted beers including Lion King, Bothy Blether and Ish!

Dominic said: "The event went really well, and we had a good discussion about Wetherspoon, real ale and the local microbrewery scene."

Shift manager Gavin Boyle, who organised the event, said: "It was great to have Dominic here – and CAMRA members and other customers enjoyed the event and asked some good questions."

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Gavin Boyle, Renfrewshire CAMRA branch chair Peter Cassidy, Mòr head brewer Dominic Hughes and CAMRA branch secretary Tracy Cassidy

LUTON FC STRIKER SAPPHIRE HITS BAR AT MOON UNDER WATER

Luton FC striker Sapphire Rohan is well known to Luton FC supporters and customers and staff at The Moon Under Water (Milton Keynes).

Sapphire, 19, plays as a striker for the FA Women's National League Division One South side, as well as being a shift leader at the pub.

Last season, she scored 10 goals in five games.

She was able to play only five games because she spent much of the season recovering from a serious knee injury, involving a torn cartilage and cruciate ligament.

Sapphire (pictured) said: "I needed to get back playing, so persevered with the physio, and I had a lot of support from my family and friends and the club – who told me they just were not prepared to lose me as a player."

Sapphire faces a busy time ahead, as she is also studying for a qualification as a veterinary nurse, alongside the football and working a 30-hour week at the pub.

"I just hope that I can keep scoring goals," added Sapphire, who harbours ambitions to play for Arsenal and maybe even England.





CAMRA'S COGNOSCENTE HAIL THE ALE AT 251 PUBS

A total of 251 Wetherspoon pubs has been acclaimed for the quality of their real ale – by members of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

The pubs are listed in CAMRA's publication The Good Beer Guide 2025, the UK's best-selling beer and pub guide.

Local branch members chose the Wetherspoon pubs for inclusion in the guide following regular visits to check on the quality of the real ales on offer.

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

A CAMRA spokesman said: "The pubs deserve their place in The Good Beer Guide 2025.

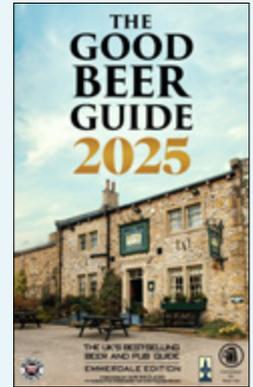
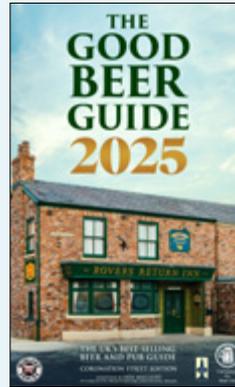
"It is our belief that if a licensee serves an excellent pint of real ale then everything else in the pub, including customer service, quality of food and atmosphere, is likely to be of an equally high standard."

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, added: "We are delighted that so many of our pubs have been recognised for the quality of their real ales by CAMRA members.

"Our pubs offer customers an excellent range of real ales at all times, including those from regional brewers and microbrewers, as well as hosting two annual beer festivals.

"Staff work hard to ensure that the real ale served in the company's pubs is in first-class condition at all times."

- We feature descriptions from **The Good Beer Guide 2025** for four Wetherspoon pubs, one each from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- CAMRA's publication **The Good Beer Guide 2025** costs **£16.99** and is available from bookshops and directly from CAMRA: shop1.camra.org.uk (website discount available to CAMRA's members).



Pub manager Stuart Kirk

THE THOMAS SHERATON Stockton-on-Tees

This grade II listed Victorian building, now in its 16th year in the guide, is a fine Wetherspoon conversion of the law courts and named after one of the country's great Georgian cabinet makers, born in the town in 1751.

The large, airy interior comprises several separate drinking and dining areas, plus a pleasant balcony and an upstairs outdoor terrace.

The guest beers, usually from the area, are served alongside the chain's contracted beers, together with a range of real ciders.

- 4 Bridge Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 3BW



Pub manager Alice Treasure

THE BRIDGE HOUSE

Belfast

Large Wetherspoon pub close to the city centre.

It has eight handpumps in the main bar, serving mainly national ales, with some local ones from Whitewater.

It is a popular watering hole and, although it can get busy, staff keep up with a fast and friendly service.

It is open for food from 8am, with alcohol available from 11.30am (12.30 Sun).

- 37-43 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7EJ

THE BOURTREE

Hawick

Built as the Hawick Conservative Club in 1897, this listed building has been stunningly transformed into a Wetherspoon pub.

The original badminton and snooker halls form the main area, and there are three other quieter sections.

Photographs depict a history of Hawick life.

Food is served all day, with breakfast and children's options.

Either bingo or a quiz is held on Wednesday evenings.

Real cider is generally available only during festivals.

Likely to open at 8am, with alcoholic drinks served from 11am.

- 422 Bourtrees Place, Hawick, TD9 9HL



Shift leader and beer champion Phil Holden-Rushworth



Shift leader Debbie Jones

THE BLACK BULL INN

Bangor

A Wetherspoon pub in a converted church and presbytery at the top of High Street.

It has a long bar and spacious seating areas on two levels.

A large outside patio overlooks upper Bangor and the university, and a lower-level beer garden provides excellent outside drinking spots.

It is popular with students and busy during term time.

- 107 High Street Bangor, LL57 1NS

WETHERSPOON, ITS CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES HAVE PAID £6 BILLION OF TAX TO THE GOVERNMENT IN THE LAST 10 YEARS

In Wetherspoon's 2024 financial year (12 months to July 2024), it generated £780.2 million in tax – about £1 in every £1,000 of ALL UK government taxes. The average tax generated per pub in 2024 was £980,000.

The table¹ below shows the tax generated by the company in its financial years 2015–2024.

During this period, taxes amounted to about 37 per cent of every pound which went 'over the bar', net of VAT – about 26 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 2015–2024	2024 £m	2023 £m	2022 £m	2021 £m	2020 £m	2019 £m	2018 £m	2017 £m	2016 £m	2015 £m	2015–2024 £m
VAT	394.7	372.3	287.7	93.8	244.3	357.9	332.8	323.4	311.7	294.4	3,013.0
Alcohol duty	163.7	166.1	158.6	70.6	124.2	174.4	175.9	167.2	164.4	161.4	1,526.5
PAYE and NIC	134.7	124.0	141.9	101.5	106.6	121.4	109.2	96.2	95.1	84.8	1,115.4
Business rates	41.3	49.9	50.3	1.5	39.5	57.3	55.6	53.0	50.2	48.7	447.3
Corporation tax	9.9	12.2	1.5	–	21.5	19.9	26.1	20.7	19.9	15.3	147.0
Corporation tax credit (historic capital allowances)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-2.0	-2.0
Fruit/slot machine duty	16.7	15.7	12.8	4.3	9.0	11.6	10.5	10.5	11.0	11.2	113.3
Climate change levies	10.2	11.1	9.7	7.9	10.0	9.6	9.2	9.7	8.7	6.4	92.5
Stamp duty	1.1	0.9	2.7	1.8	4.9	3.7	1.2	5.1	2.6	1.8	25.8
Sugar tax	2.6	3.1	2.7	1.3	2.0	2.9	0.8	–	–	–	15.4
Fuel duty	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.1	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.9	20.0
Apprenticeship levy	2.5	2.5	2.2	1.9	1.2	1.3	1.7	0.6	–	–	13.9
Carbon tax	–	–	–	–	–	1.9	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.7	15.6
Premise licence and TV licences	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.6	7.8
Landfill tax	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.7	2.5	2.2	2.2	8.6
Insurance premium tax	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	–	1.7
Furlough tax	–	–	-4.4	-213	-124.1	–	–	–	–	–	-341.5
Eat Out to Help Out	–	–	–	-23.2	–	–	–	–	–	–	-23.2
Local government grants	–	–	-1.4	-11.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	-12.5
Total tax	780.2	760.4	666.9	39.1	442.1	765.1	730.7	695.3	672.4	632.4	6,184.6
Tax per pub (£m)	0.98	0.92	0.78	0.05	0.51	0.87	0.83	0.78	0.71	0.67	7.10
Tax as % of net sales	38.3%	39.5%	38.3%	5.1%	35.0%	42.1%	43.1%	41.9%	42.1%	41.8%	36.7%
Profit/(loss) after tax	58.5	33.8	-24.9	-146.5	-38.5	79.6	83.6	76.9	56.9	57.5	236.9

¹Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2015–2024

RUGELEY

THE PLAZA'S CELLAR CHAMPION SUCCEEDS HUGELY IN RUGELEY

The Plaza (Rugeley) has been selected by the local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch to receive an award.

Cannock Chase CAMRA chair John Morgan (left) is pictured presenting a certificate to pub manager Sian Siddall. Also pictured are floor associate Finley Clews and Cannock Chase CAMRA treasurer Phil Haywood (right).

The Plaza has been voted by branch members as winner of the 'pub of the season' summer 2024 award.

Sian said: "We are really pleased to have won this accolade, our first CAMRA award for a while.

"In particular, it's recognition for shift manager Jonathan Titley, who joined us from The Linford Arms (Cannock).

"As part of his management project, I handed him the responsibility of the cellar, ordering and organising the ales, including meet-the-brewer events and tap takeovers.

"This award is all down to his hard work."

The Plaza, along with The Linford Arms and The Hedgeford Lodge (Hednesford), sponsored the Cannock Chase CAMRA annual beer festival 2024, at which Jonathan also volunteered.

Among the breweries showcased at the pub, with meet-the-brewer evenings and tap takeover selections, have been Brew61, Oakham Ales, Salopian Brewery and Titanic Brewery.



MALTBY

ALES FIT FOR A MONARCH AT THE QUEENS HOTEL



Shift manager Eleanor Hill is pictured accepting an award from Rotherham Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) vice chair Paul Redfern on behalf of The Queens Hotel (Maltby).

The pub was voted in first place by local branch members to win the 'pub of the season' summer 2024 award.

Rotherham CAMRA posted: "Congratulations to The Queens [Hotel] at Maltby for winning 'pub of the season' summer 2024.

"Thanks to Eleanor, the shift manager, for the social and for receiving the award for Beth [Burns, pub manager] and all the team at The Queens [Hotel]. Very well done."

Eleanor added: "We are very pleased to win the award and even more delighted to be back in CAMRA's publication The Good Beer Guide 2025. "Thank you to Rotherham CAMRA for the award and to the members who attended the presentation at their meeting in the pub."

The Queens Hotel serves seven real ales at all times. Alongside the three Wetherspoon permanent ales, Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles, are four ever-changing guest ales.

Popular guest ales include Acorn Brewery Gorlovka (6.0% ABV), Beermats Brewing Company Razzmatazz (5.2% ABV) and Bradfield Brewery Farmers Blonde (4.0% ABV).

MARRIED AUTHORS SPOONFEED PUB-GOERS WITH SPOON STORIES



A couple who have visited every Wetherspoon pub chose The Oxted Inn (Oxted) to launch two books they have written about their exploits.

The books – ‘But I Digress...’ and ‘Let Me Finish...’ – cover Alan and Agnes Forbes’ travels as they journey around the UK visiting Wetherspoon’s pubs.

The pair chose The Oxted Inn as it’s their local.

Pub manager Beth Hill said: “Agnes and Alan are a lovely couple who pop in here for breakfast quite regularly.

“When they said they were looking for a book launch venue, I agreed to do it at their local.”

The book launch proved very successful, with proceeds from sales of the book at the event raising £145 for the pub’s chosen charity, Young Lives vs Cancer.

Alan said: “In 2011, Agnes and I met for a drink at The Beehive (Gatwick Airport, before security) and it all started from there.

“But it was only in 2016 that we really started to ‘collect’ Wetherspoon pubs.

“Since then, we have been to 901 of them, including, we reckon, 99 which are now no longer a Wetherspoon pub.”

The couple’s favourites include Opera House (Tunbridge Wells) and The Samuel Peto (Folkestone).

But for sentimental reasons, The Man in The Moon (Newport, Isle of Wight) and The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury) will forever stay in their memory, as the couple flew from one to the other after their wedding to start their honeymoon.

● Both books are available on Amazon.

STEWART BREWING WOOING PUB-GOERS WITH ACE ALES

Stewart Brewing’s business development manager, Michael Lakomy, hosted a meet-the-brewer event at The Standing Order (Edinburgh).

Michael answered questions and chatted to customers as they sampled Edinburgh Black, Festival Ale, Hazy IPA and Ozark ales.

In addition, a new beer brewed by Wetherspoon’s pub managers from Edinburgh was available – the fruity Hop Haze (5.0% ABV).

The beer was available throughout August to coincide with the city’s famous Fringe Festival.

The pub’s manager, Suzy English, said: “We gave out samples, and Michael spoke to customers about the different beers being sampled.”

Michael said: “There was plenty of interest – and it was a most enjoyable event to do.”

Bar associate Jamie Turner is pictured serving Michael.



PHOTOSHOOT WITH MISS ENGLAND JUST TOO GOOD TO MISS, SAYS GAV

Miss England Milla Magee dropped into The Towan Blystra (Newquay) for a photoshoot with pub staff.

The venue was chosen as part of a nationwide promotion, as Miss England photographer Carolyn Oakley is pub manager Gav Coughlin's mother-in-law.

Gav said: "It seemed like too good an opportunity to turn down, so we were delighted to play host."

"Milla seems a very down-to-earth person and was happy to chat to everyone here."

A non-drinker, Milla was born in London, moving to Cornwall to pursue her interest in the sea and campaigning against marine pollution.

She has organised regular beach-cleans and has used her success in Miss England to promote the events in local media, including local newspaper Newquay Voice.

Pictured (left to right) are team leader Aisling Murphy, Miss England Milla Magee, pub manager Gav Coughlin and photographer Carolyn Oakley.



RED LION'S SHARON CHANNELS WARRIOR SPIRIT OF BOUDICA

Sharon Glenville has been raising money for Macmillan Cancer Support, a cause very close to her heart.

Sharon, who has worked as a kitchen associate at The Red Lion (Skegness) for almost three years, has collected £700 (so far) on her GoFundMe page, which displays an image of Boudica.

Sharon, who underwent mastectomy surgery in August, as part of her breast cancer treatment, explained: "Boudica is a victorious woman and I'm going to be victorious in my cancer treatment."

That positive attitude has seen Sharon enjoy a before-op photo-shoot (pictured), thanks to photographer Paul Cato, with plans for a return to work in December.

Sharon's Christmas plans also include more fundraising, for Breast Cancer Now, with the help of local artist Steve Gould.

The unusual fundraising will involve painting disposable bras and hanging them on Christmas trees.

Sharon said: "Macmillan has been absolutely brilliant, so lovely, and I also want to fundraise for a local cancer support group with the Christmas tree idea."

"Meanwhile, I hope to be back at The Red Lion in time for the run-up to Christmas and get everything back to normal."

Pub manager Abbey Gibb said: "Sharon is an inspirational person, and we are all behind her in her bid to regain full health."

● To support Sharon's fundraising, visit: tinyurl.com/3mfawtcu



FUN HOUSE STAR MELANIE PERFORMING AT PAVILION



If you remember Melanie from the TV programme Fun House, you may be interested to know that she works at Royal Victoria Pavilion (Ramsgate).

Melanie Grant and her twin sister Martina presented the ITV hit kids' show with DJ Pat Sharp.

Fun House ran during 1989–99, attracting millions of viewers and is fondly remembered to this day.

Melanie (pictured), a team leader at the pub, still does Fun House gigs at Butlins and other venues with Martina.

Melanie said: "I love working at the pub – it's perfect for me as I grew up round here and I'm a real people person and always love a chat with the customers here."

"A lot of customers know me and recognise me from the show, and we have a lot of laughs and memories about it."

Before Wetherspoon bought the pub, it was Peggy Sue's nightclub which then became Nero's nightclub.

Melanie said: "I used to come here in those days, so I have a great connection with the building."

Pub manager Chris Whitbourn said: "To have Mel here is superb – I used to watch Fun House as a kid and then found myself interviewing her for a job here."

"She is a great staff member and an asset to the pub."

FLYING BOAT MAKES A SPLASH ON 15TH BIRTHDAY

A charity fun-day at The Flying Boat (Dartford) raised £110 for Young Lives vs Cancer as the pub celebrated its 15th birthday.

The event was also a chance to recognise shift manager Sasha Gordon and team leader Peter Bramell (pictured together), who have worked at the pub since it first opened its doors on 22 June 2009.

Activities, including an inflatable dartboard, a bake sale with cakes made by staff, face-painting and hair-braiding, were all laid on for customers to enjoy.

Shift manager and organiser Georgia Glover said: "We also invited former staff members to come back and join in the celebrations – it was a great day and a good chance to raise some money for charity."



SUPERFAN ANDREW HALF WAY THROUGH HIS HOTEL QUEST

Wetherspoon superfan Andrew Forde has stayed in 29 of the company's 56 hotels.

He started his adventure at The Saxon Crown (Corby) following his retirement and has since been to establishments all over the land.

Andrew said: "Every room is different.

"You'd think a national hotel chain would offer the same rooms in all hotels.

"But I've never stayed in two rooms that looked the same.

"On top of that, the housekeeping staff at each hotel I have stayed in have been wonderful."

Andrew stays in a Wetherspoon hotel around eight nights a month on his travels, enjoying craft ale with pizza or a steak, before he retires to his room.

Among his favourites are The Saxon Crown, The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury), The Pilgrim's Progress (Bedford) and The Wyndham Arms Hotel (Bridgend).

He gave special mentions to pub manager Nikki Cameron at The Saxon Crown and hotel manager Lisa Driscoll at The Wyndham Arms Hotel.

He added: "They are excellent, always prepared to go out of their way to have a chat and make me feel welcome."

Nikki said: "Andrew is one of our best customers – and we look forward to his visits."



TAEKWONDO CHAMP ELLA THROWS HERSELF INTO PUB ROLE AND STUDIES

Floor associate Ella Heyes is the new British taekwondo champion, having won gold at the national finals in Worcester.

Ella, 17, who works at The Jolly Tars (Thornton-Cleveleys), followed her success straight afterwards with a bronze at the European Championships in Madrid.

Ella, whose father Lee is a taekwondo instructor, said: "I've been doing taekwondo since I was four and love it. I'm proud of my achievements.

"I just want to be the best I can."

Her father Lee added: "We are all very proud of Ella and grateful to the managers at the pub for being so flexible with her work schedule."

Ella started working at The Jolly Tars in February 2024 and is studying for her A levels.

Shift manager Michelle Smith said: "Ella is committed to her sport, good at her job and a lovely girl. We all wish her every success with the taekwondo."



SCORES ON THE DOORS SHOW CONSISTENTLY MIGHTY MARKS

Wetherspoon's pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales clock up average food hygiene rating of 4.99 out of 5

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

The company's pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales have an average food hygiene rating of 4.99 across 736 rated pubs, with 733 of those achieving the maximum-possible score of five.

Combined

The top three companies (see table opposite) have a rating of 5.00 each, but with a combined number of only 149 premises, compared with Wetherspoon's total of 736 rated pubs.

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

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 zero requires 'urgent improvement'.

Higher

Wetherspoon was ahead of pub and bar companies Loungers, Sizzling Pub Co and Young's and was also rated higher than restaurant and sandwich chains, including Greggs, McDonald's, Nando's, Burger King and PizzaExpress – although all of these companies also scored highly.

Of our pubs, 736 currently have an FHRS rating, with 99.59 per cent of those achieving the highest-possible rating of five.

FHRS ratings follow an independent assessment of food hygiene at the various premises, determined by local authority environmental health officers visiting venues to assess hygiene levels.

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

Ratings

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

Wetherspoon's personnel and 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.

"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 record

Did you know?

As well as the independent assessments by the FHRS across England, Northern Ireland and Wales (in Scotland, it's the Food Hygiene Information Scheme), Wetherspoon monitors its own pub hygiene standards.

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



The Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) for Wetherspoon's pubs across Scotland issues either a 'pass' or an 'improvement required' rating, albeit the achievement being excellent nonetheless.

There are 56 Wetherspoon pubs in Scotland, all of which have been FHIS rated as 'pass'.

The only independent government scheme assessing food hygiene standards

FOOD HYGIENE RATING



VERY GOOD

	Total premises scored	Average premises score out of 5
Slug & Lettuce	76	5.00
Giggling Squid	52	5.00
Yates	21	5.00
Wetherspoon	736	4.99
Wagamama	163	4.99
Turtle Bay	52	4.98
GBK	41	4.98
Greggs	2153	4.97
Nando's	439	4.97
Carluccio's	29	4.97
McDonald's	1328	4.96
Miller & Carter	116	4.96
Prezzo	103	4.96
Nicholson's	66	4.95
All Bar One	43	4.95
O'Neill's	41	4.95
Be at One	38	4.95
Starbucks	1172	4.94
Cosy Club	35	4.94
YO! To Go	299	4.92
Zizzi	127	4.92
Côte	78	4.92
Coffee#1	120	4.91
Giraffe	12	4.91
Pret	441	4.90
Toby Carvery	138	4.89
The Ivy Collection	45	4.89
Premium Country Pubs	44	4.89
Walkabout	19	4.89
Costa Coffee	2444	4.88
KFC	920	4.88
Craft Union	534	4.88
Burger King	500	4.88
Sizzling Pub Co	210	4.88
YO! Sushi	60	4.88
Innkeeper's Collection	41	4.88
PizzaExpress	345	4.87
Young's	226	4.87
Harvester	143	4.87
Castle	95	4.87
Papa Johns	440	4.85
Vintage Inns	177	4.85
Geronimo	30	4.83
Loungers	212	4.82
Ember Inns	144	4.82
Stonehouse	85	4.82
The Breakfast Club	21	4.82
Table Table	33	4.81
Subway	1873	4.80
Bill's	46	4.80
Browns	25	4.80
German Doner Kebab	133	4.78
Fuller's	172	4.77
Brewers fayre	125	4.77
Las Iguanas	49	4.76
Oakman	34	4.76
Café Rouge	17	4.76
BrewDog	47	4.72
Shepherd Neame	234	4.71
Bella Italia	75	4.71
Caffè Nero	573	4.56
Wadworth	128	4.52
Dixy Chicken	144	3.86

Information in this table was sourced in October 2024 from www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk, listing 736 Wetherspoon pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales with an average food hygiene rating of 4.99. 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.

A HARD-TO-MATCH PURPLE PATCH AT THE TOLLEMACHE INN

Grantham pub scores maximum rating of five, for seven consecutive inspections, under stewardship of manager Steven Hamilton



Pictured (left to right) are kitchen manager Peter Churchyard and pub manager Steven Hamilton

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 consecutive inspections, is The Tollemache Inn (Grantham).

Steven Hamilton has been pub manager there since 2017, although has worked for the company for 25 years and was previously in charge at The Sir John Arderne (Newark-on-Trent) (no longer a Wetherspoon pub).

Steven started as a bar associate at The County Hotel (Ashford) and has worked his way up the career ladder, with roles at pubs across the country, including in Birmingham, Croydon and Lincoln.

At The Tollemache Inn, Steven heads up a team of 43 staff members, including a kitchen team of 13, guided by kitchen manager Peter Churchyard.

Peter has worked for Wetherspoon for 12 years and has been at The Tollemache Inn for the past eight.

Steven said: "We have had a five-star rating since I have been at the pub, and it is very important to the whole team.

"The fact that it is independently assessed and judged, against strict and consistent criteria, is a great indication that the pub, as well as the company, is doing everything right.

"If you follow the rules which have been put in place, making sure that everything is to the letter, you really shouldn't go wrong."

It's not just behind the scenes in the bar area and kitchen where high standards must be maintained – the whole pub is under the spotlight during inspections.

Steven has established and experienced staff on his cleaning team, each with between five and 10 years' service at the pub.

He concluded: "All of those on the team play their part in keeping the pub in five-star condition.

"If all staff do their job as instructed, follow the procedures which have been put in place and follow their training, then things shouldn't go wrong."

ALYSHA FINDS HERSELF IN THE FRAME AFTER ROUTINE CHECK

When Alysha Garwood (pictured) started working at The Crown Hotel (Biggleswade), she recognised a certain piece of artwork on the wall – because she’d painted it when she’d been at school.

Shift leader Alysha, 23, was walking around the pub doing a routine check when she saw the work she’d created when she was just 15.

The picture is of Biggleswade town centre and won a year-10 competition while she was at school.

“Talk about a double-take,” she said. “It took a second to realise it, but I knew it to be one of mine.

“It was chosen as part of a school competition to be put up in the hotel.”

Pub manager David Neil added: “We had moved the painting from the hotel to the pub and if we hadn’t, Alysha might never have noticed it. It was a nice moment.”



KEITH RECALLS HIS DAYS IN THE LIME LIGHT



Pub manager Terry Clarke of The Childwall Fiveways Hotel (Liverpool) has discovered that one of his regulars helped to build a nearby Wetherspoon pub.

Keith Burford (pictured) is retired now, yet had installed the plumbing and heating services at the building which houses The Lime Kiln (Liverpool), under five miles away.

Terry said: “I was chatting to Keith and he told me that it’s been 20 years since he worked on The Lime Kiln.”

In fact, The Lime Kiln celebrates its 21st birthday in February 2025. Keith said: “It used to be derelict warehousing, a skeleton of a building. “I was delighted when Wetherspoon developed it into one of its pubs and proud that I was on the team.” Keith still drinks at the pub he helped to build – and also frequents Terry’s pub. He added: “Terry and all of the pub’s staff are always so welcoming.”

CHORLTON-CUM-HARDY

AWESOME ALES BRING BIG WIN FOR SEDGE LYNN



The Sedge Lynn (Chorlton-cum-Hardy) has been voted winner of the 'pub of the season' award, for summer 2024, by local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) members.

Pictured at the presentation evening are (left to right) Trafford and Hulme CAMRA branch vice chair Mark Reeves, pub manager Kirstin Nicholls, shift leader Tom Chapman and CAMRA branch general committee member Paul King.

Kirstin said: "We are delighted to be named as winner of the 'pub of the season', for summer 2024, and thank the branch members for their votes and continued support.

"There is a lot of competition in the area; so, for the team to be recognised for their hard work is a great reward."

The Sedge Lynn has 12 handpumps serving Wetherspoon's three permanent ales (Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles), together with an ever-changing range of five guest ales.

Among the especially popular guest ales from local breweries are Peerless Brewing Full Whack (6.0% ABV), Moorhouse's Blonde Witch (4.4% ABV), Acorn Gorlovka (6.0% ABV) and Phoenix Wobbly Bob (6.0% ABV).

Trafford and Hulme CAMRA branch gives four seasonal awards to pubs, bars and clubs in the branch area, south and west of Manchester city centre, which includes Chorlton, Urmston and Altrincham.

The award is presented to a pub or bar which has excelled in one or more areas, including excellence in the quality of real ales (and ciders) on offer, ongoing excellence of service to customers and/or the local community and significant charitable work.

Nominees for the award are put forward by local CAMRA members and voted for by branch members once a quarter.

WREXHAM

COUNCIL FOLK HAIL YALE FOR 'STUNNING' DISPLAY

Pub manager Andrew Hodgson is pictured outside his pub – The Elihu Yale (Wrexham).

The Welsh pub was awarded second place in the Wrexham in Bloom – (public house) best floral display competition 2024, organised by Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC).

Andrew said: "We are delighted to be recognised in the Wrexham in Bloom annual floral display competition and thank the judges for their kind comments."

Carla Hinde, WCBC's landscape officer, wrote: "The judges were particularly impressed by the overall stunning visual impact of the display and extremely impressed by the way the baskets have been maintained throughout the summer months.

"The scheme has created an artistic display welcoming to customers and passing members of the public.

"Thank you for your contribution towards the success of the Wrexham in Bloom campaign 2024."

The Elihu Yale received a certificate and prize in recognition of its hard work.





A day in the life of a maintenance associate...

Jeff Bowman (pictured), who is based at The North Western (Liverpool), joined Wetherspoon in July 2021 and has been in the maintenance associate role since April 2024.

Jeff said: "Being a maintenance associate is a job which is important to the everyday running of the pubs.

"Within my usual hours of 5am to 1pm, I can fix the issues in the pub before the busy morning starts, allowing me to do all the back-of-house jobs once the pub is open.

"These hours take place over multiple pubs which need my help across Liverpool city centre, Runcorn and Warrington.

"The jobs may include painting, decorating, plumbing, wall-tiling and general maintenance throughout the buildings.

"One of the important jobs I do is the line-cleaning, ensuring that the pints are as crisp as possible.

"Doing the housekeeping is also just as important.

"I love this job. When I moved to The North Western, I was a shift leader, but I jumped at the opportunity to become a maintenance associate because it's a passion of mine.

"I enjoy being able to surround myself with people who are satisfied with the jobs I do, especially with the more demanding ones. It becomes incredibly rewarding.

"The benefits are me knowing that high standards can be met and kept, at all times, by keeping a task list to which all of the managers can add.

"My job also helps to keep the staff and customers safe, because of the work I do – which is so important."

THE UNSUNG HEROES WHO KEEP OUR PUBS SHIPSHAPE

Maintenance associates carry out countless tasks ensuring that premises are in their very best shape

Maintaining a tip-top environment for customers and staff is essential.

The company's maintenance associates play a crucial role in ensuring that the pubs, kitchens and hotels are always in excellent condition.

Maintenance associates follow a strict task list, ensuring that every corner of the pubs, kitchens and hotels meet Wetherspoon's high standards.

Maintenance associates are responsible for tasks from general maintenance and decoration to safety checks and compliance with regulations, working closely with management and third-party contractors to maintain high standards.

Maintenance associates have shared their positive experiences and the impact of their work.

Steve Owens, maintenance associate, based at The Quay (Poole), said: "My role as a maintenance associate is to help in the smooth running of the pub.

"This includes carrying out repairs to furniture, toilets and door locks, as well as decorating and looking after external areas.

"This work then minimises the need for external contractors – which can often lead to a wait time in work being completed.

"I work in four pubs over four days, which can be quite challenging, as I don't always know, from one day to the next, what the task list will be."

Charlee Blanchard, Steve's pub manager at The Quay, added: "Having someone who is part of the team and cares about the performance of the pub really improves both the efficiency and quality of the work completed."

Wetherspoon's head of property maintenance, Paul Curran, said: "At Wetherspoon, having in-house maintenance associates is an integral part of maintaining the high standards which customers and hotel guests expect.

"By employing our own team, we ensure that maintenance tasks are completed efficiently and to Wetherspoon's exacting specifications.

"It also allows us to respond quickly to any issues, minimising downtime and ensuring that the pubs and hotels remain welcoming environments.

"Additionally, this in-house approach promotes a strong sense of teamwork and accountability, as our maintenance employees are fully integrated in the team."

THE PUB NOW ARRIVING AT LONDON WATERLOO...

The Lion & The Unicorn becomes eighth Wetherspoon venue located at a railway station

Following the opening, in September, of *The Lion & The Unicorn*, the pub became the company's eighth at a railway station.

Photographs and information about the brand-new pub, located in The Sidings, in the former Eurostar terminus at London Waterloo station, can be found on page 12.

Here, we feature Wetherspoon's pubs located at railway stations.

LONDON HAMILTON HALL

Street-level Concourse, Liverpool Street station
London, EC2M 7PY

Opened in November 1991, Hamilton Hall was Wetherspoon's first pub at a railway station.

It is named after Lord Claud Hamilton, chairman of the Great Eastern Railway Company (1893–1923) which originally built Liverpool Street station.

The pub is housed in the former high-ceilinged ballroom of the old Great Eastern Hotel and still retains today many of its original decorative features.

The highly embellished ballroom interior design was copied directly from the Palais Soubise, in Paris, in 1901.

Golden chandeliers, inspired by the building's original design, and rococo flourishes adorn the vast space.

Decorated in gold, white and pale blue, it is full of mirrors and marble, paintings and plasterwork figures.

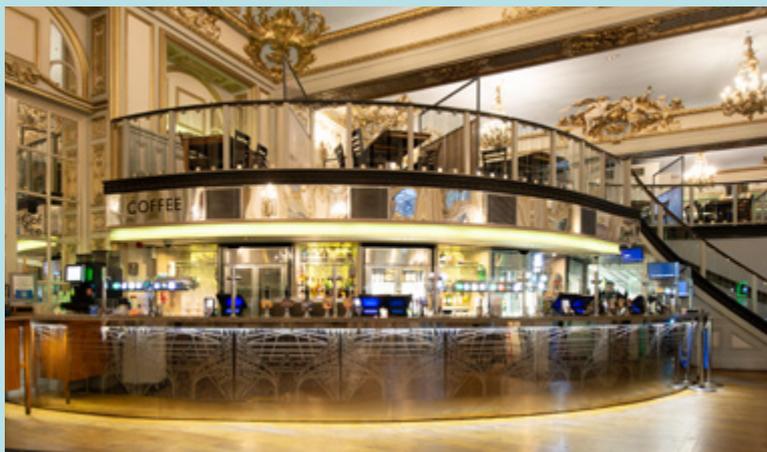
The pub is on two levels, with a bar on each.

There is a large customer area at the front of the pub.

When the Great Eastern Railway was formed in 1862, it quickly drew up plans for a new terminus in the heart of London's centre, designed by the company's engineer Edward Wilson.

The first suburban trains departed from a partially completed Liverpool Street station in 1874.

The 10 platforms of the terminus and the completed station opened fully in 1875, with the old Bishopsgate station closed and turned into a goods yard.



BIRMINGHAM

THE LONDON AND NORTH WESTERN

Birmingham New Street station, Smallbrook
Queensway Birmingham, B2 4QE

The first New Street station was built during 1846–54 by the London and North Western Railway company.

An area of notorious slums was cleared to make way for the railway station.

On officially opening (1 June 1854), it had the world's largest arched single-span iron-and-glass roof.

It was 14 years until the record was broken, in 1868, by London's St Pancras station.

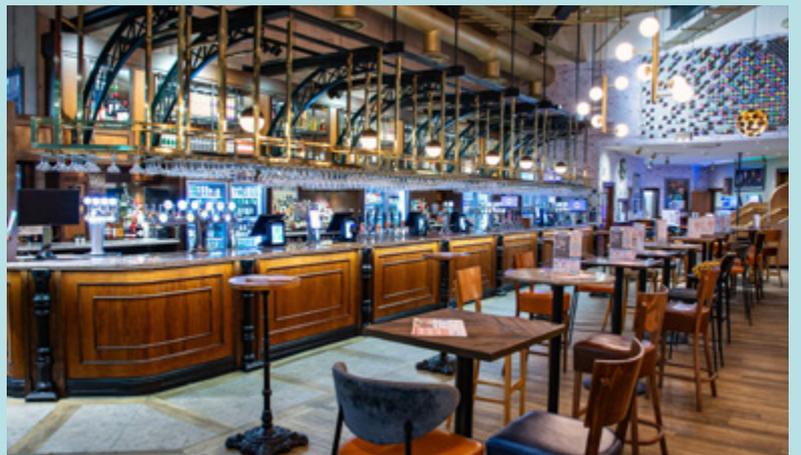
The station was redeveloped in 2015.

Wetherspoon spent £2.4 million developing this pub, at The Concourse, which opened in November 2022, remembering the London and North Western Railway (a British railway company known as both LNWR and L&NWR) in its name.

The LNWR described itself as the Premier Line and, at its peak, just before World War I, it ran routes of more than 1,500 miles (2,400km), employing 111,000 people.

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

The bespoke carpet's design was inspired by the concept of a Birmingham-built Watt double-acting steam engine, together with the artwork for an original stamp, used by the London and North Western Railway for sending parcels by railway.



LEEDS

WETHERSPOONS

Leeds City station, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS1 4DY

This pub opened in April 2000 at the UK's third-busiest railway station outside of London and the largest in England (outside the capital) in terms of platforms – with 17.

The railways arrived in Leeds sooner than anywhere else.

In 1758, England's first Railway Act authorised a horse-drawn, wooden wagon-way to be built from Charles Brandling's Colliery, at Middleton, to Cassons Close, near Leeds Bridge and Leeds City station.

The station straddles two roads, the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and the River Aire.

It is also a combination of two old stations – Leeds Wellington station and Leeds New station – these having opened in 1846 and 1869, respectively.

The two were combined in May 1938.

Thomas Prosser, the North Eastern Railway's architect, designed the station building and train shed.

Thomas E Harrison, as consulting engineer for the Joint Station Committee, was responsible for the arches which supported Leeds New station... and do to this day.

Work to rebuild Leeds City station began in 1960, taking several years to complete.

The station underwent a massive modernisation at the turn of the millennium.

Its new facilities included the pub, one of several Wetherspoon venues in the city.

Situated on the North Concourse of the station, the pub is ideally located for arriving or departing passengers and extremely popular with locals and visitors alike.

Despite its location, unusually, there is a large terrace beer garden at the rear of the pub.



LIVERPOOL
THE NORTH WESTERN

7 Lime Street, Liverpool Lime Street station
Liverpool, Merseyside, L1 1RJ

Opened in July 2015, at a cost of £2 million, this pub has since won prestigious awards for its vintage rail theme design and restoration project.

The pub's design itself has an old rail theme throughout, with a distinctive tile map, inspired by vintage rail stations.

Grand existing pillars, wood panelling and features have been retained.

There are vintage posters and photographs, as well as engineering- and steam-inspired light fittings and a wheel-and-piston sculpture by Cath Davies.

The grade II listed building, with its eye-catching turrets and spires, was originally the North Western Hotel.

The 330-room hotel opened in 1871, built by the London and North Western Railway to serve Lime Street station.

Designed by the renowned Liverpool-born architect Alfred Waterhouse, the hotel closed its doors in the early 1930s and remained empty until 1996.

Liverpool Lime Street station claims to be the world's first true public railway. It links the Mersey to Manchester, although the original terminus was at Crown Street, rather than Lime Street.

In the early days, trains were hauled up and down Edge Hill by rope, rather than by locomotives.

Lime Street's first station was opened in August 1836 by John Foster Jnr, with a wooden train shed.

However, the station was replaced by a new building, built by Sir William Tite in 1849, and a new train shed in 1867, by London and North Western Railway (LNWR) – which is still in use.



LONDON
THE BARREL VAULT

St Pancras International station
Pancras Road, London, NIC 4QP

The Barrel Vault opened in October 2018, at a cost of £2 million, at London's iconic St Pancras International.

The pub is set on the ground floor, with one large bar, in the main station concourse.

It has a feature barrel display over the bar and customer area, which boasts extensive dining and high-top table space inside, as well as an outside terrace on Pancras Road.

The landmark Victorian station and its 21st-century extension are bounded by Pancras Road and Midland Road.

The pub's name refers to the station's original design, its links with the breweries of the Midlands and the original role of the station's undercroft for the storage of beer barrels in the late 19th century.

Designed by William Barlow and originally opened in 1868, St Pancras became renowned as an engineering marvel – it was the largest space in the world enclosed by a single roof and provided the grandest entrance into London.

When the station was built, Barlow decided that trains would enter the railway station on a raised deck, more than five metres higher than the adjoining roads.

The deck, to overcome the natural slope of the land and numerous other constraints, was supported by 688 cast-iron columns – with the elevated platforms creating a huge space below, then used to store thousands of barrels of beer.



LONDON THE SIR JOHN HAWKSHAW

Cannon Street station, London, EC4N 6AP

Far below Cannon Street railway station are the remains of a Roman palace, built in the first century.

The 'steelyard', used by German and Flemish merchants, stood on the site from the 10th century until it was destroyed by the Great Fire of London (1666).

The Livery Hall, built by the Company of Plumbers, occupied the site from 1690 until the 1860s.

It was replaced by Cannon Street station, designed by Sir John Hawkshaw.

This pub, which remembers him, was opened in February 2015.

Opened by the South Eastern Railway on 1 September 1866, the original Cannon Street station building was designed by Sir John Hawkshaw and JW Barry, characterised by its two Wren-style towers, 7m square and 41m high, which faced the River Thames.

The towers supported a 210m-long iron train shed crowned by a high single arch, almost semi-circular, of glass and iron.

To this was joined, in 1867, an Italianate-style hotel and forecourt designed by EM Barry; this provided many of the station's passenger facilities, as well as an impressive architectural frontispiece to the street.

Hawkshaw was born in Leeds, Yorkshire, and is recognised primarily for his work on the Cannon Street railways, with their bridges over the River Thames, and the East London Railway.

Although the pub is relatively small, yet perfectly and conveniently placed alongside the railway platform, there is ample dining and high tables and chairs, as well as a small 'outside' terrace.

Train arrival/departure boards are also displayed.



LONDON WETHERSPOONS

Victoria station, London, SW1V 1JT

When Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, opened his first pub in north London, in 1979, he named it Wetherspoons, after a Mr Wetherspoon – his teacher at primary school in New Zealand.

The reasoning behind the name is that Mr Wetherspoon was too nice to be running Tim's particular class and couldn't control it; Tim thought to himself that, likewise, he couldn't control his first pub, so considered the name to be appropriate.

This pub was opened in December 1992 at London Victoria station, known as Victoria, named after Victoria Street nearby – and historically the London station most familiar to European visitors.

The eastern side of the station was an important terminal for boat trains serving the continent.

During World War I, it became a terminus for trains carrying soldiers to and from France, many of them wounded.

It also became associated with luxury trains, including the most famous – The Golden Arrow.

The western side became the terminus of the Brighton Belle in 1933, the world's only all-Pullman electric train.

Wetherspoons is on the upper level of 'Victoria Island' – self-contained shops on the station's 'Brighton side'.

In March 2024, the pub was extended into the adjacent former Yo! Sushi premises, adding around 165 square metres to the customer area.

With a contemporary design and views across the station, customers can drink and dine inside or 'outside', on a large balcony above the busy station concourse.





Pub manager Andy Johnston (left) and shift leader Dave Edwards

ALL HANDS TO THE PUMPS AT LINFORD ARMS IN CANNOCK

Busy Staffordshire pub continues winning streak with yet another entry in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide

Wetherspoon is proud of the quality of the real ales 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 publication from the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) – The Good Beer Guide.

Wetherspoon continues to have more pubs listed, as a proportion of its estate, than any other pub company.

Local CAMRA branch members judge and score pubs for considered inclusion in the guide.

In the new 2025 edition, there are 251 Wetherspoon pubs listed.

In this regular feature, we highlight those pubs and staff who serve an excellent range of real ales from brewers across the UK.

The Linford Arms (Cannock), which opened as a Wetherspoon pub in July 2000, has now been listed in the guide for the past dozen consecutive years, at least, including in the most recent 2025 edition.

Andy Johnston, who has worked for Wetherspoon for 27 years, took over as pub manager at The Linford Arms 12 years ago and, as he reported: "Since I have been pub manager here, we have not missed being added to The Good Beer Guide."

Andy, who has also worked at Wetherspoon's pubs in Birmingham, Wednesfield and his home city of Wolverhampton, continued:

"Inclusion in the guide is a massive deal for us and means so much to the whole team.

"We have close ties with our local Cannock CAMRA branch and have been the principal sponsor of its beer festival for the seven annual events held during the past nine years (two years lost due to COVID-19)."

Festival

The 2024 Cannock Beer Festival, in September, saw The Linford Arms (along with The Plaza (Rugeley) and The Hedgeford Lodge (Hednesford)) sponsor the event's T-shirts again.

Andy said: "They are such lovely people – and the fact that they are independent, when it comes to selecting pubs for the guide, means a great deal.

"We can pat ourselves on the back for a job well done, but, when independent organisations say that we are doing our job well, that means more."

Andy is hands on when it comes to selecting the real ales to choose, order and serve at The Linford Arms, assisted by shift leader Dave Edwards.

Part-time bar associate Carol Pearson, the wife of Cannock CAMRA's former branch chairman and festival organiser Malcolm, also brings her real-ale knowledge to the proceedings.

Handpumps

The Linford Arms has 10 handpumps serving Wetherspoon's three standard permanent real ales (Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles), together with up to five ever-changing guest ales.

The pub also regularly offers two real ciders, rotating a selection of 10 ciders, including Healeys Flattler Still Cornish Cyder, Gwynt y Ddraig Black Dragon, Westons Old Rosie and Thatchers Stan's Cheddar Valley.

Ales

Andy added: "We host a tap takeover every week, showcasing five or six ales from a local brewery, on rotation throughout the week.

"We have at least 10 popular local breweries from which we select, including Enville Ales, Salopian Brewery, Titanic Brewery and, new to the showcase, Brew61.

"This tap takeover gives a good mix of ales, alongside the national selection, for our real-ale customers, as we are a proper real-ale and cider drinkers' pub."

The local Cannock CAMRA branch holds regular meetings at the pub, with Andy providing a real-ale suggestion box for customers to ask for beers they would like to see available.

That beer suggestion box also extends to the regional craft can range, for customers to propose to the team at The Linford Arms.

What The Good Beer Guide 2025 says:

THE LINFORD ARMS

Established town-centre Wetherspoon pub serving up to eight real ales and ciders.

The pub's name originates from the builders' merchant that formerly occupied the premises in the 19th century.

The Tudor-inspired timber frame runs through this two-floored building, with quiet alcoves and snug areas giving it a homely feel.

Two ale festivals are held each year, and local breweries feature regularly.

There are good bus and rail links. Not to be missed if you are visiting Cannock.

● 79 Market Place, Cannock, WS11 1BN

What CAMRA says:

Cannock Chase CAMRA Festival Organiser Malcolm Pearson said; "Cannock Chase CAMRA has always had an exceptional relationship with The Linford Arms, in Cannock, over many years.

"Indeed, the pub is used as the base for the annual CAMRA Beer Festival meetings and, under pub manager Andy Johnston, has been fully supportive of the festival.

"The pub has appeared in almost every copy of CAMRA's publication The Good Beer Guide since the early 2000s.

"It continues to feature as a regular entry each year, confirming its status as a beacon of reliability in providing a good, ever-changing selection of beer, served at the correct temperature and in good condition.

"Despite the growing number of micropubs now appearing in the area, The Linford Arms is still considered to be one of the best pubs in Cannock to find real ale."

THE REGINALD MITCHELL • HANLEY

CHAIRMAN KEPT IN THE PICTURE IN MICHELLE AND ALISON'S KITCHEN



Kitchen manager Michelle Nixon (pictured left) and kitchen associate Alison Higgin (right) have clocked up a combined 46 years' service with Wetherspoon.

The pair, both working at The Reginald Mitchell (Hanley), originally met when Michelle started 21 years ago as a kitchen associate at the pub.

Michelle recalled: "Alison trained me when I first joined as a 19-year-old kitchen associate, in 2003, although, after six months, I had already moved on to The Wheatsheaf (Stoke-on-Trent).

"I stayed there for six years, progressing to kitchen manager, also helping at the new opening of The Green Dragon (Leek) in 2013, before returning to The Reginald Mitchell about 10 years ago."

Local resident Alison joined the team at The Reginald Mitchell in 1999 and celebrated 25 years at the same pub in October.

Pub manager Jim Mancell said: "Everyone agrees that it is a fantastic achievement by both Michelle and Alison."

Michelle, who manages a team of 14 kitchen staff, continued: "I love my job, the pub, the people and Wetherspoon as a company. "I feel that I have a secure job and just love what I do.

"When I joined, at the age of 19, I just wanted a job, but I loved it as soon as I started and threw myself straight in. I have progressed as far as I want to go and am happy."

Michelle added: "Alison will be 60 next year and, after 25 years at the same pub, knows all of its customers and staff.

"She is always happy, too. She loves the company and is a great admirer of Tim Martin.

"We have a photograph of the two of us with Tim when he visited the pub."

FOOD ANSWERS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

App, website and customer information screen in every pub assist customers to customise meal choices to exclude any unwanted ingredients

Every Wetherspoon pub has a digital customer information screen (CIS) to help customers with guidance on many varied dietary needs areas.

With details available at your fingertips, as well as on the website and app, the food and drinks information is essential for allergen guidance.

Detailed

The CIS gives detailed guidance on the ingredients and allergens contained in every meal served.

Customers can customise their meal and drinks selection, using the digital CIS technology to filter information and highlight exact choices.

The information is configurable. So, for instance, if customers have a milk (lactose) intolerance, they can use the CIS to filter out all meals containing milk – to find dishes matching specific criteria.

Specified

This customisation and ingredient-filtering option can be performed across all 14 allergen categories specified by the Food Standards Agency, including egg, milk, mustard and nuts.

The CIS also provides customers with information on vegetarian and vegan meals, as well as calories and carbohydrate content, with ingredients listed by dish and by individual menu item.

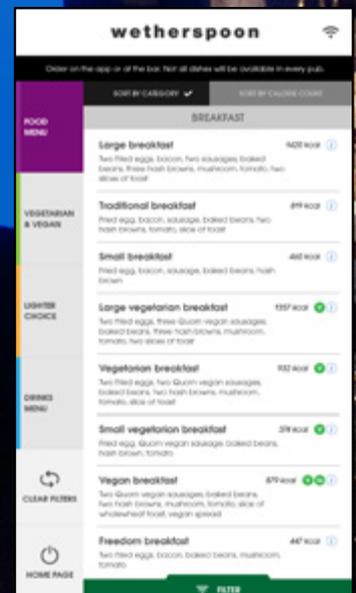
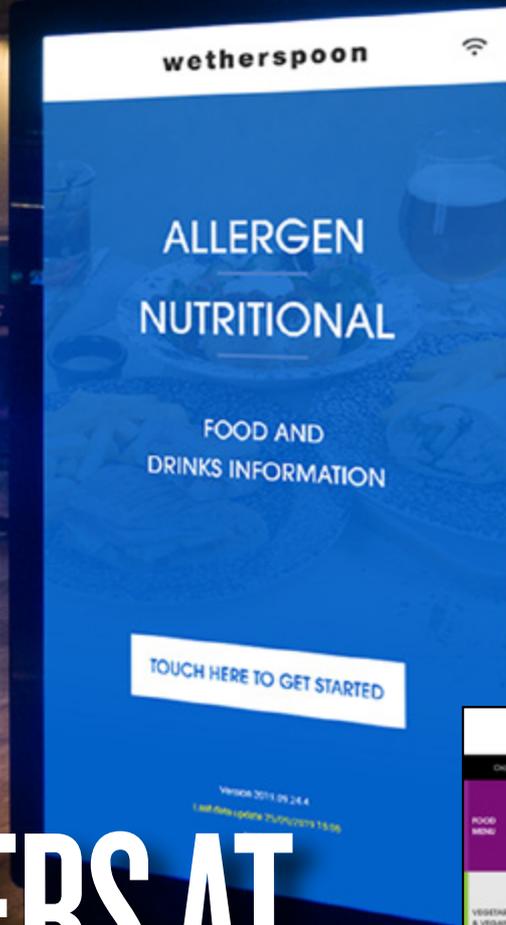
Information about carbohydrate, salt, sugar, fat, fibre and protein content is available for every food item.

Started

Although pub staff are unable to advise customers on any specific dietary choices, they will be able to direct customers to the CIS and help to get them started.

Wetherspoon's allergen, nutritional and dietary information is also available on the website (jdwetherspoon.com) and the Wetherspoon app.

As well as food menu items, information on allergens in all of Wetherspoon's drinks, including thousands of guest ales found across the estate, is also available on the CIS.



How to create individual dietary menus, using the digital customer information screen:

- Step 1** Select 'touch here to get started'
- Step 2** Select 'view menus'
- Step 3** Click on the filter line to create your own dietary menu.
- Step 4** Use the sliders...

If accessing from the app or website, use the steps below:

- Step 1** Enter the pub's name or location for the pub-specific information.
- Step 2** Select a meal.
- Step 3** Click on the box 'view full allergen and nutritional information'.

Tim says: “On pages 4–5, I comment on Wetherspoon’s annual report, published in October, highlighting some of the main issues facing the pub industry. The report received widespread media coverage. Here are the reviews which appeared in The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph and The Times.”

WETHERSPOON’S BOSS CALLS ACADEMICS’ SMALLER BEER GLASS PROPOSAL ‘SLIGHTLY DAFT’

Tim Martin criticises schooner suggestion and urges UK government not to restrict pub licensing hours

The boss of Wetherspoon’s has urged the UK government not to heed calls to restrict pub licensing hours or swap pint glasses for smaller schooners, arguing that pubs have “changed radically in recent decades”.

Amid reports, denied by the health department, of moves to cut alcohol consumption, Tim Martin, the pub chain’s chief executive, said the industry had moved away from a focus purely on beer, and Pepsi, tea and coffee were now the most popular drinks in his establishments.

He dismissed as “slightly daft” the recent and widely reported academic study proposing a switch to a two-thirds of a pint glass size – as used in Australia, where they are known as schooners.

A government spokesperson said: “Neither of these proposals are being considered.”

His remarks came as Wetherspoon’s, which has 800 pubs and is aiming for 1,000, reported a 73.5% increase in pre-tax profits to £73.9m in the year to 29 September, with like-for-like sales up 7.6%. In the last nine weeks, like-for-like sales growth slowed to 4.9%.

The company said it would pay a dividend – of 12p a share – for the first time since 2019.

Martin said: “The word pub may have a misleading connotation for some ministers and researchers. For example, Wetherspoon’s highest selling draught product by far is Pepsi. Coffee and tea volumes, which are not in the draught category, are approximately double those of Pepsi. The reality is that products sold in pubs have radically changed in recent decades.”

The comments came after the public health and prevention minister, Andrew Gwynne, suggested at a Labour fringe event “tightening up on some of the hours of operation”, although Keir Starmer later dismissed as “nonsense” the suggestion that the party would force pubs to shut early. The prime minister told LBC radio’s Nick Ferrari at Breakfast: “This is not government policy. We are not going to do it.”

Since 1988, pubs have been allowed to open all day, having previously been required to close for about two or three hours each afternoon. After the further relaxation of licensing laws in 2005, Wetherspoon’s pubs have been able to stay open until midnight on weekdays and until 1am on Fridays and Saturdays.

Martin said that pubs, clubs and restaurants accounted for 90% of beer sales in the early 1980s, but this had fallen to 40%, probably because of a growing price disparity with supermarkets, which pay virtually no VAT on alcohol, compared with 20% at pubs.

Any restriction of pub opening hours was “likely to be replaced by ‘off-trade’ consumption at home and in other ‘unregulated’ environments”, he said.

Research from the University of Cambridge found that switching away from pint glasses reduced the daily average volume of beer, lager and cider sold by almost 10%, although there was a slight increase in the amount of wine bought.

Martin rejected the idea that the use of schooners would reduce alcohol consumption, saying it would lead to more drinking at home or in parks. He added: “For example, our Aussie cousins, notorious guzzlers, already use schooners without any noticeable reduction in consumption.”

The government is considering banning smoking in some outdoor spaces – pub gardens, outdoor restaurants and outside hospitals and sports grounds – and health experts have welcomed the plans.

Martin told the Guardian that Wetherspoon’s introduced the first non-smoking pubs in the UK, before a nationwide ban. “On balance, looking at industry concerns and a diluted health argument for outside smoking, I wouldn’t extend the ban to gardens. If introduced, it would probably be a political gesture only.”

He also used the annual results to warn once more against any further Covid-19 lockdowns, as he has in previous annual results since restrictions eased. He cited research that found Sweden, which did not lock down, had a Covid-19 fatality rate “of about half the UK’s” and that “the worst performer, by some margin, was Peru, despite enforcing the harshest, longest lockdown”.

By Julia Kollewe

The Guardian / 4 October 2024

Print credit: Julia Kollewe, The Guardian, 4 October 2024

CALLS TO BAN PINTS IN PUBS 'DAFT', SAYS WETHERSPOON BOSS

Reducing beer servings risks driving customers to supermarkets, warns Sir Tim Martin

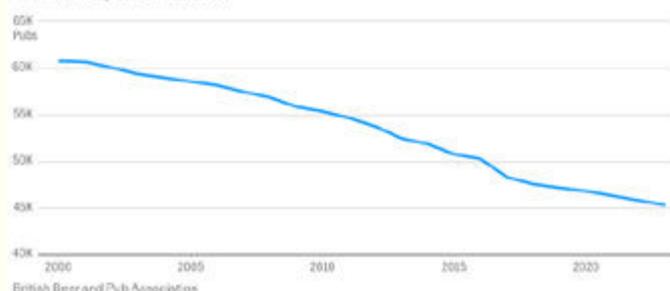
Calls to ban pint glasses in pubs are "daft" and would do little to reduce alcohol consumption, the chairman of JD Wetherspoon has said.

Sir Tim Martin said academic research suggesting pubs should switch from pint glasses to smaller two thirds servings could also encourage drinkers to buy more beer from supermarkets instead, damaging the pub trade.

He said: "Common sense indicates that reducing glass sizes is unlikely, due to human nature, to reduce alcohol consumption in pubs, and would also have no effect whatsoever on drinks bought in supermarkets, unless container sizes in supermarkets were also, unrealistically, reduced.

"For example, our Aussie cousins, notorious guzzlers, already use schooners without any noticeable reduction in consumption."

Britain is losing its boozers
Number of pubs in the UK



His comments come following a trial by researchers at Cambridge University in about a dozen pubs, bars and restaurants which swapped from serving draught beer in pints to two thirds glasses, leading to a drop in the volume of beer sold by almost 10pc.

The scientists argued the measure showed the smaller serves, sometimes known as schooners, could be used to help reduce harms from alcohol and improve the nation's health.

However, Sir Tim said it was more likely to encourage drinkers to buy alcohol in supermarkets rather than licensed venues, "thereby exchanging the relatively highly priced and supervised pub environment for the inexpensive and unsupervised alternative of home, park and party consumption".

It comes as JD Wetherspoon, which runs 800 pubs across the UK, posted a 5.7pc rise in sales over the year that drove its revenues above the £2bn mark for the first time. Pre-tax profits before exceptional items rose by 74pc to almost £74m.

Sir Tim said he believed there was scope to grow the company to around 1,000 pubs across the UK.

While the total number of pubs owned by the company fell by 26 in 2024, the company has opened a number of new sites and unveiled plans to significantly expand about 50 of its largest sites, adding more space and rooms to turn them into so-called Super Spoons.

By Daniel Woolfson

The Daily Telegraph / 4 October 2024

Print credit: Daniel Woolfson, The Daily Telegraph, 4 October 2024

JD WETHERSPOON RETURNS TO DIVIDEND AFTER 74% RISE IN PROFITS

Tim Martin, the pub chain's founder, said sales continued to improve and the company was back in 'growth mode'

Wetherspoons is to pay a dividend for the first time in five years after the no-frills pubs group reported a 74 per cent rise in annual profits.

Spoons, as it is known by regulars, posted a 5.7 per cent rise in revenue to £2.04 billion in the 12 months to the end of July, up from £1.93 billion in the previous financial year. The increase came despite it having closed a number of sites, as well as Euro 2024 and the Olympics this summer, which could have lost it customers because it does not generally show sport in its pubs.

Adjusted pre-tax profits rose 74 per cent from £42.6 million to £73.9 million, comfortably the group's best result since before the pandemic, when it would regularly surpass £100 million.

Statutory pre-tax profits fell by a third to £60.6 million from £90.5 million due to one-off charges, including the costs of selling some pubs, of £13.3 million. The previous year Wetherspoons benefited from gains of £48.3 million from one-offs.

The company said that, "as a result of [its] improved trading and financial position", it would bring back the dividend, which it had not paid since 2019. Shareholders will receive 12p a share, equivalent to the 2019 payout, on November 28.

The chain's employees have also benefited from the pick-up in profits. It handed out £49 million of bonuses and free shares in the past year, almost all of which went to staff below board level.

Fintan Ryan, a consumer analyst at Goodbody, said the return of the dividend "is a clear signal from management of the strength of the JD Wetherspoon operating model and balance sheet [and] should be taken well" by the stock market. Wetherspoons shares rose by 5½p, or 0.8 per cent, to close at 730p.

Tim Martin founded the business in 1979 on the site of a former betting shop in Muswell Hill, north London. The pub was originally called Martin's Free House before he renamed it JD Wetherspoon after one of his teachers.

The chain, which had 44 pubs at its flotation in 1992, is famous for its low prices. As well as serving beers including Ruddles Best and Ringwood Old Thumper, it is one of the UK's top sellers of coffee.

Drinks sales were the biggest driver of growth last year, with like-for-like bar sales increasing 8.9 per cent compared with the previous year. Food sales rose by 5.6 per cent and income from its hotel rooms increased by 2.7 per cent. Fruit machine sales, a comparatively small part of the business, were up almost 11 per cent.

Martin, 68, said sales continued to improve, although the pace of growth had slowed, with like-for-like sales, which strip out the impact of opening and closing pubs, up 4.9 per cent in August and September.

The company told the stock market that it "currently anticipates a reasonable outcome for the current financial year", even if Martin "continues to be concerned about the possibility of further lockdowns", as he has said before.

There are 800 JD Wetherspoon pubs around the country, from Penzance to Inverness, but that is down from a peak of 951 in 2015, partly owing to rising taxes, soaring staff costs, the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. However, Martin said that the company was "back in growth mode", repeating his "best estimate" that the company has potential to reach 1,000 in the UK one day.

What's wrong with a schooner of beer?

Tim Martin has taken aim at the schooner in his pub group's latest annual results.

He said a proposal for a two thirds of a pint measure, sometimes called a schooner, was "slightly daft". Researchers at Cambridge University have suggested that reducing glass sizes would lead to people drinking less, but Martin is unconvinced.

"Common sense indicates that reducing glass sizes is unlikely, due to human nature, to reduce alcohol consumption in pubs," he said. "For example, our Aussie cousins — notorious guzzlers — already use schooners without any noticeable reduction in consumption."

Martin's main concern is that if he were forced to sell beer in schooners rather than pints he would lose even more business to supermarkets. Any reduction in pubs' opening hours, which ministers have reportedly been discussing, would have the same effect.

"Both these proposals seem likely, if implemented, to encourage off-trade consumption at the expense of the on-trade, thereby exchanging the relatively highly priced and supervised pub environment for the inexpensive and unsupervised alternative of home, park and party consumption," Martin said.

By Tom Howard

The Times / 4 October 2024

Print credit: Tom Howard, The Times, 4 October 2024

THE BROCKET ARMS • THE MOON UNDER WATER • WIGAN

TWO LANCASHIRE HOTSHOTS CELEBRATE 20-YEAR STINTS



Two managers at two pubs in Wigan simultaneously reached a Wetherspoon career milestone.

Pub manager Dave Higham is pictured (centre) receiving Champagne and flowers to mark his 20 years' service, while kitchen manager Jemma Edwards (second right) was presented with the same for her two decades' service with the company.

Also pictured (left to right) are Wetherspoon area manager Mike Morrissey, The Brocket Arms (Wigan) hotel manager Laura Quinn and pub manager Tom Quinn.

Jemma, who has been the kitchen manager at The Brocket Arms for two years in January 2025, started in 2004, straight from school, as a kitchen associate at The Sir Thomas Gerard (Ashton-in-Makerfield). She recalled: "I didn't know what I wanted to do after school and needed a job.

"I soon got used to it, the people and the job, and worked my way up to become kitchen manager in 2009, at the age of 23."

Jemma took a step back from the management role for a while, but when The Brocket Arms needed a kitchen manager in January 2023, she stepped up again.

Jemma, 38, said: "The kitchen here is very different, a lot bigger and busier, with a bigger team of 20 staff.

"I enjoy my work and am happy in my role.

"Wetherspoon is a good company to work for.

"I've never had a problem and see myself working here until retirement."

Dave also started at The Brocket Arms, as a bar associate in 2004, where he spent five years initially.

A move to The Moon Under Water (Wigan) for one year, a move back to The Brocket Arms (for two years) and a return in 2012 to The Moon Under Water saw him climb the Wetherspoon career ladder.

Dave admitted: "I didn't think that it would be a career, as it was just a job to start with, but once I began working my way up, I thought it could be a longer-term option.

"However, I never thought about becoming a pub manager until the last year or two. It made sense and was a natural progression."

Dave, 41, took over as pub manager at The Moon Under Water in May 2024 and is enjoying the challenge.

He said: "I have quite a few other experienced, long-serving staff members on the team, and things are going very well.

"The job is always the same, but every day is different, and nothing surprises me anymore."

Dave added: "I have worked for the company for literally half of my life, although it doesn't seem like 20 years.

"Wetherspoon looks after its staff well. It is a good company to work for – and the bonuses are great.

"I also met my wife Lauren when we both worked at The Brocket Arms, although she has since left the company."

NOW OPEN

Marlow

THE GRAND ASSEMBLY

Pub manager Rachel Turner is pictured with members of her team at The Grand Assembly, Wetherspoon's new pub in Marlow.

The company has spent £3.5 million developing the pub in Market Square, in the former M&Co store.

The pub takes its name from the grand assemblies which were once held in the former Market House adjacent to the site.

The pub interior's design is inspired by traditional pubs, gin palaces and grand assembly halls of the Victorian era, with a modern industrial twist, amalgamating old and new design elements.

Links to the site's history as the premises of Batting & Sons ironmonger's from the 1820s until c1960, are also included, while giving subtle nods to Frankenstein, written by Mary Shelley, who, while writing the Gothic novel in 1817, lived in a cottage a stone's throw from the site.

Design elements have also been inspired heavily by the town's connection to the River Thames, notably the industry which it brought to the area in the town's early establishment, as well as its rich rowing heritage.

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, together with artwork commissioned by local artists.

There is a terraced courtyard beer garden at the rear of the pub.

Wetherspoon has worked with local charities Wild Marlow and Bisham Nest Box Group to provide nesting sites for swifts (a recently red-listed species) and bats, while promoting pollinating insects and bees, with tailored planting in the garden.

The pub is open Sunday to Thursday from 8am until midnight (alcohol served until 11.30pm) and Friday and Saturday from 8am until 1am (alcohol served until 12.30am), with food served throughout the day, from opening until 11pm every day.

It specialises in real ales and traditional ciders, as well as craft and world beers, serving a wide range of draught ales, as well as bottled beers, including those from local and regional brewers.

The pub is wheelchair accessible, with a specially adapted toilet for those customers needing accessibility.

Pub manager Rachel Turner said: "I am delighted that The Grand Assembly has quickly established itself in the town and confident that it will be a great addition to Marlow's social scene.

"I am also pleased that we have created 60 new jobs."

Pictured (front, left to right) are kitchen shift manager Jake Lawlor, pub manager Rachel Turner and shift manager Peter Bartlett; (back, left to right) are shift managers James McAfee (left) and Joel Cawdwell.

2-3 Market Square, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 3HH





NEW LOOK



Epsom

THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS

The Assembly Rooms (Epsom) has undergone an extensive refurbishment project, costing £1.375 million. Pictured (left to right) at the reopening are shift leader Sonata Pakeviciene, area manager Stephen Meeke, Epsom's mayor Cllr Steve Bridger and Mrs Carol Bridger.

The customer area has undergone a full and complete refurbishment, with the bar area relocated and upgraded, including an upgrade to the drinks-dispensing equipment.

The pub has been fully redecorated throughout, including the installation of a bespoke new carpet and additional furniture.

The air-conditioning has been upgraded in the customer area, customer toilets have been repaired and redecorated and new artwork added to the customer area.

External signage and lighting have also been replaced and upgraded.

Behind the scenes, the kitchen facilities and equipment has been upgraded, with an open-gantry food hoist room added, as well as new staff facilities created.

Pub manager Sel Devecioglu said: "The investment highlights Wetherspoon's commitment to the pub, its staff and customers, as well as to Epsom itself."

147-153 High Street, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 8EH



Shaw

THE SHAY WAKE

Wetherspoon's area manager Caryn Davenport (left) and pub manager Hollie Parry-Jones are pictured in the new-look beer garden at The Shay Wake (Shaw).

The pub near Oldham has a new, larger beer garden, following a £300,000 development project.

The brand-new garden has been built at the rear of the premises. The space was once occupied by a public car park, which has been developed to create the outdoor area.

This new space is in addition to an existing smaller garden, providing a larger outdoor space, with ramp access to the various garden levels.

The new additional garden (1,860 square feet) can accommodate an extra 182 seated customers, at free-standing dining tables and chairs, as well as high-topped tables and stools.

The paved garden includes a pergola, providing cover and shade over some of the seated area, together with potted trees, climbing plants, flowers and shrubs, as well as festoon lighting and colourful wall murals.

Pub manager Hollie Parry-Jones said: "We're thrilled with our brand-new, larger garden, which is a great addition to the pub and will provide a lovely outside space for customers to enjoy." The garden is open from 8am until 8pm every day.

2-10 Milnrow Road, Shaw, Oldham, OL2 8EQ





Maidenhead

THE BEAR

Pub manager Eddie Clarkson is pictured (right) at the reopening of The Bear (Maidenhead), with (left to right) shift leader Tyler Jones, bar associate Luke Perera and shift leader Tristan Rivelle.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in February 2010, has undergone an extensive refurbishment project, costing £665,000.

The pub's interior has been fully redecorated, with a new colour scheme, as well as full external redecoration.

The customer area has also undergone refurbishment, including the installation of a bespoke new carpet.

A new granite bar top has also been installed, as well as new upgraded drinks-dispensing equipment added on the bar.

The pub's toilet facilities have also been upgraded.

Eddie said: "We are delighted with the refurbishment and pleased that we have also been able to create additional jobs for local people."

8-10 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1QJ



Southgate

THE NEW CROWN

Pub manager James Apps is pictured (centre) with shift manager Katie Beresford and kitchen manager Tom van Langenberg at The New Crown (Southgate), following a refurbishment project at the north London pub costing just over £500,000.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in January 1996, has been refurbished, with safety work undertaken.

The pub has undergone a full redecoration throughout, as well as the installation of a new coffee station area.

Fire-proofing work has also been completed on the ground floor of the pub, with a new glass wash area created on the bar.

A full refurbishment of the male, female and accessible toilets has also taken place.

Pub manager James Apps said: "The New Crown has been a community pub in Southgate for almost 30 years.

"The pub is a popular local for many regular customers.

"Both they and the staff are extremely happy with its new look."

**80-84 Chase Side, Southgate
Enfield, N14 5PH**



NEW LOOK

Newcastle

THE MILE CASTLE

Pub manager Kris Lee is pictured (right) with Stephen Patterson, chief executive NE1, at the reopening of The Mile Castle (Newcastle).

The pub underwent an extensive redevelopment and refurbishment project costing £2.236 million.

A new beer garden (almost 3,000 square feet) has also opened on the site of a former car park at the side of the building.

An additional 70 full- and part-time jobs have been created at pub, to add to the 130 current employees.

The Mile Castle first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in December 2009. The pub is on three levels, with a bar on each.

The removal of a staircase on the ground and first floor has allowed for additional seating areas.

The premises has been completely refurbished and fully redecorated throughout, including the installation of a bespoke new carpet and new upgraded lighting.

Behind the scenes, the kitchen facilities have been upgraded, with an open gantry on the ground floor, as well as an additional food lift to access the third floor.

A new cellar has been added, with new drink-dispensing equipment installed on the bar.

New gents' toilets have been added.

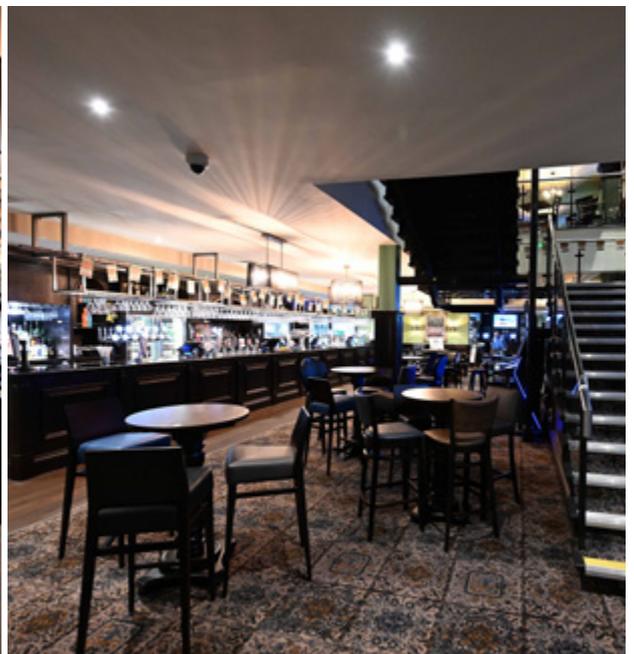
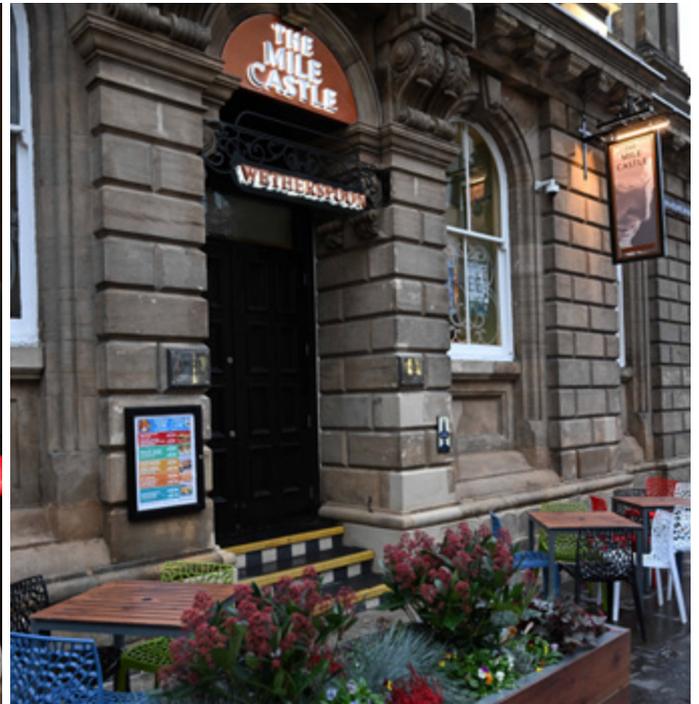
Pub manager Kris Lee said: "The Mile Castle is a landmark pub in the city.

"The redevelopment and refurbishment have created an even better pub, with more space for customers.

"We are delighted that we have also created 70 new jobs for local people."

● Please see page 8 for news on the pub's new hotel opening.

19-25 Grainger Street, Newcastle, Tyne and Wear, NE1 5JE





Pictured at The Crosse Keys (City of London) in February 2020 are (left to right) Belinda Gould, Tessa Gabiniewicz, Steph Cope, Jess Hurd and Luana Meola

INTERNATIONAL FEMALE BREWERS BRING US THEIR FESTIVAL BREWS

Women from Australia, Canada, Italy, New Zealand and the US all ready to spring into action for 12-day spring beer festival

Wetherspoon's 12-day spring 2025 showcase of beers will be celebrating five female international brewers.

The Wetherspoon spring beer festival is taking place at all Wetherspoon pubs, across the UK and Ireland, from Wednesday 5 March until Sunday 16 March, inclusive.

Five female festival brewers from overseas will be producing their ale recipes right here in the UK.

Australia-based Penny Red Beer Co's Aussie Pale Ale (4.5% ABV) will be brewed by Steph Cope, at Oakham, while Tessa Gabiniewicz will travel from Land & Sea Brewing Company, in Canada, to brew her Estuary Session IPA (4.5% ABV) at Hook Norton Brewery.

Italy's Luana Meola will bring her Chocolate Porter (5.0% ABV) recipe from Fabbrica della Birra Perugia, via Batemans Brewery.

Antipodean

Belinda Gould, from Brew Moon Brewing Company, New Zealand, will produce Antipodean Pale Ale (5.5% ABV) at Adnams Brewery.

Finally, Terrapin Beer Co's Jess Hurd will travel from the US to brew Terrapin Hey Pal (4.2% ABV) at Banks's Brewery.

Tessa said: "There is nothing more exciting to me than to be travelling to a place with such a rich history, culture and brewing tradition.

Remarkable

"My admiration for Wetherspoon's pubs runs deep, as I have heard only remarkable things about what a staple the pubs are in every community.

"Many of my peers, friends and mentors call Wetherspoon's pubs 'an institution' – and I could not be more honoured to become a part of this celebration of ale."

Huge thanks go to the five host breweries which, once again, will be welcoming the visiting brewers, as part of Wetherspoon's long-running and highly successful international brewers' project.

Fabulous

As well as the fabulous five overseas brews on offer, a further 25 festival beers will feature in the spring real-ale line-up, many of which have been brewed by women from breweries across the UK.

The festival will feature new, seasonal and speciality beers, many of them available in pubs for the very first time and all available to order via the Wetherspoon app and at the bar.

Special third-of-a-pint glasses will be available once again, too, helping customers to sample many of the excellent festival ales – with three for the price of a festival pint.

● **Don't miss this spring showcase, with an international woman's touch (coinciding with International Women's Day 2025) – at your local Wetherspoon.**

A BOON FOR SPOONS: THE TRUSTED EXPERTS WHO KEEP PUBS TIP-TOP

From carpenters to gardeners and cleaners to fridge engineers - Wetherspoon has spent decades building up relationships with professionals

Wetherspoon is proud of its suppliers and contractors, whether large or small companies or even one-person operations.

Numerous businesses have worked with the company's pubs for many years.

In this feature, we focus on four contractors which have worked closely with Wetherspoon, its pubs and pub managers for an extended period of time.

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, said: "Our suppliers are a vital part of the success of our business.

"We are proud that so many of them have been supplying the company and its pubs for a long time, offering a first-class service."

Mansfield Property Maintenance

Rhys Smith has been working for Wetherspoon for 25 years.

A trained carpenter, he was originally employed by different contractors, working on new pub openings and refurbishments, before starting his own company in 2005.

The Dartford-based company has grown every year since and now employs 60 staff, specialising in general building maintenance, repair and construction.

Rhys explained: "We operate a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week, 365-days-a-year, reactive and emergency call-out service, covering the whole of the southeast of England, from Portsmouth up to Oxfordshire and across East Anglia and the home counties.

"As well as essential repairs, we have been involved in refits and refurb, including at The Muggleton Inn (Maidstone), The Moon Under Water (Leicester Square, London) and in the roof garden at The Moon and Stars (Romford)."

Rhys added: "Wetherspoon is our biggest client.

"I have seen and worked alongside many Wetherspoon employees over the years, who have progressed and been promoted, going through that journey with them.

"We understand the operational side of the business and its challenges and speak the same language.

"We work our socks off for Wetherspoon, but it's swings and roundabouts - we have a good working relationship."



AJAW Cleaning Services

Joel Williams' working relationship with Wetherspoon started in 2006, when he was employed to clean the windows at The George (Staines-upon-Thames).

He then took on the pub-cleaning there too, a year later, before it became an in-house role.

Joel explained: "At the peak, our cleaning company was responsible for 52 pubs, from Plymouth to Southampton, Camberley to Oxford, before I separated from my business partner."

Today, Joel's Staines-based company is responsible for window-cleaning and jet washing patios and paved outside areas at five pubs weekly – at The George, The Moon Under Water (Hounslow), The Moon on the Square (Feltham), The Good Yarn (Uxbridge) and The Botwell Inn (Hayes).

Joel, who has been working alongside colleague Brian Vickery for the past eight years, added: "We also jet wash at The Greenwood Hotel (Northolt) every quarter, which is a huge outside area."

He continued: "There have been a lot of changes over the past 18 years, but I have always built up a good relationship with those I work with.

"It has always been an easy working relationship with Wetherspoon and very pleasurable."



Adams Nursery Ltd

When Elanor Adams first took on work for Wetherspoon, more than a decade ago, she was responsible for the floral displays at nine pubs in and around her local area of Selby, North Yorkshire.

Today, the already-established family business now supplies and services around 2,000 hanging baskets (in both summer and winter) for 146 pubs across Yorkshire, as far north and east as Morpeth in Northumberland, south to Shrewsbury and Nottingham and west to the Lake District.

Elanor reported: "We started with a request from one area manager, built up a good reputation in the company and the work snowballed from there.

"The knock-on effect has resulted in a wide area, and we have built a really easy, good working relationship with all the pubs and head office."

She continued: "We are a family business, with my husband David, our eldest son David Jnr, youngest son Sonny and me all on the team, along with loyal member Scott Marshall, who has been with us since the start. Our daughter India is office based and responsible for the admin."

The company provides an all-year-round planting service, with expertise in floral displays, including hanging baskets and planters, as well as garden maintenance (hedges and lawns) and maintaining the plant-watering irrigation systems.

Elanor added: "As well as regular jobs, we work ad hoc, responding to whatever needs attention, providing each pub with an individual, bespoke display (some award-winning 'In Bloom' pubs), with a personal touch which makes them stand out from the rest."



David, David Jnr and Elanor Adams (pictured left to right)

ERI Refrigeration

Sunday Nelson has worked as an engineer for Berkshire-based ERI Refrigeration for the past 25 years and, in turn, as a contractor for Wetherspoon.

His job is to fix and repair any issues at the pubs with faulty fridges, bottle stores, freezers, ice machines and cellar equipment.

Initially, Sunday would travel to pubs as far north as Manchester, but, today, there are more than 20 engineers based in regions across the UK.

Sunday's call-out area is now predominantly within the M25.

Sunday said: "This has been my only job, and things are quite different from when I first started working, but, in my opinion, Wetherspoon's pubs are number-one and always my number-one priority.

"Wetherspoon cares about its staff and has exceptional customer care. The staff are very nice people, always very helpful and understanding – well trained to a high standard.

"That makes my job easier."

Sunday concluded: "The way I look at it, indirectly, my wages are from Wetherspoon. If everything is up and running and working well, the pubs make money and I get paid. I take my job very seriously.

"I love it... and I care about my main client Wetherspoon."



SELECTION OF LOW- AND NO-ALCOHOL DRINKS JUST GOT EVEN BIGGER

How to score zero in our multiple choice

Wetherspoon's range of low-alcohol and alcohol-free drinks continues to grow.

The choice for customers cutting out or cutting down on alcohol consumption just got even better, with some new additions to the drinks menu.

Unique

NEW Guinness 0.0 (0.05% ABV) has the same smooth taste, perfectly balanced flavour and unique dark colour of Guinness... just without the alcohol.

To create Guinness 0.0, the St James' Gate brewers start by brewing Guinness exactly as they always have, using the same natural ingredients (water, barley, hops and yeast), before gently removing the alcohol through a cold filtration method.

The resulting product is a stout which is unmistakably Guinness, just without the alcohol, featuring the same dark, ruby-red liquid and creamy head, with hints of chocolate and coffee, smoothly balanced with bitter, sweet and roasted notes.

Super

Guinness 0.0 joins the other super seven low- and no-alcohol beers on the menu.

They are Beck's Blue (0.05% ABV), Corona Cero (0.0% ABV), BrewDog Punk AF (0.5% ABV), Stella Artois Alcohol Free (0.0% ABV), Heineken 00 (0.05% ABV), Erdinger Alkoholfrei (0.5% ABV) and Adnams Ghost Ship (0.5% ABV).

Thatchers Zero % (0.05% ABV) and Kopparberg Strawberry & Lime Alcohol Free (0.05% ABV) are the two low-alcohol cider choices.

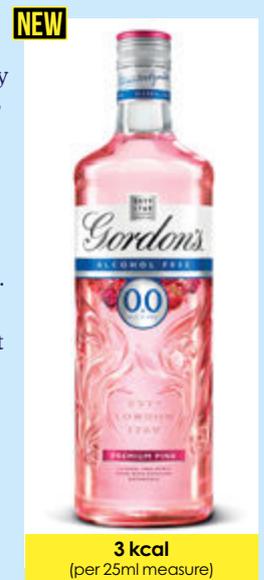
Mixer

NEW Gordon's Pink 0% (0.0% ABV), an alcohol-free gin alternative, has also been added to the drinks menu and is served with a mixer included in the price.

Delivering the bold taste of Gordon's, balanced with the sweetness of raspberry and strawberry flavours, Gordon's Pink 0% is created to achieve all the taste, yet with none of the alcohol.

The perfect alcohol-free alternative to the usual choice of Gordon's and tonic, it's 0 per cent alcohol, but 100 per cent Gordon's, established in London in 1769.

For something a little more interesting than soft drinks (although there is a great choice of those too), Wetherspoon's low-alcohol and alcohol-free drinks selection has plenty to offer.



Check out the 0% cocktails, including the Passion Fruit Cooler. A fruity blend of mango, passion fruit, orange juice and a sparkle of lemonade, served with orange, this 'weighs in' at just 128 kcal.

Try the Raspberry Refresher (85 kcal) – a blend of R White's raspberry lemonade, orange juice and lime juice, garnished with orange. It's a refreshingly perfect serve for any occasion.

HAVERFORDWEST

APPLE FANS SAY CIDER SOLD AT WILLIAM OWEN IS INSANELY GREAT

The William Owen (Haverfordwest) has been voted the best pub in the county of Pembrokeshire in which to enjoy a pint of cider.

Members of the Pembrokeshire Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch named the pub as winner of its 'cider pub of the year' award 2024.

At a special presentation evening at the pub, pub manager Nicola Hayton (pictured) received a certificate from Pembrokeshire CAMRA branch chair Alwen Thomas.

The William Owen was also runner-up for the overall Pembrokeshire 'pub of the year' award and goes forward to CAMRA's West Wales Cider Pub of the Year competition and subsequent national UK awards, if successful.

Alwen Thomas told The Western Telegraph newspaper: "CAMRA campaigns for real cider, as well as real ale, and it is a pleasure to see a popular town-centre pub offering a good range of both.

"Since its foundation in 1979, Wetherspoon has been a stalwart supporter of CAMRA's defence of traditional beverages.

"Nicola continues that commitment by offering local drinkers a choice of quality ciders from Wales and further afield."

Nicola added: "We are delighted to be awarded Pembrokeshire CAMRA's cider 'pub of the year' award for 2024.

"We thank the branch and its members for their continued support."

The William Owen serves a selection of ciders in rotation, including those from Welsh cider producer Gwynt y Ddraig.



SPALDING

ALES ENTHRAL ALL AT SPALDING'S IVY WALL

Pub manager Brendan Epton and his team at The Ivy Wall (Spalding) received a certificate at a special presentation evening at the pub.

Fenland Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) members voted the pub as winner of their 'pub of the season' summer 2024 award.

Branch chairman Malcolm Phillips (pictured centre, with fellow CAMRA members), who presented the award, said: "Congratulations to The Ivy Wall, voted for by CAMRA members in the Spalding area.

"Fenland CAMRA's members were there to celebrate the event and able to enjoy several of the ales at The Ivy Wall, such as Adnams Ghost Ship, Brains Rev James and Woodforde's Nog."

Brendan (pictured third right, with shift manager Ryan Cuthbert third left) said: "We are delighted to receive the award, voted for in first place, ahead of some tough competition.

"The CAMRA members enjoyed the presentation evening, and we thank them all for their votes and continued support."





MISSING LINGS: IVY WALL'S DIG UNEARTH'S SPALDING'S SECRETS

Lincolnshire pub opened in 2005 following redevelopment project which was delayed after ancient remains were discovered

The floor-to-ceiling glazed exterior and modern red brickwork of The Ivy Wall (Spalding) is almost a deceptive design frontage for this local historical site.

Not only a community hub and social meeting place, the pub houses a huge collection of historical artefacts, photographs and items.

The pub's first opening, which was in April 2005, had to be put on hold for more than a year after ancient remains needed to be excavated during the redevelopment project.

During Wetherspoon's pub-building project, as part of the planning permission's conditions, archaeological excavations were undertaken.

Photographs showing the archaeological digs are on display in the pub.

Medieval

The dig discovery included the remains of a cellar from the early medieval period and an 18th-century pub which once stood on the site, also called The Ivy Wall.

This medieval undercroft and cellar steps can still be seen through a large circular glass floor feature at the front of the pub, providing a real window into Spalding's past.

An impressive selection of historical ceramics and artefacts was also revealed during the excavation works, now displayed in frames on the walls throughout the pub.

The selection includes pieces of a mid-18th-century salt-glazed earthenware bowl and ointment pot, fragments of an 18th-century pancheon (a type of large bowl) and slipware bowls of 17th- to 18th-century dates, as well as glass bottle bases of the 18th to early 19th century.

There is a 16th- to 17th-century glass linen smoother, a bone pin and copper alloy thimble, a medieval knife sharpener, a 17th-century 'pipkin' ceramic saucepan for heating liquids and an early 18th-century Staffordshire-made tankard.

Two locally made 17th-century clay pipes, together with 17th-century pipes made in Spalding by Isaac Bibby, are also displayed.

Panelling

A section of the customer dining area, decorated with wood panelling, boasts a black-and-white photographic gallery depicting local scenes of a bygone age.

The local market place captured in c1905, c1910 and c1959 and the 'sheep market' of c1900 are among the images, as well as various modes of transport, including a cyclist on High Bridge in c1900, the railway station (with steam train) in c1910, a 'duck punt' (boat) and a 'balloon ascent from a field off New Road' of c1890.

Despite the rich history and artwork on display, the pub's design has a contemporary feel, with a long metallic-finish bar and mirrored back bar.



The low ceilings, various fabric furnishings, carpet, warm lighting and colour palette create a relaxing and cosy atmosphere, together with a working log fireplace with exposed-brick surround providing a focal-point feature.

The pub also has a small brick-paved enclosed courtyard-style outside area, with umbrella-covered dining tables and chairs.

The pub itself is located on New Road, which officially got its name in 1871.

Garage

For the next 120 years, the premises on the site housed coach builders, motor engineers and a garage.

Until the early 1800s, the Westlode waterway ran along the course of New Road and Westlode Street.

The site of the premises was on the north bank or Westlode Side – and the area was a busy trading point, with boats docking in the nearby river.

Its approximate location is marked 'Ivy Wall' on the town map of 1732, an important historical reference in Spalding's local history. Spalding itself is a bustling Georgian market town, situated within the South Lincolnshire Fenslands.

Known as The Heart of the Fens, Spalding is known as a centre of the flower bulb industry, with close links with the Netherlands (the origin of the Geest family – former major local employers).

The once-annual tulip parade, a tourist attraction, took place on the first Saturday in May, until 2013, with its procession of floats on various themes, each decorated with tulip petals.

The Spalding Flower Parade was revived in May 2023, incorporating 20,000 handmade knitted flowers, as well as some fresh tulips.

● **18–19 New Road, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1DQ**

WIGAN

COAT OF ARMS AT WIGAN HOTEL RESTORED TO FORMER GLORY



Hotel manager Laura Quinn is pictured outside The Bocket Arms (Wigan), following a restoration project at the Wetherspoon pub and hotel.

The coat of arms, displayed above the hotel's entrance, was removed and restored, probably for the first time since it was originally installed.

Laura said: "The coat of arms was installed in 1957, when the property was first built, and there is no record of it ever coming down or being changed.

"We were having new windows fitted in the hotel and, while the scaffolding was in place, I suggested that the coat of arms be restored at the same time."

Wetherspoon opened The Bocket Arms pub and 28-bedroom hotel in December 1998.

Laura started working at the pub seven years ago, as a shift manager, becoming hotel manager in 2021.

She met her husband, Tom, pub manager at The Bocket Arms, while working together at The Sir Thomas Gerard (Ashton-in-Makerfield), in 2007.

Interested in the history of the building, Laura has undertaken extensive research, with the help of Wigan History Society, and has delved into the story behind The Bocket Arms.

Laura writes: 'The Bocket Arms building was built in stages, with the front section built first in 1957 (which meant that there were only seven hotel rooms and a small pub area).

'Then, a few years later, the back of the building (the remaining 21 bedrooms upstairs and what was originally two large function rooms downstairs) was added, completing the property (as it stands today) in 1959.

'The Bocket Arms was built by Peter Walker Ltd and opened on 10 October 1957 by Lord Bocket, chairman of Walker Cain brewery.

'The building itself has had some major changes over the years.

'The two function rooms were home to many major Wigan functions, such as weddings and corporate parties, including a visit from the late Margaret Thatcher.

'In 1921, Bocket Hall in Hertfordshire was sold to Sir Charles Nall-Cain, who later became the first Lord Bocket.

'He took the name Bocket from the hall which he'd just purchased.

'The family fortune came from a brewing company, Cain's Brewery Liverpool, which his father, Robert Cain, had started.

'Sir Charles died in 1935 and his son Arthur Ronald Cain became the second Lord Bocket, who opened The Bocket Arms in 1957.

'The family coat of arms adorning the Bocket Hall Estate building, in Hertfordshire, is the same coat of arms on The Bocket Arms.

'The Latin motto on the crest 'felis demulcta mitis' is believed to translate as 'gentle in peace, fearless in war', from an Irish proverb which literally translated means 'the stroked (soothed) cat is gentle.'



TRY THE CHRISTMAS MENU – YULE BE VERY GLAD YOU DID

Give yourself, and your friends and family, a present with a helping of festive food

It's that time of the season again when we can celebrate and indulge with festive food and drink... at your local Wetherspoon.

The Christmas menu is now being served (13 Nov) until Tuesday 31 December (excluding Christmas Day).

Festive meals for 2024 include the ever-popular dish of sliced turkey breast and winter vegetables.

Turkey

Enjoy four slices of turkey breast, with a pork, apricot & cranberry stuffing, roasted Chantenay carrots and parsnips, Maris Piper mash, two pigs-in-blankets, peas, cranberry sauce and gravy.

This meal, together with all the festive meals and Deli Deals®, includes a drink* (soft or alcoholic).

Following the huge success of the big cheese burger (Brie slices, topped with two halloumi fries and blue cheese dip on the side, with chips – and a choice of patties), available once again this year, a NEW 11" big cheese pizza has also been added, to the festive menu.

Cheesemas

Also served as a small-plate 8" big cheese pizza option, both pizzas are topped with mozzarella, Brie, Cheddar cheese, blue cheese sauce and rocket, for a truly indulgent 'cheesemas' feast.

If you are a true cheese-lover, check out the Christmas menu small-plate options and the big cheese chips – with Brie, Cheddar cheese, mozzarella cheese and blue cheese dip.

Wetherspoon's Brie & bacon burger, as well as the chicken & stuffing burger, has also been joined on the menu by the NEW vegan five gold rings burger.

Vegan

The vegan option comprises a Beyond Meat® plant-based patty, BBQ sauce, iceberg lettuce, tomato and red onion, topped with five onion rings.

All of the Deli Deals® (which are chicken, stuffing, bacon & cranberry panini, Brie & cranberry panini, small southern-fried chicken & stuffing wrap and southern-fried chicken & stuffing wrap) include a drink* (soft or alcoholic) and can be ordered with additional side dishes.

Finish off your Christmas meal with a sweet festive treat of a cookies & cream blondeie.

This gooey, warm white chocolate brownie is packed with white chocolate and crushed cookie pieces, served with vanilla ice cream and more chocolate cookie crumbs.

A Christmas cocktail is also available for the limited Christmas-menu period – the Chocolate-Orange Espresso Martini.

THE BREWERY NEXT DOOR TO ENGLAND'S LAST WILDERNESS

Allendale Brewery operates from a former lead-smelting mill turned modern brewhouse in North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Brewery's name: Allendale Brewery, Hexham, Northumberland



Head brewer Rikki Flanagan (right) and brewer Paul McCourt

Hexham-based Allendale Brewery has been supplying cask ale to Wetherspoon's pubs across County Durham, Cumbria and Northumberland for almost 20 years.

The family-owned business, with a team of 11, also supplies one of the company's regional craft beers.

Its pale IPA Anvil (5.5% ABV) is available and enjoyed by customers at Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK.

Founded

The brewery was founded in 2005 by managing director Tom Hick, along with his father, Jim, with the first official brew being produced the following year.

Allendale Brewery is housed in a former lead-smelting mill in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, once the industrial hub of the area.

Allen Mill is now a modern 20-barrel brewhouse set on the edge of the rugged North Pennines, described as England's 'last wilderness'.

Brewery manager Neil Thomas, who grew up just 10 miles from the brewery and joined the, then, smaller team of just four in 2009, said: "We're so lucky to be where we are, a lovely spot – the location is fantastic."

Team

"We are a small family brewery, with a great team, including head brewer Rikki Flanagan and brewer Paul McCourt – and we are continuing to grow."

"Allendale has traditional roots, but, as one of the first, if not the first, microbreweries in the northeast to supply keg and canned ales, we are always seeking to innovate."

Neil first met Tom at a farmers' market when he was working for a small local producer making chilli sauce.

He recalled: "We used to trade sauce for beer sometimes, got to know each other – and I soon joined the brewery."

The Forum (Hexham) is the closest Wetherspoon pub to the brewery and consistently sells the most ales from Allendale.

Popular

Neil reported: "Golden Plover (4.0% ABV) is the most popular, an easy-drinking golden ale, while our best bitter Wagtail (3.8% ABV) and strong ruby ale Wolf (5.5% ABV) are also among the three regular beers which we deliver to Wetherspoon, with Wolf being more popular in County Durham."

He continued: "We like to build a rapport with pub managers and find them all personable and very knowledgeable about cask ale, which is well looked after at the pubs."

"The processes and systems in place at Wetherspoon ensure a good rotation of ales, always served in good condition."

THE MILE CASTLE • NEWCASTLE

LINDSEY, QUEEN OF CASTLE'S KITCHEN, CLOCKS UP 20 YEARS



Kitchen manager Lindsey Bell is pictured receiving Champagne and flowers to celebrate 20 years with Wetherspoon.

Area manager John Hudson (left) and her pub manager Kris Lee at The Mile Castle (Newcastle) made the special presentation.

Lindsey joined the company in 2004, originally as a bar associate at The Lord Burton (Burton upon Trent), progressing to team leader before switching to the kitchen team.

Lindsey recalled: "I decided to train in the kitchen and much preferred it, working my way up to become kitchen manager in 2007.

"I spent eight years at Burton before moving to the newly opened The Butler's Bell (Stafford) (no longer a Wetherspoon pub)."

Originally from the Wirral, Lindsey moved again 10 years ago to Newcastle to be nearer to her family, transferring to Union Rooms (Newcastle) (no longer a Wetherspoon pub).

She said: "When Union Rooms closed, in 2017, I literally moved across the road to The Mile Castle and have been here ever since."

Recently reopened following a huge refurbishment project, with a new hotel opened in November, Lindsey's kitchen team has grown from 30 to 50 full- and part-time staff.

Lindsey, whose young son George will be two years old at the turn of the year, worked at The Wicket Gate (Chester-le-Street) during The Mile Castle's refurbishment.

She said: "This is now the biggest team I have worked with and, although The Mile Castle was already a busy kitchen, it is set to But Lindsey is used to the challenge, having been involved in training kitchen staff at 15 new pub openings, as well as seeing several experienced team members progress, themselves, to kitchen manager roles.

Lindsey said: "It is always nice to see people progressing.

"It is good for the development of the company. I have a great team and love my job."

SALTCOATS

SALT COT GANG OF BAGPIPERS IN TUNE WITH SURROUNDINGS



A group of pipers pops into The Salt Cot (Saltcoats) after its weekly practice sessions – and one of them has immortalised the pub in music. The tune to be played on the Highland bagpipes was written by Gerard McClumpha and is called The Salt Cot Gang.

Group member Robert Tedford said: “Gerard is a talented piper and bagpipe music-writer, and his tune was inspired by our visits to the pub.

“We are The Salt Cot Gang and we have been coming here for more than 10 years for a pint (or two!) after our respective practices every Thursday night.

“Gerard was inspired to create a tune with the name of the pub in it.”

The other group members are John Hood, Billy Hunter, Joe Hayes, Gerry Hilferty and Brian Scott.

Gerard plays with The Caledonian Pipers. Robert, Billy, John, Joe and Gerry are with the Isle of Cumbrae Pipe Band, with Brian being the ‘non-playing supporter’ (the cape-carrier – for those who know the pipe band world).

Pub manager Kim Young said: “It’s always a pleasure to see the pipers on a Thursday night – and we are touched that a tune has been written, for the bagpipes, which mentions the pub’s name.”

Pub manager Kim Young is pictured (left to right) with Robert Tedford, Brian Scott (back), Billy Hunter and Gerard McClumpha.

HOTEL HOSTS NEW BLUE PLAQUE NEAR FORMER STATION'S LOCATION



A special unveiling ceremony took place at The Portland Hotel (Chesterfield), marking a permanent reminder of history in the town. Chesterfield and District Civic Society members attended the unveiling of a blue commemorative plaque at the pub – with the plaque railway related and paid for by East Midlands Railway Community Fund.

Fitted to the exterior of the building, the plaque commemorates both the hotel and the now-lost railway station of the Lancashire, Derbyshire & East Coast Railway (LDECR), once located next to the pub and hotel.

The plaque reads: Portland Hotel opened 1899. Architect James Ragg Wigfull (1864–1936). To the right of this plaque stood the Chesterfield Market Place station of the Lancashire, Derbyshire & East Coast Railway. Architect Cole Alfred Adams (1844–1909). Opened 1897. Closed 1951. Demolished 1973.

Pub manager Jacqui Elliott, pictured (centre) with Wetherspoon's area manager Joe Argyle (right) and Chesterfield and District Civic Society chair Howard Borrell, said: "Wetherspoon takes great pride in the history of its pubs and was delighted to help with the installation of this blue commemorative plaque."

Howard Borrell added: "We are very grateful to East Midlands Railway Community Fund for the plaque and to Wetherspoon for allowing it to be fitted."

"Thanks also to former chairman Philip Riden for undertaking research identifying the LDECR's station architect – Cole Alfred Adams – for the first time."

A registered charity, Chesterfield and District Civic Society was first formed more than 50 years ago.

It seeks to promote civic pride through such areas as conservation of buildings, spaces and places, encouraging good planning, architecture and urban design.

The society has operated its 'blue plaque' scheme for some years, highlighting local buildings, events and people of note.



The Portland Hotel

The Portland Hotel, on which the plaque is fixed, was finally opened in 1899. It replaced, over two phases, the Bird in Hand and White Horse public houses.

Built by William Stones brewery, it was designed to serve passengers in the adjacent LDECR station. Its name comes from the Duke of Portland, owing to the new railway line travelling over land owned by the duke.

Its architect, James Ragg Wigfull (1864–1936), was based in Sheffield and did other work for the brewery. In 1925, the former Brampton Brewery Company purchased the premises.

Latterly, it became owned by Wetherspoon, which reopened it in 2001 following an extensive refurbishment.

APP USERS PAY TRIBUTE TO PAYIT

Most of the big banks have signed up to this new, secure, simple, fast and flexible way to pay

Wetherspoon's customers have embraced a new pay-by-bank way to enjoy food and drinks at their table, without the need for a credit or debit card.

In spring of 2024, Wetherspoon teamed up with Payit™ by NatWest, offering customers a secure, simple and fast way to pay when using the Wetherspoon app to order directly to their table.

The service is easy to use. When using the Wetherspoon app, simply choose your products, select the Payit button at check-out – which takes you to your bank account – and pay.

Payit is an award-winning payment method from NatWest, using the power of open banking.

This innovative technology empowers banks to share information with one another securely and instantly.

Most of the big banks are signed up to open banking, including AIB Group, Bank of Ireland, Barclays Bank, Danske Bank, HSBC Group, Lloyds Banking Group, Nationwide Building Society, Royal Bank of Scotland, Santander and, of course, NatWest.

With no need to bank with NatWest to use Payit, just select it during your Wetherspoon app check-out process and follow the simple instructions.

No debit or credit card is needed.

Wetherspoon's senior marketing manager, Rich Cripps, said:

"Wetherspoon has always been at the forefront of innovative ideas and services.

"Offering customers new technology payment options across the pubs, we are delighted to partner with Payit."

- **Secure** – Payit protects consumers and businesses against fraud by avoiding the need to store or share account details.
- **Simple** – Done in a couple of clicks, Payit transactions can be made without the need to type in card details.

- **Fast** – Funds are transferred almost instantly using Payit.
- **Flexible** – With Payit, customers can choose which bank account to pay from, giving flexibility and control over finances.

How does it work?

When using the Wetherspoon app, customers can pay without handing over financial information or creating an account.

Instead, customers can make cardless payments from their selected bank, simply and securely, in a matter of seconds.

Customers don't have to bank with NatWest to use Payit.

A Payit button appears on the payments page, allowing you to select the bank from which you want to pay.

You are then redirected to your bank's mobile or online banking app to complete the payment.

The service uses open-banking technology, allowing you to make an instant, time-saving, hassle-free, secure payment.

Payit is available now via the Wetherspoon app.

- Search for a pub.
- Order and pay for your food and/or drinks.
- Book a hotel, with guaranteed best rates.
- Save your favourite products for faster ordering.
- Find your favourite ale.
- Get notifications when ales become available.



HAMMERSMITH

'ASK FOR ANGELA' EFFORTS BRING HIGH PRAISE FOR WILLIAM MORRIS

Wetherspoon places the highest priority on the safety and security of its staff and customers.

Pub management teams work closely with their various local agencies, including police licensing officers and local councils, as well as business improvement districts (BIDs) and pubwatch groups, to promote safe environments.

The William Morris (Hammersmith) has been recognised by the local council and Hammersmith BID as a successful 'best practice' venue, in relation to the 'Ask for Angela' scheme.

Ask for Angela is an innovative national campaign enabling those who feel vulnerable in pubs and clubs to discreetly approach staff and request assistance.

By 'asking for Angela', individuals can alert staff that they require help. They will be taken aside or to a safer location, so that they can speak in confidence to that staff member about what assistance they need.

The William Morris, also a pubwatch member, has been praised by the local licensing team for 'acting brilliantly in supporting vulnerable customers', following mystery shopper-style assessments.

Pub manager Ryan Nagle (pictured right) said: "At every induction for new staff, we ensure that everyone is aware of the 'Ask for Angela' scheme and what is required by them.

"There are also posters with information in customer toilets, as well as in staff rooms.

"We have good awareness generally in the local area, but it is pleasing to be singled out for best practice and being named as a good example in the success of the scheme.

"The William Morris is a big pub and, although staff are always vigilant, there may be times when customers need to make us aware, in a safe way, of a situation."

Ryan concluded: "Shift leader Sully Veizi (pictured) accompanied one customer to the railway station, after she 'asked for Angela' – one of several occasions on which we have helped with different situations."



STONE

PUB-GOERS ENJOY POSTE'S PIZZA PREMIÈRE

Stone's deputy mayor Cllr Jason Metters enjoyed a slice of the first pizza to be sold at The Poste of Stone (Stone).

The pub is now serving a variety of sourdough pizzas, following the installation of a pizza oven as part of a kitchen refurbishment.

It offers a choice of 8" or 11" pizzas, including Margherita, pepperoni, BBQ chicken and vegan roasted vegetable.

Cllr Metters was accompanied by his consort, and pub team leader, Sarah Goodall.

The pub has strong links to the town council, as shift manager Andrew Best is also a councillor.

Andrew said: "We were delighted that the deputy mayor visited to enjoy the pizzas on offer.

"The pizzas have proven very popular – and we are all very pleased with our new kitchen."

The Poste of Stone was closed during the refit, with decorators taking the opportunity to spruce up the pub's interior.

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Neil Ridgway, team leader Sarah Goodall, deputy mayor Cllr Jason Metters and shift manager Andrew Best.



THE SEDGE LYNN • CHORLTON-CUM-HARDY

KIRSTIN CONGRATULATED FOR LONG AND STRONG SERVICE

Pub manager Kirstin Nicholls is pictured (second left) receiving her long-service certificate and flowers from general manager Will Fotheringham (left) and area manager Sarah Leather.

Kirstin has managed The Sedge Lynn (Chorlton-cum-Hardy) since September 2013.

Originally from Newbury, Berkshire, Kirstin started her Wetherspoon career as a bar associate at Ice Barque (Grimsby) (no longer a Wetherspoon pub).

She recalled: "We had recently moved to the area and I didn't know anyone, so I decided to get a job in the biggest pub in the town.

"At the time, I didn't think that it would end up being a long-term thing, yet, within a couple of months of joining the company, I realised that it could be a good career."

Kirstin spent two and a half years at Ice Barque before heading south, spending six months at The Union Rooms (Plymouth) and progressing

to team leader, before stepping up to shift leader at The Ford Madox Brown (Manchester).

Kirstin reported: "My first pub as manager was The Milson Rhodes (Didsbury) (no longer a Wetherspoon pub), when it newly opened in March 2010, where I spent two and a half years.

"Wetherspoon then newly opened The Kingfisher (Poynton) in December 2012, where I spent eight months as pub manager, before coming to The Sedge Lynn 11 years ago."

Kirstin continued: "I have now worked for the company for more than half of my life and wouldn't still be here if Wetherspoon were not a good employer."

She concluded: "I have also now been at The Sedge Lynn so long that the pub has become a part of me.

"With many of the old regulars a huge part of that, it is a happy place to work."



THE MARDI GRAS • THE TRAFFORD CENTRE, MANCHESTER

JAMES REFLECTS ON 25-YEAR JOURNEY

Shift manager James Hayes, who works at The Mardi Gras (The Trafford Centre, Manchester), is pictured (second right) receiving his 25 years' service award.

Hailing from Salford, he started his Wetherspoon career in 1999 as a kitchen associate at The Moon Under Water (Manchester), his first-ever job.

James admitted: "It was just a job in a pub at first, but I quickly realised it could be my career path. So, here I am, a quarter of a century later."

Two years after joining the company, James moved to the, then, recently opened (July 2001) Manchester city-centre pub The Paramount.

James recalled: "I spent 10 years there, with Mark and Natalie Hodgson as my pub managers. I progressed to supervisor (shift leader) and then kitchen manager.

"Then, The Bull's Head Hotel (Walkden) newly opened (January 2012), so I spent a year there as kitchen manager, before returning to the city centre as kitchen manager at Wetherspoons (Piccadilly, Manchester)."

James then opted for a job change and spent six months at The Waterhouse (Manchester), as a shift manager front of house.

He said: "I wanted a new challenge, a change of scene and to learn different aspects of the job, so moved out of the kitchen."

In 2015, The Mardi Gras was looking for help with its kitchen team, so James answered the call.

He spent two years as kitchen manager again, before reverting to his current front-of-house role at the pub.

James continued: "Wetherspoon is a fantastic company to work for.

"Like every job, there are always ups and downs, but the good days always outweigh the bad.

"Every day is a different challenge, and I like what I do.

"The company moves forward with the times continually, which always makes things new and interesting."

James concluded: "I have worked with some amazing people and fantastic managers.

"Without them, I wouldn't still be here 25 years on."



A MEAL DEAL WITH EVEN MORE APPEAL

Price now includes expanded choice of drinks, including a range of cocktails

Savvy customers taking advantage of Wetherspoon's meal-deal offers can now choose from an even greater range of drinks, as part of their meal's price.

Wetherspoon's classic cocktails and spritz cocktails range, as well as Prosecco by the glass, are now included among the huge choice of drinks available to enjoy with selected meals.

There are now more than 150 drinks to choose from, including beers, wines and spirits, as well as soft drinks and low- and no-alcohol drinks.

New to the includes-a-drink wine range is a 175ml glass of Teresa Rizzi Prosecco DOC (11% ABV), from Italy.

This sparkling dry white wine is from the Veneto region, in Treviso, northeast Italy.

Light and lively, this pale straw-yellow-coloured wine is bright and clear, with soft, fine bubbles.

It is clean, dry and fresh to taste, with elegant tones of ripe fruits, herbs and acacia flowers.

The classic cocktail choices, now part of the includes-a-drink range, are:

- **NEW Amaretto Sour** – Amaretto, pressed lemon, bitters, sugar. With lemon
- **NEW Paloma** – Jose Cuervo Especial Silver tequila, pink grapefruit syrup, soda. With pink grapefruit
- **NEW Mango Picante** – Absolut Mango, pineapple, papaya, lemon, agave, chilli. With lime and chilli
- **Strawberry Daiquiri** – White rum, pressed lime, strawberry liqueur, strawberry purée. With strawberry
- **Espresso Martini** – Vodka, 100% Brazilian Arabica coffee, coffee liqueur. With coffee beans
- **Tommy's Margarita** – Blanco tequila, lime juice, agave syrup. With lime

Wetherspoon's spritz cocktails, now added to the includes-a-drink range, are:

- **NEW Hugo Spritz** – Tanqueray London dry gin (25ml), Prosecco (125ml), soda, elderflower cordial. With lime and mint
- **NEW Mango & Passionfruit Spritz** – Smirnoff Mango & Passionfruit vodka (25ml), Prosecco (125ml), lemonade. With lemon
- **NEW Classic Aperol Spritz** – Aperol (50ml), Prosecco (125ml), soda. With orange
- **NEW Peach Blush Spritz** – Archers peach schnapps (25ml), Coldwater Creek rosé wine (125ml), lemonade. With strawberry
- **NEW Limoncello Spritz** – Limoncello (50ml), Prosecco (125ml), soda. With lemon



SAFFRON WALDEN

FIRE BRIGADE HEROES OF 1969 ESSEX BLAZE HONoured AT THE TEMERAIRE



A new local history artwork panel is now on display at The Temeraire (Saffron Walden), thanks to the help of Wetherspoon customer Paul Wood (pictured).

Paul works for the London Ambulance Service, with a passion for an historic event which happened in the Essex town more than 50 years ago.

He was keen to share the story, got in touch with Wetherspoon – and his tenacity has paid off.

Paul explained: “I wrote a book about a fire in Saffron Walden, Essex, where, on Boxing Day 1969 a hotel burned down, killing 11 people.

“Local men, who provided the part-time fire cover, became heroes, after rescuing many more people from the flames.

“All, apart from one, of those men still survive, yet the story of the local heroics of the night is being rapidly lost in the mists of time.

“Local history displays at Wetherspoon’s pubs are well known and always very informative.

“I was keen for this local event to be added to the history panels on display at The Temeraire, so that the story could be remembered.”

Wetherspoon’s history artwork expert, Robert Renak, teamed up with Paul to produce the new display at The Temeraire, which reads:

The Rose & Crown hotel fire

“The memory of the bravery of the men of Saffron Walden will remain in the minds of the men of the service for many years,” so said Essex Fire Brigade chief officer Roy Barnes, shortly after the fire.

“Sixteen local men, including among their number a gardener, a shopkeeper, a stonemason, security guards, a bricklayer, a carpenter and a painter and decorator, together formed the Essex Fire Brigade volunteer fire crew for Saffron Walden.

“In the early hours of Boxing Day 1969, they answered a call which was to change their lives for ever and, indeed, fire safety law, with the introduction of the 1971 Fire Precautions Act.

“Just before 2am, fire had broken out in the Rose & Crown hotel in Market Square. Two fire engines from Saffron Walden were the first to arrive.

“Those 16 men were faced with an incident which was to make world news headlines and be remembered for generations to come.

“People were trapped on window ledges, the hotel flagpole and in their smoke-filled rooms. Every window on the first floor was open with desperate guests screaming for rescue.

“Smoke filled the hotel and poured into Market Square. The whole building was involved.

“Despite the risk to themselves, the volunteers extended their ladders and did all in their power to reach those who were trapped. Multiple rescues took place before reinforcing fire engines arrived.

“Long-serving fire brigade station officer Paul Curtis, whose grandfather and uncle were among the 16 local volunteers, commented in 2020:

“It’s difficult to imagine what the first two crews witnessed that infamous night, with people holding onto life from the smoke and flame-filled windows of the hotel to the screams and cries for help from those awaiting rescue high up on the second and third floors.”

These are the 16 local heroes from that night: station officer Frederick Drane, sub officer Eric Ray, leading fireman Jim Jones, leading fireman Joseph Sayer, leading fireman Albert Mummery, leading fireman Ronald Green, fireman Ron Whitten, fireman Frank Woodhouse, fireman Bob Howlett, fireman Billy Vella, fireman Les Reeve, fireman Louis Brown, fireman Tom Cook, fireman Christopher Phillipson and brothers firemen Roy Vincent and Barry Vincent.

In memory of those who perished: Arthur Walter Oliver (55); Lillian Mary Newnham (65); Elizabeth Ann Brunning (17); Gail Elizabeth Tungate (26); Samson Mayer Actman (46); Yvonne Joy Clarke (35); Marjorie Pearce (58); John Myrddin Prichard (60); Alice Emily Webb (80); Florence Jayne Honeybone (76); Ruth Baird Larabee (65)

● The book by Paul Wood, telling the full story of the Rose & Crown hotel fire, titled *From Station Officer Drane*, can be obtained from Saffron Walden’s Tourist Information Centre.

THE BEAR • MAIDENHEAD

FORMER RUGBY PLAYER EDDIE GRAPPLES WITH THE BEAR

Eddie Clarkson joined Wetherspoon as a shift manager in 2018 and is currently pub manager at The Bear (Maidenhead).

Originally from Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, he moved to Australia in 2016 to play rugby as a semi-professional player, yet returned home to the UK when his visa expired.

Eddie, 29, recalled: "My plan was to come back to the UK and further my education. I was looking for an apprenticeship, but they were all so low paid."

Having taken on various jobs during his time in Australia, including hotel maintenance, window-cleaning and labouring, as well as working in restaurants, Eddie was keen to break into the hospitality sector.

He said: "Hospitality is what I really wanted to do, and Wetherspoon was the only company I could find which was paying a living wage, together with an apprenticeship opportunity.

"I applied and was inducted at head office, then started in July 2018 as a shift manager at The Pennsylvanian (Rickmansworth)."

Eddie's exams for his hospitality management qualification (level 4), scheduled for March 2020, were delayed through COVID-19.

However, he successfully completed his apprenticeship the following year and was also promoted, in May 2021, to pub manager at The Pennsylvanian, where he enjoyed great success.

Eddie continued: "This was always what I wanted to do.

"I was eager to learn quickly.

"As a shift manager, I supported the pub manager and received a lot of support in return."

Eddie moved to The Bear in October 2023 and is enjoying his role.

He said: "The Bear is a bigger pub, with a bigger team, a larger outside area and two floors, as well as very different operationally. It has provided a new challenge and new experience for me.

"When things are more settled for me at The Bear, I will also be looking to studying the next business management degree courses (levels 5 and 6).

"I feel that I've made good inroads and, at the moment, I am very, very happy as a pub manager. I'm really enjoying it and still see myself as a pub manager in 10 years' time.

"I am now very settled and see my future with Wetherspoon."

Eddie now lives back in Princes Risborough, close to his family again. Although not playing rugby any more, he enjoys going to the gym and walking his dog, Ronald.

Eddie added: "I have had a lot of support from all of my pub managers and area manager Gemma Gillingham.

"I have had nothing but positive experiences and am thoroughly enjoying my job."



THE FORUM • HEXHAM

HOW HEXHAM'S SPECIAL BREW BECAME BOSS OF THE FORUM



In August, pub manager Steph Brew celebrated the 25th anniversary of her pub – The Forum (Hexham).

Originally from Carlisle, she moved to Hexham with her family, at the age of six, and has been there ever since.

From the age of 17, Steph was a post office cashier, working her way up to become post office manager at Hexham, spending five years there before moving into a marketing job.

In September 2015, she joined the team at The Forum as a part-time bar associate, working on Saturday or Sunday, alongside her full-time office-based job in marketing.

With the possibility of full-time work and promotion at the Wetherspoon pub, she left her other employment and has never looked back.

Steph said: "I really was not built for an office job – I like to talk to people and have that interaction with customers."

Within six months of joining Wetherspoon, Steph was a full-time team leader and, three months later, then stepped up to shift leader.

After one year with the company, she decided to aim for a shift manager position.

Steph recalled: "I worked my way up the four levels of shift management and loved going away to other pubs as part of the training, with one-week stints at pubs in Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham and Croydon.

"I was a shift manager for seven years, working with pub manager Cindy Purkins at The Forum, until she moved to John the Clerk of Cramlington (Cramlington)."

Following Cindy's move, Steph applied to take on The Forum as pub manager, with the promotion confirmed in December 2023.

She explained: "It was always in the plan for me to take over at The Forum eventually, but it was not expected so early.

"That Christmas time was an interesting few weeks, to say the least, but I survived."

Steph, 35, admitted: "I have a really good management team, and we work together well.

"I'm enjoying what I'm doing, hands on in my pub.

"When I joined the company, I didn't envisage that it would be my career or that I would be a 'Spoony' for life, but it's certainly looking that way.

"Long term, maybe within the next 10 years, I would like to go into auditing, something I have always been interested in... that is, unless I win the lottery."

BRIDGEND

WYNDHAM ARMS HOTEL SAYS GOODBYE TO LEGEND DAVID



Mr Dobbs is pictured (front centre) at the launch of his beer in 2018

The Wyndham Arms Hotel (Bridgend) has sadly lost one of its very special regular customers, David 'Dai' Dobbs.

The well-known local man, colourful character and regular customer at 'his favourite' Bridgend pub, David Dobbs passed away in July, at the age of 82.

Mr Dobbs was a local legend and known by everyone in the Welsh town, especially the team at The Wyndham Arms Hotel, where he visited every day since the pub first opened more than 25 years ago.

He also celebrated his 80th birthday there, along with the staff, many friends and the, then, mayor of Bridgend, Steven Bletsoe, a town councillor.

Mr Dobbs was also presented with a special Bridgend Town Council plaque, in recognition of being 'our favourite Bridgend character', having dedicated his life to his home town.

He was also a loyal supporter of the local rugby and cricket teams.

The Wyndham Arms Hotel once paid its own tribute to him by creating a special beer in his honour, Dobbsie's Delight, an exclusive dark ale first brewed in 2018 by Brecon Brewing.

Hotel manager Lisa Driscoll said: "I have been working at the pub and hotel for more than 20 years and saw Dai almost every day.

"He was a truly amazing man and will be sorely missed by the whole town.

"He dedicated his life to Bridgend and supported fundraising events, including our charity events and activities at the pub.

"He was loved by everyone in Bridgend and we adored him at The Wyndham Arms Hotel."

Steven Bletsoe posted on social media: "I'm hearing extremely sad news of the passing of a true Bridgend legend, David (don't call me Dai) Dobbs.

"When serving as mayor, it was an honour to help him to celebrate his birthday in his favourite watering hole.

"Rest well David"

With no known family members, Mr Dobbs' Bridgend family – the local community – joined forces to fundraise for his funeral, which took place on 9 August.

SHEFFIELD

COUP FOR THE PALACE AS ARMED FORCES ROLL IN

Armed forces veterans have begun meeting twice a month at The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield).

A group of 12-15 visit the pub on the second and last Saturday of each month, starting at 9am.

The events began after pub manager Rick Brown approached group organiser John Nixon to hold meetings in the pub.

Rick said: "They come to get together and enjoy a traditional breakfast – and we provide complimentary tea and coffee.

"Some of them stay afterwards for a pint and some have started using the pub regularly."

Pictured (left to right) are veteran Roger Roe, kitchen manager Alex Goodwin, veteran Pete North, organisers Mel Nixon and John Nixon and veteran Steven Noble, with pub manager Rick Brown and floor associate Kay Slater.



CRAFT ALE RANGE IS ALL THE RAGE

Four new additions to locally sourced craft beer line-up, based on 12 geographical regions

Wetherspoon's regional craft beer range continues to prove highly popular with customers, with the selection being regularly added to and updated.

Since its autumn-2022 launch, the regional craft initiative has offered specific locally sourced craft beers at Wetherspoon's pubs, based on 12 geographical regions across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wetherspoon has been supporting and championing breweries and microbreweries throughout the UK for more than 40 years, with a commitment to serving the best range of beers available.

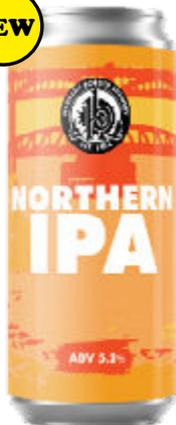
Wetherspoon's marketing executive, Jess Schofield, responsible for the regional craft project, said: "We have updated the range, yet again, to ensure that we continue to offer something new and exciting for customers to enjoy.

"If there is a beer from another region you'd like to see in your local, please let the pub team know."

These regional craft beers are each served in a 440ml can.

NEW to the range this autumn are beers for four regions: northeast, southeast, southwest and Yorkshire. These are:

NEW



Hadrian & Border Northern IPA
5.2% ABV

This bold, hoppy IPA has the classic dryness and bitterness of a west coast IPA, with citrus and tropical fruit flavours.

Northeast

NEW



Wild Beer Everstone Hazy NZ IPA
5.8% ABV

This hazy NZ IPA delivers ripe stone fruit juiciness. Sweet peach is balanced with a spicy zing from malted and flaked oats and rye malt.

Southeast

NEW



Quantock Titanium West coast IPA
5.1% ABV

This classic west coast malt base is paired with American hops, delivering flavours of tropical, citrus and pine.

Southwest

NEW



Brew York Juice Forsyth Fruited IPA
5.0% ABV

This salute to Bruce combines Cascade, Citra, CTZ and Mosaic hops with pineapple and mango – for a tropical explosion.

Yorkshire

Customers' favourites

Here, we highlight some particular 'customer favourites', from across the UK, along with where the beers are brewed.

Anglia



Nethergate Brewery
Growling Dog
Tropical IPA

7.5% ABV

The brewery

- Brewery and distillery located in Long Melford
- Established in 1986

The beer

This tropical IPA smacks of mango, pineapple and papaya – for a full, tropical taste, with a hoppy bitter finish. Be advised, this brew boasts a potent 7.5% ABV, delivering a robust punch with each glass.

Northeast and Yorkshire



Kirkstall
Judicious
Juicy pale

4.8% ABV

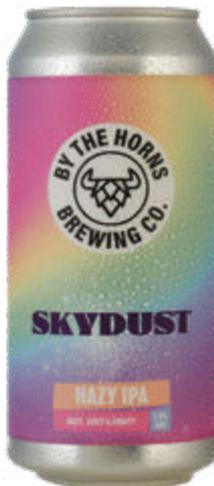
The brewery

- Brewery located in Leeds
- Established in 2011

The beer

This hazy juicy tropical pale ale is packed full of pink grapefruit, mango, pineapple, lychee, passion fruit and peach flavours.

London



By The Horns
Skydust
Hazy IPA

5.5% ABV

The brewery

- Brewery located in Salfords, Redhill
- Established in 2011

The beer

This hazy IPA has a balanced fruity blend of light tropical and citrus notes, with a brewing style influenced by both the American craft brewing scene and the British real-ale tradition.

Yorkshire



Wilde Child
Brownie Hunter
Stout

4.9% ABV

The brewery

- Brewery located in Leeds
- Established in 2010

The beer

This classic stout's addition of chocolate fudge brownie flavouring and lactose results in a rich, supersmooth dessert in a glass. World Beer Awards 2023 winner.

Wales



Tenby
Son of a Beach
Tropical pale

4.2% ABV

The brewery

- Brewery located in Tenby
- Established 2015

The beer

No fruit was harmed in the making of this tropical hopped APA, which is dry-hopped with Equanot, Mosaic and Simcoe.

Scotland



Fierce
Fierce IPA
IPA

5.0% ABV

The brewery

- Brewery located in Aberdeen, named Scottish 'brewery of the year' in 2021
- Established in 2015

The beer

This is a crisp and refreshing IPA, packed full of citrus hop flavours.

SPICING UP YOUR LIFE SINCE THE 1990S

Curry Club®, hotly supported by customers since its inception, is better than ever and in no danger of running out of steam

As well as real ale, Wetherspoon's pubs, for more than a quarter of a century, have been synonymous with curry.

Already offering curry on its menu, Wetherspoon launched its iconic curry night and original meal-deal offer, Thursday's Curry Club®, in 1998.

Today, customers can still enjoy an unrivalled selection of curries (together with a soft or alcoholic drink*, from a range of more than 150 choices) at an unbeatable price.

The curry range offers a selection of heat levels for all tastes, from very mild to extremely hot, including korma, jalfrezi, tikka masala, Madras and vindaloo.

All of the curry recipes, together with the available accompaniments, are made authentically, with many of the fresh and healthy ingredients sourced from India.

Curry Club® continues to offer classic curries, served with basmati pilau rice, plain naan bread and poppadums.

The seven classic curries available are chicken korma, chicken tikka masala, Mangalorean roasted cauliflower & spinach curry, chicken jalfrezi, sweet potato, chickpea & spinach curry, beef Madras and Naga chilli chicken vindaloo.

Katsu grilled chicken curry, katsu Quorn™ nugget curry and katsu chicken curry, with a mild Japanese-style katsu curry sauce, served with coconut-flavour rice, sliced chillies and coriander, are among the katsu curry choices.

Curry Club® is available every Thursday, 11.30am until 11pm, with many of the curries included on the main menu also, every day. Check the menu for details or ask at the bar.

Curries

The Authentic Food Company

This business is now in its 40th year of making traditional Indian cuisine, having supplied curries to Wetherspoon for 26 of those. Its team of chefs, originally from India, has travelled and worked across the length and breadth of the country, in the early part of their career, to build their culinary knowledge of regional Indian cuisine.

That extensive knowledge and experience have helped to create Wetherspoon's curry recipes.

The recipes include chicken tikka masala from the northern region of Punjab, chicken korma from the north central region with its Mughlai influences, chicken jalfrezi from Kolkata in the east and chicken vindaloo from Goa in the southwest.

The dishes' spices are chosen carefully, with bespoke recipes for spice blends, such as garam masala and tandoori masala, to impart maximum flavour and aroma.

Without any artificial colour, flavour or processed curry pastes, the curries are prepared by following some of the age-old traditional cooking methods, such as using wide bottom-heavy pans and layered cooking techniques.

Curries

What's Cooking UK

Inspired by research, this company's chefs looked at popular dishes and worked with spice experts to ensure that the ingredients used in its Wetherspoon curries help to contribute towards creating a tasty dish with balanced flavours.

Beef Madras curry originates from the southern part of India, particularly the Tamil Nadu region – and has become popular worldwide through British Indian restaurants. The dish, which is typically spicy, tangy, richly aromatic and known for its bold, spicy flavours, is named after the city of Madras (now Chennai).

Its beef is marinated in spices, including cumin, garam masala, cardamon and ginger, then slow cooked to become tender and flavourful. The sauce includes tamarind, giving it a distinctive tangy flavour and balancing out the heat.

Mangalorean curry originates from the coastal city of Mangalore, located in the southwestern Indian state of Karnataka. These curries are known for their complex balanced flavours – often a blend of spices with coconut and tamarind.

Wetherspoon's Mangalorean roasted cauliflower & spinach curry uses typical spices, including coriander, cumin, fenugreek and chillies. Enhancing sauces and giving a creamy texture, coconut is a staple ingredient in this Mangalorean cuisine.

Wetherspoon's sweet potato, chickpea & spinach curry is a flavourful vegetarian dish which is common in Indian cuisine, particularly in south and southeast Asian cooking.

The ingredients combine to create a flavourful dish which balances the creaminess from the coconut with the earthiness of chickpeas and spinach.

Sides and add-ons

Traditional and authentic Indian side dishes are also available to add to your Curry Club® meal.

These include poppadums and dips (with four poppadums, mango chutney and tomato & red onion salad), four onion bhajis (sliced and diced onion with fenugreek, in a golden spiced batter) and two vegetable samosas (an authentic Indian short pastry, filled with a blend of vegetables and spices).

You can also 'make your curry large', adding a vegetable samosa and two onion bhajis. It's also possible to change from a plain naan to a garlic naan, for a small additional price.



Rice

Tilda

The recipe for Wetherspoon's basmati pilau rice was developed in conjunction with Wetherspoon's food-development team and taking inspiration from working with top Indian chefs and restaurants.

To make the pilau truly authentic, only basmati rice is used – which is purity tested.

Like Champagne, basmati rice can be grown and harvested in only one place on Earth, at the foothills of the Himalayas.

Basmati means 'the fragrant one' – and the characteristics of this rice are long, slender grains, a tantalising aroma and delicate flavour.

Long, slender grains of basmati rice are chosen for authenticity and are the perfect fluffy texture.

Wetherspoon's bespoke rice provides the perfect accompaniment to the many curry styles and dishes offered on the Curry Club® menu.

The rice recipe is lightly spiced with garam masala, traditionally used and selected to provide a unique and balanced blend of roasted spice notes, along with aromatics and a crunch of whole spice, such as cumin.

A sprinkle of coriander leaf, selected to give a light freshness to accompany and complement the richer spice notes, as well as grill-roasted onion, imparts a rounded depth of flavour – to create the perfect, freshly cooked basmati pilau.

Naan bread

Baked Earth Bakery

Wetherspoon's naan bread is made using a bespoke and authentic recipe.

It is made with sourdough, using the bakery's own in-house starter – an eight-year-old sourdough culture.

The dough's mother culture is fed again every two weeks.

The flame-baked naan bread is cooked in bespoke ovens, replicating a traditional tandoor.

A GREAT GATHERING AT THE GREAT HARRY AFTER 50 YEARS



A London Wetherspoon pub was the venue for a special celebration for members of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) South East London branch.

At the gathering (pictured), the branch members toasted the 50th anniversary of its inaugural meeting with a pint or two of real ale at The Great Harry (Woolwich).

Organiser and branch member Roger Warhurst (pictured behind the bar, with original branch chair Mostyn Lewis and current chair Andy Large) said: "Throughout its 50 years, the branch has campaigned for improving the availability and quality of real (cask) ale, which is mostly to be found by dispense through handpumps in pubs."

"It has supported new pubs and fought against many pub closures, which have particularly accelerated in the last 25 years, to the detriment of local communities."

The Great Harry's pub manager, Rafal Sroda, added: "We were delighted to welcome the CAMRA members."

"It was wonderful that they chose to start their celebration at The Great Harry."

"We wish them continued success."

JASMINE DONATES MANE TO HELP POORLY CHILDREN

Shift leader Jasmine Ryman, who works at The Cricketers (Ipswich) donated her lengthy locks to help children battling cancer.

Jasmine (pictured before and after the haircut), who has worked at the pub for the last five years, decided to lose her locks so that they could be used by The Little Princess Trust – using donated hair to make wigs for children.

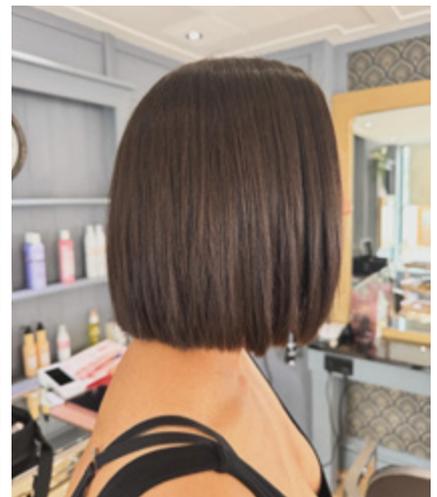
Jasmine said: "My granddad died of cancer and I know he would want me to help children suffering from it."

She added: "I have always had really long hair, so it seemed like the thing to do, with so many children in need in this way."

"It feels very, very strange, but, on the upside, washing and drying it is so much easier now."

Jasmine concluded: "With a lot of help from colleagues and customers, I was also able to raise £1,080 for The Little Princess Trust."

"Thanks to everyone for their support."



ALE FANS' PRAYERS ANSWERED BY BEER FESTIVAL IN CHURCH



A Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) beer festival sponsored by The Full House (Hemel Hempstead) attracted more than 1,200 people over three days.

Bars at the CAMRA event, held at Hemel's St Mary's Church, were run by the pub's shift manager and ale champion Alex Baker, assisted by team leader Megan Rose and bar associate Chloe Williams.

Pub manager Steph Robinson also attended the event, as did Tony de Silva, now kitchen manager of The Grand Assembly (Marlow).

The sponsorship also included the donation of two barrels of beer.

Alex said: "It was a great event, very busy and we ran out of beer just as we were closing on the Sunday."

Jared Ward-Brickett, chair of Mid-Chilterns CAMRA, said: "Alex essentially acted as manager of the bars for the event.

"He and his team did a great job – and it was fantastic to see so many people at the annual Old Town Beer Festival."

More than 30 beers and ciders were available from local and national brewers, alongside street food and live music.

Pictured (left to right) are Tony de Silva, Tyrone Robinson and daughter Steph Robinson, CAMRA branch chair Jared Ward-Brickett and his partner Chloe Gilbert, Reverend John Williams of St Mary's Church, Alex Baker, CAMRA branch secretary Charles Tuema and event volunteer Jack Richardson.

STAFF AT WREN PLAY REMEMBER WHEN

The Furze Wren (Bexleyheath) celebrated its 22nd birthday with a mini pub quiz about the year it first opened its doors – 2002.

Customers were asked questions about top boy bands and girl bands of the time, as well as the South Korea & Japan World Cup of that year.

They were rewarded for their efforts with a slice of cake which they enjoyed against a festive backdrop featuring helium balloons.

Shift leader Clarissa Mann, who has worked at the pub for 10 years, said: "We thought that a little quiz would help to create a good atmosphere – and we had a lot of fun with it."



Pictured (left to right) are team leaders Faye Horry and Adrian Batty and shift leader Clarissa Mann

LEICESTER

SCRAPTOFT PLAYERS PUT THE 'FUN' IN 'FUNCTION ROOM'



In resplendent and fun costume, the Scraftoft Players amateur dramatics society is pictured outside The White House (Scraftoft, Leicester). The group raises charity funds through its performances.

Its chosen charities for 2024 were Samaritans (samaritans.org) and Heart Link Children's Charity (heartlinkchildrenscharity.co.uk), each receiving £800.

Representatives from both charities are also pictured receiving the donations.

The Scraftoft Players, named after the suburb of Leicester from which they hail, have been rehearsing since 2011 in the Wetherspoon pub's function room.

The pub's manager, Aron Newcombe, said: "The group members have been customers at The White House since it first opened, and we love them coming to the pub for their regular rehearsals.

"They are well known locally and an important part of the community. "We are only too happy to provide a free rehearsal space for them, leading to their raising much needed funds for local charities."

GREENOCK

WATT A THRILL FOR CHILDREN AS PAW PATROL PAIR POPS IN

Children were delighted when Chase and Marshall from hit TV series Paw Patrol turned up to host a colouring-in session at The James Watt (Greenock).

Billy McLellan, husband of shift manager Amanda, is a DJ who works in promotions.

He was able to use his contacts to secure the visit, attended by 32 young children.

Amanda said: "It was a lovely day – and the children really

enjoyed colouring-in with Chase and Marshall."

The event raised £100 for Young Lives vs Cancer from donations on the day.

Pictured (left to right) are (front row) Connor John Masterton, Georgie McCowan, Faith McIlvaney and Jack Wilson, with (back row) Alyssa McLellan, Orla Watt and Jessica McPherson.



A WILLY WONKA VIBE AS GROUP VISITS CIDER FACTORY



Staff and regulars from The Wyndham Arms Hotel (Bridgend) enjoyed a visit to Thatchers cider producers.

The group of 32 travelled the hour-and-a-half journey by coach to the family-owned cider maker in Sandford, North Somerset.

Organiser and shift manager Simon James (back centre), pictured with colleagues and some of the regular customers outside the Thatchers canning plant, said: "It was the first time we had been, and it really blew us all away – it was like Willy Wonka's chocolate factory.

"Seeing the whole operation was amazing.

"Our tour guides Jon and John were very informative and fun.

"I would highly recommend a visit.

"We were lucky to book, as it is a very popular destination, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it.

"We all had a fantastic time and even got to keep our Thatchers baseball caps."

As well as the tour of the factory, plus the bottling and canning plant, the group (which was split into two smaller groups) witnessed blackberries being pressed to make Ribena and enjoyed a presentation talk by Jon and John.

They were also able to sample different ciders, including Thatchers blood orange, Vintage, Katy and Rascal.

Also pictured are hotel manager Lisa Driscoll (front, second right), shift manager Leighton Clarke (front, third right), bar associate Dan Owens (back left) and regular customer John Evans (far right), who was celebrating his birthday.

CABIN BOY NOW CAPTAIN AS JAMES LANG TURNS 10

Pub manager Ryan Hegarty led the celebrations at The Captain James Lang (Dumbarton) – the pub he has worked in since it opened.

The pub's 10th birthday was marked with a cake which was shared by customers as Ryan remembered how he started working there on 17 June 2014.

Ryan (pictured with kitchen shift leader Kristi Lennox) said: "I started at the pub as a bar associate and now I'm the manager.

"It has been a wonderful journey – and I look forward to many more years here."



The Blue Boar (Billericay)

Well done folks!
£9,689
 ...raised for our chosen charity.



Bar associate Lily-Mei Rhiannon Green has been praised for her fundraising efforts on a marathon 26-mile walk along The Thames Path.

Lily-Mei (pictured with black hat), who works at The Blue Boar (Billericay), joined a team of 30 participants and raised £550 towards a total of £9,689 for Wetherspoon's chosen charity.

Each participant had been challenged to raise £300, making an overall target of £9,000.

The team comprised mostly head-office staff, with Lily-Mei the only bar associate – and the only person from The Blue Boar on the walk.

She said: "I went on my own and was a bit younger than most of the group, but they were really inclusive, welcoming and constantly checked on me to see whether I was OK and chatted away."

"I had a lovely time and I'd love to do it again."

Wetherspoon's general manager, Richard Marriner, who also took part, said: "Lily-Mei was one of the biggest fundraisers. It was a great turn-out, and we all enjoyed ourselves. We had a pint at the final pub and a good chat after walking 10 hours."

The group started at The Kings Tun (Kingston upon Thames), stopping for lunch at The Plough & Harrow (Hammersmith) and finishing at The Liberty Bounds (Tower Hill), passing The Rocket (Putney) and The Pommelers Rest (Tower Bridge).

The Alexander Graham Bell (Edinburgh)

Well done folks!
£484
 ...raised for our chosen charity.



Shift leader Caitlin Ferguson (pictured) of The Alexander Graham Bell (Edinburgh) completed the Edinburgh Half Marathon, raising £484.56. It was Caitlin's second half marathon, and she ran it in two hours and 19 minutes.

She said: "It was a really nice course – we ran round Musselburgh and passed other sights on the way."

Pub manager Stephen Nesbitt said: "Everyone at the pub is proud of Caitlin's achievement."

The Bright Water Inn (Shirley, Southampton)



The Bright Water Inn (Shirley, Southampton) was the chosen venue for a Care Bear photoshoot to promote Young Lives vs Cancer.

CloudCo, which owns the Care Bear brand, lent a life-size costume to the charity to promote the launch of a new range of Care Bear pin badges.

Young Lives vs Cancer's strategic partnerships lead, Alex O'Connell (pictured), said: "It was a fun way to launch the badges, and we are grateful to both the pub for hosting us and the company for lending us the outfit."

Shift manager Brandan Callaway said: "We raise a lot of money for the charity through constant bonus ball events and raffles, so I'm glad that we were chosen for the launch event."

The Cross Keys (Beverley)

Well done folks!
£102
 ...raised for our chosen charity.



Limbo dancing pitched customers in a competition to answer the question: How low can you go?

Bar associate Kai Bain acted as MC as he tempted people to have a go as part of a Tiki night at The Cross Keys (Beverley).

Staff dressed in grass skirts and other Oceanic costumes, while serving customers a Hawaiian punch made from Captain Morgan Tiki rum, fruit and Monster Pipeline Punch.

Raffles for prizes, including sweets, helped towards a fundraising total of £102.

Shift manager Jessica Stead said: "It was a lot of fun – and we are planning more themed nights in the future."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Kai Bain, shift manager Jessica Stead and bar associate Callum Leak.

The Glass Blower (Castleford)



Well done folks!
£300
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Pub manager Sarah Heppinstall (pictured) walked 100 miles in one month for charity – all while working at The Glass Blower (Castleford).

But she made the 200,000-step task harder for herself when she forgot she'd booked a week's holiday during the period of the challenge.

She said: "It meant, to make up for it, that I had to do more miles than I'd expected in the three weeks I was working."

This was achieved by booking herself on to as many floor shifts as she could, meaning constant trips carrying drinks from the bar to tables.

Sarah also raised £300.

The Old Swan (Uttoxeter)



Well done folks!
£51
...raised for our
chosen charity.

A charity fundraising raffle to win a fantastic fun cake raised £51 at The Old Swan (Uttoxeter).

The sponge and vanilla buttercream with jam creation was made by local baker The Hedgehog Bakery.

It depicted The Old Swan bar, with staff and customers.

Generously donated by floor associate/cleaner Claire Smith (pictured left), the prize was won by delighted regular customer Vicky Morton (pictured right).

Well done folks!
£9,314
...raised for our
chosen charity.

The Cross Keys (Peterhead)



Five female team members from the same pub joined a group of more than 30 staff who trekked up Ben Nevis to raise charity funds.

Pub manager Lauren Law led the squad from The Cross Keys (Peterhead), which also included shift managers Carrie-Ann Watt and Louise Kelly, as well as bar associates Stephanie Stephen and Sheanna Baird.

Although the unpredictable mountain weather turned the 36-strong group back before it reached the 1,345-metre summit, the team still managed to raise £9,314.

Carrie-Ann said: "It was a great, fun day until the snow came, in June, forcing us to give up when we were pretty close to the summit."

"We got separated, but everyone made it safely down again and we all ordered pizza as a reward."

The Peterhead group met up with other staff from far and wide. Among those travelling the furthest were floor assistant Benjamin Franklin from Grover & Allen (Sudbury) and bar associate Jessica O'Dea Baxter of The Sir Thomas Gerard (Ashton-in-Makerfield).

Young Lives vs Cancer's strategic partnerships lead, Alex O'Connell, said: "While they persisted for as long as possible, the group leaders ultimately turned the group round as the conditions had slowed them right down and balance issues meant a higher risk of injury."

"Of course, this was the right decision, as the safety of participants will always come first."

"We are so pleased with the total raised."

The James Watt (Greenock)



Well done folks!
£147
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Nine-year-old Alyssa McLellan organised a sale of board games at The James Watt (Greenock), raising £147.74.

Alyssa (pictured) is the daughter of shift manager Amanda, who kept a watchful eye on proceedings.

Amanda said: "Alyssa has been collecting board games for a few years, but was happy to sell them to raise funds for our wonderful charity."

Among the games sold by Alyssa were Scrabble, Manchester Monopoly and Fill Your Pants.

And the sale has inspired a group of youngsters, led by Alyssa, to start playing board games at the pub after school.

Amanda said: "They bring them in when they want to, so long as I'm working and can be there. Very often, their parents sit with them and join in."

The Crown Rivers (Heathrow Airport's terminal 5)



Well done folks!
£425
 ...raised for our chosen charity.

Staff at The Crown Rivers (Heathrow Airport's terminal 5) took the opportunity to show support for various footballing nations, as well as for the company's chosen charity, during the UEFA Euro 2024 Championships.

Organised by shift manager Jordan Gomes (pictured), the pub's Young Lives vs Cancer champion, the Football Shirt Friday event generated funds, as well as awareness, at the pub.

Staff wore football team shirts and national T-shirts of their favourite teams for the weekly event during June and July.

Jordan said: "Our amazing staff and the entire management team celebrated Football Shirt Day every Friday, throughout the Euros tournament, to raise awareness and money for our beautiful charity.

"Great support and love were shown by our passionate team, and we managed to raise £425.60."

Pub manager Graham Farr added: "Jordan continues to do so much to support the cause.

"He has all the ideas, puts in all the effort, galvanises all team members and motivates them to get involved.

"We are, as it stands, the airport pub which has raised the most money this year, and Jordan is a huge part of why that has been possible."

Graham concluded: "Outside of Football Shirt Friday, during the Euros, Jordan has instigated Pink Friday, when staff and managers wear pink clothing in a bid to stand out and get customers to ask... why?"

"It allows us to highlight the company's charity partner and the work it does.

"Jordan also buys sweets, which are on the charity table at the bar, with all net proceeds going towards the charity fundraising total."

The Boot Inn (Burnley)



Well done folks!
£300
 ...raised for our chosen charity.

Burnley FC fan Mike Reid (pictured) now has a club shirt with his name on it, after winning a raffle at The Boot Inn (Burnley).

Customers at the pub purchased 120 raffle tickets, raising £300.

Pub manager John Rogers said: "We asked Mike what name he wanted putting on the back of the shirt... and he chose his own."

The Jolly Tars (Thornton-Cleveleys)



Well done folks!
£4,200
 ...raised for our chosen charity.

A drag night at The Jolly Tars (Thornton-Cleveleys) raised £4,200.

Staff and customers donned wigs and dresses and drew in sponsorship online and from collections.

Organiser and shift manager Michelle Smith said: "The idea started as a challenge among staff members, but quickly involved customers as well. It was a lot of fun."

Pictured outside the pub are customers and staff, including (kneeling) bar associate Danny Ellis and (from right) shift leader Jack Foster, shift manager Luke Priestley and shift leader Jordan Caine.

The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats, Sheffield)



Well done folks!
£180
 ...raised for our chosen charity.

A team of three at The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats, Sheffield) cycled the equivalent of 353 miles – the distance from Sheffield to Paris.

Shift leader Jake Dunn and shift manager Hayley Martin were joined by former colleague Kieran Candon as they took it in turn on a static cycle in the pub.

Pub manager Rick Brown said: "It was good to see Kieran and good of him to come back and do this. He was a shift manager who left us to join the RAF.

"It was a great performance from all three of them – and we raised £180."

Pictured (left to right) are Kieran Candon, shift leader Jake Dunn and shift manager Hayley Martin.

The Barker's Brewery (Huyton, Liverpool)

Staff at The Barker's Brewery (Huyton, Liverpool) walked more than four million steps in one month to raise £507.

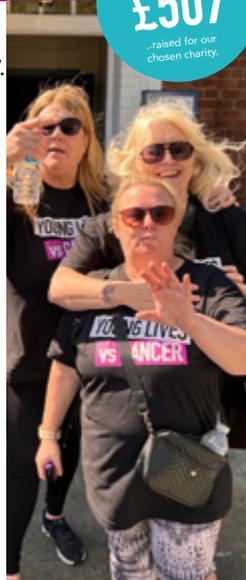
The walking challenge is something the team does each year, with the total raised including money raised through a hamper raffle.

Duty manager Pamela Rustage said: "The hamper was donated by a customer who, herself, has cancer. It was a very generous thing to do."

A walking tour of pubs in the area on the last day of the month included The Watch Maker (Prescot) and was completed by Pamela, with bar associate Julie Graham and cleaner and floor associate Stacey Rigby.

The trio carried collection buckets and took donations from pub customers.

Pamela is pictured at the rear of the three, with Stacey in the middle and Julie at the front.



Well done folks!
£507
...raised for our chosen charity.

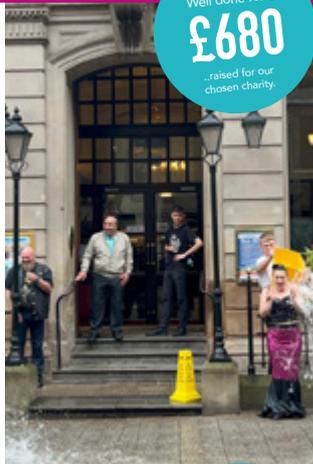
The Standing Order (Derby)

Shift manager Holly Harrison was drenched in water poured from a large flexi-bucket, but it was all for a good cause.

Holly (pictured) dressed as a mermaid for the Dunk The Manager event at The Standing Order (Derby) as customers looked on, enjoying the moment.

Pouring the water over her was team leader Kris Znots.

Holly, who raised £680 from generous customers and fellow staff, said: "Kris made it last - he poured it very slowly. It was really, really cold!"



Well done folks!
£680
...raised for our chosen charity.

The Edmund Tylney (Leatherhead)



A carnival event drew in crowds of people at The Edmund Tylney (Leatherhead) - raising £800 for the pub's chosen charity.

Locals enjoyed activities including hook-a-duck, ring toss, tombola and a pop-up ice cream parlour selling cones for £1 each.

They also handmade keyrings created specifically for the pub. All of this took place against the backdrop of songs performed by pub neighbour and volunteer Lee Windsor.

Pub manager Kara Nash said: "It was lovely to see everyone enjoying themselves, with such an incredible atmosphere.

"It really brought the community together.

"The day was a huge success, thanks to everyone who volunteered and donated."

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Dan Branwhite, customer and volunteer Luke Bird, shift leader Sam Mellish and pub manager Kara Nash.

Well done folks!
£800
...raised for our chosen charity.

The John Fairweather (Cambuslang)



Well done folks!
£829
...raised for our chosen charity.

Six staff members from The John Fairweather (Cambuslang) braved gale-force winds and heavy rain to reach the summit of Ben Nevis.

The team took five hours to reach the top of the mountain, the UK's highest at 1,345 metres.

Pub shift manager Scott Nobes, who led the trek, said: "We thought about giving up at one point because of the adverse conditions, yet persevered and made it."

The effort raised £829.

Pictured (back, left to right) are bar associate Natalie Clark, shift manager Scott Nobes and kitchen associate Lewis Brady; (front, left to right) are shift managers Shannon Stokes and Diane Fountain and shift leader Megan Holliman.

The Auld Brig (Irvine)



Well done folks!
£1,970
...raised for our chosen charity.

A team of 16 from The Auld Brig (Irvine) scaled 974-metre Ben Lomond to celebrate the pub's 10th birthday and to raise funds for its charity.

The group, led by duty manager and experienced hiker Gregor Cairns, braved strong winds and low cloud to reach the summit of the Munro, which borders Loch Lomond.

Gregor said: "I'm really into hill-walking, but not all of us were.

"For some people, it was their first time - so it was an incredible effort from all of those involved."

The group raised £1,970, thanks to donations from fellow staff and customers.

Pictured (left to right) are (back row) shift leader Calum Thomson, duty manager Gregor Cairns, associate Ady McCallum, shift leader Matthew Simpson, associate Eoghann Mitchell, pub manager Daniel Quinn, associate Chloe Smith and team Leader Chloe Smith, with (front row) associate Jaydan McGeachie, team leader Leah Toland, shift leader Toni Lindsay, associate Emma Scott, team leaders Olivia Hastie and Sophie Paterson, associate Emily Dumbreck and shift leader Nicole McCaffery.

Woodrow Wilson and The William Rufus (both Carlisle), The Furness Railway (Barrow-in-Furness), The Bransty Arch (Whitehaven), The Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (Keswick), The Miles Thompson (Kendal) and The Dog Beck (Penrith)



Well done folks!
£5,565
...raised for our chosen charity.

A team of 18 staff from pubs all over Cumbria trekked 19 miles around The Lake District, raising £5,565. Each pub sent two or three colleagues on the walk to join area manager Craig Coombes. The group, including pub manager Matt Potts, from The William Rufus (Carlisle) (pictured far right), hiked 20 miles. The circular route began at 7.30am and ended at Levens at 5pm, taking in Underbarrow and Crook. Pub manager at The Furness Railway (Barrow-in-Furness) Rob Hope said: "It was a lovely day – and we were pleased to raise so much money." The pubs represented were Woodrow Wilson and The William Rufus (both Carlisle), The Furness Railway (Barrow-in-Furness), The Bransty Arch (Whitehaven), The Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (Keswick), The Miles Thompson (Kendal) and The Dog Beck (Penrith).

The Steel Foundry (Meadowhall, Sheffield), Sheffield Water Works Company (Sheffield), The Bankers Draft (Sheffield), The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats, Sheffield), The Queens Hotel (Maltby) and The Scarsdale Hundred (Beighton)



Well done folks!
£2,345
...raised for our chosen charity.

More than 40 staff from pubs across Yorkshire trekked 17km around Malhamdale to raise £2,345. The group was led by pub manager Liam Costello of The Steel Foundry (Meadowhall, Sheffield) as they enjoyed the beautiful Dales scenery on a lovely, sunny day. Liam said: "A year or so ago, a group of staff from the pub had a walk up Snowdon as a fundraiser, and I thought this time we'd do something involving a larger group, across a whole region, so as to maximise the funds raised for our chosen charity." In addition to staff from The Steel Foundry, teams arrived from Sheffield Water Works Company (Sheffield), The Bankers Draft (Sheffield), The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats, Sheffield), The Queens Hotel (Maltby) and The Scarsdale Hundred (Beighton). Pub manager Emma Walker, from The Scarsdale Hundred, raised £565 towards the £2,345 total. She said: "It was a really enjoyable day for a great cause."

The Edmund Tylney (Leatherhead)



Well done folks!
£300
...raised for our chosen charity.

'Running machine' Luke McGuigan of The Edmund Tylney (Leatherhead) completed The Lake Windsor Half Marathon in just over 100 minutes. Kitchen associate Luke ran the event with pub manager Kara Nash and shift leader Ben Coleman, who both completed the run in two hours 41 minutes. With the run taking place during the summer heatwave, plenty of water was needed on the way. Kara said: "We have often said that we wanted to do a half marathon for Young Lives vs Cancer. "To have completed it with my fantastic team was incredible, along with our pub team on the sideline cheering us on. "It was also an amazing achievement to have completed it, in that heatwave with no shade." The trio raised £300 among them. Pictured (left to right) are Luke, Kara and Ben.

The Bransty Arch (Whitehaven)



Well done folks!
£1,860
...raised for our chosen charity.

A barbecue, an outside pizza oven and a drinks cooler were raffled off at The Bransty Arch (Whitehaven), raising £1,730. Shift manager Abby Pearson and the team sold 865 raffle tickets to customers, at £2 each. A bake sale, with staff bringing in homemade offerings, raised another £130. Shift manager Bekah Dixon organised the event with help on the stall from shift leader Alicia Pearson and bar associate Ellis Roper. Abby said: "We have wonderful customers at the pub, who always dig deep and enter any sorts of competition or event we have going on." Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Abby Pearson, bar associate Ellis Roper and shift manager Bekah Dixon.

The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew)

Well done folks!
£1,200
...raised for our
chosen charity.



Pub manager Donna Walker (pictured) took part in the Edinburgh Marathon Festival 2024.

Donna, who manages The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew), completed the 26.2-mile course in just over six and a half hours, collecting £1,200 from customers and staff.

Donna said: "I was delighted to finish the marathon and raise money for a charity which means a lot to me."

The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats, Sheffield)

Well done folks!
£303
...raised for our
chosen charity.



The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats, Sheffield) took part in a local festival, attracting hundreds of people during the course of the day.

The pub played its part in the annual Woodseats Festival, hosting a book sale, a bake sale and a tombola.

Pub manager Rick Brown said: "We raised £303 for our chosen charity, thanks, in part, to the sale of books and cakes which were donated by staff and customers.

"The parade passed right by the pub, so a lot of people stopped by and took part in the tombola and our other activities."

Pictured are pub manager Rick Brown and bar team leader Leanne Day.

The Glass Blower (Castleford)

Well done folks!
£600
...raised for our
chosen charity.



Shift manager Katy Walker ran the Great North Run in her first half marathon.

Katy (pictured), who works at The Glass Blower (Castleford), completed the course in 2h 24m, raised £600 and has already signed up for next year's event.

Katy also plans to run the Doncaster 10k run.

She said: "I really enjoyed it – a good pay-off for all the training I've done.

"I joined a running club earlier this year and started with a 5k run and it all went from there."

The Standing Order (Derby)

Well done folks!
£100
...raised for our
chosen charity.



Pub staff at The Standing Order (Derby) competed against one another in a 'sumo wrestling' competition.

The idea came from pub manager Tom Parfitt, who challenged his team to take part in the event, in which colleagues wore sumo suits and tried to eject their opponent from the ring.

Shift manager Vicky Warden said: "It was a lot of fun – and we raised £100 from customers.

"About 15–20 of us had a go at some point during the afternoon."

Pictured (left to right) are shift managers Vicky Warden and Abigail Daynton.

CAMPAIGNING FOR
**EQUAL
TAX**
BETWEEN
PUBS AND
SUPERMARKETS
jdwetherspoon.com



The Castle Hotel (Ruthin) Bar associate Saptha Puthukkara Kannachankandy

NEW CHANCELLOR URGED TO LEVEL VAT PLAYING FIELD

Customers at Wetherspoon's pubs enjoyed a price cut of 7.5 per cent on their food and drinks – to highlight the benefit of a permanent VAT reduction in the hospitality industry.

Prices at the pubs were reduced for one day only to mark Tax Equality Day (in Scotland, prices were reduced on food and non-alcoholic drinks, in line with licensing laws).

So, for example, a customer spending £10 on food and drinks paid £9.25 on the day.

All food and drinks in pubs is 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 operations director, Martin Geoghegan, said: "It's unfair that supermarkets pay zero VAT on food, yet pubs pay 20 per cent.

"Pubs have been under fantastic pressure for decades, owing to the tax disadvantages which they have with supermarkets.

"The tax benefit allows supermarkets to subsidise the selling price of beer.

"It doesn't make sense for the hospitality industry to subsidise supermarkets.

"We urge the chancellor to create tax equality between pubs and supermarkets."



The Star (Hoddesdon) Customers Toni Norris and her son George



The Elihu Yale (Wrexham) Shift manager Carrie Jones



The Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren (Stapleford, Nottingham) Team leader Sonya Gardner serves breakfast to customer Bill Smallwood



The Kings Highway (Inverness) Customer Kareem Slessor (centre) celebrating her birthday with husband Derek and daughter Debbie



The Moon and Spoon (Slough) Shift leader Amy Emery serves cocktails to customers Kiya Wilson and Tshal Samuel (right)



The Bridge House (Belfast) Customers (left to right) Fiona Coll, Rosie Gallagher and Mairead Stevenson, enjoying a meal together



The Kirky Puffer (Kirkintilloch, Glasgow) Sibling customers Jennifer (left) and Gillian McPherson enjoy breakfast together



Thorn's Farm (Yate) Pub manager Chloe Bleach serves customer Jim Cotter



The Bankers Draft (Sheffield) Regular customer Derek Miller



The William Tyler (Yardley, Birmingham) Customers Andy Byfield (left) and Martin Carroll



The Thomas Burke (Leigh) Customers Lynda and Richard Porter



Ritz (Lincoln) Customers (left to right) India Cowen, Heather Leader and Jack Kilbee



The John Wallace Linton (Newport) Customer Gary Morton is served a pint by shift manager Kirstin Drake

TAPS GUSHING WITH LUSH LIQUID AT SITE OF FORMER WASHHOUSE

The Miles Thompson (Kendal) turned 20 years old in September, having first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in 2004 on the site of the former public washhouse and baths designed by Thompson, themselves opened in 1864.

As part of the celebrations, the pub staged a three-day tap takeover, showcasing ales from two popular local breweries, as well as meet-the-brewer events.

The Miles Thompson served 10 local ales, five from each of Kendal-based Hawkshead Brewery and nearby Kirkby Lonsdale Brewery, based in Kirkby Lonsdale, Carnforth.

Among the birthday celebration guest ales were Hawkshead Red and Kirkby Lonsdale Pennine Ambler.

The pub's kitchen also reopened following a complete refurbishment project, with several dishes available for customers to sample, including pizza, small plates and wraps.

There was also a charity raffle and tombola, which collected £110 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pub manager Cameron Hinde, who has managed the pub for two years, said: "We were delighted to share our 20th birthday celebrations – a significant milestone – with our regular customers and visitors alike, as well as to raise funds for a great charity."



Shift managers Jamie Wilson (left) and Connor Coombes, with some tombola prizes

HOLLERING AND HOOTING IN TOOTING AS TONY CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

Shift leader Tony Wakenell is pictured (centre) receiving his long-service award certificate, and Champagne, from general manager Stuart Wade (left) and area manager James Cobley.

Tony, who has worked at J.J. Moon's (Tooting) since December 2003, celebrated 20 years with the company.

He started in the summer of 2004 as a shift manager at The Moon Under Water (Norbury), having had previous experience in the hospitality sector.

Tony spent one year there, followed by short stints in Wetherspoon's pubs in Balham and Brixton, before returning to Norbury for a nine-year spell, which also included a role as kitchen manager.

Further moves to pubs at Crystal Palace, Thornton Heath and Purley preceded a six-year stay at The Whispering Moon (Wallington), also as shift manager and kitchen manager.

A one-year spell at The Moon on the Hill (Sutton) followed, where he became a shift leader, then a subsequent move to his current pub in Tooting.

Tony, 41, said: "I like my job and am happy as a shift leader.

"When I started, I didn't think that I would be with the company 20 years, but, after 10 years, it wasn't a surprise."



JOY AS THE SIR NIGEL GRESLEY WELCOMES WEDDING COUPLE



Mark and Patricia Skelcher chose The Sir Nigel Gresley (Swadlincote) as the venue for their wedding reception.

The couple and 30 guests were given their own private area, decorated in blue and white to match the bride's dress.

The reception featured a cake iced in blue and white and created by bar associate Karen Boxley.

Guests enjoyed lunch at the pub, followed by a buffet later in the afternoon.

Team leader Rene Harrison took charge of the day and was the couple's main point of contact with staff.

She said: "The day went brilliantly.

"Everyone seemed to have a fantastic time."

Patricia added: "Rene did a brilliant job.

"Everything went just how I imagined it, with Rene coming back to us all throughout the day to check that we were happy and to see whether there was anything else she could do.

"The service was excellent – and we had a really lovely wedding day."

Pub manager Rob Winterton said: "The day was a credit to Rene and our team.

"It was our first such event, but we'd be happy to host others in the future."

WAGON & HORSES IS A PLATFORM TO VIEW SPEEDY SPOKES PEOPLE

Customers stood outside The Wagon & Horses (Chapelton, Sheffield) as Tour of Britain cyclists whizzed past them.

Live coverage of the event, in which competitors cycle the length of Britain in stages, drew crowds inside the pub until the cameras showed the Peloton approaching.

"Then they all went outside to see," said pub manager Peter Bryan.

"We all went to have a look. It was a wonderful sight. Lots of people showed up to support the event."

In order to promote cycling as a means to get to the pub, Peter is liaising with the local council to have a bike rack installed outside the premises.



BRILLIANCE OF NEW BAR RAISES THE BAR AT THE ARNOLD MACHIN

Shift manager Cathy Myatt is pictured in front of the new-look bar at The Arnold Machin (Newcastle-under-Lyme).

The pub underwent a full redecoration, including new light fittings, with new glass racks installed above the bar.

The rack's design has incorporated a depiction of the old Ironmarket buildings, located opposite the pub.

It is a nostalgic representation of the street's layout, before recent redevelopments in the town.

Pub manager Cassie Leech, who has managed the pub since 2016, said: "Local people are very proud of Newcastle and think it's lovely that that effort of detail has been included in the bar.

"They're intrigued by the design, when it is pointed out."

The refurbishment work at The Arnold Machin included new staff room facilities, with a personalised artwork image taken by Cassie, and changing room.



SHIFT MANAGER JAMES PULLS PINTS OF ALE HE HELPED TO BREW

An award-winning new ale which shift manager James Shields helped to brew is now available to customers at The Edwin Waugh (Heywood).

James visited Heywood-based Phoenix Brewery to make Heywood Pale Ale, a 4.1% ABV pale ale, with the help of brewers Andrew Goodliffe and Graeme Rothery.

The ale was featured in a meet-the-brewer event at the pub, with customers given samples while brewery reps fielded questions.

James, the pub's ale champion, said: "Making the beer was a great experience – and it's a great feeling to see customers drinking a beer which you have helped to make."

The beer (available permanently at the pub) won bronze in the 'session beer of the year' category at the Small Independent Brewers Regional Beer Awards 2023.

Brewery director Steve Parker said: "James spent the day with us and did everything from mashing-in to putting beer in barrels.

"We have a great relationship with the pub and are really happy that Heywood Pale Ale is available as a permanent fixture."

Pictured (left to right) are Phoenix rep Becca Parker, brewery manager Lucy Parker and shift manager James Shields.



SMART IDEA FROM JOSH DELIVERS DOLLOP OF DOSH

Baked treats made by two staff members from The Linford Arms (Cannock) raised £198 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The five-hour bake sale featured several types of cake, cupcakes and brownies made by shift manager Kate Hooley and bar associate Carol Pearson.

A raffle, with prizes including a hamper and a £20 Wetherspoon gift voucher, helped to boost the fundraising total.

Following a family member receiving support from cancer charities, the event was inspired and organised by bar associate Josh Groves.

Kate said: "It was all his idea, and we just supported him.

"He did a great job, and we are all grateful to everyone who contributed."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Laura Hibbert, shift manager Kate Hooley, bar associates Carol Pearson and Josh Groves and two of the pub's customers who volunteered to help in staffing the stall.



DARWEN GANG TRAVELS TO STUDY EVOLVING PHOENIX



Sixteen customers and staff from The Old Chapel (Darwen) took a 25-mile coach trip to visit Phoenix Brewery.

The group of eight customers and eight staff were treated to a tour of the Heywood brewery, an ale-sampling and a talk by brewery director Steve Parker.

Pub manager Warren Hughes, who led the visit, said: "There is a strong following for our real ales and real ale in general at the pub.

"Phoenix beers are very popular with customers, and I wanted to take some staff, as well as loyal customers, to deepen their understanding of the brewing process and of the different ale styles."

After the visit, the group returned to the pub and was offered some more ales while the discussion continued.

Warren added: "Everyone had a great time and it's something we would do again.

"We have been invited back as Phoenix is building a tap bar for visitors and we'd like to go and see that next year."

Warren is pictured kneeling (front left) with Phoenix Brewery's director Steve Parker in front of the group during the visit.

LONG-TIME CUSTOMERS AND STAFF CELEBRATE BIRTH OF THE GEORGE

Staff lined up to celebrate the 28th birthday of The George (Staines-upon-Thames), including two staff members who have worked at the pub for 10 years.

Kitchen manager Maciej Kapiwoda and shift manager Jaynie Warren have both been at the pub since 2014.

Pub manager Ashik Shah said: "We spent the day getting feedback from customers who have been coming here for many years – longer than any of us have worked here. It was nice to hear their reflections."

Pictured (left to right) are team leaders Julia Gliaudel and James Selby, kitchen manager Maciej Kapiwoda, pub manager Ashik Shah, shift manager Niki Sapolidou and bar associate Samantha Thompson.



LONG REIGNS CELEBRATED AT WINDSOR'S KING AND CASTLE

Several very experienced pub staff gathered to celebrate the 22nd birthday of The King and Castle (Windsor).

Pub manager Valerie Docherty has 20 years' service at the pub (28 years with Wetherspoon), while deputy manager Jasmin Cunningham has 22 years' service at the pub and kitchen shift leader Gina Cameron has worked for 21 years.

Valerie said: "We are a really well-integrated team.

"We enjoyed a moment to look back on the past and celebrate with customers."

Pictured are pub manager Valerie Docherty (centre) with bar associate Aleksander Paciorek (left) and shift manager Hossai Hootak.



EMMA TURNS BACK TIME AT THE ROYAL HOP POLE



Hotel manager Emma Shakesheff regularly takes tourists on an historical tour of The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury).

Wetherspoon took over the building in 2007, when archaeologists discovered that the building contained structures dating from 1380.

The pub's medieval hall attracts a lot of interest from customers and tourists, with people coming from far and wide to have a look.

Emma (pictured front) said: "I've been doing the free tours for the past eight years – one woman and her son drove down from Sheffield just to see the pub and come on the tour.

"The history also interests people from abroad, when they have stayed as hotel guests."

Other points of interest include pictures and architecture dating from Tudor and Georgian times.

Historic paintings are featured behind glass panels in some of the hotel's bedrooms.

"We really cherish what we've found here and are delighted to be able to share it with members of the public," added Emma.

● **The free tours are featured here: www.heritageopendays.org.uk**



BEER FESTIVAL

Round-up

ALE MADE FROM FRUIT ALLOWS PITHY PURSUIT

Customers enjoyed a selection of real ales, including five from international brewers, during a 12-day beer festival.

The international brewers were from Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the USA.

The festival featured several beers not previously available at the pubs, including vegan (also suitable for vegetarians) beers.

As well as featuring a range of malt and hop varieties from around the world, there were also beers which included coffee and fruit in their ingredients.

The international beers were Red Racer Session (Central City Brewery, Canada), Orihime Pale Ale (Ishii Brewing, Japan), Dinner Ale (Townshend Brewery, New Zealand), Who Dat (Urban South Brewery, USA) and All Dog Alert (Yazoo Brewing, USA).

The festival line-up also included Born to be Mild (Conwy Brewery), Sun Lounger (Fyne Ales Brewery), Salem Session IPA (Batemans Brewery), Mango in the Night (Rudgate Brewery), Sapphire Spoon (Titanic Brewery), Banoffee Pie Golden Ale (Maxim Brewery) and The Gloaming (Loch Lomond Brewery).

Wetherspoon's marketing manager, Jen Swindells, who organised the festival, said: "The festival was a great celebration of real ale."

"It allowed the pubs the opportunity to showcase a selection of beers, including those from brewers as far afield as Japan and New Zealand, as well as those closer to home."

International brewers at **The Crosse Keys (City of London)**

Pictured (left to right) are Toshi Ishii (Ishii Brewing, Japan), Kyle Huling (Urban South Brewery, USA), Gary Lohin (Central City Brewery, Canada), Linus Hall (Yazoo Brewing, USA) and Martin Townshend (Townshend Brewery, New Zealand)



J.J. Moon's (Hornchurch) The festival gets the stamp of approval from Royal Mail workers and customers (left to right) Andy Taylor, Paul Abbs, Dean Burrows and Clive Murday



The Packhorse Inn (Sleaford) Pub manager Emma Metheringham serves customer Lindsay Stuart a festival pint



The Gold Cape (Mold) Customers Kelly Arnold (left) and Elizabeth Davies toast the festival



The Golden Lion (Newmarket) Customers Katrina Hughes and Trevor Reynolds



Goldengrove (Stratford) All smiles behind the bar (left to right) are bar associate Naomi Machado and team leaders Bukky Olayia and Erica Alves



The Unicorn (Altrincham) Shift manager Mark Leech serves customers Georgia Doherty and Rachel Marshall (right)



The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards) Shift manager Dylan Stewart serves customer Kieran Savage a pint of festival ale



The Sussex (Rhyl) Team leader John Carlyle

FOLK GO THROUGH DESSERTS WITH A BEAR WITH NO NAME



A 10th birthday party and charity fundraiser at The Coliseum Picture Theatre (Cleethorpes) raised £184 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Staff and their family members, including Debbie Croft (mum to brothers shift leader Daniel and bar associate Cameron), produced homemade cakes for a sell-out charity bake sale.

There was a raffle, guess the name of the Teddy and the number of sweets in a jar.

Well-known local charity fundraiser and customer Jean Madin (pictured front right) helped with a tombola at the event.

Pub manager Chloe Rankin (pictured front centre) has worked at the pub since it opened a decade ago, originally as a shift manager.

Also pictured are (back, left to right) kitchen shift leader George Nobbs (eight years) and bar associate Michelle Goldsmith (10 years), with (front left) shift leader Ellie Boggis (six years).

Shift managers Jade Parnell and Stuart Davidson (not pictured) have also worked at The Coliseum Picture Theatre since it first opened.

Chloe said: "It was lovely to celebrate 10 years with the team and customers, although I'm not sure where that decade has gone."

PUB-GOERS ASKED TO ELECT DRINKS CABINET

Customers cast their votes in an ale election to choose which beers would be sold at The Society Rooms (Stalybridge).

The poll was organised by shift managers Johnny Nicoll (pictured) and Rachel Wren to give the public a democratic choice over the ales on sale.

More than 500 votes were cast as polls opened just days after the UK's general election.

After a week of voting, sealed ballot boxes were removed to a secure location and counted.

Johnny said: "A lot of our customers were fed up with the politics by then, so we thought that we'd give them a different kind of election – with a large dollop of fun thrown in.

"Customers said that they felt 'listened to' and it was a talking point all week."

The full list of candidates was Titanic Plum Porter, Marston's Old Empire, Phoenix Wobbly Bob, Morland Old Speckled Hen, Wainwright Gold, Acorn Gorlouka Imperial Stout, Oakham Ales Citra, Theakston Old Peculier and Moorhouse's Blond Witch.

Citra topped the poll with Wobbly Bob and Old Peculier also chosen to sit permanently alongside favourites Abbot IPA and Ruddles.



NORTH CHEAM

JO'S EXIT A GREAT LOSS FOR CHEAM DREAM TEAM

Part-time bar associate Jo Kent is pictured marking 25 years' service with Wetherspoon, alongside area manager James Cobley (left) and general manager Stuart Wade.

The presentation of a certificate, Champagne and bouquet of flowers also signalled Jo's very final shift at The Nonsuch Inn (North Cheam), where she worked for her entire Wetherspoon career.

Pub manager Martin Kelly said: "Jo was always hard-working and a real favourite with customers, many of whom have asked me to change her mind about retirement."

Jo, who continues to work as a freelance beauty therapist, said: "I worked just a few hours a week at the pub, during the busy lunchtime period, and it fitted in well around my other work.

"I have met so many lovely people, staff and customers, during the past 25 years and have really enjoyed my time.

"Wetherspoon is a good company to work for and looks after staff very well."

Jo concluded: "I'll continue to stay in touch, join in with social events and pop in to say hello from time to time."



MEXBOROUGH

MATT TURNS ROUGH PATCH OF LAND INTO MARKET GARDEN



A rough patch of land outside The Old Market Hall (Mexborough) has been transformed into a small garden.

The area at the side of the pub, which is not used by customers, was targeted for regeneration by pub manager Matt Fearn.

But – as the land was owned by the council – he had to approach Mexborough First ward councillor Sean Gibbons for support.

Matt said: "Sean was very helpful, making several calls to get the permission required."

He also thanked Elanor Adams, of local business Adams Nursery Ltd, who helped with the look of the upgraded area and chose plants and flowers.

Pictured (left to right) are Cllr Sean Gibbons, shift manager Joanne Goodban and kitchen manager Luke Hambrey.

MEXBOROUGH

VETERANS ANSWER THE CALL AT THE OLD MARKET HALL



The Old Market Hall (Mexborough) has begun hosting morning meetings for veterans of the armed forces.

The group was launched with a special 'walk and talk' from the pub around the local countryside, but, now, monthly meetings are held inside the pub.

They take place on the first Monday of each month, starting at 10am.

Pub manager Matt Fearn was approached by Doncaster Council's stronger communities officer Edward Radford.

Matt said: "We were delighted to be involved with the council's project.

"Doncaster is really strong on veterans' welfare, and we wanted to do our bit to help."

Veterans turn up to meet over a cup of complimentary tea or coffee.

Matt said: "We've welcomed Coldstream Guards who served in the 1960s, as well as those who served more recently."

As well as meeting socially, Edward is on hand to deal with any financial, housing or mental health issues which the veterans might want to raise.

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Chris Brown, veterans John Gray and Frank Knapton MBE, pub manager Matt Fearn, veteran Brian Whitmore, Edward Radford of Doncaster Council and bar associate Amy Webb.

RUTH RIDES BUS TO BEAUTIFY BRITAIN

Ruth Major visited 34 Wetherspoon pubs in 21 days as she toured Britain promoting her antilitter Beautify Britain campaign.

Ruth, 79, started her 400-mile bus tour in Folkestone, Kent, visiting The Samuel Peto, and ended it in Carlisle at Woodrow Wilson.

Beautify Britain wants everyone to pick up one piece of litter each day.

The tour attracted widespread media attention. She was interviewed by BBC local radio on nine occasions.

Ruth said: "I do it because this country is so beautiful, but it is being spoiled by a minority who drop litter all over the place."

She chose to stop at Wetherspoon's pubs because, she said: "I feel safe there, the toilets are clean and you can charge your phone, if you ask nicely.

"Also, I'm a vegetarian and there's always something for me to enjoy on the menu.

"In addition, the pubs serve my favourite tipples, Leffe and Erdinger."

In each pub, Ruth asked staff to take a photo of her holding up her campaign poster.

Other pubs on her route included The Moon & Stars (Penge), St. Matthew's Hall (Walsall) and The Eric Bartholomew (Morecambe) – but her favourite was The Poste of Stone (Stone).

"It's a lovely pub in a lovely town," said Ruth, who plans another marathon bus tour in 2025.

● For more information about the campaign, visit: www.rubbishruthsrambles.co.uk



BRADLEY GREEN'S BOOK-LOVERS ENTHRALLED BY NOVELIST CAROLINE

Women's fiction author Caroline James popped to the book club at The Bradley Green (Biddulph).

Caroline is a member of the pub's book club and was invited by shift leader Christine Keen, who runs it.

Caroline has written many books, including *Coffee, Tea, The Chef & Me* and *The Best Boomerville Hotel*.

She gave a talk to book club members about writing and being published.

Christine said: "It was a very bubbly, funny talk – and we were all laughing. She made everyone feel so at home.

"Caroline is the first published women's author who has come along to the weekly meetings."

Christine set up The Bradley Green Book Club three years ago – and weekly meetings have proven popular.

She added: "I read about 80 books a year. My grandma got me into reading when I was little."

A book raffle after the meeting raised £40 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pictured (left to right) are author Caroline James and shift leader Christine Keen.



SHEFFIELD WATER WORKS COMPANY TAPS INTO MUSICAL TALENT



A showcase for local musicians at Sheffield Water Works Company (Sheffield) raised £258.82 on the day of the event and a total of £367.46 during freshers' week, for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Some donations were cash, some fundraising was taken online via Just Giving and QR posters were put up around the pub for customers to donate.

All of the acts gave freely of their time.

The annual event, dubbed Live@Lloyds, attracted 10 local bands and individual performers, watched by hundreds of customers.

Shift leader Holly Megan and bar associate Amber Waller organised the event, alongside pub manager Haydn South.

Haydn said: "When we put up posters around the pub for the event, we had regulars immediately asking about it and whether they could play.

"We also contacted acts from previous years to come down and perform for us again."

The event also featured performances from staff from other Wetherspoon pubs around the city.

Haydn added: "It was a great afternoon and a very successful charity event for us.

"We were supported by local businesses in Sheffield, such as Altida Transit and Evolution Sounds, which gave their time and equipment to make the event possible."

Haydn is pictured with arms outstretched in front of shift leader Holly Megan (left) and bar associate Amber Waller, (next row back) musicians Adam Finlay, Jack Walley, Francesca Cullen and Tom Green, with (back row) Dan Russell, Bob Bridge, DJ James Clapson and Jamie Wray.

QUIZ BRINGS QUIDS IN AT QUARTER-CENTURY BASH

The Richmal Crompton hosted a quiz to celebrate its 25th birthday.

The event at the pub in Bromley raised £200 for Young Lives vs Cancer – a total boosted, through more events, to £900 by the end of the weekend.

These included a darts competition and a bake sale, as well as face-painting for kids and adults.

Shift manager Scott Ballard said: “We tried to do as much as we could to involve customers in the celebrations.

“The celebrations went down really well, and it was great that we were able to raise so much for our chosen charity.”

A 25th birthday cake made by staff was enjoyed by customers.

Shift leader Beck Gibbons took on the responsibility of decorating the pub with balloons and bunting.

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Ripon Tahar (holding baby Fia), bar associate Amelia Bailey, bar associate Angel Allison-Russell, team leader Callum Ellis (Fia’s dad), Chloe Marshall-Angus (face painter), bar associate Breanna Condon (holding bake sale picture) and shift leader Beck Gibbons.



HOLY TOMBOLA, BATMAN! HEROIC TOYS HELP TO RAISE £400

A tombola and a bake sale raised £400 for Young Lives vs Cancer as The Kings Ford (Chingford) celebrated its 28th birthday.

Batman toys were the focus of the tombola as fans of the genre tried to win the full set donated by shift manager Sibel Hussein.

Other prizes included drinks, perfume and after-shave.

Cakes were donated by customers for the bake sale.

Sibel said: “It was a fun way to mark our birthday.”

Sibel is pictured (right) with pub manager Matt Turner and shift leader Holly Burke.



LYMINGTON

SIX ALES HELP SIX BELLS TO ENTER THE GOOD BEER GUIDE



The Six Bells (Lymington) is celebrating the pub's inclusion in the publication *The Good Beer Guide 2025* by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

Pictured (left to right) are shift managers James Mann, Ginni Holdsworth and Chris Thurgood, with shift leader Mikey Rosser, proudly displaying The Six Bells' entry in the guide.

Southern Hampshire CAMRA branch auditor Peter Simpson was the bringer of good news and kindly took the photograph.

Ginni, who transferred from The Herbert Wells (Woking) three years ago, is the cellar champion and has worked hard to build a real-ale following at The Six Bells, culminating in this first inclusion in the guide since 2018.

Ginni said: "I learned a lot from pub manager Gary Hollis at The Herbert Wells and have brought that knowledge to share with the team here.

"It has been a real team effort, with a lot of hard work – and we are really excited to be in *The Good Beer Guide 2025*."

The pub serves six real ales at all times, including permanent guest ale Flack New Forest IPA (4.9% ABV), as well as beers from Bowman Ales and Goddards Brewery.

ROMAN WAY BREWER DROPS IN WITH ALES FIT FOR EMPEROR



Customers at The Moon Under Water (Milton Keynes) enjoyed a selection of real ales from a microbrewery located in nearby Weedon.

Roman Way Brewery's director and partner Phil Lawler is pictured at the tap takeover and meet-the-brewer event at the pub.

Organised by shift manager Taylor Lucas, helped on the night by shift leader Kodi Meader and team leader Jack Bentley, the event also enabled regulars to enjoy a presentation and to have a chat with Phil about his beer.

Among the Northamptonshire-based Roman Way Brewery's ales available were Barbarian Best (3.8% ABV), Villam (4.4% ABV) and Hannibal (4.6% ABV).

All of the ales' names are linked to Britain's Roman past, as the microbrewery is located close to Watling Street, the first Roman road built in Britain.

Event organiser Taylor said: "The Roman Way Brewery's selection proved a big hit with real-ale-drinkers, and regulars enjoyed the opportunity to meet and chat to Phil from the microbrewery."

NEW MENU WOOS FOOD FANS AT THE GREAT WOOD

The Great Wood (Blanchardstown) celebrated the launch of its new menu dishes, with some tempting free tasters.

Shift leaders Lila Ramadani and Laura Ward (right) are pictured with samples for customers to try at the pub in Ireland.

Among the dishes being promoted with tasting samples were the ramen noodle bowl and sticky Korean fried chicken bowl, as well as the Korean fried chicken wrap and Korean crunchy chicken strip burger.

Staff members offered the samples to customers in and around the pub, including shoppers at Westend Commercial Village, where The Great Wood is situated.

Pub manager Helen Malcom said: "Everyone was happy to try the samples. The new menu is going well, with the Korean dishes absolutely flying out.

"We also gave away take-away coffee cups, for customers to come in and claim a free coffee, which was also a popular promotion."



EMMA AND ALAN ENJOY AN ALE-FILLED ADVENTURE



Several Wetherspoon hotels provided the excuse (and accommodation) for two enthusiastic customers on two adventurous trips.

Emma Donatantonio and her partner Alan Greig (pictured), self-confessed ardent admirers of Wetherspoon's pubs, embarked on a road trip through southwest England, stopping at various Wetherspoon hotels en route.

Emma said: "Despite our frequent pub visits, we had yet to experience any of the Wetherspoon hotels, so these trips remedied this."

The couple stayed at The Hatchet Inn (Newbury), The Bath Arms (Warminster), The Queen's Head Hotel (Tavistock) and The Greyhound (Bridport) on their tour of the southwest.

A shorter 'mini tour' of East Anglia followed, with stays at The Troll Cart (Great Yarmouth) and The Kings Head Hotel (Beccles).

Emma reported: "Our Wetherspoon-centric road trips were a resounding success.

"Planning our tours around Wetherspoon hotels provided an excellent framework for exploring both the southwest and a small part of East Anglia, while revealing beautiful buildings and delicious brews at every turn.

"We're already planning our next tour, with the Cotswolds looking like the next likely area to conquer."

Emma concluded: "For anyone seeking an affordable, ale-filled adventure with a touch of history, we highly recommend a Wetherspoon wanderlust of your own."

TEN-GALLON HATS AND A WAGONFUL OF PINTS AT COWBOY-THEMED 30TH

Staff and customers dressed as cowboys as The Moon in the Square (Bournemouth) celebrated its 30th birthday.

And, to mark the occasion, the price of a pint of ale was reduced to £1.99 for the whole weekend.

The birthday-priced beers included Wolf Brewery Coyote and Hook Norton Haymaker.

Pub shift manager Emily Naylor said: "We had a fun weekend.

"The beers proved very popular, and we had plenty of extra hats and outfits for customers to wear to join in the theme."

Pub manager Quique Medina Saura, added: "We are delighted that The Moon in the Square has reached this milestone.

"The pub has played an important part in the town's social scene for the past 30 years."

Pictured (left to right, back row) are bar associates Alyson Da Silva and Sam Kemp, floor associate Maksim Conn and bar associates Richard Davis, Angela Barandiaran and Andre Ceron, with (front row) shift managers Emily Naylor and Kristina Bitca and bar associate Sophie Fulcher.



BIRTHDAY BASHES APLENTY AS PUBS HIT THEIR PRIME

Anniversary celebrations up and down the land as venues clock up 20 years or more

From 1 July until 31 October 2024, numerous Wetherspoon pubs celebrated a significant birthday of 20 years or more.

The 20th anniversary was marked by six pubs, clocking up 120 years' service to their respective communities since 2004.

During July, The John Fielding (Cwmbran), The King of Wessex (Bath) and The West Quay (Brighton) each reached their 20-year milestone.

In September, The Miles Thompson (Kendal) marked two decades since opening.

Throughout October, there were 20-year celebrations held at The Great Western (Cardiff) and The William Rufus (Carlisle).

Silver anniversary celebrations were marked at 19 pubs during the four-month period, clocking up a remarkable 475 years' collective service since 1999.

The pubs reaching their 25-year milestones were The Swan (Weymouth), The Waterfront Inn (Brierley Hill), The Prince of Wales (Cardiff), The George Inn (Littlehampton), The Wheatsheaf Inn (Kilmarnock), The Forum (Hexham), The Blue Bell Inn (Scunthorpe),

The Richmal Crompton (Bromley), The Saxon Shore (Herne Bay) and The Regal (Cambridge).

Also notching up 25 years were The Penny Black (Northwich), The Eccles Cross (Eccles), The Willow Walk (Victoria), Hunters Hall (Galashiels), The Lord Caradoc (Port Talbot), The Sennockian (Sevenoaks), The Wishaw Malt (Wishaw), The Ernehale (Arnold) and The Salt Cot (Saltcoats).

Two pubs marked three decades since opening during this birthday period. In August, The Moon in the Square (Bournemouth) and, in September, The Last Post (Southend-on-Sea) each celebrated 30 years.

In October 1993, J.J. Moon's (Hornchurch) clocked up 31 years since first opening its doors.

Celebrating 33 years' service to their communities were The Moon Under Water (Hounslow) in July, followed by The Moon and Sixpence (Hatch End) in September and The Beaten Docket (Cricklewood) in October.

The Railway Bell (New Barnet) marked 34 years since first opening, in August, while The Moon Under Water (Enfield) celebrated 36 years, in September.

The Waterfront Inn (Brierley Hill)

This pub, built on the site of the Round Oak Steel Works, opened in July 1999.

Celebrating the pub's 25th birthday are (front, left to right) shift managers Beata Jus and Gemma Lowe, pub manager Jamie Marsden and shift leaders Kelsey Brookes and Leah Hancock; shift leader Scott Fereday (back left) and kitchen manager Adam Weston.

Jamie has been pub manager since July 2020, having started with the company 10 years ago.

Among his long-serving staff members is shift manager Gemma Lowe, who has also worked for Wetherspoon for 10 years and been at The Waterfront Inn since November 2022.

Shift leaders Alan Edmonds (almost 20 years with the company) and Scott Fereday (16.5 years with Wetherspoon) both joined the pub team in 2018.

Kitchen shift leaders Maise Handley (since March 2016) and Lucie Handley (from June 2017) have spent their whole Wetherspoon career at the pub, while kitchen associate Simon Edmonds joined the company in 2007 and the pub team 10 years later.



25 YEARS



The Penny Black (Northwich)

This pub, which first opened in September 1999, is housed in the former Northwich post office, taking its name from the world's first-ever adhesive postage stamp.

The building itself, now a grade II listed property, was purpose built during 1914–19 as the town's main post office – its architect was Charles Wilkinson. Originally finished in 1915, it was not opened or used until 1919, because of World War I.

Pictured with a celebration cake and balloons, to mark 25 years since the pub opened, are (left to right) team leader Jess Turner, shift manager Donna Mort and kitchen associate Owen Jones.

Pub manager Shaun Pearce has worked for Wetherspoon for 20 years, taking over at The Penny Black in September 2023.

Among his long-serving staff members are shift managers Donna Mort (six years) and Adam Minton (five years), as well as cleaners Ray Halfpenny (14 years) and Kathy Rowe (eight years).

The Saxon Shore (Herne Bay)

Celebrating 25 years since The Saxon Shore first opened, in August 1999, are (left to right) shift manager Jodie McCluskey, area manager Peter Pethers, pub manager Emma Mann and regional manager Tim Hine.

Emma started working for Wetherspoon in April 2010 and took over in October 2023 as pub manager in Herne Bay.

Among Emma's long-serving staff members are shift manager Jodie McCluskey (10 years) and kitchen manager Billy Smith (six years).

Shift managers Lillie Dutton and Owen Spain have each clocked up five years, while shift leaders Jasmine Iddenden (seven years) and Simon Bartocha (five years) are also among the long-serving staff.

The southeast coastline of England was once known as the Saxon shore, from the military forts built along it during the late Roman occupation. Today, the Saxon shore's footpath passes along central parade and has given its name to this Kent pub.



25 YEARS

25 YEARS



The George Inn (Littlehampton)

Marking the pub's 25th birthday are (left to right) shift manager Peter Eydmann, bar associate Chloe Wright, pub manager Tim Ilott and team leader George Andrews.

Tim has managed the pub since November 2017, having worked for Wetherspoon since May 2012.

Among his long-serving staff members are kitchen team leader Kevin Robertson (11 years), shift leader Matt Stevens (10 years), shift manager Peter Eydmann (eight years) and bar associate Stevie Winter (seven years).

All clocking up six years' service are shift manager Ash Waters, shift leader Danny Scovell, team leader Amanda Harley-Gillies and kitchen associate Deniss Zotikovs, with kitchen associate Daryl Beddis on five years.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in July 1999, preserves the name of the George Inn which originally stood on High Street until the 1820s.

The Eccles Cross (Eccles)

This pub, which first opened in October 1999, takes its name from the nearby Eccles Cross. The original cross was erected in the 5th century by Celtic missionaries.

The stump of the later Saxon cross stood neglected for years, until accidentally demolished by a lorry in World War II.

Pictured celebrating 25 years' service to the people of Eccles are (left to right) shift manager Leon Gillings, bar associate Carmen Jackson and shift leader George Lee.

Tasha Brady took over in August 2021 as pub manager at The Eccles Cross, having joined the company in August 2016.

Tasha's long-serving staff members include kitchen manager Lewis Modd (nine and a half years), shift managers Elise Stone (seven and a half years), Jack Norris (almost seven years) and Leon Gillings (almost six and a half years) and bar associates Kayleigh Ryder (seven years), Jazmin Minto (almost six and a half years) and Carlos Corrente (almost six years).



25 YEARS

EPSOM

CELEBRITIES RUN DERBY DRAW WITH A DIFFERENCE AT ASSEMBLY ROOMS



Love Island's Frankie Foster and TV horseracing presenter Nick Luck arrived at The Assembly Rooms (Epsom) to run the official Derby Draw.

The draw determines the all-important starting gate positions for runners and riders, as well as which colours the jockeys will wear.

Nick and Frankie, a keen horseracing fan and on-course pundit, conducted the draw outside the pub as the town of Epsom put on a show around the event.

The event was organised by pub manager Sel Devecioglu, along with colleagues in the local pubwatch group and the business improvement district (BID).

It was also attended by the mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Councillor Steve Bridger and Epsom Downs general manager Tom Sammes.

Tom said: "For the first time, this year, we decided to take the draw for the Betfred Derby to the heart of the community on Epsom's High Street.

"Given the amazing history and heritage of the Betfred Derby, it was appropriate that the draw ceremony was performed outside of the grade II listed Assembly Rooms, and I would like to pay tribute to the amazing staff there who provided us with free coffee and looked after everyone so well.

"The event also coincided with a farmers' market day which guaranteed a healthy crowd."

Sel said: "It was a great success, bringing together the pub and the town for this annual event."

As part of the build-up to the Derby Draw, two of horseracing's better-known voices took part in a live podcast inside the pub.

Presenters Nick Luck and 'The Wine Tipster' Neil Phillips discussed the draw and gave their thoughts on the likely outcome of the Derby itself.

Pictured (left to right) are Frankie Foster, mayor Steve Bridger, Nick Luck, pub manager Sel Devecioglu, council chief executive Jackie King and Epsom Downs general manager Tom Sammes. Also pictured are presenters Nick Luck and 'The Wine Tipster' Neil Phillips.



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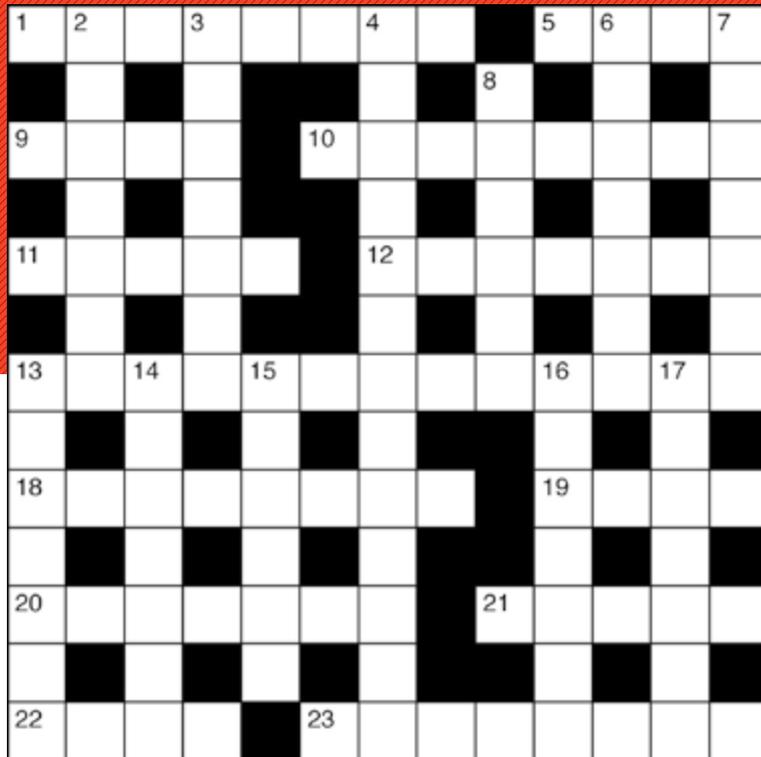
The first four correctly completed crosswords to be pulled out of the hat will win each of those entrants a Wetherspoon gift card worth £30.

Closing date for entries: 5 March 2025

Post to:

Wetherspoon News Magazine Competition
PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

4 x £30 PRIZES TO BE WON



Across

- 1. 1944 film melodrama based on a play by Patrick Hamilton (8)
- 5. Calling system at bridge, popular in Britain, which developed from the old Culbertson and Lederer systems (4)
- 9. "Animal ---", novel by George Orwell (4)
- 10. "--- City", 1980 Burt Lancaster film by Louis Malle (8)
- 11. Principality in the United Kingdom whose capital is Cardiff (5)
- 12. Crossbred hunting dog, usually a greyhound cross with a collie (7)
- 13. Richard Gordon novel filmed in 1957 with Dirk Bogarde (6,2,5)

- 18. Any of various crabs of the tropical family Gecarcinidae that are adapted to a partially terrestrial life (4,4)
- 19. The imperial dynasty of China from 618-907 A.D. (4)
- 20. Italian composer of the opera The Barber of Seville (7)
- 21. Al, winner of the Indianapolis 500 in 1987 at the age of 47 years 11 months (5)
- 22. Mr. Penn, Oscar nominee for his role in the film Dead Man Walking (4)
- 23. Surname of American tennis star nicknamed 'Little Mo' (8)

Down

- 2. A member of a Native North American people of the Plains now living in Oklahoma and Wyoming (7)
- 3. Christopher, actor who played Tarzan in the 1984 film Greystoke (7)
- 4. 1966 film version of Feydeau's L'Hôtel du libre Échange (5,8)
- 6. "The --- in the Rye", novel by J.D. Salinger (7)
- 7. Another name for alfalfa (7)

- 8. Stan, British comedian who partnered Oliver Hardy (6)
- 13. Miss Del Rio, Mexican actress who appeared with Henry Fonda in the 1947 film The Fugitive (7)
- 14. Card game for two to six players who amass points by declaring sets of cards (7)
- 15. Plant whose varieties include the bee ---, frog --- and spider --- (6)
- 16. Name of Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice (7)
- 17. Sally, 1992 Olympic women's 400m hurdles champion (7)

SOLUTIONS (Summer/autumn 2024 issue)

- Across:** 1 Botany; 4 Smiles; 9 The Pawnbroker; 10 Avocado; 11 Olsen; 12 Offal; 14 Pepys; 18 April; 19 Cassava; 21 Everton Weekes; 22 Orsino; 23 Aldrin.
- Down:** 1 Batman; 2 The Comforters; 3 Nyasa; 5 Marlowe; 6 Luke Skywalker; 7 Sarong; 8 Onion; 13 Allston; 15 Laredo; 16 Scent; 17 Danson; 20 Steel.

The summer/autumn 2024 crossword winners were:

★ KT, Walsall ★ JM, Hertford ★ CR, Stafford ★ MP, Chelmsford



Please complete the answers and your details, as shown, and send the completed page to:

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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 5/3/25. 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.



Ash Corbett-Collins is national chairman of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

Cheers

CROOKED HOUSE'S CRUSHING WAS A REAL SHOCK, BUT PUBS ARE IN PERIL EVERYWHERE

Reports from across England show that many pubs continue to be demolished or converted, without apparent planning permission, says CAMRA's national chairman Ash Corbett-Collins

Entering the new year can be a reflective time, and that goes for CAMRA too.

This year, we've seen changes in the campaign and also with the people we work alongside.

We've been looking back at a case which shocked many across the country and kick-started a campaign to ensure the protection of pubs from the same fate.

On 5 August 2023, a fire destroyed much of the interior of the Crooked House pub in Himley, Dudley.

In under 48 hours later, the remaining structure of the building was demolished without planning permission.

On the anniversary of this case, CAMRA reported shocking figures which spelled out a national scandal.

In 2017, planning laws were changed so that pubs in England could not be converted or demolished without planning permission.

However, reports from CAMRA volunteers across the country show that many pubs continue to be demolished or converted without apparent planning permission.

These include at least 10 in the six months in the run-up to the demolition of the Crooked House and a further 29 in England since, which are currently being investigated by CAMRA.

In the year since the demolition of the pub, CAMRA has supported the determined efforts of local campaigners to keep alive the story of the Crooked House.

PROTECTION

We met government ministers to lobby for the protection of pubs and worked with West Midlands Combined Authority to encourage the statutory listing of other local pubs, in the hope that they receive the protection which the Crooked House deserved.

Over this last year, we have been tireless in our campaigning and our message that more protection is needed for pubs across the UK.

It is vital that this new government echo this sentiment and we see real change to policy to secure the future of our pub stock and cultural heritage.

With this new Labour government comes new opportunities to spread CAMRA's message of the protection of pubs, clubs and brewing.

CAMRA prides itself on creating relationships with MPs from all nations of the UK.

Since we now have a vastly different government, we are striving to ensure that all newly elected MPs are aware of CAMRA's aims.

Pubs are hugely important to communities, and people want to see that represented in their elected officials.

One of the first challenges which CAMRA faced with the new government was the autumn budget.



We proposed a 20% discount in tax on pints in pubs



DUTY

Joining forces with industry leaders, the Society of Independent Brewers, CAMRA sent groundbreaking new economic modelling directly to the treasury, showing the transformation which a UK-wide cut in duty charged on beer and cider served in pubs could bring.

We proposed a 20% discount in tax on pints in pubs, which would create thousands of new jobs and contribute £70 million to the economy, encouraging consumers to move from supermarket alcohol back to being able to support their local pubs and social clubs.

We also urged the chancellor to stick by the Labour manifesto promise of reforming business rates in England.

The system which this government inherited unfairly penalises pubs and makes it harder for all bricks-and-mortar businesses to compete with online shopping.

CAMRA's own figures show the shocking extent of chum in the pub trade, with over 1,000 businesses closing their doors so far this year.

TOOL

In October, CAMRA called on all beer-lovers and pub-goers to get involved and use a simple online tool to contact their MPs ahead of the budget.

We're hugely grateful for the support of members, and non-members alike, in putting pressure on the government to show their dedication to the protection of pubs, clubs, breweries and cider producers.

When times are tough for all of those involved in the trade, the best way to show your support is to join CAMRA.

Pubs and clubs aren't just the best way to enjoy beer, cider and perry, they're also hugely important to tackling loneliness and bringing communities together.

As well as lobbying in Westminster, we work locally to protect venues, breweries and producers from closure.

We also champion people with awards like the Pub Saving Award, which recognises campaigns to save pubs which would have otherwise been lost.

Joining CAMRA means becoming part of a movement to ensure the UK's incredible culture and heritage.

MEMBERSHIP

Since 1971, CAMRA membership has counted towards the tangible protection of cask beer and, in the years since that, has extended to pubs, clubs, cider and perry.

We're working tirelessly to ensure that 2025 will bring real change for the hardworking bar staff, licensees, producers and brewers who deserve respite from the rising costs of employing staff and energy.

We hope that you'll help us in campaigning for that change.

● **To join CAMRA, or to give a gift membership to a friend or loved-one, visit: join.camra.org.uk**



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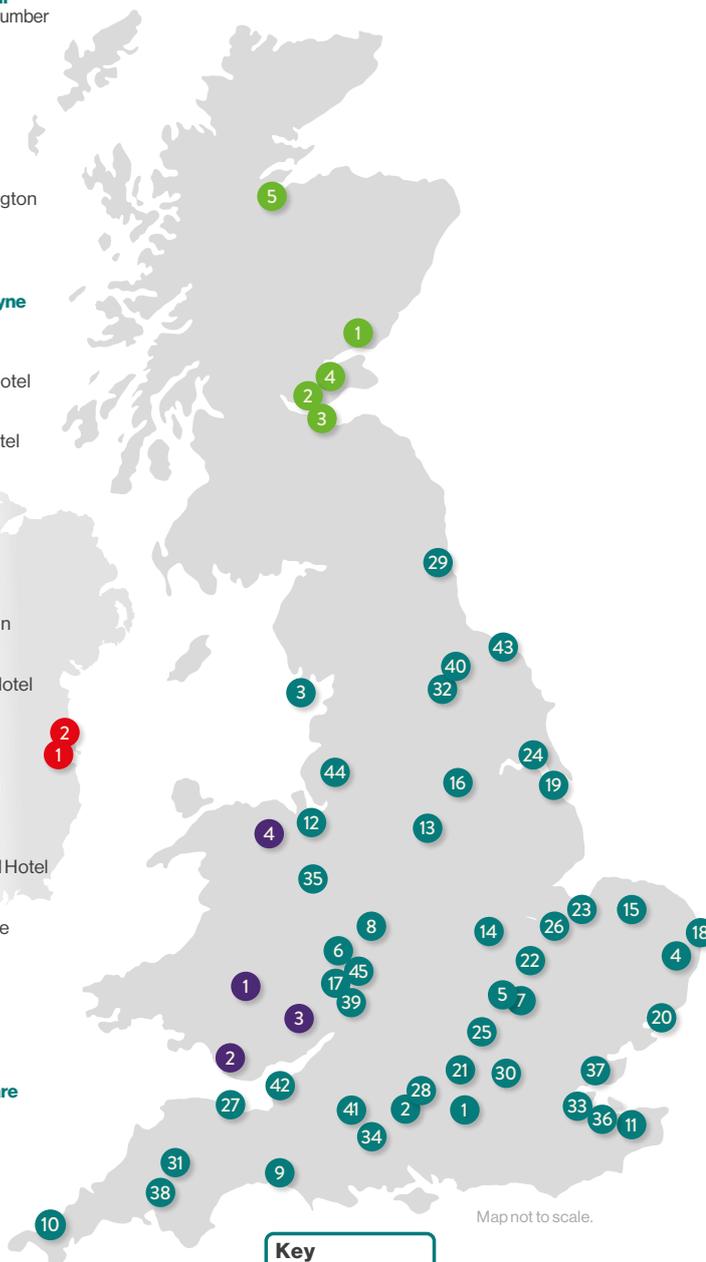
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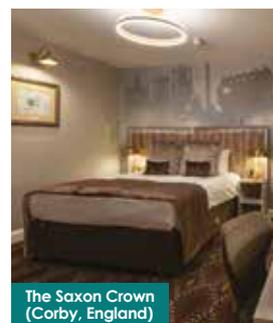
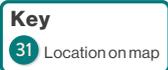
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The Crown
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Map not to scale.



The Saxon Crown
(Corby, England)



Keavan's Port Hotel
(Dublin, Ireland)



The Golden Acorn
(Glenrothes, Scotland)



The Kings Head Hotel
(Monmouth, Wales)

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- 2 **Swords**
The Old Borough
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