

YOUR FREE MAGAZINE | SPRING 2022

WETHERSPOONNEWS

UK EDITION

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Number one world beer in the UK

Crafted by Westons Cider, Much Marcle, Herefordshire

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Number one beer brand in the world

Worthington Brewery: 260 years of heritage



NEW ON DRAUGHT

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Budweiser
4.5% ABV

Stowford Press Apple Cider
4.5% ABV

Stowford Press Mixed Berries
4.0% ABV

Worthington's Creamflow
3.6% ABV

YOU READ IT HERE FIRST

So did writers from the national press

SPIRITS IN THE MATERIAL WORLD

New vodkas, rums, liqueurs, shots and a gin added to line-up

LAGER-LOVERS REJOICE

Fab new world beers added to range

SLEEP EASY

Wetherspoon has been named one of the best large hotel chains

Table service

HOW TO ORDER FROM YOUR TABLE

Download the Wetherspoon app



OR

Scan the QR code on the food menu



Or note your table number and order at the bar.

WIN!**PRIZE
CROSSWORD
117**

INSIDE

FEATURES

Tim's viewpoint

Piping pub news and common-sense opinion directly to customers for 30 years 4

Students' union becomes students' Spoon-ion

Students at Hull University are now enjoying Wetherspoon's food and drinks – in their own campus bar 8

You'll sleep easy

Wetherspoon has been named as one of the best large hotel chains 10

Brought on board

Wetherspoon has appointed four employees to its board 16

You read it here first

Articles carried in this magazine 'upcycled' to feature in pages of daily newspapers and websites 22

£454 million in free shares and bonuses paid to employees since 2006

83 per cent paid to pub staff 26

We top hygiene charts for pubs

Wetherspoon's pubs consistently top the charts in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme 32

£5.6 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 35

Try a few new brews in 2022

Spring real-ale festival makes a welcome return 36

New on draught

Fresh partnerships bring six new draughts to our bars 38

Heroic Polish RAF pilots honoured

The Greenwood Hotel (Northolt) celebrates brave exiles who flew and fought for the allied cause in World War II 42

CAMRA acclaim for our pubs

213 of the company's pubs are listed in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2022 46

Birthday cake galore

Pubs' birthdays aplenty as milestones whizz by 48

Pub histories

We focus on The White House, in Scraftoft, Leicester 53

Old Manor's real-ale royalty

Pub in Bracknell has been featured annually in The Good Beer Guide since 2000 54

Alternative views

Wetherspoon News presents articles from the press 56

Take flight with new rosé, red and sparkling white

Trio of wines offers a great variety of styles and flavours 60

Pub design

The Coliseum Picture Theatre, Cleethorpes 70

Spirits in the material world

New vodkas, rums, liqueurs, shots and a gin added to line-up 74

A mighty vegan menu

Two new vegan dishes added to our menu 80

Lager-lovers rejoice

Fab new world beers added to range 84

Putting our stamp on post offices

Mail-related edifices have delivered particularly well 96

THE REGULAR STUFF

Now-open and new-look pubs 62

Meet the brewer 88

Our people 20, 29, 30, 41, 73, 83

Community 44, 51, 86, 93, 110, 112, 114

Young Lives vs Cancer – CLIC Sargent 100

CAMRA's bar talk 118

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

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

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

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Democracy is the best system for economic progress and human rights

But an increasingly presidential UK system, combined with emergency powers, results in incoherent policies...

Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come, said the French writer Victor Hugo.

Powerful political ideas convulsed the twentieth century – various totalitarian systems, with widespread intellectual support, took over half the world, at untold humanitarian cost, and clashed with one another and with western democracies.

Following World War II and the fall of the Berlin Wall, American intellectual Francis Fukuyama optimistically proclaimed the idea of the 'end of history' – the ultimate victor being liberal parliamentary democracy, which, in effect, through the ballot box, empowered the peoples of the world.

Democracy, combined with a free press and universal suffrage, certainly unleashes immense economic forces and personal freedoms.

Thus, Japan emerged, in a few decades, from the rubble of war and autocracy, to be the second biggest economy in the world.

Likewise, South Korea emerged, in no time flat, from penury to become one of the richest countries in the world, whereas North Korea has suffered terribly under an autocratic system.

Miracle

In Europe, West Germany created an economic, civil (and football) miracle, whereby freedom and democracy were established, which undemocratic East Germany could not match.

Yet parliamentary democracy has by no means taken root everywhere.

In China, a blend of autocracy and private enterprise has produced several decades of huge economic growth, albeit allied to an appalling civil rights history.

Various theocratic régimes make their parliamentary institutions

subject to ecclesiastical control, so cannot be regarded as truly democratic.

And, unfortunately, there are still military and other dictatorships around the world.

Indeed, in many European countries, including the UK, a debate has raged about the 'democratic deficit' in the EU – with its unelected presidents, its MEPs who cannot initiate legislation and its highest court (the ECJ) which is not subject to parliamentary control.

But no democratic system is without flaws, as the UK and many other countries have frequently demonstrated.

Winston Churchill summed it up succinctly in 1947: "No one pretends that democracy is perfect... Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time..."



This centralisation of power in Downing Street has been going on for around 25 years



Indeed, many of the goings-on in our own democracy have been particularly diabolical of late.

A major error may have been the agreement by MPs to grant emergency powers to the government, during the pandemic, so that vital policies, with far-reaching consequences for civil rights, health and

economic systems, were decided on at 'party central' – No. 10 Downing Street.

Surely, the central purpose of democracy is to harness the vast experience and ideas of the people, distilled through debate in the media and in parliament.

This process of debate, chaotic at times, and the energy which it unleashes are the essence of democratic success.

The unusual circumstances of the pandemic, with many unknowns and conflicting views about the best approach, were the perfect opportunity for parliament to utilise its collective knowledge by scrutinising every detail.

Instead, power was delegated to a tiny clique of special advisers and ministers in No. 10 Downing Street, with very little experience of the real world.

What could possibly go wrong?

Lurching

The lurching from lockdowns to 'eat out to help out' to curfews, circuit breakers and moonshots and to pints with substantial meals only could surely have been replaced with a more coherent response, if the measures had been properly debated.

Instead of harnessing public energy, the small clique in No.10 decided on policy itself, as parliament had decreed it should do, and set about trying to control public opinion through propaganda.

Taxpayers' money was used liberally by the government during the pandemic to advertise in the press, creating a huge conflict of interest – democracy relies on the press as a watchdog which guards against nefarious government behaviour.

Yet, instead, government became its biggest paymaster.

In addition, instead of fostering debate in critical areas of policy,

the government employed anonymous social media users, and its own MPs, to vilify government critics, so that its own views, and those of the narrow scientific faction represented by SAGE, would remain predominant.

This centralisation of power in Downing Street has been going on for around 25 years, as the big egos among prime ministers have sought to create a more 'presidential' system.

However, that's a dangerous step.

Like all democracies, the UK needs a system which is so strong that it could be run by an idiot – because one day it will be – and, as former Supreme Court judge Lord Sumption has pointed out, the use of emergency powers is particularly dangerous.

Democratic

Since ideas are so important, it's surely vital that the democratic world make the case for democracy more persuasively and emphatically.

The main point, as Winston Churchill pointed out, is that it's not perfect, but it's better than its alternatives.

In fact, let's go one step further and say that, in the nuclear age, the establishment of democracy, for all of its faults, in every country of the world, is essential for the future of humanity.

Tim Martin
Chairman

Tim says: "Albert Einstein, who, like Winston Churchill, didn't go to university, is reputed to have said that a chicken trying to understand Einstein was like Einstein trying to understand the universe.

"In other words, Einstein understood that, brainy though he was, he didn't know much in the great scheme of things. William Shakespeare, probably the greatest writer ever, didn't go to university either and was lashed in his lifetime by the 'university wits' – tragically awful contemporary poets, who criticised his work and referred to him as an 'upstart crow'.

"Some time ago, Wetherspoon News drew attention to the narrow backgrounds of the (then) senior teams of all of the main political parties (see comments regarding a Times newspaper article, page 58). Don't get me wrong, as the song goes, education is generally a plus – provided that it discourages dangerous groupthink and encourages arguments and ideas from a wide range of people.

"Unfortunately, that's not always the case."

READ BY 2 MILLION CUSTOMERS

YOUR FREE MAGAZINE | WINTER 2020/21

WETHERSPOON NEWS

Good decisions depend on a wide range of views and backgrounds...
but lack of diversity among political leaders leads to dangerous groupthink...



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

THIS BEER WITH CLASS NEEDS A PROPER GLASS

Dear Sir

It is great to see Leffe Blonde on draught available in Wetherspoon pubs again. The problem is that staff are already short of dedicated glasses.

I can think of two solutions to the problem: a) charge a deposit on the glass (not an ideal solution, for a few reasons); b) serve the product in an identically shaped glass, without Leffe branding.

There is nothing worse than being served Leffe in a normal pint glass. The Belgians and Dutch take great pride in matching their glasses to the many specialist beers available.

Mike Aldron

Cwmrhydyceirw, Swansea

Tim replies: I agree and will do my best to sort. Hope you don't mind my saying that Cwmrhydyceirw is even more difficult to pronounce than Llanelli – for some people only, I know. As regards Leffe Blonde, paraphrasing Dorothy Parker, drinkers won't give passes to Blondes in plain glasses.



A PLEA FOR TURKEY, TREACLE AND TOFFEE

Dear editor

Since retiring, my wife and I have begun visiting various branches of your pub chain around West Yorkshire. We are particularly fond of your very good breakfast deals and also your newly introduced chicken dishes.

Although we have tried and enjoyed your Christmas festive burgers, we were sorry to see that there was no traditional turkey dinner available this year – since, in past years, we have really enjoyed it.

We also lament the passing of good-old favourite desserts, such as treacle sponge and sticky toffee pudding – is there any chance of their reappearing on the menu?

Yours faithfully

Maurice Ryan

Brighouse, West Yorkshire

Tim replies: In April 2021, when pubs reopened on a garden-only basis, we cut down the menu to try to make things easier for our teams.

It worked quite well – and we thought, when pubs reopened fully in July, that we could increase our speed of service and make things more efficient by keeping the slimmed-down menu.

However, we decided, based on observations such as yours, that we overdid it and are adding back some of the old favourites in April. I will pass on your recommendations to the groovy catering team.

LIZ IS THE BIZ SAYS HAPPY CUSTOMER

Dear editor

Please can you give some recognition to a wonderful lady called Liz, who works tirelessly at The Maidenhead Inn (Basingstoke)? She is always very friendly and ultra efficient.

The pub is not the same when she is not there – and she is a shining example to the young folk working alongside her. She really deserves to be thanked.

Mr Allen French

Via e-mail

Tim replies: Thank you, indeed. Fantastic Liz receives many compliments – as do the other excellent staff, to be fair.

PAW TREATMENT FOR DOGGED CUSTOMERS?

Dear editor

Having recently retired from work, I became the proud 'parent' of a puppy dog.

She soon became an important part of my life and routine.

As a regular diner at Wetherspoon's pubs, I took puppy along with us, when my wife and I went to our local in Newcastle-under-Lyme, where we sat outside and ordered breakfast.

Imagine my surprise when the manager had to tell us that dogs are not allowed – inside or outside.

It's the first time in my life that I have been kicked out of a pub... and a Wetherspoon at that! LOL

So, this e-mail is not in anger... rules are rules... but I would like to remind Tim et al that the current trend in pubs, restaurants and shops is to go 'dog friendly'.

These venues have seen the growing attraction of such places and the profitability of dog access.

Therefore, I ask please to consider looking at your rule on allowing dogs.

I suggest that outside, at least, is a step forward which would be greatly appreciated by many of your customers. You could even be radical and offer pet membership – a small fee giving the pet access permission.

Having visited quite a few pet-friendly places, I have been assured that dogs messing the floor is not happening.

I hope that my thoughts above strike a chord with you, and I am certain that they will with many others, should a poll be taken.

Yours

Paul Lythgoe, via e-mail

wetherspoon

Dog Policy

We've had several letters, over the years, about our dog policy. Here are examples from 2018 and 2014.

2018

Dear Tim

I've been a customer of Wetherspoon for many years. I recently visited your pub in Mold, Flintshire. We sat down to have a meal at lunch time, only to be informed by a staff member that no dogs are allowed in the outside seating area. On this occasion, Wetherspoon lost three customers – and I'm sure that there will be many more in future. You have lost me for good, with this policy.

I spoke to the manager who informed me that it was Wetherspoon's policy. My reply was: "What 'idiot' made this policy; in this day and age, how can anyone in business turn business away?" By the way, there was a pub just up the road which allowed dogs on the premises.

Regards, Mr B, North Wales (via e-mail)

Tim replies:

Thank you for your letter. The idiot you refer to was, indeed, my good self. This is an emotional area, but, since our first pub, it has been our policy not to allow dogs, except guide dogs. Whereas most dog owners can control their well-trained dogs, this is not invariably the case. The original rule, unfair on some dogs, I admit, is even more sensible today, since our pubs sell large amounts of food and admit children.

Also, in my experience, guide dog owners aren't keen on other dogs being admitted. Most big food retailers and restaurant companies allow only guide dogs. I enclose a letter from a customer on this subject (and my reply) which appeared in Wetherspoon News in 2014. In this area, you can't please all of the people all of the time.

WETHERSPOON NEWS > AUTUMN 2018

Justice for dogs - that's all I want

2014

Dear Tim

As a family which always chooses Wetherspoon pubs first and fell walkers, we were delighted to learn about the opening of The Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, in Keswick. (Editor's note: the pub opened on 30 September 2014)

Our only concern was that it was not 'open for dogs'. We are now proud owners of Florrie (pictured), a 14-month-old collie rescued from Ireland, and we would like to take her in with us.

You may know that Keswick has been voted the most dog-friendly town in England (Kennel Club). If you were to take a walk down its main street, you will see that most pubs and hotels encourage well-behaved dogs and their owners.

While I fully understand your general policy about allowing entry to registered assistance dogs only, would you consider having an area in the pub, where Florrie is allowed?

Yours, Jim Murray, Tyne & Wear



Tim replies:

Another vexed issue. At my first pub in north London, I was persuaded to buy a Doberman, for security reasons. Before the poor dog died, I had walked the equivalent of from here to Australia, I calculated. He was useless as a guard dog, and I wanted my money back. He used to bark loudly, in panic, if another dog entered the premises – and pandemonium would often ensue. Whereas almost all dogs are well behaved, in reality, in busy pubs like ours, it's very difficult to prevent flare-ups of the nature I describe, which can be upsetting for some customers. In the end, we decided to go for 'guide dogs only'. I'm the first to admit that this policy is unfair, as far as Florrie is concerned.

WETHERSPOON NEWS > AUTUMN 2014

Tim replies: A tricky area, indeed – and a very emotive one. In our busy pubs, with high food sales, not everyone likes dogs present – and accidents can happen.

This is an area in which, to paraphrase the poet John Lydgate, later made more famous still by Abraham Lincoln: "You can't please all the people all the time."

Please also see (above) my 2018 and 2014 Wetherspoon News replies to similar queries.

ARE YOU SITTING IN THE POSHEST PUB MARK STEEL'S EVER SEEN?

The Wallaw (Blyth) earned high praise from visiting comedian Mark Steel during his In Town show on BBC Radio 4.

Mark dropped in to the pub as he researched the town before his 30-minute talk delivered to a live audience.

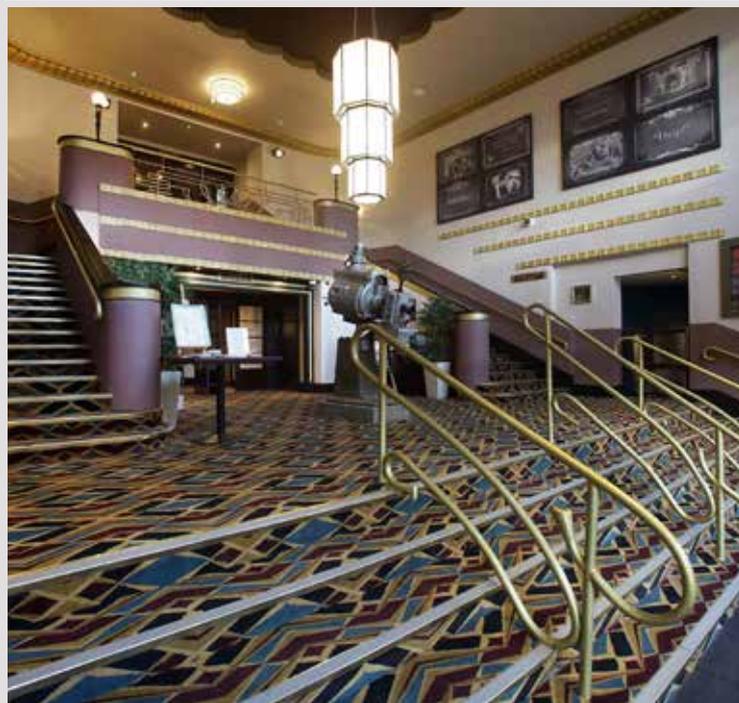
The show mixes humour with historical tales and numerous references to local landmarks, including, in Blyth's case, the guns on the local beach; the Keel Row shopping centre; the statue of strongman Willie Carr – and The Wallaw pub.

The pub piqued the comedian's interest for its architectural features, which he contrasted with a humorous (yet sympathetic) caricature of Blyth as a northern, hard, dour former mining town.

During the show, available on BBC Sounds, Mark says The Wallaw is "the poshest pub I've ever seen", referring to its history as a former Art Deco cinema and its "posh lamps and mirrors".

He described the pub's offer as "chrome-plated glass, futuristic lighting through geometrically challenging lamps – and a guest ale for £1.49".

The pub's manager, Lauren Jenner, said: "Mark popped in for a look around and clearly has an eye for décor. The pub really is a feature of the town because of its past as a cinema and the way it's designed now. We're glad he mentioned us in the show, even if he did apply his comedic licence to the description."



HULL SCORES A FIRST AS STUDENTS' UNION BECOMES STUDENTS' SPOON-ION

Students at Hull University are now enjoying Wetherspoon's food and drinks – in their own campus bar.

It follows a partnership agreement between Hull University Students' Union (HUSU) and Wetherspoon – the first of its kind.

The partnership allows HUSU access to the successful business model which Wetherspoon has implemented at its pubs across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

With the university's Sanctuary Bar run and managed by HUSU, students are benefiting from Wetherspoon's prices on all food and drinks.

In addition, the students' union's Asylum nightclub and Eats deli also offer a wide range of Wetherspoon food and drinks.

Sanctuary Bar's staff, as well as those working in Asylum nightclub and Eats deli, have been given the same training as all Wetherspoon staff, yet will continue to be employed and managed by HUSU.

Wetherspoon's chairman, Tim Martin, said: "We are very pleased to have entered into a partnership with Hull University Students' Union for the operation of Sanctuary Bar, Asylum nightclub and Eats deli and look forward to working with it to make the bar a great success."

Jeremy Hartley, chief finance officer at the University of Hull, with responsibility for commercial services, said: "We know that our students really value having all of the facilities they need in one place.

"Our single-site campus provides our community with study spaces, food and drinks establishments, gym and sports facilities and much more.

"This announcement further enhances that student experience, providing students with quality, affordable food and an events space right on their doorstep.

"Our campus is what makes the University of Hull the wonderful place it is – and this new partnership emphasises the importance of providing students with the very best experience possible."

Pictured at the opening are Hull University Students' Union presidents Peace Igi-Ehon, Holly Burton, Phoebe Bastiani, Ellis Leonard and Sian Doherty.





57 HOTELS
1,285 ROOMS

See back cover for all hotels and locations.

YOU'LL SLEEP EASY IF YOU BOOK A ROOM WITH US



The King's Head Inn, Salisbury

Wetherspoon has been named, in a survey undertaken by consumer champions Which?, as one of the best large hotel chains.

It was listed as the fifth-highest-rated hotel chain, based on an October 2021 online survey of 2,603 Which? members and the public.

Hotels were marked on the following criteria: average price paid; cleanliness; rooms; bathrooms; customer service; beds; communal areas; description versus reality; value for money; Wi-Fi; COVID-19 safety measures.

Wetherspoon received an overall customer score (combining overall satisfaction and likelihood of recommending) of 74 per cent.

It ranked above hotel chains which included Travelodge, Jurys Inn, Novotel, Hilton, Holiday Inn and Copthorne.

Wetherspoon's people operations manager, Tom Ball, said: "We are delighted to have been rated so highly.

"We take great pride in our hotels – and the fact that Which? members and the public rated them so highly is very rewarding.

"Our hotels offer a great place to stay, next to or above a Wetherspoon pub, with value-for-money accommodation.

"Our hotel rooms feature 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.

"The hotels all offer 24-hour reception service – and our 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 with disabilities.

"A great advantage is that these hotels are centrally located – so guests can enjoy food and drinks at the attached pub in each town or city."

At present, Wetherspoon has 55 hotels in the UK (across England, Scotland and Wales), as well as two in the Republic of Ireland.

They include The King's Head Inn (Salisbury), The John Francis Basset (Camborne), The Saltoun Inn (Fraserburgh), The George Hotel (Brecon) and The Old Borough (Swords).

The Saltoun Inn, Fraserburgh



The John Francis Basset, Camborne



The George Hotel, Brecon



The Old Borough, Swords



wetherspoon

NEW PUB AND HOTEL 89 BEDROOMS

NOW OPEN

KEAVAN'S PORT, DUBLIN

1–5 Camden Street Upper/49–51 Camden Street Lower



Artist's illustration.



Located on a rejuvenated Camden Street, only 1km from the city centre and Grafton Street, the hotel is a short distance from many of Dublin's attractions.

Book direct for the best rates – on the telephone, our website or our app.

See website for full terms and conditions.

THE CHEQUERS INN HELPS JADE TO BECOME A PICKLED PERSON

Kitchen associate Jade Morgan has fulfilled her life-long dream, thanks to a fortnight's break from her job at The Chequers Inn (Stourbridge).

Since the age of 14, Jade (now 23) has been a fan of the Circus of Horrors and always dreamed of the opportunity to perform with it.

When the chance came up for a two-week job with the troupe, Jade jumped at the chance to apply for the role.

The Circus of Horrors' vacancy was for a 'pickled person'.

The role demanded someone who was 'flexible and did not suffer from claustrophobia' and could fit his or her entire body into a glass jar 61cm high by 45.7cm wide.

Jade said: "I really enjoy my job at Wetherspoon, but it has been my life-long dream to be in the Circus of Horrors.

"Thanks to my pub manager for agreeing to my time off, I got the chance to fulfil that dream."

The pub's manager, Siobhan Rustom, added: "Jade started working in the kitchen at The Chequers Inn during the summer, having previously worked in a circus.

"In October, when she was presented with the chance to work with the circus company for which she has always wanted to work, we were delighted to be able to give her the leave (two weeks) to do so – and she was over the moon.

"Thankfully, Jade didn't run away with the circus, as she is now back with us at the pub and is a valued kitchen team member."



TICKLED PINK NIGHT BRINGS IN WAGON FULL OF CASH

A charity fundraiser at The Wagon & Horses (Chapelton, Sheffield) collected £457 for breast cancer charities.

Organised by shift manager Abi Wilson and shift leader Charlotte Barlow, the Tickled Pink night was in support of the local ASDA supermarket's Ticked Pink campaign, raising funds for Breast Cancer Now and CoppaFeel!

The fundraising event at our pub raised the charity cash through a staff bake sale, tombola and bingo, with prizes donated by staff and local businesses, as well as cash collections.

Shift leader Beth Truelove said: "Everybody is touched by cancer, in some way or another, at some stage, whether personally or via someone they know and love.

"Everyone got involved in this event and had a great time, but, more importantly, raised much-needed funds to help to support the work of leading breast cancer charities."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Joanna Dallyn, shift leader Charlotte Barlow, pub manager Peter Bryan, bar associate Laura Morris, shift manager Abi Wilson and shift leader Beth Truelove.



PUBS MAKE A BIG SPLASH IN LOO OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2021



The Captain Noel Newton, Oakham

Hundreds of Wetherspoon pubs have won acclaim for the quality and standards of their toilets – in the Loo of the Year Awards 2021.

The awards are aimed at highlighting and improving standards of away-from-home toilet provision across the UK.

Inspectors for Loo of the Year Awards make unannounced visits to thousands of toilets at sites across the UK, in order to judge them.

All of the toilets are graded silver, gold, platinum or diamond, with unacceptable toilets not graded at all.

A diamond rating (the highest-possible rating) is awarded to outlets which offer 'exceptional toilets'.

The toilets are judged against numerous criteria, including décor and maintenance, cleanliness, accessibility, hand-washing and -drying equipment and overall management.

Wetherspoon's pubs and hotels received 25 diamond awards, 746 platinum awards and 46 gold awards.

The company's operations director, Martin Geoghegan, said: "We are delighted that our pubs have won so many awards.

"Staff at our pubs ensure that the toilets are in excellent condition at all times – and it is superb that this has been recognised by the inspectors.

"Offering our customers clean and well-maintained toilets is of utmost importance to us."

The Loo of the Year Awards' managing director, Becky Wall, said: "The toilets at Wetherspoon's pubs have been designed and fitted out to a very high standard and are clean and well maintained.

"The individual pubs deserve their awards."



The Pillar of Rock, Bolsover



Keavan's Port, Dublin

FOUR OF OUR STAFF ARE BROUGHT ON BOARD



Regional manager Debbie Whittingham

Wetherspoon has appointed four employees to its board.

After consultation with shareholders and employees, it was felt that the company would benefit from having more pub experience at board level.

As a result, suitable applicants from within the company were invited to apply.

More than 100 applications were received from talented and experienced managers.

After a thorough selection process, four appointments have been made – two as an employee director with full plc director status and two as an associate employee director.

The appointments have been made for an initial three-year term.

The employee directors are:

- **Debbie Whittingham** – regional manager for the West Midlands. Debbie joined Wetherspoon in 1992 as a shift manager and was appointed as a pub manager in 1993, then as an area manager in 2002. Debbie is a head-office sponsor for the company's network groups and was named Wetherspoon's 'area manager of the year' in 2014.
- **Hudson Simmons** – area manager for Sheffield. Hudson joined Wetherspoon in 1997 as a shift manager, was appointed as a pub manager in 2003 and as an area manager in 2014. In 2010, he was named 'pub manager of the year'.



Area manager Hudson Simmons

The associate employee directors are:

- **Will Fotheringham** – regional manager for the Manchester area. Will joined Wetherspoon in 1998 as a shift manager, was appointed in 2000 as a pub manager and as an area manager in 2006. He was awarded 'area manager of the year' in 2011 and ALMR* 'area manager of the year' in 2013.

**Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers, now called UK Hospitality*

- **Emma Gibson** – pub manager of The Imperial (Exeter). Emma joined Wetherspoon in 2004 as a bar associate and was appointed as a pub manager in 2010. Emma has chaired the Torquay and Exeter Best Bar None groups. In 2019, she received the Commissioner's Award from the Police and Crime Commissioner of Devon & Cornwall Police for services to Best Bar None.

Wetherspoon's chairman, Tim Martin, said: "A successful pub company depends primarily on gradual improvements, based on suggestions from employees.

"Pub and area managers, along with other pub team members, have always participated in weekly decision-making meetings, which distil suggestions from the 'front line'.

"The appointment of employee directors will extend this approach to board meetings and will help to preserve the culture of the company for the future.

"Wetherspoon is pleased to welcome Debbie, Hudson, Will and Emma to their new role."

Emma Gibson said: "I am honoured to be given this new role. It is an incredible opportunity for me. I have always loved progressing within Wetherspoon and am still keen to continue to do so. I love running The Imperial.

"This new role allows me to continue as a pub manager and also to be part of the bigger picture and represent pub employees on the board.

"I am very much looking forward to the role. It is wonderful how Wetherspoon has chosen to appoint employee directors. Having a greater and more diverse skill set at board level can only benefit the future success of the company."

Debbie Whittingham said: "I am tremendously proud to work for Wetherspoon and incredibly excited and honoured to have been chosen for this role.

"Wetherspoon has always been forward thinking and innovative – and I see this role as another example of that.

"The success of the company has been driven largely by incredible people.

"The company's values and culture have always been centred around our belief that running pubs well is a 'people thing'.

"This role is an extension of that, further putting our employees' voice right at the heart of the company."

Hudson Simmons said: "I am very excited to be able to provide a direct link between the board and the rest of my colleagues across the business.

"I am also looking forward to contributing further to the continued success of Wetherspoon."

Will Fotheringham said: "I am excited to be appointed as one of the new employee directors and look forward to playing my part in contributing to the success of Wetherspoon.

"I aim to use my more than 20 years' experience with Wetherspoon to contribute to future ideas and initiatives which will enable the company to progress even further."



Regional manager Will Fotheringham



Pub manager Emma Gibson

SIMON AND WAYNE - A PARAMOUNT DOOR DRAW



Keeping customers safe at The Paramount (Manchester) are door staff Simon Brown (second right) and Wayne Henshaw (second left). The two-man team has been doing the job for 18 years – and regional manager Will Fotheringham thinks that it would be difficult to match that.

He said: Wayne and Simon have worked on the door for 18 years. I'm not sure any other pub could ever claim this length of service. They are very much a part of the pub family."

The pub is managed by Natalie and Mark Hodgson (also pictured), who have also notched up a good length of service.

Natalie said: "We've been running the pub for 16 years, so Wayne and Simon are ahead of us.

"They are a great team and, while they are always friendly and polite with customers, it's their job to keep customers safe."

Simon said: "We have become pretty well-known local faces. We like to have a laugh and a joke with customers.

"They are coming out to enjoy themselves – and that's the approach we take to them."

Simon, who is also a personal trainer and Manchester United supporter, occasionally works at Old Trafford.

He added: "The fans see me there and say: 'Hey, you're the doorman from The Paramount.'"

Wayne Henshaw doubles up as a maths and information technology teacher at a local college.

The pair has done a great deal of training over the years and has a good collection of professional badges and certificates to show for it.

Simon added: "It's a great job. Our length of service and the fact that Natalie and Mark have been here for 16 years mean that we know what we are doing and can provide a lot of stability, so that customers can enjoy themselves."

AVION ABC SPELLS OUT ALES, BEERS AND CAROLS

Staff and customers at The Avion (Aldridge) got the festive season off to a flying start with an evening called Ales, Beers and Carols.

Community activist Andrew Clayton hosted the annual Christmas event which first took place in 2013.

Shift manager Emma Farren said: "Andrew is a lovely fellow who does a lot of work in the community. He came up with Ales, Beers and Carols simply to encourage people to get into the seasonal spirit.

"We are grateful to him for his time and the effort which he puts into preparing the evening."

Customers chose from a range of ales, including Best Christmas from Pheasantry Brewery, based in Newark.

Andrew Clayton is pictured (centre) with shift managers Lisa Watkins and Luke Burgoyne.



CHAMPAGNE GIFT SHOWS JULIE SHE'S TRULY VALUED

Long-serving staff member Julie Hall received Champagne, flowers and a certificate to mark her two decades with the company.

She is pictured (second right) with Wetherspoon's area manager Anthony Buckley (right), along with colleagues shift leader Paddy Rigg and duty manager Sharna Blackburn, at Wetherspoons (Gateshead), where she has worked for the past 20 years.

When Massarella Café, in Newcastle, closed, Julie having worked there for 13 years, successfully applied for a full-time job with Wetherspoon.

She recalled: "The past 20 years have gone by so quickly; when I joined the company, I didn't dream in a million years that I would still be here 20 years later."

Julie switched to a part-time role, as floor and bar associate, six years ago when she lost her mum and had to juggle childcare along with her job.

Julie said: "Bill (Alderson) has been my manager here for around 15 years and is always very fair and flexible.

"Everyone was so good to me when I lost my mam. They continue to be understanding with my shifts, fitting in with school and looking after my daughter Demi.

"At the minute, I can't return to a full-time position, although Demi is now 15 and a lot more independent. When she leaves school, I will be able to look to return to a full-time job at the pub." In the meantime, Julie continues to enjoy her role at Wetherspoons.

She concluded: "The people I work with are great – and the customers are always lovely."



NEW SHAKESBEER BREW IS AS YOU LIKE IT

The Watch Maker (Prescot) has launched its own Shakesbeer ale, after linking up with a local brewer.

Shift leader Daniel McCourt took charge of the project. He also came up with the name Shakesbeer, inspired by plans locally to open a new theatre.

When considering the style of the new ale, Daniel consulted regulars and the local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch.

Then, he approached local brewer Peerless to help him to brew the beer which he had in mind.

The result is a zesty, blond 4.0% ABV ale.

The pub's manager, Sheena Pyper-Mann, is planning a bus trip for customers to Peerless, so that they can see where their new ale came from and how it's made.

Sheena said: "Daniel worked extremely hard to ensure that the beer came to fruition.

"He asked customers for their views on the style of beer they would like to be served in the pub – and the result is the superb Shakesbeer.

"I would also like to thank brewery owners Steve and Rosie Briscoe and their team at Peerless for their dedication in creating the beer."

Pub manager Sheena Pyper-Mann is pictured (centre) with shift manager Jess Bowman and St Helens and Districts CAMRA pubs officer Ian Pye.



OUR PEOPLE

THE HARRY CLASPER • WHICKHAM

CLASPER TIGHT: CUSTOMERS KEEN TO CLING ON TO TYLER



Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Michelle Cuthbertson, duty manager Johnny Crawford, pub manager Tyler Hudson, cleaners Allison Gillender and Emma Herron and kitchen team leader Ashleigh Halliday



When customer Malcolm Pears wrote to tell us about his local Wetherspoon (Your Say – Winter 2021/22), he told us that The Harry Clasper (Whickham) “has become our village hub” and is a “first-class establishment”.

With high praise for pub manager Tyler Hudson and her “very friendly, respectful and well-organised ship”, Wetherspoon News felt duty-bound to find out a little more about Tyler and her team.

The Harry Clasper first opened in June 2014, with Tyler taking over the reins in July 2017, following a month-long relief post there and subsequent successful application to become its manager.

Tyler, 32, first began her Wetherspoon career as a 17-year-old glass-collector at The Forum (Hexham) in her hometown, while still a student.

She recalled: “My sister, Toni Fitzgerald, was working at the pub and suggested that I spend my work experience there.

“She still works for Wetherspoon and is currently the deputy manager at The Five Swans (Newcastle).

“After completing my A levels, I joined the team at The Forum on a full-time basis, before moving to the now-sold pub Union Rooms (Newcastle) as a shift leader, where I first met John Hudson, now my husband.”

Tyler had a spell at The Quayside (Newcastle) before John was promoted to Wetherspoon area manager and the couple moved to Wakefield, where Tyler worked at The Six Chimneys for four years.

Tyler continued: “We returned to the northeast – and I went back to The Quayside, that time as a senior manager, before the relief position at The Harry Clasper came up.”

In the four and a half years since taking over, Tyler has cemented the pub’s pivotal role across the close-knit community of Whickham. The team hosts numerous events, including raffles, family fun-days and community fundraisers, and has collected £27,000 in that time for Wetherspoon’s chosen charity – Young Lives vs Cancer.

Tyler said: “We are all very community focused, and the customers are always willing to help to support us. We wouldn’t be where we are without them.

“I am taking part in the Young Lives vs Cancer London-to-Paris bike ride in May, and my regulars have made the sponsorship forms and posters for me. They really love the different events and getting involved.”

That close relationship can also be found throughout the team, with three staff members from the original opening team still working at the pub. They are kitchen team leader Ashleigh Halliday and cleaners Emma Herron and Allison Gillender.

Tyler manages a team of 40 full- and part-time staff, including fellow managers, supported by duty manager Joanna Anson, who returned to work for the company in September 2017, having first teamed up with Tyler at The Quayside.

Tyler concluded: “Everybody is really close, and our community success is a real team effort.

“We have a very strong and caring team – the staff members spend time with our customers, making them all feel welcome and safe.”

THE WOULDHAVE • SOUTH SHIELDS

PHILIP COMES FULL CIRCLE WITH HIS RETURN TO SOUTH SHIELDS



Pub manager Philip Riddle is pictured receiving his 20-year long-service award from Wetherspoon's area manager Anthony Buckley, as shift manager Scott Forster and bar team leader Claire Scott look on.

Philip (second right) had worked in various part-time bar staff roles, as a university student, from the age of 18.

His first full-time job was at his uncle's computer company, but Philip admits that he didn't want to be stuck behind a desk all day.

Philip confirmed: "I like being out and about, meeting people and on my feet. I knew that office work was not for me."

"I applied for a job with Wetherspoon, was successful, and was given the choice of working at a pub in Leicester, Derby or Nottingham."

Philip recalls: "I packed my bags, left my home in South Shields and went to work at The Pilgrim Oak (Hucknall), living and working in an area where I didn't know anyone."

Philip revealed: "Starting as a shift manager was a very different experience. I knew general bar work, but it was a sharp learning curve going straight into management."

"Being responsible for a team of staff was a shock to the system, at first, but I soon got to grips with the Wetherspoon way of working and gained experience as I worked."

He spent two years in the Nottinghamshire pub, as a shift manager, before a return to his native northeast, joining the teams at The Lambton Worm (now sold) and The William Jameson, both in Sunderland, as well as the newly opened pub The Bishops' Mill (Durham).

In 2008, Philip took over his first pub as pub manager, at The Fire Station (Whitley Bay), where he spent six years, before a further four years as pub manager at The Wallaw (Blyth).

He said: "The pub manager position then came up at The Wouldhave (South Shields) – chance for me to return to my home town."

"Since I took over, four years ago, we have had an extensive refurbishment and expansion, at a cost of more than £2 million, transforming the pub and its potential."

Philip concluded: "Geographically, during the past 20 years, I have come full circle with the company."

"I guess it was a bit of a gamble at first to pack my bags and leave what I knew, but it worked out in the long run."

YOU READ IT HERE FIRST, AND SO DID WRITERS FROM THE NATIONAL PRESS

Articles carried in this magazine 'upcycled' to feature in pages of daily newspapers and websites

Wetherspoon News (winter 2021/22)

RESTORATION



The Playhouse (Colchester)

FIXING THE ROOF WHILE THE SUN IS SHINING...

Company spends millions ensuring integrity of original ceilings at historic buildings which have been converted into a pub

Wetherspoon's reputation for breathing new life into often derelict and unloved, yet once beautiful, old buildings is well known.

The company spends millions of pounds on restoration and renovation projects to build new pubs in some iconic historic premises.

Custodian

However, the responsibility for conservation does not end there. It is a continual commitment and, as current custodian of some historically important properties, we continue to invest heavily in their upkeep and preservation for future generations.

Two restoration projects, at Opera House (Tunbridge Wells) and The Playhouse (Colchester), have been carried out during 2021 to ensure that the dome ceilings in both listed buildings will endure and be enjoyed for at least another 100 years.

The ceiling restoration work at The Playhouse cost the company £500,000, while the project at Opera House came in at £700,000.

Restored

Similarly constructed fibrous ceilings at The Art Picture House (Bury) in 2019 and The Picture House (Stafford) in 2020 have both been restored, while The Richard Oastler (Brighouse) is next to receive some much-needed TLC.

Wetherspoon's property manager, Craig Beardmore, responsible for overseeing the projects, said: "Wetherspoon invests heavily in its historic buildings for future generations, almost providing a

Essential

These works are being undertaken not because the ceilings are in a poor or dangerous condition, but, as with all historical buildings, essential improvements are required to ensure that they never reach that critical stage."

Wetherspoon ensures that periodic safety checks and inspections are carried out on all fibrous ceilings, in accordance with health and safety guidance which was reviewed following the fibrous ceiling collapse at the Apollo Theatre, London, in 2013.

What is a fibrous ceiling?

Fibrous ceilings fall into two categories:

FIBROUS PLASTER

Construction: Plaster ties made up of hessian (scrim) wadding ties and mixed with plaster of Paris, sometimes reinforced with wire, are used as mechanical fixings to hang a suspended ceiling.

Usage and period: Commonly found in historic theatres, cinemas, picture houses of around 1860-1940s.

LATH AND PLASTER

Construction: Laths are thin strips of timber which are fixed to the structure, with wet plaster applied, usually in several layers. The plaster forms a key, as it is forced between the laths.

Once dry, this plaster is given further coats and often a paint finish. Early examples of this type of ceiling have hair was

How the damage was done...

Structural damage to the ceiling at Opera House was caused by a World War II German incendiary bomb.

To conserve limited fuel for their return flight on their journey back from bombing raids over London, German Luftwaffe pilots would release aircraft weight by randomly dropping unexploded bombs.

One such discarded bomb fell through the roof of this opera house, now our pub, and landed on one of the proscenium arches. Fortunately, but, thankfully, did not explode. Instead, it just burned itself out – and the only damage was the hole in the roof and a few clearly visible scorch marks.

Restoration project – step by step

1. Working with local listed building officers, the first stage of a project is to gain planning approval for the necessary maintenance work to be carried out on a listed building.
2. Specialist scaffolding, called a structural crash deck, must be installed under the ceiling to allow access. The equipment is designed and engineered to take the weight of the ceiling, should it fall.
3. Access and safety equipment are then put in place.
4. Building contractors are next in, cleaning the back of the ceiling, removing dust and debris, while an asbestos test is also carried out.
5. Plaster specialists can then inspect the ceiling below (what we see) and above (behind) to check the condition, assess what needs to be repaired and make their recommendations.
6. Once the restoration job has been quoted for, the refurbishment work can then begin. Redecoration of the ceiling, as well as of the pub itself, is then completed.



As reported in our last edition of **Wetherspoon News (winter 2021/22)**, stories from our magazine are often picked up by the media.

Pub manager Cesar Kimbirima's BBC News article was highlighted as one such story to reach a national audience via mainstream media.

And, following the publication of that magazine edition, our feature on the ceiling renovations at Opera House (Tunbridge Wells), as well as The Playhouse (Colchester), subsequently captured the attention of the press.

Our feature, titled 'Fixing the roof while the sun is shining...', prompted The Daily Telegraph's senior travel writer Greg Dickinson to write: 'The country's most ornate Wetherspoon is worth travelling for'.

Travel

In the travel section of the national newspaper, he reported on the pub's domed ceiling being 'renovated to its former glory', before detailing its history and current life as our pub.

Dickinson then went on to pick out a further five favourites 'worth travelling for in their own right', now enjoying life as a Wetherspoon pub, including Royal Victoria Pavilion (Ramsgate), The Knights Templar (City of London), The West Kirk (Ayr), The Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (Keswick) and The Samuel Peto (Folkestone).

He wrote: 'It's all about upcycling these days, didn't you know? Fast fashion's reputation is in the bin. Plastic bags are out, tote bags are in. Even our dear princes and princesses are turning up to gala climate change events wearing tatty old outfits.'

'And indeed, the Wetherspoons pub chain is part of this national effort to repurpose old things. In fact, they've been at it for years. Across the land, old banks, churches, dairies, theatres and cinemas, which would otherwise be destined for demolition, live another day.'

Business Telegraph also announced: 'Drinkers at Britain's poshest Wetherspoon raise the roof after a £700,000 restoration of the ornate domed ceiling at the former opera house.'

The Sun

The Sun added: 'The building, dating from 1902, is now hitting the high notes again in Tunbridge Wells, Kent – and the drinks are going for a song too.'

Daily Mail said: 'Tenor for a pint! Punters can now safely enjoy a pint in the grade II listed building for decades to come.'

The Daily Star's headline also declared: "Poshest" Wetherspoon gets £700,000 refurb of ornate ceiling in former opera house.'

Kent Online, the local news outlet for Tunbridge Wells, also reported that 'Wetherspoon has restored the ceiling of the Opera House in Tunbridge Wells'.

Their journalist Angela Cole, who also requested images of the pub to run with the story, wrote: 'The company is known for taking on often-old-but-beautiful buildings and local landmarks and it invests heavily in their upkeep and preservation.'

Website

Sophia Alexandra Hall, from Classic FM, wrote a piece on the radio station's website, reporting: 'Opera lives on in this converted Wetherspoon, with two performances taking place every year, despite the grade II building's new full-time gig as a pub.'

She went on: 'The J D Wetherspoon company has converted multiple grand buildings into pubs... With all these conversion projects, Wetherspoon has always promised to maintain the original features of its buildings, and with the Kent opera house, they have gone one step further.'

As a result of the publicity, Ross Markwick, pub manager at Opera House, revealed: "There has been a great buzz about the pub, with customers coming from a little further away than usual just to see the works we have had done."

However, it's not only the national press in the UK which reports on Wetherspoon News stories, as our feature on the preservation of the historical wall murals at The Star (Hoddesdon) proved.

Michael Wing, journalist for The Epoch Times (independent news media in America), got in touch, having seen our magazine story (autumn 2021).

He requested images to go with his piece about the 'incredibly rare Elizabethan wall paintings', in the 'life & tradition' section of the US newspaper.

Josh Layton, in the Metro newspaper, also reported with his story – Painting of iconic Tudor figure unearthed behind walls of Wetherspoons pub – explaining:

'A Wetherspoon pub has yielded up 'incredibly rare' paintings from Elizabethan times believed to show her chief adviser William Cecil.'

'Restoration work at The Star in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, revealed five wall panels showing figures dressed in the finery of the time.'

Wetherspoon News (autumn 2021)

THE STAR BRUSHES UP ON ITS TUDOR HISTORY



floor level and reveals the flanking timber posts, with a painted dado scheme of grotesques and scrollwork.

It is thought that the scheme continued around the walls at ground-floor level.

The scheme, which exhibits a high level of technique, contains fascinating depictions of Elizabethan clothing and millinery,

and architectural interest. The timbers show smoke blackening and soot encrustation dating in the open hall.

Four timbers from the north wall and adjacent floor were dated.

They were found to have been felled over a few seasons, from winter 1448/47 through spring 1447 to spring 1448.

This strongly suggests construction in 1448 or within a year or two after this date.



The Star's Tudor wall paintings are featured at the nearby Lowewood Museum, in Hoddesdon, where visitors have the chance to find out more about the historic discoveries found during our 2014 renovation work.

A large (almost life-size) photograph is on display, enabling you to get up close and personal before visiting the real thing at our pub, just half a mile away. Wetherspoon has provided a donation towards the graphic panels in the display at the museum.

Part of a brand-new exhibition on the ground floor of the museum, entitled Tankards, Tales and Taverns, the exhibition also offers information about many local pubs, in the borough of Broxbourne, past and present.

The museum has thousands of photographs in the collection and some of these feature pubs, ale houses and inns dating from 1900. The Tankards, Tales and Taverns exhibition runs until Saturday 6 November 2021. The museum, with free admission, is open

SPENCER THE POET INSPIRED BY A WEDNESDAY IN WETHERSPOON

Writer Spencer Brown has published a collection of poems titled *Somewhere or Anywhere?*, and it's a collection which includes a tribute to Wetherspoon.

Spencer, 28, who publishes under the name SA Brown, is based in York, where he often visits The Postern Gate, although he took inspiration from more than one of our pubs for his poem – Wetherspools on a Wednesday Evening.

He explained: "This is a collection of poetry by a proud Yorkshireman (is there any other sort?) and Englishman, who was born within sight of York Minster. Many of the poems are ingrained with the county's identity, landscape, sense of place and forthright character.

"There are poems (30 in total) on what it means to be from York, Yorkshire and England, as well as the allure and adventure of travelling and living overseas.

"More broadly, there are poems about growing up in the '90s; about the importance of reading in furnishing the imagination;

about social media and the digital age; about society; about daily life in England and many more diverse subjects."

Wetherspools on a Wednesday Evening is an amalgamation of Spencer's many visits to our pubs all over the country.

Spencer added: "It is meant to reflect the beautiful mundane nature of everyday life, and I certainly fine-tuned the poem a few times while in The Postern Gate.

"As a writer, I love coming to Wetherspoon to work or relax.

"It's always unpretentious, friendly and calm. The food and drinks are good value, and you're never rushed or chased up by staff. It's very conducive to being creative."

● ***Somewhere or Anywhere?* is available priced at £7.99. For details visit: www.sabrown.net**

Wetherspools on a Wednesday Evening

Freedom is eating alone and enjoying the solitude,

At peace with the world, a tranquil mood.

Placidly observing as the world passes by,

There's a simple beauty in every beholder's eye.

Serene silence at the old couple's table,

No contrived chit-chat keeps a marriage stable.

Just one another's company (and fish and chips) will do,

As they sprinkle on salt and enjoy the pleasing value.

A bald bloke battles at the blinking fruit machine,

Two girls share a luminous cocktail jug, newly eighteen.

A post-shift workman gets a round for his mates,

A waitress – student by day, pint-puller by night – collects empty plates.

Families seek a midweek treat, a night off cooking and washing pots,

A guffawing group line up Jägerbombs and sambuca shots.

Smokers gather outside, and comment on the dreary drizzle,

The chefs, unseen, direct their domain through the steam and sizzle.

Ensnared in a booth, two lovers halve their food and drink,

And if we only stop to look and think,

We see a simple beauty – every second of every day,

All around us, too elusively obvious to say.



UNCHARTED WATERS FOR THE FERRY BOAT

The Ferry Boat (Runcorn) has been mentioned in The Good Beer Guide for the first time for several years, much to the delight of its manager Jimmy Quinn (pictured).

The pub is listed in the 2022 edition of the guide, published annually by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

Jimmy said: "We are over the moon to be mentioned in the 2022 Good Beer Guide. It's our first mention for a while, in the best-known pub beer guide in the UK, and my first-ever as pub manager.

"It is the result of a lot of work here to get the ale offer perfect in terms of range and quality of delivery."

He also thanked local CAMRA members for their efforts in reporting the pub's ale offer to guide editors.

Ales on offer at the pub include Abbot, Adnams Ghost Ship, Whitstable Bay Pale Ale and Windsor & Eton Treason West Coast IPA.

These are among a list of a dozen ales, but there is also a good range of craft lagers and ciders.

A CAMRA spokesman said: "The Ferry Boat deserves its place in The Good Beer Guide 2022. It offers beers from microbrewers and the bigger brewers – and our members locally report that the condition in which they are kept and sold is of a high standard."



COUPLE HITS TOP SPEED OF FOUR PUBS PER DAY ON 10-YEAR TOUR



Edwin and Gloria Garrett have visited 457 pubs on a 10-year tour of Wetherspoon pubs – giving marks out of 10 as they go.

The pair, aged 78 and 76, respectively, are the paternal grandparents of Isabelle Garrett, a team leader at The County Hotel (Ashford).

Their travels have taken them far and wide, as far as Falmouth, Cornwall and Edinburgh, Glasgow and even Inverness, where they stayed at The King's Highway pub and hotel.

Using The Furness Railway (Barrow-in-Furness) as a base, they visited all Wetherspoon pubs in Cumbria.

Gloria said: "When Edwin and I retired, we decided that we would like to explore the country."

She added that they often stay in Wetherspoon's hotels on their travels by train: "We would decide on an area or county which we fancied visiting, then book a hotel, often a Wetherspoon one, near a railway station.

"Using that as a base, we would go and visit the nearest Wetherspoon pubs. We like the friendly atmosphere in the pubs, with reasonable food and alcohol prices."

While the pubs serve as an enjoyable backdrop for food, drinks and historical interest, the couple make every effort to visit local landmarks of note.

"We do explore the area nearby as well," said Gloria.

They have visited up to four pubs a day on their outings and once chalked up 20 over a five-day trip.

Gloria or Edwin always take at least one interior and exterior photo of the pubs visited, before recording their entries in a journal together, with marks for criteria such as the food's quality and service.

Granddaughter Isabelle said: "They even rate things like CQSMA to be honest," referring to the company's CQSMA standards: cleanliness, quality, service, maintenance and atmosphere.

These are the standards expected of pubs and monitored by external mystery customers. Results are recorded in a 'league table' stored on the couple's laptop.

The list is kept secret, but Gloria revealed that their favourite pubs are The Imperial (Exeter) and The Knights Templar (City of London) although their local is Royal Victoria Pavilion (Ramsgate).

And they aren't done yet – Gloria said: "We still have eight more to do in Devon.

"We hope to keep it up and continue our adventures."



Shift leader Natalie Robson at The Harry Clasper (Whickham)

Note from the editor: Wetherspoon has been named as a top employer by the Top Employers Institute for the last 17 years in a row (as featured on The Guardian newspaper's website).

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.

£454 MILLION IN FREE SHARES AND BONUSES PAID TO EMPLOYEES SINCE 2006

83 per cent paid to pub staff

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

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

Bonuses and share schemes provide an extra incentive for people to stay with the company: there are 11 employees who have worked for the company for over 30 years, 326 for over 20 years, 3,049 for over 10 years and 8,827 for over five years.

Since 2006, the company has paid £454 million to its employees in respect of bonuses and free shares.

BONUSES AND SHARES

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

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

In the financial year ended July 2021, when pubs were closed for a substantial period and the company made a loss of £136 million, bonuses and free shares of £22.8 million were awarded (see table[^] below), with 79 per cent of employees receiving a bonus and/or shares in that period.

In previous financial years, when pubs were open for the entire time, substantially higher payments were made.

For example, £46 million was awarded in 2019, when 97 per cent of staff also received a bonus and/or free shares.

At the current time, 15,171 of our 40,670 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 – more even, in the last five years, than John Lewis – a company owned by its employees.

Since the share scheme was introduced, Wetherspoon has awarded 20.6 million shares to employees – approximately 16 per cent of all shares in existence today.

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

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

Wetherspoon: Bonuses and free shares V profits, 2006–21

Financial year	Bonuses and free shares	Profit after tax (loss/profit after tax)	Bonus etc as % of profit
	£m	£m	
2021	23	-136	-
2020	33	-30	-
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	454	641	49.3

[^]Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2006–21

TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS FOR MAN OF MYSTERY



Wetherspoon's pub staff need to be on their 'A' game, at all times, as they never know who they might be serving or when.

As well as the in-house procedures and protocols, helping to ensure and maintain high standards of hygiene and cleanliness, together with the independent local council five-star hygiene initiative, Wetherspoon also has an army of mystery shoppers making unannounced visits to our pubs.

South Wales-based mystery shopper 'John' is one of the many clandestine operatives assigned to visit and report on standards of service at Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK and Ireland.

His visits also include Wetherspoon hotels, reporting on the rooms, décor and cleanliness.

Self-employed John runs his own small cleaning company, serves as a magistrate and is a voluntary worker in a prison, as well as for the Samaritans, yet still finds the time to enjoy his role as a mystery shopper.

John reported: "For the past 17 years, I have been a mystery shopper for various companies and have had some fantastic assignments.

"I have flown first class all over the world, stayed in countless hotels and eaten in too many restaurants to remember, of all standards and levels.

"However, I have probably eaten or drunk in more Wetherspoon pubs than any others, all over the UK and Ireland, when I travel around the country as a mystery shopper."

John admitted: "My wife Mary and I actually love Wetherspoon.

"We often celebrate our wedding anniversary there and, for my wife's 70th birthday, we booked for 15 of us to celebrate in our local Wetherspoon."

Although clearly a fan, when in his mystery-shopper role, John is always very professional in his approach to judging standards.

He revealed: "I also live in the real world where human nature sometimes lets folk down, so, when writing detailed reports, I try to be pragmatic.

"Although I realise that these reports are used to improve or adjust falling standards, where necessary, so have to be accurate."

John continued: "Some years ago, I was fulfilling an assignment which involved eating one meal and enjoying a pint in a particular Wetherspoon pub.

"One question in the report asked: 'Was there a clean handover, with no spillage at the bar?' How would you answer this question when the following happened?"

"As the guy filled the pint and went to hand it over, he caught the bottom of the glass on the bar edge and the drink went all over me, literally soaked me in beer.

"I actually laughed, although he was distraught, naturally.

"So, what did I write?"

"Well, after I had been cleaned up with the help of the staff, and I was enjoying my meal, I saw the same staff member helping a blind customer come through the doors.

"The staff member then sat near him and read menu choices to help him to choose his order. Now, that is service.

"So, I did have to put in my report accurately that a mishap had happened earlier, but then focused on the excellent service quality of this same staff member in assisting others to enjoy their visit."

Thanks to mystery shoppers like John, who help to ensure that excellent Wetherspoon standards are constantly maintained, customers can enjoy their visit in the knowledge that every effort has been made to make the experience a pleasant one.

And, as he shared his story, John was enjoying fish and chips and excellent service in one pub, looking forward to breakfast in another the following day, before finishing that day in a third for dinner, all as a mystery shopper.

John concluded: "It might be an obsession, but it's a nice one."

IRELAND

KRYSTAL HAS HER HANDS FULL FINDING NEW STAFF



At the beginning of August, Krystal Schollick was appointed to the new position of personnel, training and recruitment manager (Ireland) – a role which she is relishing and enjoying.

With new pub openings continuing across Ireland, she has certainly had a very busy first few months in the job.

Krystal said: “There is definitely a lot happening – and Ireland is unique for Wetherspoon, with a small number of pubs, currently, in a logistically large and spread-out area.

“Recruitment has been the main priority, with a great team helping me with the challenge.

“Once staff have been recruited, we can then get stuck in to the training side of things, ahead of our new pubs opening.”

That training is headed up by established lead trainer Colin Thompson and supported by experienced managers, including pub managers Phil Annett (The Bridge House, Belfast), Michael Morgan (The Central Bar, Carrickfergus) and Alice Treasure (The Spirit Merchant, Newtownards).

Krystal continued: “My role, which was postponed from March 2020, when the pandemic hit, is new to the company and is developing as we go along.

“However, as a pub manager previously, I have always taken great pleasure in seeing people develop and progress.”

Krystal marks 18 years with Wetherspoon in March 2022 and, having first started as a bar associate, knows at first hand of the opportunities and progression within the company.

Originally from Northumberland, she moved in 2004 to her mum’s hometown of Coleraine to study at Ulster University Coleraine.

A part-time weekend job at The Old Courthouse, Wetherspoon’s now-sold pub in the town, turned into an 18-year (so far) career.

Krystal spent four years at that pub, working her way up the career ladder, with subsequent spells in Carrickfergus and Newtownards, before taking on her first pub as manager in 2011 at The Spinning Mill (Ballymena) (now sold).

She returned to The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards) as manager four years ago, before taking on her new role.

Krystal said: “With the training and support which staff now have in place, new recruits will definitely come up through the ranks quicker than I did.

“With so much new development happening and so many opportunities opening up, we need to get staff ready for the roles and have people who are keen to step up and progress.

“Now is the time to be joining Wetherspoon, with so many great career opportunities open to those who want them.”

Krystal concluded: “Wetherspoon has great facilities and fantastic training in place, but it is the people who are amazing, particularly area managers Darren Niven and Dan Foster, as well as pub manager Alice Treasure, at my former pub – we make a good team.”

OUR PEOPLE

HOW AREA MANAGER MIKE FOUND HIS 'FOREVER HOME'



Wetherspoon's area manager (Merseyside, Cheshire and Lancashire), Mike Morrissey, had a huge surprise when he arrived at The Friar Penketh (Warrington) during his pub visits.

Friends, family and colleagues (some pictured) had gathered to surprise Mike (front) and to mark his 25th anniversary with Wetherspoon.

Mike recalled: "I don't usually like surprises, but that was a really fantastic day.

"So many people were there to celebrate, and I was presented with a cake, as well as Robbie Fowler's signed and framed Liverpool Football Club shirt, which is a bit special."

Liverpool-born Mike joined Wetherspoon at the age of 21, in October 1996, with previous experience across the northwest in the pub industry with Allied Domecq.

His first post with Wetherspoon was as assistant manager of The Lamb (Edmonton), now sold.

Mike laughed: "I remember asking my dad: 'Where is Edmonton?' He said: 'In Canada!'

"I received the phone call on the Friday and started at the pub, which turned out to be in north London, on the Tuesday.

"Wetherspoon was quite a London-centric company then, so I knew I would have to move south, but my brother lived in London, so I wasn't completely on my own."

After under a year at The Lamb, Mike gained further experience with relief manager roles at pubs in Stoke Newington and Camden, before seeing a vacancy which would take him back to the northwest.

Mike confirmed: "I successfully applied for a shift manager position at the newly opened The J. P. Joule (Sale).

"I had met my wife-to-be Christine while she was working at The Moon Under Water (Manchester) along with fellow shift manager Ged Murphy (now general manager), and the three of us opened The J. P. Joule. Christine and I were shift managers there, with Ged as pub manager."

Mike had a further move to Hoylake Lights (Hoylake) before successfully applying for his first pub manager position, in July 1998, at Wetherspoons (Chester), now called The Square Bottle. Mike and Christine managed that pub together for five years.

Subsequent moves to The Seven Stars (Manchester), The Brass Balance (Birkenhead) and The Ferry Boat (Runcorn) all followed, before Mike became an area manager in 2011.

He said: "I spent the first 18 months working on an IT project, before taking on the role of area manager for Merseyside, Cheshire and Lancashire which, more than a decade on, is still my role."

Mike continued: "I have been in the industry for a long time now and enjoy so much what I do, although, when I first joined, I never contemplated it being a lengthy career.

"I guess things 'clicked' for me when I became pub manager at Chester, when Christine and I had our first daughter and I had 'grown up'.

"I realised then that it was a job for life and that I had found my forever home with Wetherspoon."

Mike has been joined at the company, along the way, by several members of his family. His wife Christine Mooney now works nationally as a Wetherspoon trainer, while their daughters Emily (shift manager) and Ellie (team leader) Morrissey both work at The North Western (Liverpool).

Mike's dad, John, worked with him at The Ferry Boat (Runcorn) from summer 2007, but is now a team leader at The Premier (Widnes), aged 81 years young.

Christine's son, Conor Mooney, worked in pubs across Liverpool – and Mike's brother, John, was a shift manager in the northwest, although both have now left the company.

Mike said: "Wetherspoon has afforded me some massive opportunities and to do so many different things over the years. It has been a great career.

"I am happy in my role, but would always look at further opportunities in the company, if they came up."

He added: "Like any job, it has its challenging days, but I have genuinely never got up in the morning and not wanted to go to work. That has a lot to do with the fantastic people I work with, particularly Ged, a great friend and colleague for the past 24 years.

"I could easily name 25 colleagues who have worked for Wetherspoon for 15–20 years – and not many pub companies can say that."

Mike concluded: "The industry watches when Wetherspoon does new things, and I am proud of the company."

CAMRA DOUBLE FOR THE KIRKY PUFFER



The Kirky Puffer (Kirkintilloch) has been recognised by members of the local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch.

Glasgow and West of Scotland CAMRA named our pub as the 'Dunbartonshire Pub of the Year', presenting a certificate to pub manager John McKenna (left), now on display at the pub.

Branch secretary Brian McAteer (right) made the presentation during a break in CAMRA's branch meeting, held at the pub.

Brian said: "Our congratulations go to John McKenna and his team – The Kirky Puffer emerged as a comfortable winner."

"This is the second time that the pub has won this award and, judging by our experience on the evening of the meeting and presentation, there has been no complacency in its commitment to quality beer."

John added: "We are thrilled to be named as 'Dunbartonshire Pub of the Year', beating some tough opposition across the region, and we thank the local CAMRA branch members for their continued support."

The Kirky Puffer serves six real ales, at all times, including four ever-changing guest beers, among them local ales from Scottish breweries Stewart Brewing and Williams Bros.

FORUM FOLK DECREE OUR BRAND IS GRAND

Wetherspoon has been named 'brand of the year' at the World Branding Awards.

These are the premier awards programme of the World Branding Forum (a global non-profit organisation).

Wetherspoon, like other brands, was judged on brand valuation, consumer market research and public online voting.

It is the only winner in the pubs category (United Kingdom).

The award stated: "Following a rigorous assessment, evaluation and

voting process, Wetherspoon has been selected to receive the World Branding Award Brand of the Year."

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, said: "This is a great achievement for the company."

"Past winners include leading companies like British Airways, Guinness, Samsung, BMW and Apple."

"It is great to be in such esteemed company – and especially rewarding as Wetherspoon is the only winner in the pubs category."

WE TOP HYGIENE CHARTS FOR PUBS

Our industry-leading ratings are not an accident, but are the result of our unrelenting pursuit of excellence

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

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

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

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

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

It was ahead of pub companies including Slug & Lettuce and Walkabout and was also rated higher than restaurant and sandwich chains, including, PizzaExpress, Miller & Carter, Pret a Manger and Greggs – although all of those companies also scored highly.

Of our pubs, 778 currently have an FHRS rating, with 98.59 per cent of those achieving the highest-possible rating of five.

Scotland operates the Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS). This scheme has a pass/fail rating – with 65 Wetherspoon pubs in Scotland gaining a 'pass' score – a 100-per-cent success rate.

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

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

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

Wetherspoon's audit director, James Ullman, said:

"We are proud of our pubs' hygiene ratings. However, we also take it extremely seriously when a pub does not achieve the maximum rating in either scheme.

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

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

Hygienic food-handling

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

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

Physical condition of the premises and facilities

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

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

Food safety management

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

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

Did you know?

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

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

The only independent government scheme assessing food hygiene standards

FOOD HYGIENE RATING



	Total premises scored	Average premises score out of 5
ASK	59	5
Aldi	781	4.99
Nando's	406	4.99
TGI Fridays	76	4.99
Wetherspoon	778	4.98
Waitrose	349	4.98
McDonald's	1144	4.96
GBK	52	4.96
Slug & Lettuce	78	4.95
Las Iguanas	45	4.95
Walkabout	20	4.95
Greggs	1359	4.94
Sainsbury's	932	4.94
Giraffe	17	4.94
Lidl	667	4.93
Costa Coffee	2119	4.92
Tesco	1743	4.92
Pret a Manger	375	4.92
PizzaExpress	319	4.92
Miller & Carter	102	4.92
Starbucks	785	4.91
Morrisons	387	4.91
Nicholson's	64	4.91
O'Neill's	34	4.91
Burger King	411	4.9
YO! Sushi	52	4.9
Be At One	33	4.9
Bill's	72	4.89
Yates	36	4.89
Asda	525	4.88
Sizzling Pub Co	177	4.88
Table Table	44	4.88
Café Rouge	43	4.88
KFC	814	4.87
Hungry Horse	240	4.87
Prezzo	162	4.87
Coffee#1	94	4.87
Oakman	23	4.87
All Bar One	50	4.86
Vintage Inns	149	4.85
Côte	86	4.84
Bella Italia	86	4.84
Harvester	157	4.83
Toby Carvery	141	4.83
Chef & Brewer	137	4.83
Carluccio's	45	4.83
Zizzi	113	4.82
Beefeater	128	4.81
Brewers Fayre	125	4.81
Browns	21	4.81
Turtle Bay	42	4.79
Young's	130	4.78
Subway	1410	4.77
Caffè Nero	560	4.77
Geronimo	35	4.74
Loungers	174	4.72
Pitcher & Piano	16	4.63
BrewDog	29	4.52
Brains	73	4.38

Information in this table was sourced from www.scoresonthedoor.org.uk on 24/1/22, listing 778 Wetherspoon pubs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with an average food hygiene rating of 4.98. Please note that, where councils are yet to assess or submit their pub inspection, there may be a slight gap in the number of pubs, compared with that in our records. Businesses are rated from 0 to 5 which is displayed at their premises and online. The top score is 5.

STAFF ACTING CAREFULLY IN CAERPHILLY KEEP MALCOLM UPHILL AT THE TOP



Pictured are (left to right) kitchen manager Jamie Cox, pub manager John Stephens and duty manager Hayley Todd

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 six inspections, which stretches back to their first in January 2012 (three months after opening), is The Malcolm Uphill (Caerphilly).

The Welsh pub has been managed by John Stephens since it first opened in October 2011 and, until 2020, by Danielle Stephens, who left the pub to take up an area manager role with the company.

Duty manager Hayley Todd, who has worked at the pub for the past nine years and previously spent six years at The Ernest Willows (Cardiff), said: "Hygiene is one of our top priorities – and we work extremely hard to ensure that we maintain high standards. Attention to detail is all important.

"Our customers are more than aware of the pub's hygiene rating and it's essential that they can enjoy a clean and safe environment."

Kitchen manager Jamie Cox started at the pub in 2014 as a kitchen associate, working his way up to manage the kitchen team.

He took over in 2019 when the previous kitchen manager, Stephen Powell (who also progressed from kitchen associate), moved to Cabot Court Hotel (Weston-super-Mare).

Hayley said: "Stephen produced kitchen information packs and a short quiz for the team – to ensure that they all understood the high standards required.

"Details like these are needed to ensure that the pub runs safely, including correct temperature ranges for fridges and freezers, in line with our standard operating procedures. Jamie has continued to ensure that the same high standards are implemented."

Hayley added: "We all work well as a whole team – bar and kitchen all together as one, making sure that jobs are done correctly and to the highest-possible standards.

"Key to a successful pub are organisation, communication and teamwork.

"All of the guys work really hard to keep up those standards which we all expect – and we have a very good team, run from the top by John, who sets the standards."

WETHERSPOON, ITS CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES HAVE PAID £5.6 BILLION OF TAX TO THE GOVERNMENT IN THE LAST 10 YEARS

The government needs taxes, but there should be tax equality between supermarkets and pubs, says Wetherspoon

In Wetherspoon's 2019 financial year (12 months to July 2019), before COVID-19, it generated £764.4 million in tax – about £1 in every £1,000 of ALL UK government taxes. The average tax generated per pub in 2019 was £871,000.

In the financial year ended July 2020, when pubs were closed for a long period, and the company made a substantial loss, £436.7 million of taxes were generated, net of furlough payments. The table^a below shows the tax generated by the company in its financial years 2012–2021.

During this period, taxes amounted to about 40 per cent of every pound which went 'over the bar', net of VAT – about 15 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 understands the need for taxes, yet, like the hospitality industry generally, believes that there should be tax equality among supermarkets, pubs, restaurants and similar businesses.

"Until recently, supermarkets have paid zero VAT on food sales, whereas pubs, restaurants and hotels, for example, have paid 20 per cent.

"The chancellor, Rishi Sunak, in July 2020, announced a temporary reduction to five per cent VAT for pub and restaurant food sales, but the government intends to revert to 20 per cent.

"Pubs also pay about 20p a pint in business rates, whereas supermarkets pay only about 2p.

"It's quite wrong that dinner parties in Chelsea, for example, pay zero VAT for food bought from supermarkets, when pub customers normally pay 20 per cent VAT for fish and chips.

"Equality and fairness are important principles of efficient tax régimes, and we urge the government to introduce equality in this area – sensible tax policies will increase investment and government revenues."

Wetherspoon's tax payments in financial years 2012–2021	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
VAT	93.8	244.3	357.9	332.8	323.4	311.7	294.4	275.1	253.0	241.2	2,727.6
Alcohol duty	70.6	124.2	174.4	175.9	167.2	164.4	161.4	157	144.4	136.8	1,476.3
PAYE and NIC	101.5	106.6	121.4	109.2	96.2	95.1	84.8	78.4	70.2	67.1	930.5
Business rates	1.5	39.5	57.3	55.6	53.0	50.2	48.7	44.9	46.4	43.9	441.0
Corporation tax	–	21.5	19.9	26.1	20.7	19.9	15.3	18.1	18.4	18.2	178.4
Corporation tax credit (historic capital allowances)	–	–	–	–	–	–	-2.0	–	–	–	-2.0
Fruit/slot machine duty	4.3	9.0	11.6	10.5	10.5	11.0	11.2	11.3	7.2	3.3	89.9
Climate change levies	7.9	6.1	10.4	9.2	9.7	8.7	6.4	6.3	4.3	1.9	74.0
Stamp duty	1.8	4.9	3.7	1.2	5.1	2.6	1.8	2.1	1.0	0.8	25.0
Sugar tax	1.3	2.0	2.9	0.8	–	–	–	–	–	–	7.0
Fuel duty	1.1	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.9	2.1	2.0	1.9	20.2
Carbon tax	–	–	1.9	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.7	2.7	2.6	2.4	23.3
Premise licence and TV licences	0.5	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.6	0.7	0.7	0.5	8.2
Landfill tax	–	–	–	1.7	2.5	2.2	2.2	1.5	1.3	1.3	12.7
Furlough tax rebate	-213.0	-124.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-337.1
Eat out to help out	-23.2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-23.2
Local Government Grants	-11.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-11.1
TOTAL TAX	37.0	436.7	764.4	728.8	694.6	672.3	632.4	600.2	551.5	519.3	5.6bn
TAX PER PUB (£000)	43	528	871	825	768	705	673	662	632	617	6.3
TAX AS % OF NET SALES	4.8	34.6	42.0	43.0	41.8	42.1	41.8	42.6	43.1	43.4	39.7

^aSource: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2012–2021

WOO-HOO, TRY A FEW NEW BREWS IN 2022

Our spring real-ale festival makes a welcome return, with 12-day event kicking off on 30 March

Wetherspoon's spring real-ale event makes a welcome return for 2022, with a selection of 25 fantastic festival beers.

The 12-day festival is taking place at all Wetherspoon pubs from Wednesday 30 March until Sunday 10 April, inclusive.

The festival's beers will feature 19 which are brand new to Wetherspoon, having never before featured nationally in our pubs. In addition, 18 of the festival's ales are new or occasional brews which have been produced again especially for this event.

Vegan

Among the festival collection are vegan and vegetarian, as well as gluten-free, beers, together with ales from three international brewers.

All three international brewers have featured at past events and are among the most popular festival visitors.

This will be the third occasion for which Young Henrys Real Ale (4.0% ABV) has been brewed for our bi-annual event and the fourth time that Young Henrys has featured, while the ale Terrapin Jazz (5.5% ABV) is new to Wetherspoon, although this is Terrapin's fourth festival brew.

Trio

In our autumn 2016 real-ale festival, Birrificio Foglie d'Erba Hot Night at the Village (5.0% ABV) was voted 'beer of the festival'. This supremely popular ale makes up the trio of international brews this time around.

There are two speciality beers among the 25 festival ales: Daleside Morocco Ale (5.5% ABV) is brewed with spices, while Mauldons Cherry Porter (4.8% ABV) is produced using cherries and is also a gluten-free ale.

Others to look out for are Jersey-based Liberation's The Jester (4.8% ABV), a new beer from a very popular festival brewer, as well as the vegan-friendly stout Dragonhead (4.0% ABV) from Orkney Brewery.

Strongest

Also definitely among those beers to check out are Otter Brewery's Hawthorn (4.0% ABV), Oakham Triple Beam (5.0% ABV) and Nine Tenths Below (5.9% ABV) – the strongest festival ale, from Titanic Brewery.

All of the festival ales will be available to order via the Wetherspoon app, as well as at the bar.

Our special third-of-a-pint glasses will again be available, helping you to sample many of the fantastic festival ales – with three for the price of a festival pint.

Don't miss this spectacular and eagerly anticipated spring showcase at the world's biggest real-ale festival – across Wetherspoon's pubs.

REAL-ALE FESTIVAL

WED 30 MAR
SUN 10 APR

19 ales new to Wetherspoon

vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free ales

three international ales

All festival ales are available on the app

for the facts drinkaware.co.uk jdwetherspoon.com wetherspoon

JW LEES MALT CRUSH 3.7% ABV

JW Lees Brewery, Manchester. Est. 1828

This new golden ale is brewed with classic hop varieties which give a spicy, floral aroma, then combine with its subtle malt notes to deliver a well-rounded, refreshing and delicate flavour.

Hops: Fuggles, Saaz

SALTAIRE BANQUET 3.8% ABV

Saltaire Brewery, West Yorkshire. Est. 2006

This new British session bitter, brewed exclusively for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival, is copper in colour and brewed with classic British hop varieties, resulting in a honey-sweet and delicate hedgerow spiced bitterness, balanced against a breadly malt base.

Hops: Admiral, Challenger, Goldings

VEGAN

ORKNEY DRAGONHEAD 4.0% ABV

Orkney Brewery, Orkney. Est. 1988

This black stout delivers aromas of bitter chocolate, roast coffee and dark fruits, leading to roast malt and roast barley flavours, complemented by a complex, bitter blend of hop varieties, resulting in an intense and full-flavoured character.

Hops: Challenger, East Kent Goldings

OTTER HAWTHORN 4.0% ABV

Otter Brewery, Devon. Est. 1990

This bronze-coloured beer is the first in this brewery's range for its 'Pints Mean Trees' initiative, aiming to plant a tree for every barrel sold. English hop bitterness prevails in this beer, resulting in a traditional style which is enhanced by fruity hints, delivering a softness to the palate and a pleasing zest.

Hops: Ernest, Pilgrim

YOUNG HENRYS REAL ALE 4.0% ABV

Young Henrys Brewery, New South Wales, Australia. Est. 2012

This popular beer is a modern take on the traditional English best bitter style, with a solid malt backing of caramel and toffee, balanced by hints of spice and a mellow, deep, citrus flavour, leading to a long bitter finish. Richard Adamson had been due to fly over to brew this beer for us, yet was unable to because of the pandemic. Banks's Brewery has brewed this beer to his original recipe.

Hops: Galaxy, Topaz

ROBINSONS HOPTIMUS PRIME 4.1% ABV

Robinsons Brewery, Cheshire. Est. 1838

This pale golden seasonal ale makes a welcome return especially for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival. The unique flavour of this beer transforms as its ingredients combine, resulting in a refreshing, full-bodied beer with rich malt and fruity hop flavours.

Hops: Goldings

VEGAN

ROOSTER'S TENDERFOOT 4.2% ABV

Rooster's Brewery, North Yorkshire. Est. 1993

This amber-coloured vegan-friendly beer has been brewed only once before and is now available again especially for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival. It is a traditional English best bitter, yet brewed with a bucketful of US hops, providing a hoppy balance to the malt character.

Hops: Cascade, Chinook

SAMBROOK'S TOMAHAWK 4.2% ABV

Sambrook's Brewery, Battersea. Est. 2008

This dark red ale is brewed using a blend of US hops which delivers vibrant citrus and pine aromas and grapefruit notes, balancing the roast malt, toffee and breadly flavours in its dark malt profile.

Hops: Cascade, Citra, Simcoe

SHEPHERD NEAME CROSSFIRE 4.2% ABV

Shepherd Neame Brewery, Kent. Est. 1698

This occasionally brewed light amber IPA has been brewed again for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival. It is bursting with fruity apricot aromas and distinctive hop notes, balanced by emerging sweet malt notes.

Hops: Ernest

ADNAMS FISHERMAN 4.5% ABV

Adnams Brewery, Suffolk. Est. 1872

After a few years' break, this rare beer has been brewed again especially for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival. It is deep red in colour, with a flavour which, although clean and refreshing, conjures up roasted nuts and dark chocolate, along with a lingering taste of liquorice and dark fruits.

Hops: Goldings

BUTCOMBE MIHI 4.5% ABV

Butcombe Brewery, Somerset. Est. 1978

This new deep golden bitter, brewed exclusively for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival, is packed full of New Zealand hop varieties, resulting in tropical fruit aromas which lead to a grapefruit sharpness, balanced by smooth malt notes which help to provide a full-flavoured character.

Hops: Motueka, Nelson Sauvin, Pacifica, Waimea

THEAKSTON XB 4.5% ABV

Theakston Brewery, North Yorkshire. Est. 1827

This ruby-coloured beer is a classic British ale, with a rich, inviting aroma leading to a blend of generous fruit flavours and underlying malt notes in the balanced, full-bodied flavour.

Hops: Bramling Cross, Challenger, Fuggles, Progress, Target

HARVIESTOUN HEAVEN CENT 4.6% ABV

Harviestoun Brewery, Clackmannanshire. Est. 1983

This blond IPA, brewed again especially for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival, has pleasing, hoppy, floral notes and a perfect balance of malt and bitterness. With its generous quantities of citrus, grapefruit, pine and resinous flavours, it has a crisp and refreshing character.

Hops: Centennial, Eureka, Magnum, Waimea

HOOK NORTON RED RYE 4.7% ABV

Hook Norton Brewery, Oxfordshire. Est. 1849

This red seasonal rye beer is brewed with a blend of five hop and five malt varieties combining to deliver dark fruit and citrus aromas, with flavours of dates and raisins, balanced by a citrus twist.

Hops: Amarillo, Chinook, Citra, Sovereign, Willamette

CAIRNGORM RED MOUNTAIN 4.8% ABV

Cairngorm Brewery, Highlands. Est. 1997

This rarely seen russet-coloured beer has been brewed again especially for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival. Roast crystal malt provides the colour and a nutty flavour, while its blend of hops delivers a fresh, fruity finish.

Hops: Columbus, Perle

LIBERATION THE JESTER 4.8% ABV

Liberation Brewery, Channel Islands. Est. 1871

This new amber IPA, brewed exclusively for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival, contains three modern UK hop varieties which deliver a pleasing fruity aroma and flavour, with balancing malt notes resulting in an easy-drinking character.

Hops: Admiral, Jester, Olicana

MAULDONS CHERRY PORTER 4.8% ABV

Mauldons Brewery, Suffolk. Est. 1982

This speciality black ale has a full-bodied character, with a balanced hop aroma, leading to a rich blend of chocolate and roast flavours, resulting in a smooth, subtle, fruit finish.

Hops: Fuggles

BIRRIFICIO FOGLE D'ERBA HOT NIGHT AT THE VILLAGE 5.0% ABV

Birrificio Foglie d'Erba, Forni di Sopra, Italy. Est. 2008

This mahogany beer is brewed in the style of a traditional English porter, with notes of coffee, chocolate and liquorice in the flavour, leading to a refreshing, slightly herbal finish. Gino Perissutti had been due to fly over to brew this beer for us, yet was unable to because of the pandemic. Shepherd Neame Brewery has brewed this beer to his original recipe.

Hops: East Kent Goldings, Target

GREENE KING HERITAGE 5.0% ABV

Greene King Brewery, Suffolk. Est. 1799

This occasionally seen beer, made using the classic Chevallier malt variety, has been brewed again for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival. Herbal, citrus, floral and spicy notes combine with a sweet malt flavour to deliver a refreshing, easy-drinking ale.

Hops: First Gold, Pilgrim, Saaz, Strisselspalt

OAKHAM TRIPLE BEAM 5.0% ABV

Oakham Ales, Cambridgeshire. Est. 1993

This new pale golden IPA offers exciting fruity hop flavours, with rich bitterness and fruit from its Summit hops combining seamlessly with the spicy, zesty characteristics delivered by its Columbus hops.

Hops: Columbus, Summit

VALE JEKYL AND HYDE 5.2% ABV

Vale Brewery, Buckinghamshire. Est. 1995

This deep red beer has been brewed again exclusively for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival. Its citrus and lime aromas lead to rich roast malt flavours, balanced by fresh berry fruit hop notes and a dry, lasting finish.

Hops: Cardinal, Fuggles

BATEMANS BEAST FROM THE EAST 5.5% ABV

Batemans Brewery, Lincolnshire. Est. 1874

This occasionally brewed strong pale ale is golden in colour, with generous quantities of US hops delivering a refreshing and citrusy flavour, leading to a crisp, hop-packed finish.

Hops: Cascade, Chinook

DALESIDE MOROCCO ALE 5.5% ABV

Daleside Brewery, North Yorkshire. Est. 1992

This ruby-coloured, award-winning spiced strong ale is brewed to a secret ancient recipe, held for over 300 years. It is subtly spiced to produce an enticing and complex flavour, with sweet, fruity, liquorice and ginger notes all evident.

Hops: Goldings, Northern Brewer

TERRAPIN JAZZ 5.5% ABV

Terrapin Brewery, Georgia, USA. Est. 2002

Spike Buckowski has returned to brew for us again, this time at Adnams Brewery, in Suffolk. This is a pale IPA, with its bold aromas of fruit and hops leading to a powerful blend of tropical fruit notes and a rich, resinous flavour, with subtle malt notes, resulting in a long, pleasing finish.

Hops: Chinook, Simcoe

TITANIC NINE TENTHS BELOW 5.9% ABV

Titanic Brewery, Staffordshire. Est. 1985

This golden beer, brewed again especially for this Wetherspoon real-ale festival, has an initial sweetness which rapidly fades as the powerful citrus hops take over, leading to a refreshing taste above the waterline, while its boldness and strength lurk beneath.

Hops: Cascade, Chinook, Columbus

REAL-ALE TYPES

 Pale; very light; blond; straw

 Golden

 Amber; mid brown

 Dark brown; ruby

 Black; deep ruby; very dark

OPEN ONE OF OUR DOORS

Fresh partnerships bring six new draughts to our bars: Budweiser, Corona Extra, Leffe Blonde, Worthington's Creamflow and two Stowford Press ciders

Wetherspoon is pleased to introduce six NEW drinks on draught, including world beer brands Corona Extra, Budweiser and Leffe Blonde, together with Stowford Press Apple Cider and Stowford Press Mixed Berries, made by Westons Cider, as well as Worthington's Creamflow, supplied by brewer Molson Coors.

Budweiser (4.5% ABV), the King of Beers, was first brewed in 1876.

Adolphus Busch, an 18-year-old German on a ship bound for America, the land of freedom and opportunity, dreamed of what the future might bring.

He followed his ambition and partnered with his future father-in-law, Eberhard Anheuser, to create the Anheuser-Busch Company.

They created Budweiser – a smooth, crisp, American-style lager, brewed with the best barley malt and a blend of premium hop varieties.

Did you know? Every pint of Budweiser in the UK is brewed with 100 per cent renewable electricity.

Corona Extra (4.5% ABV), the number-one most popular beer in the world and the number-one world beer in the UK, is now enjoyed in more than 120 countries worldwide.

The refreshing, flavourful golden liquid was first brewed in 1925 at the Cervecer a Modelo, in Mexico. Quickly after its launch, Corona Extra became the best-selling beer in the country. Today, it continues to stand for disconnection and enjoying nature around the world.

Did you know? Corona Extra is brewed with 100 per cent natural ingredients.

The recipe for Leffe Blonde (6.6% ABV), which is smooth and fruity, with spicy hints of clove and vanilla, is the result of centuries' experience in the art of brewing. It is also the number-one speciality beer in Europe.

L'Abbaye Notre-Dame de Leffe was founded in 1152, on the Meuse River, in Dinant, southern Belgium. Almost a century later, the canons of the abbey started brewing Leffe in 1240. During those days, when the great plagues had made water unsafe to drink, Leffe wasn't just a pleasure, but a vital public asset – pure, nutritious and delicious.

Did you know? Leffe Blonde was brewed only within the abbey, right up until the 1950s.

Stowford Press Apple Cider (4.5% ABV) and Stowford Press Mixed Berries (4.0% ABV) are both crafted by Westons Cider, based at Much Marcle, in Herefordshire, with a family cider-making history stretching back five generations to 1880.

Stowford Press Apple Cider is a refreshing medium-dry sparkling cider.

It is pale straw in colour and bursting with crisp cider-apple flavour, with a fruity aroma – developed during the slow maturation period.

The award-winning Stowford Press Mixed Berries is a refreshing, sparkling cider, with the flavour of crisp apples and sweet berries.

Deep berry coloured, it has a rich aroma of mixed berries and fresh forest fruits.

Did you know? Stowford Press began life more than 30 years ago as 'Vat 53', the name of the oak vat in which the liquid was matured.

Worthington's Creamflow (3.6% ABV) is the product of 260 years' heritage at the Worthington brewery.

An English-style beer, brewed by Molson Coors in Burton-on-Trent, it is superbly creamy, with velvety hints of rich buttered malt loaf, chilled malted milk and banana split – in every sip.

Since 1761, when William Worthington first established the Worthington brewery, his name has been synonymous with great-quality ale.

The secret to Worthington's success is the purity of the water in Burton-on-Trent – the historic heart of British brewing.

Did you know? 1761 was the beginning of a brewing dynasty, comprising four generations of Worthingtons. Confusingly, William's son, grandson and great-grandson were also called William.

As well as our six great NEW draught offerings, your local Wetherspoon pub is still serving, on draught, the ever-popular Bud Light (3.5% ABV), Carlsberg (3.8% ABV), Coors (4.0% ABV), Carling (4.0% ABV), Stella Artois (4.6% ABV), San Miguel (5.0% ABV), BrewDog Punk IPA (5.2% ABV), Guinness (4.1% ABV), Thatchers (4.8% ABV), Kopparberg Strawberry & Lime (4.0% ABV), Ruddles (3.7% ABV), Doom Bar (4.0% ABV) and Abbot Ale (5.0% ABV), alongside a wide range of guest ales and ciders.

Number one speciality beer in Europe



S AND FEEL THE DRAUGHT

Number one world beer in the UK



Crafted by Westons Cider, Much Marcle, Herefordshire



Worthington Brewery: 260 years of heritage



Number one beer brand in the world



Leffe Blonde
6.6% ABV

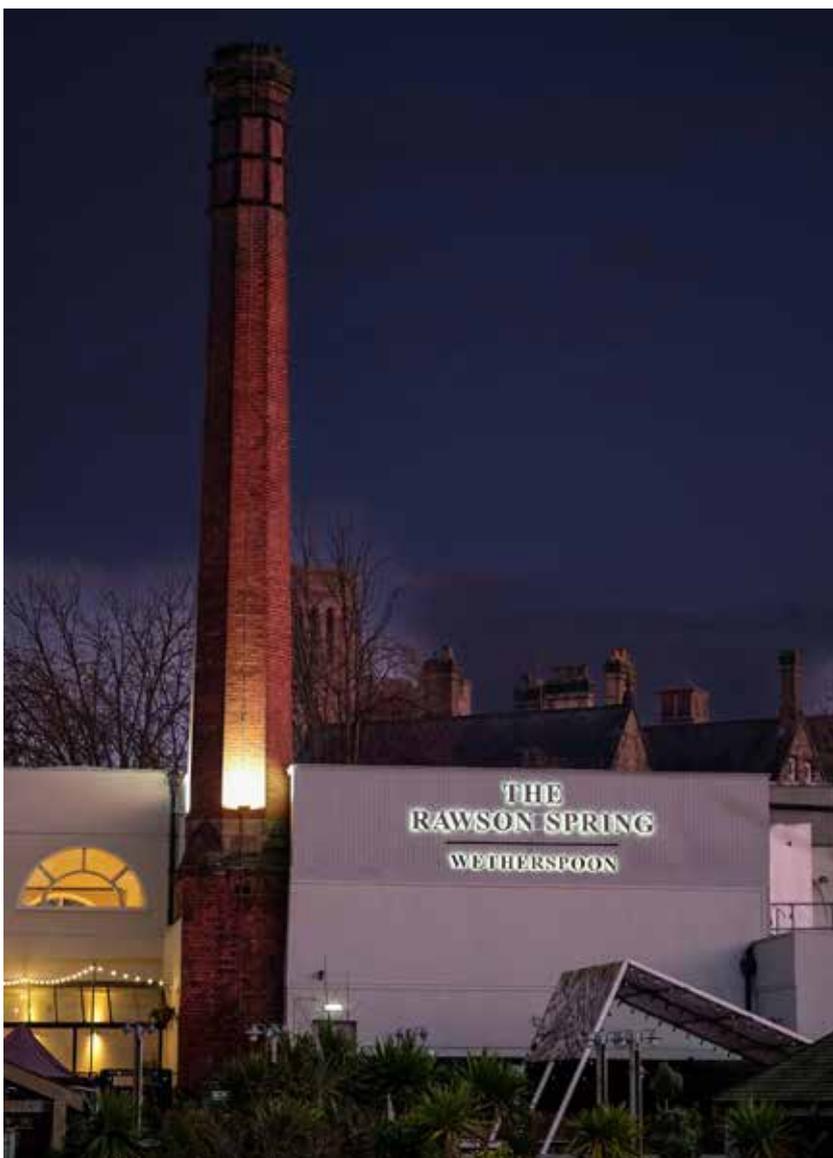
Corona Extra
4.5% ABV

Budweiser
4.5% ABV

Stowford Press Apple Cider
4.5% ABV

Stowford Press Mixed Berries
4.0% ABV

Worthington's Creamflow
3.6% ABV



CHIMNEY A HIGHLIGHT AT THE RAWSON SPRING

Pub manager Grace Hopkins, her team and regular customers have been enjoying their new-look pub, The Rawson Spring (Sheffield), following its total refurbishment and reopening in mid May 2021.

The work included full redecoration, both inside and outside, as well as maintenance work and complete rendering of the pub building.

The installation of exterior lighting also now allows the night-time illumination of one particular architectural feature.

The Rawson Spring opened in July 2007, on the site of the former swimming baths at Hillsborough, originally built in 1926.

Part of the original building is a large red-brick chimney, which was used for the boiler to heat the pool. The fireplace is also still visible in the basement area of the pub.

The towering chimney, an iconic local landmark, is now illuminated all evening, from 3pm during winter months.

Grace said: "Customers always comment on how high the chimney is and that it used to heat the pool."

"Many of the locals also have fond childhood memories of how they learned to swim at Hillsborough baths."

"Now, they are impressed by how great the chimney looks, when the lights are on, and how amazing it looks as you approach the pub."

SARAH AND KITCHEN CREW SAIL THROUGH AUDIT AT FERRY BOAT

Sarah Booth scored top marks in her first Wetherspoon audit as kitchen manager at The Ferry Boat (Runcorn).

Sarah (pictured), who took over as kitchen manager last year, praised her team after the result in which she was awarded five green stars – the highest-possible score.

The news was given following a detailed audit of the pub kitchen's cleanliness, wastage and stocks.

This internal Wetherspoon auditing procedure, undertaken regularly at every pub, ensures that the operating standards at our pubs adhere to strict guidelines.

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

"You just have to keep on top of things," she said, marking out kitchen shift leader Lucky Hope for special praise. "We run a tight ship," added Sarah, who likes to cook cakes and biscuits at home for her family.

Sarah started working part time in the pub's kitchen when the pub opened 15 years ago and, before taking over as kitchen manager, held both team leader and shift leader role.



THE NEW CROWN • SOUTHGATE • THE MOON UNDER WATER • LEICESTER SQUARE

FROM CLEANERS TO PUB MANAGERS – SISTERS AGNIESZKA AND BOGUSLAWA SCRUB UP WELL



When Agnieszka Seemungal came to England, in 1997, on a two-week holiday, her cousin Eugenia persuaded her to stay – and now, 25 years later, she is the pub manager at The New Crown (Southgate).

She started with the company as a cleaner at one of Wetherspoon's then landmark pubs – The Moon and Sixpence in Wardour Street (Central London), under the management of Jan and Gerry Swords.

Agnieszka (left) spoke so highly of the place that her younger sister, Boguslawa Kazberuk (right), subsequently came to join her. Boguslawa is now the pub manager at Wetherspoon's Leicester Square venue, The Moon Under Water.

Their careers have changed their life, taught them much about people and instilled a life-long commitment to hospitality.

Agnieszka soon filled a vacancy as a kitchen porter at The Moon and Sixpence (now closed) and then rose through the ranks to become a kitchen team leader, bar team leader, shift manager and relief pub manager at a number of London sites, before being given her own pub to run permanently.

During that time, ambitious Agnieszka developed an invaluable network of contacts with other pub managers, including Jan and Gerry, who run The Knights Templar (City of London).

Agnieszka said: "I worked with Jan and Gerry for eight years and learned so much from them. My time spent there means a lot to me."

Along the way, she also met Michael Wilkins, who runs The Windmill (Stansted Airport).

"He asked me what my ambitions were and I told him that I wanted to be a pub manager. He really listened and became a mentor, pushing me to achieve my ambition and boosting my confidence all the way," said Agnieszka.

While she runs a tight ship and is attentive to the nitty-gritty of running a pub, Agnieszka is, at heart, a people person.

Following completing a course studying mental health, she is aware of those issues faced by staff and customers and likes to discuss this with her daughter, Katrina, a psychology student

at the University of Bournemouth, who also works part time at The Moon in the Square (Bournemouth).

Agnieszka said: "Whether it's a staff member or a customer, mental health is something you have to be aware of in order to relate to that person in the right way.

"The importance of mental health and the good running of a pub require proper boundaries to be set and I regard my pub as my home and my staff as my children, regardless of their age."

Agnieszka's customer relations are well known to head office and were officially recognised by Wetherspoon's personnel and legal director, Su Cacioppo, when she was awarded a certificate of commendation for professional and calm customer management.

"It was a surprise. I've dealt with all kinds of customers, but I have always tried to deal with all of them in the right way," said Agnieszka.

Younger sister Boguslawa spoke of her time with her sister at The Moon and Sixpence and of her experience running The Moon Under Water.

She said: "We worked together in a few pubs, but The Moon and Sixpence was where we started, so I always remember it fondly. Because we both wanted to be a pub manager, we had to part ways eventually."

She added: "My older sister inspired me to come to England and then inspired me to pursue my dreams.

"The pub I run is visited by tourists mainly, but we do have a few regulars who we know well. It is a busy venue, a place where people come to meet because it's 'Wetherspoon Leicester Square', so it's very well known and easy to find.

"We are a port of call for people on London days out. They come to us before or after they see a film or a show."

Agnieszka and Boguslawa are busy people – although they do meet once in a while face to face, they are regularly in touch and are bonded not just by blood, but by their time working for Wetherspoon.

HEROIC POLISH RAF PILOTS HONOURED AT LANDMARK PUB



The Greenwood Hotel (Northolt) celebrates brave exiles who flew and fought for allied cause in World War II

The Greenwood Hotel (Northolt) first opened its doors as a Wetherspoon pub and hotel in July 2016.

The landmark building, originally built in the late 1930s, underwent a £2.92-million restoration project and has subsequently won recognition and design awards for that restoration.

Like every Wetherspoon pub, The Greenwood Hotel celebrates the local history of its surrounding area with artwork, photographs and information boards adorning the walls throughout the building.

Not surprisingly, the nearby airfield at RAF Northolt is highlighted with history and photographs, detailing the airfield's beginnings and crucial role during the Battle of Britain.

Hurricane

RAF Northolt was also the first airbase to operate the Hawker Hurricane, a British fighter aircraft, and one of the key airfields in the defence of London during World War II.

The lesser-known story of the Polish RAF pilots, many based at RAF Northolt, is also celebrated with a photograph of one particular pilot also on display at the pub.

Flying Officer Jan Krajewski of No.303 Polish Fighter Squadron is pictured (above) in the cockpit of his Spitfire on 23 August 1944.

The picture caption also explains: F/O Krajewski, although gravely wounded, brought his Spitfire back from Holland to Northolt in 1944.



The Greenwood Hotel

In August 1940, No.303 was formed at RAF Northolt, only the second Polish Air Force fighter squadron in the UK, and it would go on to become the most successful of all allied squadrons in the Battle of Britain.

The Royal Air Force Museum reports: 'During the Second World War, the Royal Air Force welcomed into its ranks thousands of exiles from German-occupied Poland. Polish personnel served in all RAF commands, and in all theatres, and earned a reputation for exceptional courage and devotion to duty.'

Concern

'The Poles were keen to fight, but the RAF would not, at first, let them fly operationally. This was because few of the exiles spoke English and there was concern about their morale.

'What the British did not yet realise was that many of the Poles were excellent pilots. Having come through the Polish and French campaigns, they had more combat experience than most of their British comrades and they employed superior tactics.

'As the Battle of Britain wore on and the shortage of trained pilots became critical, the exiles were accepted into RAF squadrons and two Polish fighter units, Nos. 302 and 303 Squadrons, were formed.

'Once committed to action, the Poles flew and fought superbly, shooting down 203 enemy aircraft for the loss of 29 pilots killed.

'No. 303 Squadron became the most successful Fighter Command unit in the battle, shooting down 126 German machines in only 42 days.

'The British now rose to the challenge of integrating the Poles into the RAF. By an agreement of August 1940, the Polish Air Force (PAF) was granted independent status, though it remained under RAF command.'

Victory

Following the allied victory in World War II, and with Poland ruled by the Communist Soviet Union, many airmen who had evacuated to the UK chose to stay.

Their contribution to the war effort was recognised at RAF Northolt in November 1948 with the unveiling of the Polish Air Force Memorial.

Every year since, a memorial service is held there on the first weekend in September.

An exhibition at the RAF Northolt Museum, housed in the Polish Lounge, tells the story of the Polish airmen and their achievements during World War II, with memorabilia, photographs and information on display.

In addition, a permanent exhibition on the Polish Air Force has also been created at the Battle of Britain Bunker, in Uxbridge.

A collaboration between the London Borough of Hillingdon and the Polish Air Force Memorial Committee (polishairforcememorialcommittee.org), the collection provides greater awareness of the Polish Air Force story.

● For details, visit: battleofbritainbunker.co.uk/polish-air-force



WIGAN

DOUBLE DELIGHT AT THE BROCKET ARMS



It was worth the wait for members of the darts and dominoes team at The Brocket Arms (Wigan) as this impressive haul of silverware (pictured) proves.

Competing in the Springfield Darts & Dominoes League, The Brocket Arms finished 2020/21 season as Premiership winner.

The pub's manager, Tom Quinn (pictured front centre), explained: "Because of COVID-19, last season was stopped with one game to go. When the matches eventually resumed, to clinch the title, we had to win our last game and hope that the nearest team didn't."

"We finished as runner-up in the darts and winner of the dominoes, ensuring our Premiership (combined disciplines) victory."

Tom describes the teams as a 'mix and match of staff and customers', with players needing to be good at both games. Their first two seasons saw them finish last and last but one, before last season's (their third) success.

Tom continued: "Shift leader Ben Rigby is our captain and does all of the hard work, organising matches at home and away (most teams are based in and around Wigan town centre)."

With two darts boards permanently in use at The Brocket Arms, attracting new players has helped with the success of the team.

The 2021/22 season began in September and, after 11 matches played (by mid January), The Brocket Arms' team, so far, had won six darts and 10 dominoes games in its bid to retain its title.

READING

QUIZ WHIZZ SHAUN POSES QUESTIONS AND FOR PICTURES

Celebrity Shaun Wallace of ITV's hit quiz show *The Chase* hosted a charity fundraiser at The Back of Beyond (Reading).

Shaun, one of the tough-to-beat chasers in the show, acted as quizmaster at the pub.

The event was timed to coincide with the reopening of the pub, following a refurbishment.

As well as posing questions, Shaun posed for photographs with customers and raffled prizes, including a signed copy of his book and a signed copy of the board game named after the ITV show.

A total of £1,023 was raised for the Royal Berkshire Hospital charity.

Duty manager Sam Cooze asked Shaun – an acquaintance – to host the event. Sam's partner Catherine Beresford, a former member of The Back of Beyond team, helped to run the night.

The pub's manager, Rachel Lord, said: "We are very grateful to Shaun and to all of the customers who helped us to raise this impressive total."

Pictured (from left) are Catherine Beresford, Shaun Wallace, Rachel Lord and Sam Cooze.



LEYLAND

MEMBERS PITCH IN AS LION CHIEF WALKS PAW-PUNISHING 50 MILES



Keen walker Mark Batty joined members from Leyland Town Centre team in a 50-mile walk to raise charity funds for a local hospice.

Mark, pub manager at The Leyland Lion, met up with the group which represents the local town centre, before setting off on the two-day challenge, walking from Morecambe FC to Blackpool FC on day one; then, the following day, from Blackpool to Leyland.

The team, which helps to raise funds for town improvements and for charitable organisations, raised more than £3,000 for the local St Catherine's Hospice.

Rock and roll fancy-dress wigs and outfits were donned at various stages of the trek, including an Elvis and a David Bowie.

Mark said: "It was a gruelling effort, but we all supported one another and got over the line."

"I'm absolutely delighted that so much was raised."

The group with which he walked are all pub regulars and plans a similar two-day challenge later this year, from Leeds to Lancaster – along the canal.

Mark Batty is pictured (second from right) with (from left) Leyland Town Centre members Jon-Lee Herbert, Martin Carlin, Mark Croasdale and Jack Godwin.

KIRKINTILLOCH

HISTORY PUT ON SHOW AT THE KIRKY PUFFER

A visit to the pub turned into a 'night at the museum' for customers at The Kirky Puffer (Kirkintilloch).

Shift manager Paul Travers, helped by fellow shift managers Lizzie Quinn and Sara Cairney, organised an historical 'artefacts day' to be held at the pub.

The Kirky Puffer is named after the small steamships (known as Kirky puffers) which were built in Kirkintilloch and once plied up and down the Forth and Clyde Canal, alongside the pub.

Kirkintilloch was the only place in Scotland where ships were built inland. A boat yard was established in 1866 by Townhead Bridge, where canal barges and ships were built.

Paul, a local man himself, was keen to bring the history of the town to life in the pub, for locals and visitors to enjoy.

He said: "I wanted to get the community involved and interested in the local history and didn't think that this kind of event had been done before in a pub."

"I thought – all I can do is ask... and the Auld Kirk Museum jumped at the chance to bring artefacts to display."

As well as items from old boats and Kirkintilloch's Lion Foundry, usually on display at Auld Kirk Museum in the town, there were representatives at the all-day event from Kirkintilloch and District Society of Antiquaries and from Forth & Clyde Canal Society.

Paul added: "Customers were able to handle the exhibits, watch laptop canal history presentations and really get to know the history of the local area."

"We had a great reaction to the event, particularly from older customers, and the youngsters also enjoyed the face-painting."

"We would definitely consider a similar community event, again, in the future."





CAMRA ACCLAIM FOR OUR PUBS – ALL ACROSS THE UK



Pictured behind the bar are (left to right) team leader Victoria Daniels, shift leader Lewis Farmer and kitchen team leader Dannielle Brown

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

In total, 213 of the company's pubs are listed in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2022, the UK's best-selling beer and pub guide.

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

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

A CAMRA spokesman said: "The pubs all deserve their place in The Good Beer Guide 2022.

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

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

THE FULL HOUSE Hemel Hempstead

A former cinema and bingo hall (hence the name), which is spacious with extensive seating, the pub has a décor reminiscent of its past.

Consistent beer quality and a wide range of changing ales, often local, ensure that it is always interesting to visit this pub.

Food is served all day. There are regular beer festivals in spring and autumn. The ladies' toilets are notably ornate.

● 128 Marlowes, HP1 1EZ

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

● We feature descriptions from CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2022 of four Wetherspoon pubs, one each in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

● CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2022 is available from bookshops and directly from CAMRA: shop1.camra.org.uk, priced at £15.99 (website discount available to CAMRA's members)



THE ROBERT THE BRUCE

Dumfries

This former Methodist church, sensitively converted by Wetherspoon, has a relaxed atmosphere and is a popular meeting place in the town centre.

There is a pleasant outside seating area at the rear.

The pub stands near the site where Robert the Bruce killed John Comyn in 1306 in an incident linked to Scotland's fight for independence.

The food menu offers a range of good-value meals all day, every day.

Alcoholic drinks are served from 11am (on Sunday).

● 81-83 Buccleuch Street, DG1 1DJ

Duty manager Thomas Hynes pours a pint of real ale

YR HEN ORSAF

Aberystwyth

An award-winning conversion of Aberystwyth's former GWR railway station, which dates from 1924.

This excellent Wetherspoon pub offers up to six guest ales, usually including light and dark beers, and with a Purple Moose brew always available.

Ciders are from Westons and Gwynt y Ddraig.

Drinks can be enjoyed outdoors on the old station concourse, which has access to the railway station.

Convenient for trains, buses and taxis.

● Alexandra Road, SY23 1LN



Pub manager Andrew Roberts (centre) with shift leader Dairion Scott (left) and bar associate Tyler Jones



THE BRIDGE HOUSE

Belfast

Twice a CAMRA Northern Ireland Pub of the Year, this is a very busy bar near the city centre.

It has a large L-shaped ground floor with a smaller more family-orientated bar upstairs, and a recently added beer garden at the rear.

The main bar has eight handpumps serving a range of national brews, and a seating area includes a mixture of tables and booths.

Open for food from 8am, with alcoholic drinks served from 11.30am (12.30pm Sun).

● 35-43 Bedford Street, BT2 7EJ

Pub manager Phil Annett

BLOWING OUT THE CANDLE AT PUBS BORN IN THE NINETIES

In December and January, eight of our pubs celebrated a silver or pearl anniversary

During December 2021 and January 2022, eight Wetherspoon pubs celebrated a significant birthday of 25 or 30 years.

The handful of milestone 'silver' and 'pearl' anniversaries marked an incredible combined total of 210 years serving their respective communities across the UK.

The New Fairlop Oak (Fairlop) and The George (Wanstead) both marked 30 years since first opening their doors to customers.

The 25-year celebrations were held at The Sir John Oldcastle (Farringdon), The Earl of Dalkeith (Kettering), The Moon Under Water (Wigan), The Red Well (Wellingborough), The Counting House (Glasgow) and The Montagu Pyke (Westminster).

Other long-serving pubs during that two-month period included 33 years at J.J. Moon's (Kingsbury) and The Toll Gate (Harringay), as well as 31 years for J.J. Moon's (Wembley).

Wetherspoons (Victoria Station, London) marked 29 years, while four pubs celebrated 28 years. They were The Foxley Hatch (Purley), The Moon on the Hill (Sutton), The Bell Hotel (Norwich) and The Red Lion & Pineapple (Acton, London).

Nine pubs notched up 27 years during December and January. They were The Harvest Moon (Orpington), The Good Yarn (Uxbridge), The Playhouse (Colchester), The Falcon (High Wycombe), The Moon Under Water (Watford), Golden Cross Hotel (Bromsgrove), The Masque Haunt (Old Street, London), The Moon & Stars (Penge, London) and The Square Peg (Birmingham).

Pubs marking 26 years in that same period included Wetherspoons (Piccadilly, Manchester), The Muggleton Inn (Maidstone), The Cliftonville Inn (Hove), The Tollemache Inn (Grantham), The Jubilee Oak (Crawley), The Moon on the Square (Basildon), The Hatter's Inn (Bognor Regis) and The New Crown (Southgate).

The New Fairlop Oak

Fairlop

December birthday celebrations at The New Fairlop Oak coincided with a festive charity raffle in aid of Young Lives vs Cancer, raising more than £1,500.

Pictured are (left to right) pub manager Karen Burdett, kitchen associate Lindsey Wood, kitchen manager Gabby Merlut and shift leader Burhan Pazar.

Karen has been pub manager at the Essex pub for 14 years, while Lindsey – the longest-serving staff member – has worked there since March 1993.

The pub opened in December 1991.

It is named after the oak tree planted in 1951 on the green Fullwell Cross after the original Fairlop Oak was blown down in 1820.



The George

Wanstead

Pictured marking the pub's 30th birthday are (left to right) kitchen manager Gary Faulkner, bar associates Ayesha Harper and Nancy Scates, team leader Callum Macdonald and shift manager Christabel Ampofo-Manu.

Pub manager Danny Jupiter returned to The George in 2017, as pub manager, having worked there previously as a shift manager.

Among his long-serving team members are kitchen shift leader Anthony Barrett (since 2015), team leader Callum Macdonald and bar associate Lawrence Cutler (both since 2016) and shift manager Matt Turner (joined in 2017).

The George opened as a Wetherspoon pub in January 1992, retaining the name of its Edwardian premises completed in 1903. The building replaced an earlier George and Dragon Inn which had stood on an adjacent site from 1716.



The Sir John Oldcastle

Farringdon

This Wetherspoon pub, which opened in January 1996, is named after The Sir John Oldcastle Tavern which stood in the former grounds of Sir John's nearby mansion and was already long established by 1680.

The 25th anniversary is pictured, marked out in 25 pints making the figure of 25, with (left to right) shift leader Goutom Kumar Banik, pub manager Daniela Little, kitchen manager Shantanu Banik and shift manager Keith Charles Gamby.

Daniela became pub manager at the pub in September 2001 and has completed 25 years' service with the company.

The pub's longest-serving staff member is shift leader Mohammed Ferdous Mahmud (almost 17 years), who joined in September 2005, while shift manager Izida Ojase (16 years) and kitchen manager Ula Bowroska-Doma (14 years) have also both been on the team for a good while.



The Earl of Dalkeith

Kettering

Pictured marking the 25th birthday at The Earl of Dalkeith (Kettering) are (left to right) shift leader Wendy Taylor, shift manager Ashleigh Martin and pub manager Chantal Rondino.

Chantal took over as pub manager one year ago, but has worked for the company for nine years.

Among her team are long-serving staff members kitchen manager Katie-Rose Connolly (12 years) and kitchen team leaders Stephen Rutter (14 years) and Kayleigh Cross (12 years).

The pub, which opened as a Wetherspoon in December 1996, is located in Dalkeith Place, whose name comes from the Earl of Dalkeith.

For centuries, the land was owned by the dukes of Buccleuch – the eldest son being given the Earl of Dalkeith title.

The premises itself was built around the 1880s and was once the Dalkeith Billiards Hall.

The Moon Under Water

Wigan

Customers Brian Fenton (left) and Andrew Christy have been visiting The Moon Under Water (Wigan) since it first opened its doors in December 1996.

The pair are pictured with (left to right) shift leader Amanda Campbell, pub manager Sian McKenzie and team leader Shania Fishwick, together with a large birthday cake which was enjoyed by all.

The Moon Under Water occupies 5–7a Market Place. Number 5 is a former bank (1890–1957) and later a shoe shop.

Number 7 was built in the 1960s on the site of the long-standing Cross Keys Hotel.



MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS

The Red Well

Wellingborough

The Red Well was the most famous of several springs in Wellingborough.

Visited by royalty, it has since given its name to the Redwell area of the town and this Wetherspoon pub, which opened in December 1996.

Pictured marking 25 years since that day, enjoying a birthday balloon-fest, are (left to right) shift manager Kirsti-Kitten Smith, pub manager Ben Gardiner, kitchen associate Angie Haines and shift manager Emma Healey.

Angie is the longest-serving team member at The Red Well, having worked at the pub for 24 years.

Ben added: "We were delighted to mark the pub's silver anniversary; however, Angie's 24 years' service are a remarkable achievement and should be congratulated."



The Counting House

Glasgow

Mick Murphy (front right) became pub manager at The Counting House (Glasgow) 14 years ago – in March 2008. He is pictured with his team members marking his pub's 25th birthday with a large cake.

Also pictured are (left to right) shift managers Erin Dickie and Megan MacPhee, team leader Cheryl Clark, bar associate Natalie Allan and team leader Karen Hamilton.

Mick is the longest serving at the pub, followed closely by deputy manager Louise McDonald, who joined the team a year later, in March 2009.

Our pub, on the corner of George Square, opened in December 1996, in premises which were previously owned by the Bank of Scotland.

The building was designed during 1867–70 for the bank, in the Italian Renaissance style, by Scottish architect JT Rothead.

The Montagu Pyke

Westminster

The site of the former Marquee Club music venue, which closed in 1995, this Wetherspoon pub opened in December 1996.

The premises were originally built in 1911 as a cinema by Montagu Pyke – his 16th and final cinema – and our pub's name remembers him.

Pub manager Ziggy Bal has been running the central London pub since March 2011.

Pictured celebrating the pub's 25th birthday are (left to right) shift leader Miguel Aguirre, team leader Nathalia Franchi, bar associate Paulina Szandula, team leader Alexandra Alexandru, bar associate Estibaliz Roales Molina and (front) kitchen shift leader Monica Malazzi.



EAST DIDSBURY

ARTY BETHANIE MAKES BOTTLE TOPS BEAUTIFUL



The saying 'one man's rubbish is another man's treasure' has certainly proven to be the case at The Gateway (East Didsbury).

Shift leader Bethanie Arrell (pictured), who has worked at the pub for the past four years, has been collecting bottle tops from the pub for a community art project.

As well as working her way up from bar associate to shift leader, Bethanie has also volunteered for the past six years as a leader at 24th Stockport Guides, based in Davenport.

Having attended Rainbows (aged 5–7), Brownies (7–10 years) and Guides (10–14), Bethanie became a young leader at 16 and an adult leader when she turned 18.

As part of its recycling pledge and attainment of badges, the Guides are transforming recycled waste, including tin cans, bottle tops and wooden furniture.

Bethanie reported: "We are spray-painting all of the bottle tops and using them in upcycling workshops to create artwork.

"These will either stay with the group for display or be sold to generate funds for trips and equipment.

"The whole idea of the project, which is an ongoing challenge, is to create useful things from rubbish, as well as awareness about recycling and the environmental impact of too much waste.

"Thanks to permission from the pub managers and help from my colleagues, we have saved so many bottle tops that we are running out of space to store them."

She concluded: "It is amazing that the pub has helped so much towards this project.

"Hopefully, it will inspire other Guide groups and youngsters.

"The groups are run by volunteers; so, when the community helps out, it is so beneficial to the young girls, creating a positive impact, via the work we do in the community."

GIDDY BRIDGE STAFF STAR IN LIAM'S FILM

A fly-on-the-wall documentary depicting working life at The Giddy Bridge (Southampton) has been released by one its staff.

Shift leader and film student Liam Calvert began making the documentary to highlight the effort colleagues put in to keep the pub in tip-top shape.

Stars of the show include shift leader Jade Younie, demonstrating what's required to open the pub each day, and bar associate Sam Jochim, illustrating the process of pub close-down at night.

Liam said: "When I was asked to make a documentary for my course, I thought of my fellow workers and the work they do. A lot of the film focuses on things which customers don't usually see."

"Everyone was happy to be involved, as the documentary was made, from a supportive standpoint, to show off the work they do."

He added: "The company was also happy to encourage me and support me as I made the film."

The pub's manager, Alan Shorthouse, said: "It was fun to see Liam filming and interviewing his colleagues, but there is a good message here, as it really tells a story about what's needed, in terms of the hard work put in every day by our team."

● **Liam's film, 24 Hours at The Giddy Bridge, can be viewed on his YouTube channel [tinyurl.com/2d79k952](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2d79k952) and on: www.liamcalvert.co.uk**



MUNICH RIBBONS GET PRIDE OF BLAIZE IN TRIBUTE TO FAN FRED



A charity with links to Manchester United Football Club made a presentation of Munich Ribbons to The Bishop Blaize pub, following the death of one of its regular customers – Fred Henshaw. The commemorative ribbons were originally laid in Germany, in 2020, along with a wreath, by visiting supporters to honour the 'Busby Babes', the eight footballers who died in the 1958 Munich air crash.

Charity Manchester Munich Memorial Fund (MMMF) recovered the ribbons and donated them to a group of supporters at the pub.

The pub's manager, Ben Plunkett, received the gift on behalf of the Manchester pub, a regular match-day meeting place for fans and a stone's throw away from the Old Trafford ground.

Fred's daughter Louise Nowell and other members of his family were present at the handover ceremony.

Ben said: "I knew Freddie Henshaw of course, so did all the staff. He was a massive Man United fan – and I was honoured to stand alongside his daughter to accept the presentation from the trustees of the charity."

Ben is pictured, left, with MMMF vice-chair Tony Crook, Fred's daughter Louise Nowell, MMMF chair Pat Burns, member Tommy Fereday and founder member Brian Mulholland.

The inscriptions on the ribbons read: "For our Beloved Busby Babes; Forever in our Hearts and Never Forgotten; Rest in Peace MMMF"

STONE FROM STATELY HOME GIVES WHITE HOUSE A SOLID FOUNDATION

Our imposing pub in Scraptoft, Leicester, was built in 1928 with bricks from the demolished Normanton Hall

Our online pub histories series continues to prove a hugely popular source of historical information since its launch at the end of 2016.

Initially showcasing just a handful of our pubs in major UK city centres, including Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield, our website history catalogue has now grown to encompass more than 750 of our premises.

Wetherspoon takes immense pride in the restoration and refurbishment of some wonderful and, in several cases, unique buildings, to create our pubs – and our pub histories series has unearthed some interesting discoveries.

Images

The online historical information, detailing the story of our pubs, includes numerous images of the artwork and old photographs on display, as well as photos of the interior, exterior and features of each building.

In this pub histories spotlight, a regular Wetherspoon News feature, we focus on The White House, in Scraptoft, Leicester.

This venue opened as a Wetherspoon pub in March 2011 on the site of a former pub and hotel, retaining the name The White House.

Bought

The building has been The White House hotel and bar since 1950, when it was bought by the Northampton Brewery Company.

Until 1950, the Georgian-style property had been a private residence, built in c1928 for a Mr TH Crumbe.

A local businessman, Tom Crumbe was the honorary secretary of Leicester Rugby Football Club (now Leicester Tigers). It is thought that he wanted somewhere to entertain executives from opposing clubs; however, he died before the building was completed.

Demolished

The stone for The White House was brought from Normanton Hall, demolished two years earlier.

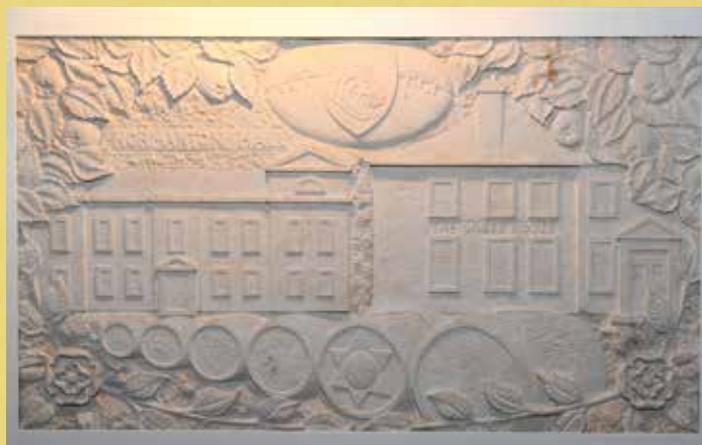
An 18th-century mansion built for Sir Gilbert Heathcote, retired merchant, founder member of the Bank of England and one of the richest men in England, the hall was located 25 miles away and stood on what is now the southern shore of Rutland Water (a reservoir and popular tourist attraction created in the 1970s).

The White House was purchased in 1932 by Mr Harrison, a well-known Leicester seed merchant who wanted space to trial his plants and seeds.

Harrison sold it in 1948 to the Northampton Brewery, which opened it as a pub two years later. It became a popular wedding reception venue, with many local couples posing on the stairs for their wedding photos.

An original Ancaster limestone carving, by sculptor James Wheeler, is on display in the pub. The pictorial stone carving tells the story of The White House and how it came to be.

**375 SCRAPTOFT LANE, SCRAPTOFT
LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE, LE7 9SE**





Pub manager Jason Gunyon

OLD MANOR'S REAL-ALE ROYALTY IS TO THE MANNER BORN

Pub in Bracknell, managed by Jason Gunyon, has been featured annually in The Good Beer Guide since 2000

Wetherspoon is proud of the quality of the real ale served in its pubs.

Its staff work hard to offer first-class beers at all times.

This is evident in the high number of Wetherspoon pubs listed, over many years, in the Campaign for Real Ale's (CAMRA) Good Beer Guide.

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

In the current guide (2022, the 49th edition), there are 213 Wetherspoon pubs listed.

Excellent

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

The Old Manor (Bracknell), which first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in 1993, has been featured in the guide every year since 2000.

Pub manager Jason Gunyon took over the reins in September 2019, having previously managed The Tilly Shilling (Farnborough).

Jason said: "I have worked at The Old Manor, on and off, for the past 14 years – and the pub has always been in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide during that time."

Jason started as a bar associate at The Gig House (Wokingham) (now sold), when the pub first opened in 2004. He spent just over four years there, before moving to The Old Manor as a shift manager.

Sojourn

He had a brief 15-month sojourn at The Tilly Shilling, his first post as pub manager, before returning to The Old Manor.

Speaking about the pub's guide-listing longevity, Jason said: "We have a very successful record and are always delighted to be included, although never take it for granted."

"The team works hard to ensure that our real ale is kept in good condition at all times, that we offer a well-kept and varied selection of beers and, wherever possible, that we include popular local breweries among our suppliers."

Shift manager Chris Mistrygacz is responsible for the ale orders; in his absence, shift manager Sasha Stewart takes on that role.

Jason reported: "We don't ask specifically for suggestions from customers, but the team members talk regularly to our real ale-drinkers, sometimes daily, so can get a good idea from chats, in passing, what they prefer to drink."

Feedback

"We use that feedback to guide us on our ordering and do our best to source the beers which people want, from either local breweries or Wetherspoon's supplier – East-West Ales."

The Old Manor, which was originally built more than 400 years ago, has two bars serving up to eight real ales between them.

As well as Greene King's Abbot Ale, Ruddles and Sharp's Doom Bar, there are five ever-changing guest ales, usually from local brewers.

Among those local breweries regularly showcased are Marlow-based Rebellion Beer Co., Loddon Brewery in Reading, Hogs Back Brewery at Tongham and Windsor-based Windsor & Eton Brewery.

Jason added: "We regularly select from these breweries, as well as several others."

"We also have a great relationship with our local CAMRA members, who sometimes hold their meetings at the pub. Quite a few of the senior committee members at the branch are frequent visitors and often enjoy breakfast, as well as a few ales in the evening."

Dating back to Tudor times and once known as the Old Manor House, the building is one of the oldest surviving in Bracknell.

The priest's hole, visible above the main fireplace, shows that the Old Manor House was once used as a refuge by those fleeing from religious persecution.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Old Manor House was owned by the veterinary surgeon to Ascot Racecourse.

The house remained a private residence until the 1930s.

Since then, it has had a variety of uses, including being a club and a residential hotel, before opening as a Wetherspoon pub in June 1993.

What The Good Beer Guide 2022 says:

THE OLD MANOR

Featuring in the guide every year since 2000, this Wetherspoon is located in one of the oldest buildings in Bracknell.

Tudor origins are obvious, especially the monks' room where a priest hole, dating from 1682, can be seen.

Two bar areas offer three regular beers and six changing guest ales, plus Old Rosie and Black Dragon ciders.

With a broad customer mix, the pub gets busy on Friday and Saturday evenings.

There are three outside areas to enjoy.

● Grenville Place, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1BP

What CAMRA says:

The pub is a previous winner of the Berkshire South-East Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch 'pub of the year' and was voted, by branch members, runner-up in the 'cider pub of the year', in 2018.

CAMRA Berkshire South East branch's chair, Kevin Lenton, said: "The Old Manor has been in every CAMRA Good Beer Guide since 2000... testimony to how well the pub keeps and serves its cask beers."

"This pub is in our branch's region – and several of our members are frequent visitors. In addition to the good beer and food served, we find the pub's staff to be friendly and helpful."

"We are also very grateful that we can use its meeting facilities for our branch meetings and also CAMRA regional meetings, for both of which the pub's team is happy to lay out the room to our requirements."

Tim says: “At Wetherspoon’s first pub, more than 40 years ago, a Daily Mirror journalist (a regular customer) swore blind that he and his peers wrote better after a few pints – which sounded unlikely. However, a day spent with him, touring Fleet Street’s old drinking haunts, undermined this scepticism.

Wetherspoon floated on the stock market 30 years ago, with 44 pubs, since when we’ve had thousands of press conferences and interviews. Despite a few hiccups during the pandemic, journalists’ subsequent reporting has generally been conscientious and accurate.

One of the best books I’ve ever read (*The Years With Ross*, by James Thurber) was written by a journalist about his time at the famous New Yorker magazine, with founding editor Harold Ross.

In the article below, US writer Hamilton Nolan gives an interesting perspective on what the job is really like today – with which many journalists, famously argumentative, may disagree...”

“

POWER, PRECARIETY AND WHITE-HOT ANGER: WHAT I LEARNED IN A DECADE IN JOURNALISM

You won’t make much money, your best stories will be forgotten, and you’ll be doomed to constant disappointment and despair. I recommend it highly

As the decade of the 2010s began, I was ensconced in an exciting if modestly paid New York media job, writing every week about the recession-fueled layoffs and closures across the media world, while avoiding them personally. As the decade reached its end, I myself became a casualty of a publication closure and layoff, just another unemployed writer hustling for what comes next. In journalism, as in life, there are only lucky idiots and unlucky idiots. Successful people who are very convinced that they deserve everything they have are not to be trusted.

In 2009, I was working at Gawker.com, a news and gossip site that rested in the sweet spot between the media establishment and the seething hordes – enough of an outsider to do whatever we pleased, but well known enough that the insiders still read us, often out of hate. It was fun. I was a media reporter, and watched wide-eyed as titans of the industry were ravaged by a combination of the global economic crisis and the rise of new media, like us.

As the years went by, what had begun as a little blog by a handful of people working at home moved to a big office in Soho, with parties on

a private roof deck, and then to a fancier office in Union Square, with wide open spaces that were the architectural equivalent of bragging. The mid-decade years were the high point; one liquor-soaked holiday bash featured a tower of crab legs and a bowl of macarons the size of a car trunk; famous media people routinely showed up at our parties, eager to slum with the mouthy kids who made fun of them, and to try to be friendly enough to inoculate themselves from criticism in the future. One day Brian Williams, the news anchor, came by the office for a chummy lunch with us, motivated, no doubt, by the fact that his daughter was about to star in *Girls*, an HBO show we were sure to mock mercilessly. We were loved, hated, and feared in equal measure. We were proud of the quality of our enemies. More importantly, we were financially sustainable and doing what we wanted.

Then it all fell apart. A lawsuit secretly funded by a vindictive Republican billionaire outraged about our reporting on him bankrupted the company. Layoffs became common, and employees started to flee – one's entire social life could have been built around going-away parties. The company was sold off to a big media company, which handled it ineptly, and after a couple of years sold off again to a private equity firm, often the last stop before the media ownership train goes fully off the tracks. In October, Splinter, the politics-focused successor to Gawker where I was working, was folded. If nothing else, it was a well-timed invitation for introspection on a decade in journalism. That and a box of old notepads are all you can walk away with.

The point of journalism is the stories. Everything else is glitter. Furthermore, the vast majority of everything you write will be forgotten within a matter of days. The sooner a writer understands this, the better. We are all secretly precious, harboring hopes that our wise words will be pored over by future generations. But in reality, written journalism has a lot in common with television journalism: it will be enjoyed or despised when it comes out, and then everyone will move on. There will be a handful of stories you write that will be remembered for years, but you have no control over which these will be. They are just as likely to be your worst as your best. Any writer unable to reach a sort of zen acceptance of these facts will have their heart broken by reality soon enough.

The people who really will remember what you write are the people you write about. The gift of journalism is the chance to tell the stories of those who would otherwise not be heard, and journalism tends to be worthwhile in direct proportion to how much this is its goal. In general, people are happy to have someone interested in them enough to tell their stories; the only segments of society who try to avoid being written about are those who feel that the media might threaten their tight hold on power. If you are a reporter and you find yourself talking to evasive PR people more than regular people, you are probably writing about the wrong things. This is always a hazard. Prestige in media is bestowed on absurd things. The most prestigious job, White House correspondent, is also the worst. At best, it offers the hope of schmoozing with bureaucratic leeches for bits of gossip that can be spun into news; more often, it involves looking good at televised press conferences while being lied to by officials.

Likewise, the media attention lavished on presidential conventions is matched by an absolute lack of news. I covered three of them, and never heard a single newsworthy thing at any of them that did not come out of the mouth of a protester who was barred from actually accessing the convention by many well-armed police. America would be better off setting up a single live camera on the convention stage, and then sending the thousands of political reporters out to talk to homeless people instead. That would offer at least the hope of capturing some insight about what is happening in the country.

There exists in journalism a discernible divide between those who see it as a cause, and those who see it as a career that might enable them to hang out with important people and get a hefty book deal one day. Some journalists will tell you what they want to write about, and others will tell you where they want to work. It is the latter, unfortunately, who get most of the jobs. The most esteemed positions in media are often held by people whose greatest talent is "getting good jobs". The world is full of excellent writers and reporters who are barely getting by, because they make the mistake of pouring their efforts into stories rather than into career-building. A less self-pitying way to say this is: there are scores of people capable of filling every decent job in journalism. The New York Times could turn over its entire staff 20 times without suffering a loss in

quality. This means, in fairness, that we should hold the work of the people at the top of the profession to high standards, because there are a hundred writers standing behind them who could do their jobs just as well. Everyone who has been around for a while has come to understand this. It is what drives the white-hot anger at every half-assed Ivy Leaguer who lands a plum columnist job.

The rage of the creative underclass burns brightly just below the surface of the media. That is why the most meaningful legacy that Gawker left behind may not be any of its big scoops, but rather its role in setting off the wave of unionization that is still sweeping through America's newsrooms to this day. Unions took off in media because journalists have, if nothing else, enough common sense to see that the people in charge make more money and have more power but are clearly not any smarter than us. That can't last forever.

Yes, journalism has flaws. Its highest level is full of self-important twits and lazy white men failing upwards; it is dour, sensationalistic, and ignorant of vast swaths of the country; it routinely publishes falsehoods, exaggerations, errors, and lies, due in large part to an unearned conviction that it is competent in many matters that are in fact wholly beyond its capabilities; and it is fascinated with nothing more than itself, forcing countless uninterested readers to slog through navel-gazing tripe such as this essay.

The average sanitation worker contributes far more to the public good in a single day than most journalists do in a lifetime. If you choose to pursue it as a career, you are in for infinite disappointments. You wanted to cover Watergate, but you will end up writing reviews of Waterpiks; your dream job will instead be awarded to some halfwit celebrity's kid; if you ever do secure a worthwhile position, you will surely lose it; the good times won't last, but the bad times very well might. Your best stories will be forgotten, you won't make much money, and your archives will be lost to tech glitches. When it's all over, your entire body of work will have mattered to only a small handful of people, none of whom you will ever meet.

Which is all to say: I recommend it highly. If you ever get a chance to be a journalist, grab it and hold on tight. It is much, much better than having a real job.

Hamilton Nolan is a writer based in New York City.



By Hamilton Nolan

The Guardian / 2 January 2020

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WETHERSPOON VERSUS THE TIMES

There can be only one winner – but who is it?

Tim says: “For the pro-EU Oxbridge orthodoxy, who dominate the media, especially at the influential Times, Financial Times and Guardian, opposition to Brexit is a quasi-religious calling. In this extract from his article (The Times, 10 February 2022), Simon Nixon, chief leader-writer, makes several points which defy common sense and facts.

The main one is, astonishingly, that the UK is becoming more ‘protectionist’ outside of the EU. This is cobblers.

The EU is the biggest protectionist organisation in the world, with over 12,600 tariffs (when I last looked) on a vast range of products, including coffee, wine, rice, bananas, children’s shoes and clothes. The tariffs are collected by EU governments and sent to Brussels.

The UK has made a commitment to free trade – it has agreed, for example, to scrap tariffs on Antipodean wine, which will reduce shop (and pub) prices.

In this area, Boris Johnson should certainly get a move on (and he’s not the sharpest tool in the box), but, if he doesn’t, we can vote him out.

In contrast, EU President Ursula von der Leyen cannot be voted out, under the undemocratic EU system – which is the main point for most people.

Another misleading comment by Mr Nixon is that the UK will become ‘more protectionist ... since this was the situation in the 1970s, before EU membership ...’.

It has clearly escaped his notice that the UK was in the Common Market for most of the 1970s, having joined in January 1973, at which point its tariff régime was controlled by Brussels.

But logic and facts don’t count for much in quasi-religious debates.

These arguments have raged for years and, as the article shows, even highly educated Times leader-writers believe what they want to believe.”

“ THE REALITY OF BREXIT APPEARS TO BE PROTECTIONISM AND SECRET SUBSIDIES ”

.....The reality is that even the supposedly nailed-on benefits of Brexit are proving elusive. Take the mission to turn Britain into a global leader in free trade. This did not survive its first contact with reality last year. The Trade Remedies Authority was supposed to be the guarantor that post-Brexit Britain would not succumb to protectionist pressures. This anti-dumping watchdog was established to take over the role previously played by the European Commission in determining whether and what sanctions to impose on foreign imports that have benefited from unfair subsidies.....

.....Decisions to impose tariffs or quotas are made on the basis of transparent criteria, where the remedy was proportionate to the damage sustained by EU firms. Britain aimed to emulate the EU model by setting up the TRA as an arms-length body, limiting the power of politicians to override its decisions. Moreover, the government added an extra criterion by which to assess the economic case for trade sanctions: it was required to consider the impact on consumers as well as producers.

Yet when the TRA, in one of its very first adjudications last year, concluded that Britain should drop EU tariffs on nine out of 19 categories of Chinese steel, the government overruled it. The TRA concluded that in those nine categories, the damage to consumer interests outweighed the risks to the steel industry. But under lobbying from the steel industry, ministers caved in. The result is that just weeks after the TRA had come into existence, the government passed an emergency law, extending the sanctions for a year and giving itself new powers to overrule the TRA.

What this means is that trade policy in Britain can no longer be considered immune from protectionist pressures but has in fact been politicised. The government is expected to lay new secondary legislation this week which will formalise the right of ministers to “call in” TRA decisions that it finds inconvenient. Meanwhile Anne Marie Trevelyan, the international trade secretary, must decide before the end of June whether to extend the tariffs on Chinese steel, after the completion of the government’s “review”. Few expect the government to back the TRA. The UK regime can no longer be considered transparent and predictable, or even to put consumers first.....

.....The danger is that instead of becoming a global leader in free trade, Britain outside the EU will become more protectionist, more open to political interference and more susceptible to vested interests, with damaging consequences for long-term competitiveness. That would come as little surprise since this was the situation in Britain in the 1970s, before EU membership constrained what politicians could do. If Mr Rees-Mogg is serious about delivering Brexit opportunities, he should make it his priority to dispel these fears.....

Quotations from The Times
The Times / 10 February 2022

IT'S BACK

STEAK CLUB

TUESDAY

from 11.30am until 11pm

INCLUDES **ALMOST ANY** DRINK*

Available from Tuesday 5 April



Gourmet 8oz sirloin steak; Lemon & herb char-grilled half chicken; Mixed grill

IT'S BACK

CURRY CLUB

THURSDAY

from 11.30am until 11pm

INCLUDES **ALMOST ANY** DRINK*

Available from Thursday 31 March



Naga chilli chicken vindaloo; Chicken jalfrezi; Chicken tikka masala

LET YOUR TASTE BUDS TAKE FLIGHT WITH NEW ROSÉ, RED AND SPARKLING WHITE

Three new offerings all come from the beautiful south – of France, America and England

Whether you are socialising or dining, just catching up or celebrating – and want to enjoy a glass or two of wine together – Wetherspoon's pubs are now serving three NEW choices.

Each available in a 750ml bottle, our NEW trio of vegan-friendly wines offers a great variety of styles and flavours – with one new rosé, a new red and a new sparkling white added to our selection.

There's something to suit all tastes.

Attractive

Belle Année by Mirabeau (12.5% ABV) is an attractive, pale-apricot-coloured, vegan-friendly, award-winning rosé wine, with its vine roots firmly in southern France.

It has an aroma bursting with notes of seasonal strawberries, limes, raspberries and cherries, with a round and fruitful taste.

Underpinned by a delicate floral aspect, it has a refreshing finish.

Trivento Malbec (14% ABV) is an Argentinian multiaward-winning red from the renowned Mendoza wine region.

Velvety

A bright crimson-red wine, whose plum and raspberry aromas mingle elegantly with vanilla notes from the six months spent in

French and American oak casks, this is well balanced, with sweet tannins and a velvety finish.

Broadwood's Folly (12% ABV), from Denbies of Dorking (founded in 1986), is an English sparkling white wine, hailing from the Surrey Hills.

Delightful

It has a fine flavour purity and a crisp, dry, mouth-watering finish. This delightful English sparkling wine is aromatic, with notes of citrus, apple and honey. It is balanced, refreshing and perfect for sharing.

These new additions join our already-excellent wine cellar collection which includes Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc (13.5% ABV), as well as Hardys Shiraz (13% ABV), Hardys Rosé (11.5% ABV), Hardys Pinot Grigio (12% ABV) and Hardys Chardonnay (12.5% ABV).

Our Coldwater Creek draught wine range, available by the glass (125ml, 175ml and 250ml), also offers rosé (12% ABV), pinot grigio (11.5% ABV), merlot (12% ABV) and Chardonnay (12.5% ABV).

To add a little sparkle to your visit, the ever-popular Italian Teresa Rizzi Prosecco and sparkling rosé are available, alongside Wolf Blass sparkling brut from Australia.



NEIL ARMSTRONG INSPIRES ROBERT'S SPOON MISSION

A Birmingham man, who once showed astronaut Neil Armstrong around his workplace, has spoken about his own 'Moon mission'.

After travel restrictions curtailed foreign holidays in 2020, Solihull resident Robert Bird began his trek to take in several hundred Wetherspoon pubs.

Among the first ports of call was The Moon Under Water (Cradley Heath) (pictured), but further travels took him round all of the company's pubs in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Norfolk, Somerset and Suffolk and to cities including Bristol, Liverpool and Sheffield.

Robert said: "I used to tour around football league grounds, but I think I've visited pretty much all of them while following Birmingham City away.

"So, I decided to tour Wetherspoon's pubs instead – and have now been to hundreds of them."

Explaining his meeting with Neil Armstrong, the first human to set foot on our moon, Robert added: "I used to work for Cincinnati [engineering works] – and Neil Armstrong was one of our directors. I was invited to take him on a tour of the Birmingham plant. On some level, I suppose we shared a desire to travel."

Robert's wife Irene and children William, Lee and Danielle have accompanied him on many of his tours. "Sometimes, my wife goes shopping when I go to the football – and then we meet at the local Wetherspoon."



SAVOY IN SWINDON FUNNELS PRESENTS TO SALVATION ARMY



The Savoy (Swindon) supported a nationwide charity initiative in the run-up to Christmas.

The pub was a designated drop-off centre for The Salvation Army's Christmas present appeal, collecting gifts and donations on behalf of the many Salvation Army churches and centres across the UK.

The donation of 129 unwrapped new toys and gifts, for children and young people who might not otherwise receive a Christmas present, was gratefully received by the team at The Savoy.

The gifts, arranged into suitability for specific age groups, were then wrapped and distributed to those in need.

Shift leader Lauren Love, who organised the gift collection, is pictured (right) with Captain Theresa Torr (centre) and Pauline Tyrrell, both from The Salvation Army Swindon Gorse Hill.

Lauren said: "A huge thankyou to all the team at The Savoy and our generous customers, who donated toys and gifts, as well as cash to buy items towards The Salvation Army's Christmas present appeal 2021.

"Christmas is a time to give and to help others, so we wanted to do our bit to support children and young people."

NOW OPEN



Dublin

THE SOUTH STRAND

The South Strand (Dublin), Wetherspoon's third pub in Dublin's centre, has opened on the site of a former bar in Hanover Quay.

Pictured outside the new pub at the heart of the Grand Canal Docks district are (left to right) shift manager Ethan Mannion, pub manager Luke Mannion and shift managers Abbie Griffiths and Conor McAuley.

The new pub occupies a ground-floor and basement area in South Dock House and includes an open-gantry kitchen, as well as an extensive pavement café-style outside seating area, overlooking the former docks and Grand Canal.

The history of the area's industrial past is echoed in the interior design of the new pub.



1 HANOVER QUAY, DUBLIN, D02 E295



Kings Norton

THE NAVIGATION INN

Pub manager Nikki Rumney is pictured with local MP Gary Sambrook at the official ribbon-cutting of her new pub The Navigation Inn (Kings Norton), near Birmingham.

She is also pictured (centre) with team members (left to right) shift manager Cassie Boam, kitchen manager Ewan Nelson, kitchen shift leader Joel Wilson and bar associate Cam Simpson.

The pub, which has retained the name of the long-time community pub, is recorded on the 1840 tithe map of Kings Norton, when it had its own malthouse, yard and stables. It was rebuilt in its present form in 1906.

Our extensive and sympathetic renovation work, at a cost of more than £2.5 million, has stripped back the two-storey detached building to its original part-Victorian interior and exterior and extended it to more than double its original size.

1 WHARF ROAD, KINGS NORTON, BIRMINGHAM, B30 3LS



NOW OPEN

Beighton

THE SCARSDALE HUNDRED

Pub manager Emma Walker is pictured with The Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Cllr Gail Smith, cutting the ribbon to open the new pub, The Scarsdale Hundred, alongside shift manager Ricky Brown (left) and Wetherspoon's area manager Hudson Simmons.

Wetherspoon spent £2.19 million developing a former restaurant in Beighton, six miles southeast of Sheffield's city centre, in this centuries-old once-rural village, in an area recorded in the Domesday Book and once known as the Hundred of Scarsdale.

In the Domesday Book, from 1086, it was one of the 71 places recorded in the Scarsdale Hundred.

The ceiling rafters' design also includes shields and banners, depicting the settlements and individual townships. Other features include three fireplaces, a bespoke carpet and booth seating.

2 SEVENAIRS ROAD, BEIGHTON, SHEFFIELD
SOUTH YORKSHIRE, S20 1NZ



NEW LOOK

Reading

THE BACK OF BEYOND

Pub managers Rachel and Jason Lord are pictured in their new-look beer garden at The Back of Beyond (Reading).

The pub, which first opened in the Berkshire town more than 25 years ago (November 1996), has been refurbished and upgraded, with the beer garden expanded to double its original size.

The larger upgraded garden, overlooking the Kennet and Avon Canal, can accommodate seated customers at free-standing garden dining tables and chairs, as well as bench seating with canopies.

It is decorated with hanging baskets, along with potted trees, climbing plants, flowers, shrubs and festoon lighting.

104-108 KINGS ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE, RG1 3BY



Acton

THE RED LION & PINEAPPLE

Pub manager Ryan Nagle is pictured in his new-look beer garden at The Red Lion & Pineapple (Acton).

The west London pub has undergone a refurbishment project on its outside space, with brand-new furniture and an enlarged sheltered area installed.

Free-standing outdoor dining tables and chairs, as well as high-top tables and stools provide ample seating for alfresco dining and drinking, at the back of the pub.

The paved space has large umbrellas for shade and is decorated with festoon lighting, vintage-style lamps and hanging baskets.

281 HIGH STREET, ACTON, LONDON, W3 9BP



NEW LOOK

Carmarthen

YR HEN DDERWEN

Wetherspoon's area manager Victoria Walker (right) is pictured with the Mayor and Mayoress of Carmarthen, Cllr Gareth John and Mrs Claire John, at the official opening of the new roof-top terrace at the pub.

Also pictured outside the front of the pub, with Victoria and the visiting dignitaries, is (front) team leader Kelly O'Hara, with (back, left to right) shift leader Lauren Biggs and pub managers Jen Dawe (The Red Lion Inn, Morriston) and Danielle Phillips (The York Palace, Llanelli).

A £2-million redevelopment project at Yr Hen Dderwen (Carmarthen) has resulted in a new indoor customer area, adding more than 278m² of customer space, as well as a new roof-top terrace offering stunning views.

The pub, which first opened in July 2002 and is managed by Laura Mosford, has also undergone a complete redecoration, with new furniture, fixtures and fittings.

New stairs and an access lift to the first-floor customer pub dining area and terrace have been installed, together with a real fire, enlarged windows, bi-fold doors and booth seating.

47-48 KING STREET, CARMARTHEN, SA31 1BH



Sunderland

THE COOPER ROSE

Pub manager Nik Chapman is pictured (centre) with shift managers Liam O'Brien (left) and Alex Walton at The Cooper Rose (Sunderland).

As well as complete refurbishment and redecoration of the pub, inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, the ground-floor bar has been enlarged and summer doors added at the front of the building.

As we go to print, a new roof terrace garden, offering views across the city, is also being built, featuring two covered pergolas.

The roof terrace, housed in a fully glazed enclosure, will be accessed via a curved staircase, as well as a passenger lift, enabling access for all.

2-4 ALBION PLACE, SUNDERLAND, TYNE AND WEAR, SR1 3NG



Chippenham

THE BRIDGE HOUSE

Pub manager Chris Stevens is pictured in his new-look pub, The Bridge House (Chippenham).

A new bar and backbar, with over-bar glass racks inspired in design by the local bridge over the River Avon, have been installed.

The entrance lobby has also been opened up, with new glass panels added, allowing for more natural daylight to flood into the pub.

Redecoration, in new refreshing colours, has been completed internally, together with the addition of new feature lighting and new high furniture, positioned in the bar area.

New booth seating has also been installed in the sunken area of the pub.

Artwork reflecting the history of the cotton industry in the local Chippenham area has also been introduced and is on display throughout the pub.

**BOROUGH PARADE, CHIPPENHAM
WILTSHIRE, SN15 3WL**



NEW

WETHERSPOON IS OPENING

An Geata Arundel

9 Arundel Square
Waterford, X91 RD35

Date to be confirmed.

The Raymond Mays

44-48 North Street, Bourne
Lincolnshire, PE10 9AB

26 April 2022

The Prese Well

5 The Mount, Heswall
Merseyside, CH60 4RE

17 May 2022

GEORGE GANG PUTS HEADS TOGETHER TO HELP BRAIN TUMOUR RESEARCH

Staff and customers at The George Hotel (Hailsham) donned fun festive headgear in support of a serious cause.

Kitchen manager Julie Mcloughlin (pictured left with colleagues) introduced the Brain Tumour Research charity's Wear a Christmas Hat Day to her colleagues and customers at the pub in East Sussex.

They donated cash to the charity and wore a festive hat for the day in the run-up to Christmas, collecting £680 in cash and pledges. The Commercial Hotel (Accrington), the town where Julie's mum lived, also added £142 to bring the fundraising total to £822.

Julie's inspiration for the event came from her mum, Sue Mcloughlin, who died from a brain tumour in September 2021, at the age of 67, just days after celebrating her 49th wedding anniversary.

Sue had been diagnosed in December 2020 with grade 4 glioblastoma multiforme (GBM), after discovering her speech had become slurred. During her brave fight against the disease, she underwent surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

Julie said: "As a family, we want to do anything we can to help to raise awareness of brain tumours – and I know it's something my mum would have wanted."

"The George Hotel is a real community pub, where our regulars are our friends, and I thank them all for their amazing support."

Brain tumours kill more children and adults under the age of 40 than any other cancer, yet, historically, just one per cent of the national cancer research spend has been allocated to the disease.

Brain Tumour Research funds sustainable research at dedicated centres in the UK. It also campaigns for the government and larger cancer charities to invest more in research into brain tumours to speed up new treatments for patients and, ultimately, find a cure.



THE FASTER HE COUNTED HIS SPOONS...

First featured in our magazine two years ago (spring 2020 edition), self-confessed Spoons fan Peter Dobson has reached a significant milestone in his quest to visit every Wetherspoon pub in the UK.

By mid November 2021, Peter chalked up his 300th pub visit, in his ambitious 'Wetherspoon Challenge'.

As well as enjoying a visit to the various pubs, Peter also shares each experience on his YouTube channel – Visiting Every Wetherspoon: tinyurl.com/4cpb8fv5

Peter reported: "The videos are not professional (assembled from photographs taken during the visits), but I have more than 400 subscribers, which is great."

Starting in October 2019 at #001 with The Eight Bells (Dover), by the turn of the new year 2020, Peter had already collected his first 100 venues from across London and the southeast.

His travels have since taken him further afield and, despite setting out on this adventure at probably the most difficult time in recent history, his total of 300 visits, in just over two years, is a remarkable achievement.

Peter concluded: "I want to say a massive thankyou to all the lovely Wetherspoon staff and customers who have really got behind me to support my crazy challenge."

"You're all doing an amazing job – and I'm so looking forward to meeting you all, hopefully in the near future."



ENVILLE'S ENVOYS BRING ALES TO THE CROSS INN



A meet-the-brewer event at The Cross Inn (Kingswinford) showcased ales from a local Stourbridge-based brewery.

Located just 15 miles from the pub, Enville Brewery's representatives, Rebecca Braham and Helen Briggs, hosted the presentation at our pub – and customers enjoyed sampling the ales on offer.

Among the brews at the event, organised by shift manager and ale champion Ryan Evans, were Enville Ale (4.5% ABV), Blizzard (6.5% ABV), Ginger Gothic (5.2% ABV), Gothic Stout (5.2% ABV) and American Pale Ale (4.3% ABV).

Ryan said: "The pub opened in August 2020, so has been closed for much of the time, through COVID-19 restrictions.

"This was our first opportunity to stage a meet-the-brewer event, something we plan to organise regularly in the future.

"Enville's ales are also proving very popular with our customers and are regularly among the four or five ever-changing guest ales on offer at the pub."

Pictured are (left to right) customers Anthony Pugh and David Furber, with Rebecca Braham and Helen Briggs from Enville Brewery.

DREAM ENTRANCE IN GLASGOW FOR GOLDIHOPS AND THE THREE BEERS

If you went down to The Society Room (Glasgow), you'd be in for a pleasant surprise, as Goldihops and three other beers were on offer at a meet-the-brewer evening.

Ale-lovers at the pub held their first such evening in two years.

Newly appointed ale champion duty manager Michael Dolan kicked off a series of what will hopefully become regular events by inviting local Kelburn Brewery to show off its beers and talk to customers.

Ales featured on the evening were Kelburn Goldihops, a hoppy 3.8% ABV golden ale, Pivo Estivo, a pale, dry, citrusy number at 3.9% ABV, the more full-bodied Jaguar (4.5% ABV) and Pacific Porter at 5.5% ABV, made with chocolate malt.

Kelburn Brewery's owner, Karen Moore, said: "It was an informal, fun evening and was nice chatting to customers and answering their questions about the beers and brewing in general."

The pub's manager, Bobby McCrone, added: "It's really good to be able to run these evenings again. It was a busy, well-attended evening, generating a lot of interest in the ales."

Karen Moore is pictured (left) with Michael Dolan and Kelburn sales rep Mary-Jane Baxter.





STARS IN ALIGNMENT AT THE COLISEUM PICTURE THEATRE

This fully restored Art Deco delight brings glee to Cleethorpes, following 100 years of this historic building's ups and downs

This Wetherspoon pub opened in July 2014, following a £1.67-million redevelopment project of the former Amishi nightclub.

In more than a century since it was first built, the premises has been home to an array of businesses and activities.

However, our pub's name remembers the building's early incarnation as the Coliseum Picture Theatre.

The distinctive local landmark first opened its doors in May 1914, as a rival cinema to the nearby cinemas – Royal and the Empire.

It was used as a boxing booth or hall for troops of the Manchester Regiment, during World War I (1914–18), before being taken over, in 1919, by Cleethorpes Empire Company and reopening the following year.

Façade

The date of 1920 is still visible today at the top of the building's façade.

The cinema closed in November 1937 and was taken over by FW Woolworth Co Ltd, which converted it into one of its stores, with very little alteration, for a brief sojourn.

It was also used as The British Legion Club, an auction room and dance hall, before opening in 1977 as an indoor market.

Just a month after launching the market venture, fire completely gutted the premises, yet, almost a year later, it reopened again, following a further £40,000 refurbishment.

Then, by the 1980s, it became an amusement arcade and later Arthur's Snooker Hall, before reverting to an indoor market again, known as Some Place Else.

In the late 1990s, the building was transformed once more to house the Baton Rouge live music restaurant, boasting an upstairs seating area and bar, with views over the dance floor.

Celebrities

Yet another makeover in 2008 produced the Amishi nightclub, attracting television celebrities among the night-time revellers to the Art Deco-themed venue, before being sold in 2013.

Wetherspoon purchased the premises that year and began transforming it into a modern pub, with echoes of Cleethorpes's history and the building's original cinematic life.

The priority of the new pub design was to re-establish the appearance and Coliseum Picture Theatre name, by restoring to its former glory the Art Deco-style external façade.

Internally, the sensitive restoration and renovation project exposed the industrial trusses, while the construction of the roof space has created a dramatic internal area. This is all illuminated by roof lights, welcoming natural light into the space.

The double-height space of the building has been preserved by enhancing the mezzanine levels within and installing traditional wood panelling to give the customer areas a feeling of tradition and warmth.



A feature fireplace on the ground floor also adds to the cosy feel of the place, despite the large surrounding space.

Booths

Several booths and fixed seats throughout the pub provide intimate areas to relax, while open areas with traditional tables and dining chairs provide seating in the customer areas on two floors.

An open kitchen on the first floor, together with an open-gantry area on the ground floor, allows customers a view of the behind-the-scenes workings of the pub.

There is also an open cellar, on the ground floor, with a glass wall providing views of the beer barrels and storage.

The interior design of the pub plays on the theme of The Coliseum Picture Theatre as a place of entertainment.

There are gilt-framed prints and large mirrors on display.

The cinematic history of the building has also contributed to many of the ideas behind its interior design. The glasswash area is inspired by a design of a typical 30s cinema ticket booth.

Having discovered links between the Roman port in Grimsby and settlements around the area of Cleethorpes, this ancient history has been used as an inspiration for some of the interior's finishes.

There are decorative columns on the first floor and a large wall mural depicting decorative Roman-style statues and a 'view' of Cleethorpes pier.

A Roman gladiator statue also stands proudly in the pub, representing the sculptures which once surrounded the Coliseum in Rome.

The roof-terrace garden provides a quiet oasis of calm where customers may relax, away from the busy town centre, with plenty of space for outdoor socialising, including sheltered seating.

There is also, at the front of the building, a beer garden at ground-floor level.

● 26–28 High Street, Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, DN35 8JN





THE CORDWAINER • NORTHAMPTON

HAPPY MANAGER IAN PUTS HIS SUCCESS DOWN TO CHEMISTRY



Pub manager Ian Gardner may have worked for Wetherspoon for more than 20 years, but regular changes and innovations across the company, as well as his working environment, always bring a fresh new challenge.

Ian has managed The Cordwainer (Northampton) since July 2009, when it first opened as a Lloyds bar. Back then, it was one of three Wetherspoon pubs in the town centre.

In the summer of 2019, with a full refurbishment and expansion, The Cordwainer underwent a £1-million investment project, adding a new roof-top terrace and increasing the indoor capacity.

Ian reported: "The reopening of our new-look pub was just around eight months before lockdown happened, so we still don't know the full potential of the pub – and things still feel quite new.

"We are also now the only Wetherspoon pub in the town centre; so, more than 12 years on from opening, there is still enough excitement and much ambition for me as pub manager.

"During my career with the company, there has been some change every few years – this offers a dynamic new look to my job... which is absolutely great."

Ian first joined the company in 1998 at The Figure of Eight (Birmingham), but left to complete a chemistry degree at the University of Birmingham.

He laughed: "That's when I found out that I'm rubbish at chemistry!"

Ian returned in June 2000, working for two years at The Spread Eagle (Acocks Green, Birmingham) as a relief manager, then spent about a year at The Rising Sun (Redditch) and had a five-year stint at The Briar Rose (Birmingham), before moving to Northampton.

Ian, 44, said: "I spent my formative years in Birmingham and my 'growing-up' in Northampton, in terms of my career and family life.

"I now have three children (aged six, nine and 13).

"I have worked for several types of manager and have learned something different from each – from discipline to a passion for real ale.

"The company is absolutely brilliant, too, and has given me everything during the past 20+ years.

"The main thing about Wetherspoon is that it cares about its people. Tim Martin is passionate about his people.

"I also love helping to develop people and seeing them fulfil their ambitions."

Ian concluded: "I am lucky to be in the position where I am.

"I have a great job, in a brilliant pub, in a place which I love.

"My dream is to be here long enough to have a statue erected, in the middle of the pub, when I eventually hang up my apron."

NEW SPIRITS



SPIRITS IN THE M

When it comes to shorts, our customers are never short of choice - with

In the full spirit of Wetherspoon tradition, we have added a selection of NEW spirits to our ever-growing drinks menu.

Whatever your tittle, we have something for everyone.

With two NEW vodkas, two NEW rums and four NEW liqueurs and shots, as well as a NEW gin on the block, customers will be spoiled for choice.

NEW in the vodka line-up are Au Vodka (blue raspberry) and Smirnoff Mango & Passionfruit Twist vodka.

Unique

Au Vodka (blue raspberry) (35.2% ABV) combines Au's multiaward-winning vodka with fresh raspberry, creating a sweet, fruity, unique blue vodka.

Au Vodka, in its signature gold bottle ('Au' being the chemical element symbol for gold in the periodic table), was founded in 2016 by close friends Charlie Morgan and Jackson Quinn, in their home city of Swansea.

Inspired by gold, Au Vodka combines British heritage and luxury ingredients. An ultra-premium British vodka, it is five times distilled and gold filtered for a pure, authentic taste.

Smirnoff Mango & Passionfruit Twist flavoured vodka (37.5% ABV) is bold, tropical and deliciously juicy.

It is made with unmistakably smooth Smirnoff No. 21 Premium Vodka, triple-distilled from a blend of the finest grains and filtered 10 times.

Infused with naturally sweet mango and fruity passion fruit flavours, for a tart and fruity finish, this pairs well with lemonade or pineapple and cranberry juice.

Manquila (15% ABV) is the latest creation from Manchester-based craft distillery Zymurgorium (makers of Realm of the Unicorn and Sweet Violet gin-based liqueurs) to be served at Wetherspoon.

Zymurgorium (an amalgamation of 'zymurgy', meaning the study of scientific brewing, and 'emporium') was first set up by Aaron Darke in 2013, in his mum and dad's garden shed.

With new premises and joined by his brother Callum, the pair started to create novel and never-seen-before spirits.

Manquila, the new 'Queen of the Night', has come swinging into your local from Manchester's notorious flavour wizards. Zymurgorium's wild strawberry cream liqueur is blended with some of the finest agave spirit from Jalisco (Mexico) to produce a fiesta for your taste buds - available as a shot or over ice.



MATERIAL WORLD

new vodkas, rums, liqueurs, shots and a gin added to line-up

Collection

We have added two NEW choices to Wetherspoon's rum shack collection, with Duppy White Jamaican rum (40% ABV) and Twin Fin coconut & lychee rum (38% ABV).

Duppy White is a vibrant celebration of Jamaica and its influence on the world.

Produced and co-founded with musical pioneer and British rapper Kano (from East Ham, London), this is a rum five years in the making, with flavours of mango, pimento and fresh thyme – a 100-per-cent Jamaican flavour.

Born from the memories, smells and flavours which reflect Kano's Jamaican roots, it also celebrates the profound impact of Jamaican culture on London and the world, including food, fashion and music.

With an unmistakable, yet subtle, note of Jamaican pot still rum, it has a rich caramel sweetness and full texture, with hints of fresh-cut sugarcane grass, mango and a subtle peppery heat.

Vibrant

Twin Fin coconut & lychee rum is bold and bright, with notes of fresh lychee and vibrant coconut and an aromatic taste of coconut sorbet, wild strawberry and melon, together with a crisp and tart lychee finish.

Inspired by the coasts of Cornwall and the Caribbean, Twin Fin is created by Southwestern Distillery, near Padstow.

To craft Twin Fin, self-taught master distiller Tarquin Leadbetter (of Tarquin's Gin) has combined his experience of distilling botanicals with his love of experimentation and innovation.

The finest Caribbean rums are carefully selected from distilleries across the Caribbean, then blended together with fruits and spices from around the world, in the north Cornwall coast distillery, established in 2012, to produce rich, tropical and refreshing Twin Fin rums.

Wetherspoon's gin palace also has a new bedfellow... or should that be bathfellow?

NEW to the range is the award-winning Bath tub Gin (43.3% ABV) from Kent-based Ableforth's, founded in 2011 and inspired by the home-concocted 'bathtub gins' of the 1920s.

Double infused for extra flavour, it combines delicious botanicals, such as juniper, coriander, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves and orange peel and is crafted using a traditional cold-compounding technique.

It is served with your choice of tonic or mixer and an orange slice. Discover the NEW spirits on our drinks menu now being served.

See next page for brand-new vodka-based Swedish schnapps – **Flävar** 

FLÄVAR – SCANDILICIOUS SWEDISH SCHNAPPS



Wetherspoon's pubs are the first in the UK to launch a brand-new range of vodka-based schnapps from Sweden called Flävar (25% ABV).

There is an age-old tradition of food and drinks going hand in hand with the Swedish midsummer festivities, raising glasses, drinking schnapps and collectively exclaiming 'Skål'!

Flävar is produced by master craftsmen Janne and Anders, next to the Göta Canal, in Borensberg, south Sweden.

The clean and pure vodka is made with some of the freshest water in the world.

Janne said: "We've been producing our award-winning vodka for more than 20 years – and it makes the perfect base for a sweet and smooth schnapps."

If you have ever been to Sweden, one of the first things you would have noticed is that it is a country which loves sweets.

So, Janne and Anders have flavoured their beloved schnapps with some of Sweden's most famous and indulgent favourites.

Anders said: "We wanted to create a range of schnapps which reflect the way in which we drink schnapps in Sweden – fun, bright and for the good times!"

The NEW range of flavoured schnapps is now available at your local Wetherspoon – and each can be enjoyed as a shot, over ice or with a mixer.

Strawberry and Lime

Sweden has some of the most succulent strawberries in the world, candy-sweet and flavoursome. These are mixed with a touch of lime for the enticing taste of a Swedish summer. (This is also available as a bomb, with Monster Ultra.)

Raspberry and Liqueur

What the Swedes don't know about liqueur isn't worth knowing – it's their perfect warming treat for cold winters. This is delicious combined with the sweet, soft and juicy raspberries found growing wild all over Sweden.

Salted Caramel

The smooth, moreish, sweet and salty sensation shouldn't work, but it REALLY does!

NEW *and* FRUITY



BLUE RASPBERRY



COCONUT & LYCHEE



WHITE RUM



DOUBLE INFUSED



WILD STRAWBERRY



BLACKBERRY & RASPBERRY



RASPBERRY



MANGO & PASSIONFRUIT

STRAWBERRY



LEMON



ORANGE



STRAWBERRY & LIME



PASSION FRUIT & ELDERFLOWER

SWEET VIOLET



MARSHMALLOW



APPLE



RASPBERRY



RHUBARB & GINGER



BANANA, TOFFEE & SPICE



CHERRY



MANGO & PINEAPPLE



PINEAPPLE



POET HELPS PIPERS DELIVER A BIG BLOW ON BURNS' NIGHT

Our annual Burns event (14–26 January) was enjoyed by customers at our pubs across England, Wales and, of course, Scotland.

As well as with Scottish haggis, neeps and tatties, plus our Caledonian burger, some pubs marked the occasion with other Scottish traditions, including pipes and poetry.

At The Golden Acorn (Glenrothes), customers were entertained by bagpiper Sara Smith (pictured above), from Ballingry (Fife).

Sara, a member of the highly successful Lochgelly High School Pipe Band and a floor associate at the pub, played traditional pipe tunes to mark the occasion.

Piper Thomas Cornwall, from Inverness, is pictured (below left) with shift manager Robyn Morrison outside The King's Highway (Inverness).

Thomas played a selection of pipe tunes for customers to enjoy with their haggis, neeps and tatties, while Robyn treated everyone to some Robert Burns poetry readings.

At The Bellwether (Wednesbury), bar associates Lauren Dale (left) and Bethany Green are pictured (below right) with customer Robert Burns.

Sharing his name with the Scottish poet, 87-year-old Robert dons his Highland dress every year to celebrate Burns' Night (25 January).

Also a regular at The Bloxwich Showman (Bloxwich) and The Avion (Aldridge), Walsall-born Robert, still living in Walsall, is also a Winston Churchill impersonator.



POPPY APPEAL BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN PEOPLE

Each year, during the November period of remembrance, Wetherspoon's pubs support the Royal British Legion's annual poppy appeal.

Our pubs across England, Scotland and Wales display poppies – and each has a collection box on the bar.

Many of our pubs also produce their own poppy and remembrance displays to mark the occasion – and 2021, the Royal British Legion's centenary year, was no exception.

Shift leader Amy Leeder and team leader Tracy Willats are pictured with their annual poppy display at The Red Lion (Thetford).

Amy said: "Tracy and I have been decorating the pub with an annual poppy display for the past six years, also with the help of our regular customers."

"It is a humbling thing to do, and we are very proud to support the Remembrance Day commemorations in this way."

"Our display for 2021 incorporated a war horse theme, with 200 handmade purple poppies to remember the animals lost in service too."

At The Miller's Well (East Ham), pub staff, together with members of the East Ham & District Branch Royal British Legion, officials and supporters (pictured), gathered for a minute's silence to remember those who lost their life in two world wars and subsequent conflicts.

Our east London pub, which houses a permanent memorial, set up by East Ham & District branch members as The Miller's Well War Memorial Trust, displaying memorial plaques, medals and dedicated artwork, is the community focal point for Remembrance Day commemorations.

The pub's manager, Paul Johnson, said: "We are always honoured to play our part in the Remembrance Sunday commemorations, welcoming our friends from the Royal British Legion."

"It is always a poignant day for everyone, with 2021 having the added significance of being the 100th anniversary of the Royal British Legion."

It was not only in pubs, but also at our head office, that Wetherspoon was showing its support for the RBL poppy appeal.

Our supply distribution partners DHL, based at the Wetherspoon national distribution centre (NDC) in Daventry, also wore their poppies with pride on the front of our fleet of delivery lorries.

Several of the DHL drivers who deliver to Wetherspoon's pubs are, themselves, ex-servicemen, having previously served in the armed forces, and are pictured with their vehicles and poppies on display.

They are Phil Windridge, Geoff Otter, Pete Oldham, Steve Haynes and Steve Whiting.

The Royal British Legion is there to help members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans and their families – all year round. Every person, every donation and every poppy count.



NEW

A MIGHTY VEGAN MENU – BUILT FROM THE GROUND UP

Two new vegan dishes added to our menu

Every new year, following the festive season's excesses, many of us often make a personal promise to ourselves to make steps to improve our diet and fitness, health and well-being.

In January, tens of thousands of people across the UK, once again, joined the vegan revolution – through the Veganuary campaign – inspiring and supporting people to try vegan for January and throughout the rest of the year.

Wetherspoon has always been at the forefront of changing ideas, new trends and customer interest, and has been recognised for our innovations, including our vegan dishes.

Reduce

Veganuary 2022 was no exception, with two NEW non-meat dishes, not only for vegans and vegetarians, but for anyone looking to reduce the meat intake in their diet.

The even better news is that our NEW fiesta burger and NEW smashed avocado muffin aren't for Veganuary (throughout January) alone.

The two new vegan dishes have been added permanently to our menu, so that they can be enjoyed by everyone all day, every day, year long.

Our fiesta burger (Beyond Meat® plant-based patty, salsa, guacamole, roasted peppers, courgette and onion, with six onion rings and chips) and smashed avocado muffin (a toasted English muffin, with guacamole and pico de gallo) join an ever-growing feast of vegan menu options.

Curry

If you haven't tried our Mangalorean roasted cauliflower & spinach curry yet, where have you been? You are missing out on a real treat.

Served with basmati pilau rice, plain naan bread and poppadums, the oven-roasted cauliflower florets and spinach have been combined with a sauce infused with curry leaf, cumin and coriander and allowed to simmer for hours, delivering a rich aromatic flavour – which is then finished with coconut cream and garam masala.

If you are seeking a lighter bite or snack, our paninis and wraps or small plates offer great value and choice.

Among the options are Quorn™ nuggets, served as a small-plate choice, with eight coated pieces and a sweet chilli sauce, or as a wrap option, with tomato, cucumber and salsa.

Protein

These crunchy meat-free nuggets are high in protein and fibre and low in saturated fat, with no soya, made from mycoprotein – a natural, nutritious fungus – which is good for not only us, but also the health of the planet.

Our Beyond Burger™ – served as a classic burger, with chopped Cos lettuce, sliced tomato and red onion in a sour dough burger bun – is a tasty, more traditional burger choice, although still a plant-based option from Beyond Meat®.

It is available in our classic burger range, which includes a drink as part of the price.

You can add toppings, including, BBQ sauce and five-bean chilli – and double your patty (for an extra cost) for a bespoke burger to suit yourself.

We also serve vegan roasted vegetable pizza and Mediterranean salad, jacket potato with five-bean chilli, roasted vegetables or baked beans, as well as vegan breakfast, all clearly marked on our menus like this  for vegans.

Check out our entire vegan menu range today.



NEW

Fiesta burger



BEYOND MEAT™



Five-bean chilli jacket potato



Quorn™ nuggets

Our menus have a selection of vegan items

NEW Smashed avocado muffin • **NEW** Fiesta burger • Vegan breakfast

Bowl of chips with curry sauce • Quorn™ nuggets (small plate with sweet chilli sauce)

Jacket potato with five-bean chilli, roasted vegetables or baked beans

Quorn™ nugget wrap • Mediterranean salad • Beyond Burger™ • Five-bean chilli

Mangalorean roasted cauliflower & spinach curry • Vegan roasted vegetable pizza



Smashed avocado muffin



Mangalorean roasted cauliflower & spinach curry

PRAISE FROM PETA

In the past, Wetherspoon's vegan menu dishes have won recognition at the PETA Vegan Food Awards.

A UK-based charity dedicated to establishing and protecting animal rights, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is always keen to promote menu innovation and new vegan options.

Dawn Carr, PETA's director of vegan corporate projects, said: "The market for vegan food has seen explosive growth over the past few years – and this shows no signs of slowing.

"In fact, a YouGov survey (January 2022) showed that one-third of people in the UK are interested in going vegan – and more and more meat-eaters are seeking vegan meals to improve their health and reduce their impact on the planet.

"It's brilliant to see Wetherspoon's vegan range growing – and it's smart business, too."

BABY RUBY - OUR YOUNGEST NEWBIE



Wetherspoon's pubs have been welcoming customers, young and old, for several decades now – but few of them are as young as Ruby-Rose Szoros.

Baby Ruby-Rose was just 48 hours old on her first visit to The Bishop Vesey (Sutton Coldfield).

Mum Charli and father Lee brought the infant along with them to celebrate a family birthday, but the couple has been visiting the pub for many years.

Now 32, Charli has been a regular there since she was 18, while her parents, sister and brother-in-law are all customers there as well.

She said: "My baby girl potentially might just be the youngest to have been in one of your pubs (at under 48 hours old)."

Charli and Lee visit the pub weekly, on a Wednesday, enjoying a family meal and a drink with their son Hugo, aged two.

Charli said: "Hugo loves having his dinner here every Wednesday night now – it's become a bit of a family ritual. Our Wednesday family night will continue with our new fourth member."

Baby Ruby-Rose is pictured with her uncle Mike Ashford at The Bishop Vesey.

FAN CHRIS SPREADS THE NEWS TO BALI



News of all things Wetherspoon has spread far and wide over the years, thanks to customers taking copies of our magazine on holiday with them.

One such traveller is Chris Smeaton, who took some copies on a month-long tour of Indonesia, visiting friends, family and former colleagues.

His tour took him to Bali, Java and the Indonesian capital Jakarta.

Chris, who is a retired teacher, said: "Everyone over there was very excited to read about Wetherspoon, as I had mentioned the pubs to people on previous visits."

Copies were handed to locals, as well as to British expatriates, including a head teacher in Jakarta.

Chris is pictured at his local, The Corn Exchange (Bury St Edmunds).

LEYLAND LION TAMER LEADS SAFARI TO YORK

More than 100 customers from The Leyland Lion (Leyland) enjoyed a day out to York organised by the pub's manager Mark Batty.

Two coachloads set off from the pub at 9am. On arrival, people went their separate ways in groups to visit the city's tourist attractions and cafés.

The trip was one of a series of customer coach tours organised by Mark – these have included many northern cities and tourist attractions, with the occasional foray abroad to destinations as far away as Prague.

Mark said: "It was a great day out and was really good to get so many people out and about."

Next stop on the tour schedule is the ancient Roman town of Chester.

Mark is pictured in the foreground with customers behind him.



THE NEW FAIRLOP OAK • BARKINGSIDE

BUSY IN BARKINGSIDE: THE TRIO WORKING TWO JOBS EACH



Three staff members at The New Fairlop Oak (Fairlop) have six jobs among them.

These days, it's common for people to work more than one job.

In fact, the Office for National Statistics reports, during August–October 2021, that 1.15 million workers had two or more employments.

Such workers depend on a flexible approach and good communications with their different employers.

At the pub, shift leader Burhan Pazar (left) also works as a legal accounts software analyst. His twin brother, Omer (right), is a teacher at a secondary school in Newham, east London, by day and works as a team leader in the evening.

Their colleague, Dean Richards (centre), is also a team leader, but works as a web designer in the daytime.

All three have to manage their time carefully and efficiently.

Burhan, 26, has been at The New Fairlop Oak since mid 2019.

He said: "It can be challenging, time-wise. You have to be organised."

He works 9am–5.30pm during the week as a software analyst and then Fridays and Saturdays, in addition to occasional weekday shifts, at the pub – where he also organises the weekly pub quiz.

Burhan says of Wetherspoon: "It's a good working environment – and the company is happy to fit me in so that I can work my other job. I think, these days, employers need to be flexible around that."

His twin, Omer, said: "Teaching is demanding and challenging in itself. As well as your teaching hours, say 9am–3pm, there is a lot of lesson-planning and marking to do.

"Time-wise, having a second job on top of that is an additional challenge, so you just have to be 'on it'.

"I like to think, as a team leader, that I bring a lot to the table with my work ethic. I take the job seriously – and, if you're like that, the employer will be more willing to be flexible with you. It's a two-way street."

Dean, 28, doesn't find it hard to manage his time.

He said: "I work from home. I start work as a web designer at 6am, working until 2pm, and then I get a chance to freshen up before starting at Wetherspoon at 4pm or 5pm."

Late shifts at the pub can go on until 2am, since, once the customers have gone, the place has to be tidied and made ready for the next trading day.

Pub manager Karen Burdett said: "Burhan, Omer and Dean are all fantastic members of staff.

"Any shift with them on it is a good shift... a bonus.

"They mostly work their other job in the day, working here in the evening.

"Other colleagues prefer day shifts, so we can easily organise the rotas to accommodate them."

NEW

BOTTLED BEAUTIES SURE TO MAKE LAGER-LOVERS REJOICE

Fab new world beers, Peroni, Staropramen, Asahi and Heineken, added to range

Wetherspoon has added four NEW world beers to its wide range of bottled beer and craft choices.

Our collection now offers Peroni (5.1% ABV), Staropramen (5.0% ABV), Asahi (5.2% ABV) and Heineken (5.0% ABV), served in a large bottle for your enjoyment.

These fab four brews join our ever-popular Birra Moretti (4.6% ABV), Erdinger Weissbier (5.3% ABV), Tyskie Gronie (5.0% ABV), Efes (5.0% ABV), Newcastle Brown Ale (4.7% ABV), Brooklyn Lager (5.2% ABV), BrewDog Hazy Jane (5.0% ABV) and BrewDog Elvis Juice (6.5% ABV) – all still being served.

Travel the world today, via your taste buds, in the comfortable and familiar surroundings of your local Wetherspoon pub.

NEW



660ml

Peroni (5.1% ABV)

In 1963, the Peroni family had a vision to create a beer to embody Italian values of quality and craftsmanship.

This premium Italian lager is crisp and refreshing, with a delicate balance of bitterness, citrus and spicy aromatic notes, combined with a fast, clean finish.

Brewed with the same flair and attention to detail through three generations of master brewers, Peroni Nastro Azzurro uses only the finest ingredients, including the exclusive Nostrano dell'Isola maize, giving the beer its distinct clarity and light golden colour.

NEW



660ml

Staropramen (5.0% ABV)

Meaning 'old spring' in English, this Czech Republic premium beer has its own distinctive taste.

A deep golden colour, with a rich and floral aroma, this is a full-bodied beer with a pleasantly balanced and malty flavour, together with a gentle, bitter finish.

With the building of a brewery in Smichov, Prague has been the home of Staropramen since 1869.

With a brewing method which uses a 70-day process, to allow the distinctive tastes to develop, this product represents the spirit of Prague.



NEW

660ml



Asahi (5.2% ABV)

Asahi Super Dry is Japan's number-one beer and the UK's number-one Japanese beer.

Brewed to the Japanese recipe to deliver its refreshing, crisp, super-dry taste, this premium lager has a clean finish.

It has a distinctive taste known in Japan as karakuichi (dry), a word adopted by sake-brewing techniques.

NEW

650ml



Heineken (5.0% ABV)

First brewed in Amsterdam way back in 1873, Heineken is a refreshing premium beer, brewed with 100% natural ingredients, with a well-balanced taste and subtle fruity notes.

Heineken was first brewed by 22-year-old Gerard Heineken, after he purchased a brewery called 'De Hooiberg' (Haystack), in the heart of Amsterdam. More than 140 years later, the lager still carries the Heineken family name and a relentless dedication to quality.

DUNDEE

COUNTING HOUSE CREW COUNTS A LOT OF KILOMETRES



Staff at The Counting House (Dundee) raised funds for Poppy Scotland, with a sponsored walk event throughout November 2021.

During the month-long challenge, the team collectively walked 2,636km in its 'Walk to Remember'.

The pub's manager, Stevie Reid, pictured with bar associate Tobryn Prior, explained: "The Counting House is in a university city and we get a lot of staff transferred from all over the UK to our pub.

"We decided to do this walk of remembrance, in aid of Poppy Scotland, aiming to cover the equivalent distance as the 22 pubs, where current staff have been transferred from, and back home again.

"We were walking home for those who couldn't."

Among the pub locations from where staff have been transferred are Alloa, Arbroath, Berkshire, County Durham, Devon, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, Galashiels, Glasgow, Hampshire, Hawick, Kent, Kirkcaldy, Lancashire, London, Oban and Wiltshire.

The team members recorded their steps and distance, while working at the pub throughout the month of November, achieving their 2,636km target, as well as raising £253 for Poppy Scotland.

RENFREW

LORDLY MUNIFICENCE FROM LORD OF THE ISLES

A Christmas hamper of selection boxes and chocolates was delivered to Renfrew foodbank by staff at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew).

The festive treats were put together, by staff, led by the pub's manager Donna Walker, thanks to donations from customers, friends and family.

Donna, pictured (right) with shift leader Claire McCafferty, said:

"We just thought that it would be a good idea to give some local children some nice things to eat over the holidays.

"The hamper was full of sweets and treats for children at Christmas."



DERBY

OUR DERBY PUBS RAISE KNIFE CRIME AWARENESS

Our three Wetherspoon pubs in Derby joined forces to show their support for knife crime awareness in the city.

The Standing Order, The Babington Arms and The Thomas Leaper each hosted charity fundraising events, during a fortnight-long awareness initiative, collectively amassing £1,372 for Safe and Sound Derby.

The Standing Order presented Innuendo Bingo and The Babington Arms staged a pub quiz night, while The Thomas Leaper hosted Rock and Roll Bingo, an open-mic live music night and charity raffle draw.

The proceeds from all events were donated to Safe and Sound Derby, a local charity helping to transform young lives through awareness, support, outreach and education.

Staff from the pubs also joined hundreds of local people, throughout the city centre, for 'A walk against knife crime in Derby', in support of victims and protesting against knife crime in the city.

The shift manager at The Thomas Leaper, Holly Harrison, said: "We all feel very strongly about spreading awareness regarding knife crime.

"We are very passionate about coming together as a community to help to keep our staff and customers safe.

"This awareness initiative and joint fundraising event showcase what we can achieve when working together in unity."



Pictured outside The Thomas Leaper are (left to right) bar associate Jordan White (The Babington Arms), shift leader Bethh Mosley (The Standing Order) and shift manager Holly Harrison (The Thomas Leaper)

HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING

WILD BOAR BUNCH DIGS DEEP FOR SPACE4

Staff and customers at The Wild Boar (Houghton-le-Spring) supported a local community project in the run-up to Christmas.

The team collected donations at the pub on behalf of local foodbank Space4.

Collecting boxes were available for anyone to pop in and drop off much-needed tinned and dried food items, as well as toiletries and essentials, which were then given to the Space4 volunteers for distribution.

Customers were also able to enjoy a cuppa at the pub and learn more about the services on offer from Space4, which include a listening ear, advice and guidance to those in need.

Shift manager Stephen Petty said: "Recent times have been extremely tough for a lot of folk – and Space4 does an amazing job helping local people.

"We wanted to do our bit, especially in the run-up to Christmas, to help to support the Houghton-le-Spring community and this much-needed initiative."

Run by volunteers from St Michael and All Angels Church, Space4 community project is based on the ground floor of the library, on the main shopping street in Houghton-le-Spring.

Working in partnership with other local community organisations, Space4 provides practical advice and support, as well as a foodbank for those facing financial difficulty.



Reverend John D'Silva from Space4 receives the donations from team leader Natasha Marshall and shift manager Anthony Stronach

Meet the brewer

Wetherspoon is committed to serving the best range of beers in its pubs, including sourcing from microbreweries throughout the UK and Ireland annually. Here, we feature two brewers whose beers are enjoyed at our pubs.

PIONEERING YORKSHIRE BREWERY HITS NEW PEAKS

After beginning as a microbrewery in 2005, Saltaire now produces more than five million pints of beer a year

Brewery's name: Saltaire Brewery, Shipley, West Yorkshire



This year, Saltaire Brewery is marking 16 years since its first brew and a working relationship with Wetherspoon which stretches back to the brewery's inception.

Owner and founder Tony Gartland, who is still very much involved, set up Saltaire, one of the earliest microbreweries in Yorkshire, in 2005.

Now, the brewery produces more than five million pints of beer a year and distributes to 20 countries worldwide.

Closer to home, although within a wide geographical spread from the Shipley-based brewhouse, Saltaire's cask ales are delivered directly to our pubs across Yorkshire, as well as to Manchester, Liverpool, Middlesbrough and as far south as Croydon and Surbiton, south London.

Flagship

Among those ales are Saltaire's flagship brew Saltaire Blonde (4.0% ABV), Cascade (4.8% ABV) and the multiaward-winning Triple Choc (4.8% ABV).

Wetherspoon's customers across the UK should also look out for New World (5.2% ABV), which is on our national listing until the end of March.

Co-owner Nick Helliwell, who joined the brewery seven years ago as sales and marketing director, confirmed: "We produced 500 casks of our red hoppy beer, New World, for Wetherspoon's pubs nationwide for its seasonal listing.

"We also deliver directly to local pubs and have done so right from the start."

He continued: "When we started out in 2005, there were around 400–500 breweries in the UK; now, there are 2,500, so it was somewhat more of a rarity to have a local brewery.

Relationship

"Our relationship with Wetherspoon has grown in that time, delivering cask ale weekly to pubs, and we have also produced two or three festival ales every year for the past decade."

Although Nick points out that Saltaire's business is not built around Wetherspoon, it is, nevertheless, a much-valued working relationship.

He confirmed: "When our beer leaves the brewery, we need to ask ourselves important questions to ensure that it reaches the customer as we would want it to.

"We consider whether the serving conditions are clean; is the beer poured well; is the turnover fast enough for the ale to stay fresh. Wetherspoon answers all of these – and we trust its pubs with our beer."

Production

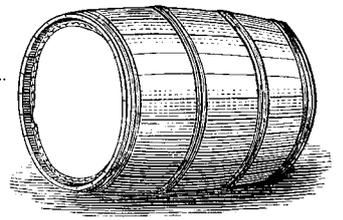
Production manager Ben Pearson (pictured) has been at the helm of beer production for the past two years. Previously with Rooster's Brewing Co, he is responsible for Saltaire's bespoke 40bbl Moeschle brew kit.

Also, since the 2019 installation of a state-of-the-art packaging plant on site, as well as being a financial saviour, thanks to direct customer delivery during the pandemic, the 100,000-unit-per-week-capacity plant now brews and packages beer for a dozen other breweries.

Nick concluded: "We have a great relationship with Wetherspoon at every level – with its pubs being a great shop window for our beer.

"Wetherspoon knows what it is doing, cares about beer and looks after it.

"In fact, a couple of our brewery staff are former Wetherspoon employees and have only ever had good things to say."



CRAFT BEER PIONEER SET TO MOVE 'LOCK, STOCK AND BARRELS'

Isle of Wight-based Goddards to transfer production to brand-new facility

Brewery's name: Goddards Brewery, Ryde, Isle of Wight



Goddards Brewery is the oldest brewery on the Isle of Wight and one of the first independent craft beer producers in the UK.

It was founded in 1993 by Anthony Goddard at Barnsley Farm, in Ryde, where the family-run brewery still operates. However, things are about to change – and 2022 promises to be an exciting year for the folks at Goddards.

During March and April, they are due to move, 'lock, stock and barrels', to a brand-new purpose-built facility. The new brewery, near Sandown, will feature a visitor centre, together with a restaurant, bar and shop.

Goddards' managing director, Bob Simpson (pictured centre), with brewers Nigel Eldridge (left) and Josh Davies, said: "Not only will the new facility increase our capacity and capability, but it will also provide more flexibility.

Showcase

"It will allow us to have a massive showcase capability and also help with our production, especially with our brewing contracts for other breweries, both here on the island and on the mainland.

"The bigger site will allow the brewery to work smarter and more efficiently."

Bob joined the Goddards team just one year ago, yet his brewing experience and working relationship with Wetherspoon stretch back much further.

He founded Ventnor Brewery in the mid 90s, around the same time as Anthony launched Goddards, and has since worked at Bass, Molson Coors and Yates' Brewery.

Bob revealed: "I have known David Aucutt and the team at Wetherspoon supplier East-West for many years – and Goddards has been trading with Wetherspoon for at least 15–20 years.

Cask

"We deliver directly to the two Wetherspoon pubs on the Isle of Wight, as well as across the south coast, from Bournemouth to Bognor Regis, with weekly trips to the mainland with our cask ale." Wetherspoon's customers across the UK might also have enjoyed Goddards' flagship brew Fuggle Dee-Dum (4.8% ABV), an amber, smoky, nutty, hoppy brew which was available on our summer 2021 guest ale listing.

Bob reported: "Our core range of beers is traditional, old-school real ales, with our flagship beer Fuggle Dee-Dum taking centre stage, followed by our citrus blond Ale of Wight. Together, they account for more than two-thirds of our volume."

It is a regular ale on offer at S. Fowler & Co. (Ryde), our nearest pub to the brewery, as well as Starboard! (4.0% ABV) and Wight Squirrel (4.3% ABV).

Christmas

These, together with Fuggle Dee-Dum, were being served when the Goddards team members enjoyed their Christmas get-together at our pub.

Bob laughed: "I guess it was a bit of a busman's holiday, but, as well as our own three beers, I enjoyed a few other ales."

He added: "My general observations at the Wetherspoon pubs I visit are that they are always clean and tidy, the staff obviously stick to a strict cleaning régime and cellar management is very good."

Goddards' two brewers, Nigel Eldridge (17 years at the brewery) and Josh Davies (seven years), are currently enjoying producing different recipes in the new portfolio, developing new products and exciting small brews and collaborations to add to the range.

With a new home and new beers in the pipeline, there are exciting times ahead.

BURNS' WEEK
Round-up



The Sussex (Rhyll) Shift leader Karen Walsh is pictured serving Burns meals at the pub, suitably decorated for the annual event

FIRE SPREADS BEYOND SCOTLAND AS ANNUAL BURNS' NIGHT IGNITES

At our annual Burns event, Wetherspoon's pubs across England, Wales and, of course, Scotland celebrated the life and poetry of the Scottish poet Robert Burns.

The ever-popular celebration, this year running for 13 days (14–26 January, inclusive), included Burns' Night itself on Tuesday 25 January.

To mark the occasion, the pubs served two special meals, once again: Scottish haggis, neeps and tatties, as well as our Caledonian burger (6oz beef patty burger, with haggis and whisky sauce, served with chips and six beer-battered onion rings).

A haggis, neeps and tatties small-version meal was also available, for those wanting a lighter meal or smaller portion.

Among the drinks choices for the Burns event meal deals were Scottish gins, whiskies, rum and beer.

They included two Scottish single-malt whiskies, Glenmorangie and Glenfiddich, Scotland's BrewDog Elvis Juice beer and BrewDog's Five Hundred Cuts Botanical Rum, as well as Scottish gins Tanqueray No. Ten, Tanqueray Flor de Sevilla, Hendrick's Gin and Edinburgh Gin Rhubarb & Ginger.

Customers taking part in Dry January® could also enjoy BrewDog's Punk AF (0.5% ABV), the low-alcohol beer from the Ellon-based brewery.

The event's organiser, Jen Swindells, said: "Our Burns event is always a great opportunity for customers to sample some traditional Scottish food and drinks and to celebrate for longer than just the evening of 25 January itself."



The Great Glen (Fort William) Enjoying their first Burns event are Fort William Football Club's newest signings Jordon Thompson (left) and Adam Morris, both from St Helens



Rose & Crown (Maldon) Tartan-clad bar associate Jack Bannister serves Scottish beers from BrewDog



The Castle Hotel (Ruthin) Customers Roy and Janet Hughes are served by duty manager Chris Rutter



The Salt Cot (Saltcoats) Customer Josephine Dornan enjoys haggis, neeps and tatties



The King's Highway (Inverness) All smiles from customers Josephine and Winston Duff, from Inverness, being served their Burns meals by shift manager Matthew Nicol



The Kirky Puffer (Kirkintilloch) Customer Tracy Brown tucks into a Caledonian burger meal, with a Scottish gin and tonic



The Market Cross (Holywell) Pub manager Chelsea Cahill serves haggis, neeps and tatties to customer Damian Dowgiello



The Crystal Palace (Glasgow) Shift leader Vailla Macpherson serves Alexander Robertson and Charlotte Clark their Burns meals

BURNS' WEEK
Round-up



The Claude du Vall (Camberley) Slàinte – customers Jan Cooper (left) and Thomas Parry enjoy a toast to Burns



The Rohan Kanhai (Ashington) Duty manager Cheryl Graham serves customer John Smith with haggis, neeps and tatties



The Malthouse (Willenhall) Shift leaders Jack Bloor (left) and Reece Philips



The Wheatsheaf Inn (Kilmarnock) Customer Kenneth Campbell enjoys a Caledonian burger and a pint

NORTHFIELD

CASSIE GIVES GIVING TREE A GOOD SHAKE

Shift manager Cassie Boam made the most of her brief spell at The Black Horse (Northfield) to help in supporting disadvantaged youngsters during the Christmas period.

Cassie, who has now joined the team at the recently opened The Navigation Inn (Kings Norton), spent eight weeks at The Black Horse, near Birmingham, where she organised a charity collection.

KidsOut's Giving Tree initiative is designed to be a fun alternative to the traditional secret Santa, inviting businesses and individuals to buy toys for children in local refuge homes, instead.

The recipients are children who have escaped domestic violence, being forced to flee their homes quickly and leave all possessions behind. Without Giving Tree, these children may not otherwise receive a gift at Christmas.

Cassie, who was previously a pub manager at The Widow Frost (Mansfield) and has returned from maternity leave, said: "I wanted to do something

different and had heard about this national scheme which distributes in local areas.

"The customers and staff at The Black Horse were all fantastic – and we received so many donations in such a short space of time."

KidsOut (kidsout.org.uk) gives disadvantaged children positive experiences to support them in becoming future members of our society and workforce.

Each year, more than 20,000 children flee domestic abuse to seek sanctuary in refuge.

Typically leaving home with only the clothes on their back, these children have experienced physical, emotional and even sexual abuse and arrive at refuge with nothing.

In collaboration with Women's Aid, partner charities and corporate supporters, KidsOut works to remind these children, and thousands of others living with disadvantages, what it is like to be children and just have fun.



RENFREW

PUB BOSS DONNA HELPS THE NATIONAL ELF SERVICE



Pub manager Donna Walker has become a volunteer for the Glasgow Children's Hospital, a cause very close to her heart.

Donna (pictured with Santa) explained: "I lost my seven-year-old niece, Sophia, to a brain tumour in November 2020, so wanted to do something to give back to the hospital which looked after her."

In the run-up to the festive season, Donna spent most of December dressed as a Christmas Elf and continues, at least once a week, to help with charity cash collections at shopping centres.

Donna, who runs The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew), said: "At every pub where I have been manager, we have been keen fundraisers, splitting all of our collections in half between the hospital and Young Lives vs Cancer.

"I want to continue my volunteering role and hopefully, when restrictions are lifted further and we are allowed to return to the hospital, I can help to support as a volunteer there too."

WHICKHAM | NEWCASTLE

SISTERS TONI AND TYLER HIT SWEET SPOT WITH GIFTS FOR CHILDREN

An amazing array of Christmas gifts for children at a local hospital were collected by staff at The Harry Clasper (Whickham) and The Five Swans (Newcastle).

The presents, including, chocolates, other confectionery, clothes and toys, were taken to children's hospital The Royal Victoria Infirmary.

Staff at the pubs have organised similar donations to the hospital for the last four years.

The Harry Clasper's manager, Tyler Hudson, collected the donated gifts, as well as some cash to buy others, together with staff and customers.

Her sister, Toni Fitzgerald, is deputy manager at The Five Swans and led the charity effort there.

Toni is pictured with sister Tyler (centre) and, on the right, bar associate at The Harry Clasper, Michelle Cuthbertson.



AWARDS

MELKSHAM

BEAR BEHIND? NOT WITH THESE BLOOMERS



At the annual South West In Bloom awards, organised by the Royal Horticultural Society, The Bear (Melksham) was recognised for its floral displays.

The Wiltshire town of Melksham received its fourth consecutive gold award, while our pub achieved third place in the Shaun Cregan Trophy – Best Public House category.

The pub's manager, Bethany Hughes-Smith (pictured), said: "This competition is an important event in the town's diary, and we are delighted to be recognised for our display at The Bear."

This is one of 18 regional/national competitions which make up Britain In Bloom, the biggest horticultural campaign in Europe.

The aim of the communities which take part each year is to improve and regenerate local environments through the imaginative planting of trees, shrubs, flowers and landscaping, conservation and recycling projects.

Melksham Town Council's town clerk, Linda Roberts, said:

"It was wonderful to be able to run this competition as usual, as we have seen how important gardening has been to people during this unusual time.

"Melksham has a lot to be proud of, and we are happy to encourage and celebrate the wide range of horticultural skills in our community."

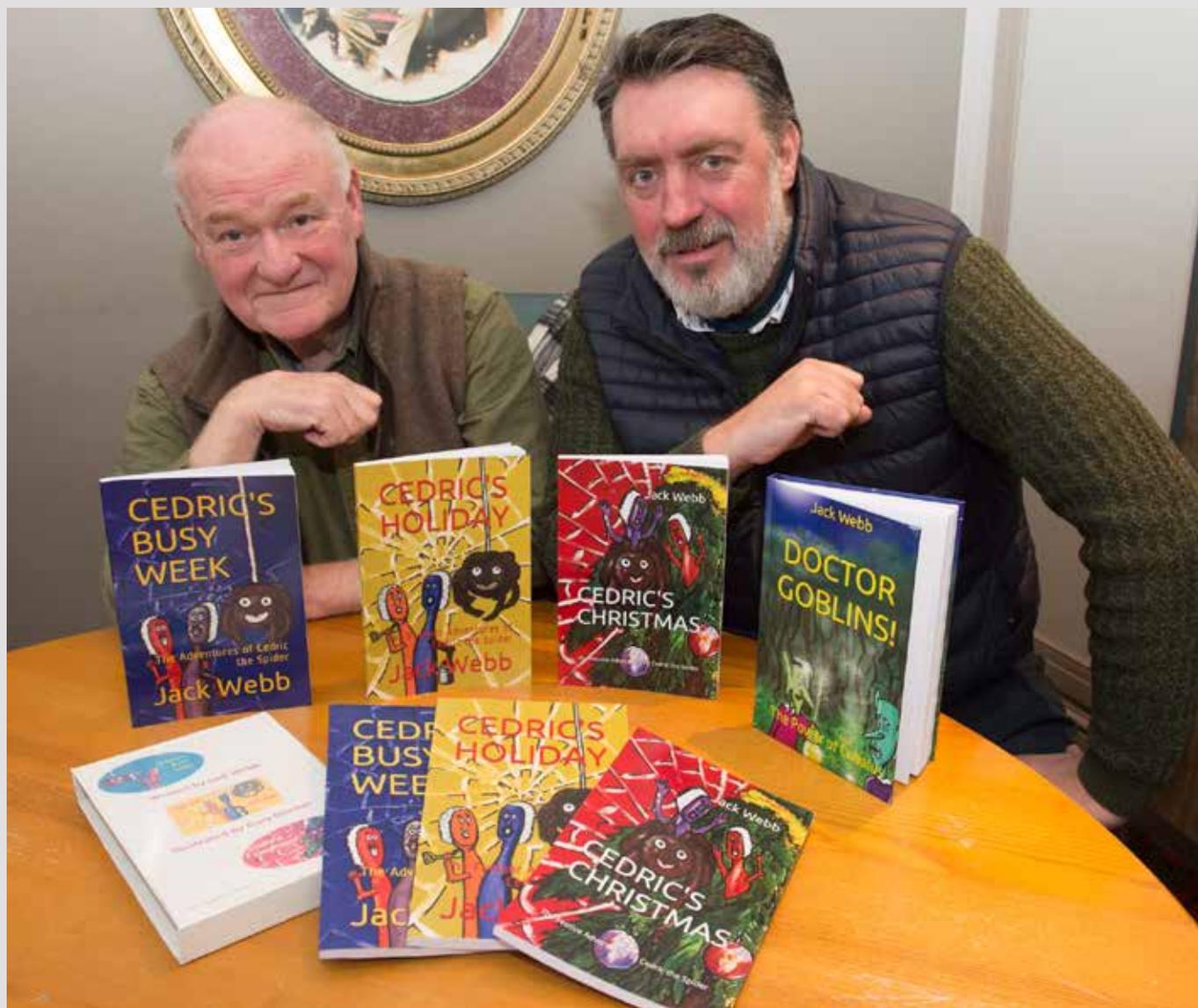
The town's deputy mayor, Cllr. Colin Goodhind, added:

"Being there to see our 'bloomers' get their fourth consecutive gold award, which they so richly deserved, was a real pleasure.

"In other categories, The Bear (Wetherspoon) also received an award for which they should be congratulated.

"A blooming good show all round!"

AUTHOR SAYS OUR PUBS ARE JUST HIS TYPE



John Player, a Wetherspoon customer, is a children's book author, with many of his stories written in our pubs.

John's most recent publication, 'Doctor Goblins! – The Power of Cobalus', is his fourth book and, like his previous work, is written under his pseudonym Jack Webb.

Doctor Goblins! is illustrated in full colour throughout by Gary Stocker (pictured right), John's good friend and neighbour.

John (pictured left), 75, explained: "After two careers, in teaching and IT, I now have a part-time job as a van driver for an occupational health company, Gipping Occupational Health.

"I park the unit at offices, factories etc, set it up, then a nurse arrives and carries out health checks all day on the staff.

"Having time to kill, I walk (sometimes miles) to the nearest Wetherspoon pub, where I have an excellent breakfast, stretched out with coffee and toast throughout the morning.

"I use the time to write children's books, mainly for my 13 grandchildren, and self-publish them on Amazon."

John's previous three books, all about the adventures of Cedric the Spider, were published one every year during 2018–20.

He revealed: "The Cedric the Spider books were inspired by my daughter, Emily, who asked me to write down the bedtime tales I made up for her when she was a child.

"They encouraged her not to be afraid of spiders.

"Doctor Goblins! marks a departure from that trilogy, although the main characters, Locum and Ten Ends, first appear in those earlier tales.

"The age range for readers is also a little higher, probably more suited to children of eight years or older, although, as ever, there exists a subliminal text for the satirical amusement of parents and guardians."

Suffolk-based John concluded: "I have sat in Wetherspoon's pubs in many towns across East Anglia and the East Midlands.

"The staff are ever helpful and friendly; there is always a quiet corner where I can work; I am never rushed.

"It is an inspirational place to write – and every pub has consistently high standards."

● **To buy Doctor Goblins!: tinyurl.com/2p98zx5f**

PUTTING OUR STAMP ON POST OFFICES

Many types of disused historic building have become a Wetherspoon pub, but mail-related edifices have delivered particularly well

Wetherspoon has the unrivalled reputation, as well as numerous accolades to show for it, for its sensitive restoration and renovation of many towns and cities' historic, and often derelict and neglected, landmark buildings.

Among those architectural gems now enjoying a second (sometimes more) life as a pub are former cinemas and theatres, police stations and court houses, churches and chapels, banks and shops – even an old dairy.

Former post office buildings, in towns and cities across the UK, are also among the recycled and rejuvenated premises, with many of the purpose-built premises dating back more than a century.

Here, in our second instalment (also see autumn 2021 edition), we highlight some of our pubs with a post office past which are no longer a place to buy stamps and send mail, but are nevertheless an important hub in their local community.

THE LAST POST

CHILWELL ROAD, BEESTON
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, NG9 1AA

This pub was once Beeston's main post office, opening as a Wetherspoon pub in September 2000.

The post office, formerly on High Road, occupied a new building in the square early last century.

In 1935, the post office was rebuilt at the junction of Chilwell Road and Foster Avenue, first opening on 8 July 1935.

Nottingham Evening Post (8 July 1935) reported: "This afternoon, Beeston's new Post Office was opened by Mr Ireland, Chairman of the Beeston and Stapleford Urban District Council.

"It is one of the best erected buildings of its class in the county, and the whole of the materials used are either British or of Empire origin.

"Doors, furniture and fittings, together with the panelled walls, are in polished figured walnut.

"The exterior of the building is faced with Loughborough buff-facing bricks, with Hollington stone dressings, plinths and copings and roofed with Precelly green slates."



THE ALEXANDER BAIN

MARKET PLACE, WICK, HIGHLAND, KW1 4LP

This pub opened in May 2003 in the former post office building in Market Place.

The distinctive three-storey building, by architect William Oldrieve, first opened in 1914, housing the telegraph and telephone rooms, serving until the early 1990s as the town's main post office.

The pub is named after a prolific inventor, born in 1810 on the outskirts of Wick, near Watten, Caithness.

Alexander Bain invented the electric clock, electric printing telegraph and the facsimile machine.



THE THOMAS WAGHORN

14 RAILWAY STREET, CHATHAM KENT, ME4 4JL

The well-known statue (erected in 1888) by the bridge over Railway Street, near to the pub, commemorates the 'postal pioneer' Thomas Fletcher Waghorn - the Chatham-born naval officer and merchant seaman who developed a new postal route from Great Britain to India.

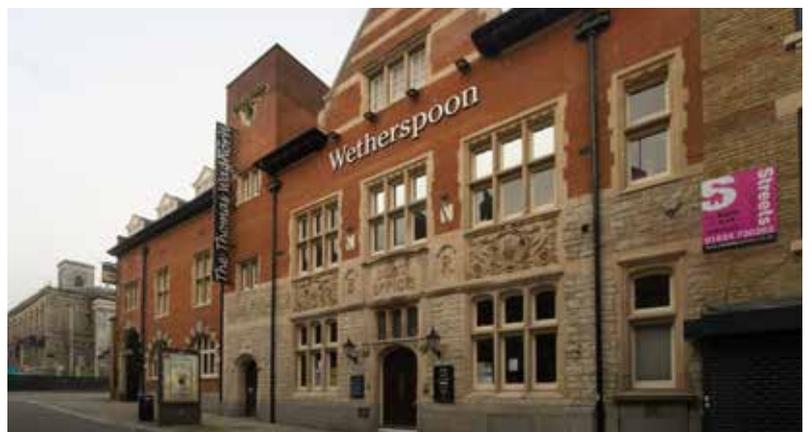
The pub, which opened in July 2016, remembers the man whose 6,000-mile overland route replaced the 16,000-mile sea journey, reducing the time taken to reach its destination.

Waghorn, born in 1800 and a self-confessed 'plain, blunt fellow', boasted: "Give me your mail and I'll deliver it to India in 90 days."

The three-month service was set to replace the existing route around Africa which could take up to two years.

The building itself, in classic Edwardian style, was built for the General Post Office by its Office of Works, under the direction of William Oldrieve.

First opened in 1902, the post office closed c1994.





THE LAST POST

COUNTY SQUARE, PAISLEY, RENFREWSHIRE, PA1 1BN

The pub, which opened in December 1998, takes its name from the building's former use as Paisley's main post office.

The original post office building (opened in 1893) was designed by Walter W Robertson of HM Office of Works, Edinburgh, and built in the Tudor or Domestic Gothic style, 'in harmony with Paisley Station and the Burgh Municipal Buildings adjoining'.

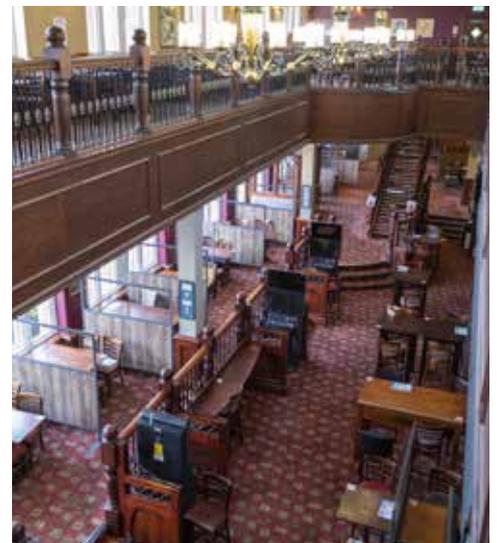
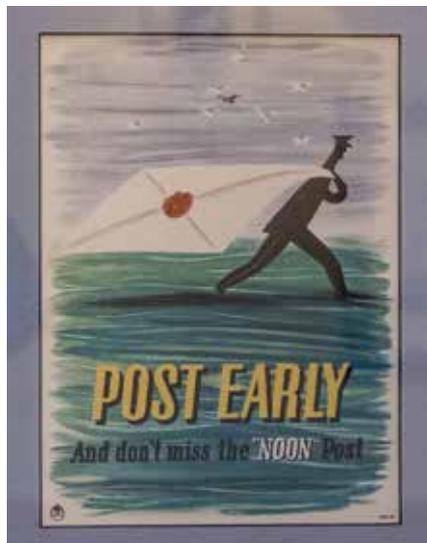
The Glasgow Herald (6 February 1893), which reported on the opening, said: "In the public office, there is ample accommodation for the public, both as regards the postal and the telegraphic work, and behind the counter of the public office accommodation has been provided for, should the occasion be necessary, the service of twelve clerks.

"On the first floor, above the public office, is the telegraph room. It is splendidly lighted from three sides by means of ten large windows.

"Retiring rooms for telegraph clerks and messengers are also placed on the first floor.

"The building is heated throughout with steam pipes.

"Externally the new Post Office has a very fine appearance, and its internal arrangements have been carried out in accordance with the best methods for the efficient and prompt discharge of postal work."



THE POSTE OF STONE

1 GRANVILLE SQUARE, STONE
STAFFORDSHIRE, ST15 8AB

The Poste of Stone opened in April 2002 in the former central post office building, in this old market town situated north of Stafford.

However, the history of Stone, as a location for a post office, pre-dates our pub by more than 400 years.

The reign of Elizabeth I marked the establishment of Stone as a 'post office' in the original sense – an office for the local master of the posts, who was to 'keepe three horses at least contynuallie in the stable bothe winter and somer'.

On the post road from London to Holyhead, Stone was the only Staffordshire town mentioned in a 1573 'list of postmasters' preserved at the Public Records Office:

'The Poste of Stone – William Nicholson for his wagies serving her Majestie by the space of CLI days at xxviii miles at xx d. per diem ... £12 11s 8d.'

Nicholson, 'The Poste of Stone', is remembered in our pub's name.

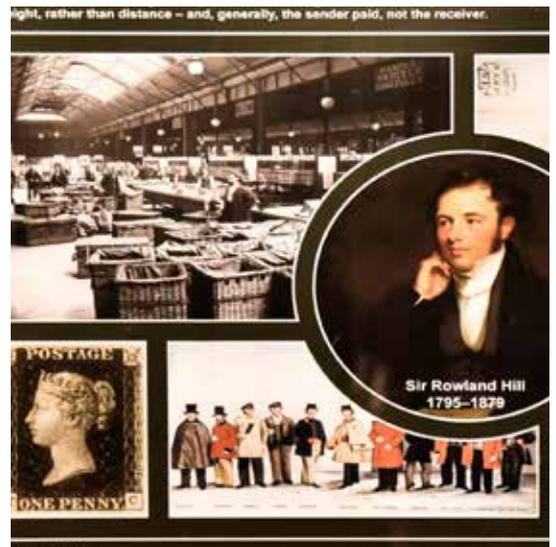
The post office was originally located in the Crown Inn, a coaching inn on Crown Street, but when mail was no longer carried by coach, the post office moved several times, occupying various buildings on High Street, handling mail for the town and surrounding area.

Our pub occupies a prominent position on the corner of Granville Square and Station Road.

Built in 1933, this former post office accommodated a telephone exchange on its upper storey.

A large London plane tree dominates the space in the centre of the square, in front of our pub, planted to mark the coronation of Edward VII in 1902.

The square is also the location for the town's war memorial, a bronze figure designed by Albert Toft and unveiled by the Earl of Dartmouth in 1921.



Among some other former post office buildings now housing Wetherspoon pubs are The Ralph Fitz Randal (Richmond), The Last Post (Loughton), The James Watt (Greenock), The Last Post (Southend), The Postal Order (Blackburn), The Post & Telegraph (Brighton), The Postal Order (Worcester), The Leyland Lion (Leyland), The Tumble Inn (Pontypridd), The Humphrey Bean (Tonbridge), The Weeping Ash (St Neots), The Glass Blower (Castleford) and The Exchange (Banbury).

APPRENTICESHIP LEVY HELPING LIZ AND CLAIRE TO HELP OTHERS

Wetherspoon using government's apprenticeship scheme to help our partner - Young Lives vs Cancer



It is not just Wetherspoon's employees who, to help to progress and further their career, can benefit from their apprenticeship levy.

As Wetherspoon pays the UK Government's apprenticeship levy, we can choose, each year, to transfer a percentage of our levy funds to other businesses to support their apprentices.

Our charity partner Young Lives vs Cancer is benefiting from this arrangement, with the funds being used to further develop their teams too.

Amazing

Since our partnership began in 2002, our staff and customers have raised more than £19 million for the charity. This is another way in which we can help to boost the amazing work which it does, supporting more than 7,000 young cancer patients and their families.

Young Lives vs Cancer is using this transfer of funds to support Liz Blunt (pictured left) and Claire Herrick (pictured right), who are the eyes, ears and feet on the ground for the organisation.

They work with individuals, groups and companies, across their respective regions, who want to support and raise funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Liz and Claire are working towards their level 3 leadership and management apprenticeship, with their study lasting around 12 months.

Effectiveness

Young Lives vs Cancer's people development manager, Lee Jones, said: "Their apprenticeship is certified by the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), with the aim being to increase the effectiveness of our managers, to build their confidence as potential leaders and to retain

talent in the organisation, which helps us to continue our mission in supporting young people and families with cancer."

Liz, senior fundraising engagement manager, added: "I am really grateful to Wetherspoon for funding my apprenticeship course – and a massive thankyou to them for their wonderful support, which is so appreciated.

"It's been my pleasure to be in touch with different Wetherspoon employees over the years, regarding their fantastic fundraising.

"Thanks to Wetherspoon, I am studying for a level 3 team leader/supervisor qualification, which is a brilliant opportunity to learn about being a better leader and manager.

Skills

"The programme includes improving knowledge and skills, for example, regarding project management, decision-making, communication, leading and managing people and finance.

"As a senior fundraising engagement manager, these skills are very important to help in my work to raise more funds and awareness for the vital work which is carried out by Young Lives vs Cancer.

"In particular, the skills have been useful in my work of managing a project group concerning our charity Homes from Home, where one of our main aims is to set up a group for each of our 11 homes – called Friends of Home from Home.

"I have worked and volunteered for Young Lives vs Cancer for almost six years – and this course has been a fantastic opportunity to really develop my knowledge, skills and behaviours.

"Ultimately, I want to give my best performance to ensure that we can raise maximum funds and awareness for the charity."



WOW – CUSTOMERS AND STAFF RAISE AN AMAZING £19M

Wetherspoon has now raised £19 million for its chosen charity – Young Lives vs Cancer.

The company's staff and customers have been raising money for the charity since 2002.

Our association began when Wetherspoon's chairman and founder, Tim Martin, was on a train, sitting opposite the then chief executive of the charity (previously called CLIC Sargent).

They struck up a conversation, and Tim was inspired to launch a partnership, with an initial target of £100,000.

The fundraising campaign was quickly extended to £500,000, yet has gone on to exceed even the most optimistic of dreams.

Wetherspoon is Young Lives vs Cancer's longest-standing corporate partner, now marking two decades.

The incredible fundraising efforts during the past 20 years have included some weird, wonderful, wild and wacky events, helping to raise cash and awareness for the cause.

Our fabulous fundraisers have, among other things, played football, darts, 10-pin bowling and bingo; held quizzes, raffles and bake sales; hiked up mountains, run marathons and jumped out of aeroplanes; had legs waxed, heads shaved and been tattooed; sung, danced and cycled; sat in beans and showered in ice; worn wigs, crazy costumes and next to nothing! All in the name of charity.

The money goes towards supporting 7,000 young cancer patients, and their families, to ensure that each has what he or she needs to get through cancer.

This might be a financial grant or helping a family to stay together at one of the charity's Homes from Home – a free place for families to stay when their child is going through cancer treatment.

Young Lives vs Cancer's partnerships manager, Claire Herrick, said: "We are so appreciative of the fundraising undertaken by Wetherspoon's staff and customers."

Wetherspoon's people operations manager, Tom Ball, said: "We are proud to support such a wonderful charity and look forward to raising millions more for it in the coming years."



The Thomas Ingoldsby (Canterbury)



Amberlea Hoare-Foote braved the clippers, along with colleagues, to raise more than £300 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

A kitchen associate at The Thomas Ingoldsby (Canterbury), Amberlea was joined in the fundraising event by bar associate Khalil Persad and area manager Mark Powell, who winced as their legs were waxed.

Wielding the waxing strips were shift manager Jemma Hitchcock and pub manager Ali Stevenson.

Jemma, who organised the event, said: "It was more fun for some than others, but, joking aside, it was brave of all of those involved to do this and raise money for such a good cause."

Pictured (from left) are Khalil Persad, Jemma Hitchcock, Amberlea Hoare-Foote, Ali Stevenson and Mark Powell.

The Watch Maker (Prescot)



A four-pub tour over 15km raised more than £230 for Young Lives vs Cancer. Staff from The Watch Maker (Prescot) walked to The Barker's Brewery (Huyton), The Navigator (Stoneycroft) and The North Western (Lime Street station, Liverpool).

Particularly generous were the staff at The Navigator who emptied their tips jar into the collection bucket.

Sheena Pyper-Mann, who manages The Watch Maker, said: "I'd like to thank the staff at the other three pubs as they did everything they could to help us on the day."

Pictured from left are Sheena Pyper-Mann, shift leader Casey Regan, bar associate Jamie Collins, kitchen associate Danny Turner and shift manager Jess Bowman.

The White House (Luton)



Two colleagues from The White House (Luton) raised £1,400 for Young Lives Vs Cancer by completing a local half marathon. Shift manager Gabriel Mana (left) finished the run in an hour and 45 minutes, while the pub's manager Roy Bigg (right) took two hours and seven minutes.

Money was raised from generous sponsorships and donations from customers.

Roy said: "We are so pleased to have raised such a sum of money and would like to thank our customers for their kindness."

The pair is now planning to enter this year's London Marathon, with the pub also organising a static cycling event to raise more money for the charity.

The Iron Duke (Wellington)



A charity bake sale, in the run-up to Christmas, was held at The Iron Duke (Wellington).

A total of £610 was raised for Young Lives vs Cancer through a 'how many sweets in the jar' competition, sales of baked treats and a raffle to win a hamper.

The pub's manager, Mat Turner, said: "It was a great way to raise money – and we are grateful to all who took part."

Shift manager Vicky Norris and team leader Sara-Beth Rowland helped with the baking, contributing personal favourites, a classic sponge and a candy cane-themed cake.

Pictured (from left) are shift leader Alex Taylor, team leader Sara-Beth Rowland and associate Michelle Hume.

The Last Post (Beeston)

Well Done Folks!
£300
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Pub manager Luke Armstrong raised money for Young Lives vs Cancer by live-streaming himself playing Pokémon from The Last Post (Beeston).

The innovative fundraising scheme involved a 24-hour stream on the interactive Twitch game-streaming site, on which users can talk to one another – and donate funds for good causes.

Using a laptop computer, Luke was aided by a special microphone to allow him to describe the gameplay, in detail, to his audience.

Luke said: "It was a lot of fun, if pretty tiring, especially towards the end."

"A lot of people, friends and other Pokémon players, got in touch to watch me play, to chat, to keep me going and to make donations."

A total of £300 was raised.

The William Owen (Haverfordwest)



Well Done Folks!
£928
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

A week's charity events at The William Owen (Haverfordwest) raised £928 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

All of the events were organised by shift manager Nicola Hayton (pictured). A Monday bake sale, attended by town mayor Alan Buckfield, raised £128 – and this was followed on Tuesday by a puzzles and mysteries night which raised another £85.

More funds were raised on Wednesday at a Halloween-themed craft morning for children, while the pub's Thursday quiz night, hosted by team leader Stacey Thomas, continued the fundraising.

A Halloween-themed fancy-dress competition was staged on the Saturday – and Nicola's head-shave topped off the week on the Sunday.

The pub's manager, Jon Blayney, said: "It was a remarkable effort by Nicola and the team – and we are very grateful to all of those who took part and donated."

The Stag & Pheasant (Mansfield)

Well Done Folks!
£2,584
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



The team at The Stag & Pheasant (Mansfield) took part in a charity abseil, collectively raising more than £2,500.

The team members jumped off Millersdale Bridge, Derbyshire, which is 27.4 metres high.

The pub's manager, John Preville, said: "This was an amazing feat by staff at the pub, including some with a fear of heights."

"I am very proud of their efforts to raise so much money for our superb charity."

Those taking part (pictured left to right, standing) were shift leader Brandon Smith, shift manager Tim O'Flaherty, shift manager Sorel O'Berg, bar associate Chelsea Tolley, team leader Kyle Murfitt, Anna-May Kettlewell (friend), cleaner Jacqui Coss, shift manager Matt Nevin, bar associate Tori Sellors, shift leader Kirsty Bradford, floor associate Emmie Lynch, bar associate Connor Baugh and kitchen associate Jamie Lilley.

Pictured front are Bella Preville (pub manager John's daughter), pub manager John Preville, bar associate Keeley Millington, door staff Martin Rhodes, kitchen associate Aaron Hodder (aka Spider-Man), kitchen shift leader Paul Hallsworth, shift leader Adam Smith and bar associate Megan Dean.

Also pictured (front, in baseball cap) Zac Holland, from R.E.A.L Education Ltd, who kindly helped to organise the event, with his three staff members (far right, crouching, and two standing).

The Old Chapel (Darwen)



Well Done Folks!
£320
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

A grumpy Grinch visited The Old Chapel (Darwen), much to the delight of the 100 children who turned up for the day.

Parents paid £3 for a child to meet the Grinch and receive a goody bag, with around £320 raised for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The Meet The Grinch event was the brainchild of shift manager Laura Garbett, pictured here as the Grinch.

The pub's manager, Warren Hughes said: "Laura is a big Grinch fan and came up with the idea. We were all very impressed with what she pulled off on the day."

Laura (Grinch) is pictured with (from left) floor associate Olivia McVan, shift leader Abby Lord and Warren's daughter Orlah, aged five.

The Francis Newton (Sheffield)



Well Done Folks!
£90
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

The Sheffield University Brass Band (pictured) performed festive tunes and carols to entertain staff and customers at The Francis Newton (Sheffield).

The band, which kindly agreed to play, was part of a Christmas market fundraising event at the pub, held in the pub's car park, in the run-up to Christmas. It was organised by shift manager Miah Dobson.

Local businesses and producers sold their crafts and gifts, and their stallholder fees helped to raise £90 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Stallholder Kele Holmes is also pictured with her fabulous festive pompom wreaths for sale.



The Hedgford Lodge (Hednesford)



Well Done Folks!
£150
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

A Christmas craft fair at The Hedgford Lodge (Hednesford) collected £150 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pub manager Kat Prince is pictured (second left) with stall holders Helena Durant, Lisa Gallimore and Jamie Lee-Lawley (left to right) at the event, one of several Christmas fundraisers at the pub.

Nine stalls in the beer garden, at the front of the premises, saw local sellers and producers (each paying to attend) offer gifts and goodies to customers to buy before Christmas.

The team at The Hedgford Lodge also sold home-baked cakes to add to the charity coffers.

The Catherine Wheel (Henley-on-Thames)



Well Done Folks!
£300
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

A haunted pub was the setting for a murder-mystery night which raised money for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The Catherine Wheel (Henley-on-Thames) is reputedly haunted by the ghost of Mary Blandy, who was hanged on Easter Monday 1752 for murder.

With participants donning outfits from the era, 12 doughty detectives took part in a darkly atmospheric four-hour quest to solve the mystery of a fictional 1920s murder.

A total of £300 was raised for charity from ticket sales for the evening. Included in the £24.99 ticket price was a three-course meal and a glass of Prosecco on arrival. Awards were presented for best costume and best actor.

Organiser and pub shift leader Holly Perry said: "The evening went really well – and we will have to do another one because the people who took part enjoyed it so much that they're telling all of their friends."

Pictured (from left) are bar associates Nathan Painting and Rachel Brooks-Newman, Holly Perry and shift manager Chris Burke.

The Glassmaker (Nailsea)



Well Done Folks!
£652
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Shift manager James Maxwell is making the most of his preparations in the run-up to a charity cycle challenge in May.

James (pictured centre), who works at The Glassmaker (Nailsea), will be taking part, for Young Lives vs Cancer, in the Paul's House-to-Paris cycle challenge 2022.

The four-day challenge, which starts at the charity's London Home from Home, Paul's House, will go via Portsmouth, Caen and Évreux, before finishing at the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

As part of his training, James completed three charity fundraising events at the pub in Somerset, covering 327km and raising £652 into the bargain.

James said: "I would like to give my thanks to '@the Gym' for lending me the exercise bike and to Nailsea Active for helping to organise one of the events with me.

"Thanks also to my colleagues, friends and family, as well as all the customers at the pub, for their support and generous donations."

The Glass House (St Helens)Well Done Folks!
£400
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Customers packed into The Glass House (St Helens) to take part in the first of a now-weekly fundraising event.

It was quite literally a 'full house' for the inaugural charity bingo night at the pub.

The event, organised by shift manager Chantelle Briscoe-Williams, raised £150 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Chantelle said: "Our customers really enjoyed it, and it is now a weekly occurrence at The Glass House."

"The team looks forward to our bingo Tuesdays and a chance to raise money with our brilliant customers for Young Lives vs Cancer."

The team also raised £250 in the run-up to Christmas in a 'guess the name of the Teddy bear' fundraiser.

Donated by bar associate Tia Harris, the secret name for the bear was chosen and sealed in an envelope by pub manager Ashleigh Briscoe-Williams.

Alan the Teddy, pictured with Ashleigh (left), bar associate Scott Wharton and Chantelle, has now gone to a lovely new home with young customer Lydia.

The Eva Hart (Chadwell Heath)Well Done Folks!
£1,000
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

The Eva Hart (Chadwell Heath) was turned into a veritable Santa's grotto as children arrived to receive presents from Father Christmas.

Shift manager Kimberly Dunnage and pub manager Gabby Alefounder led a £1,000-fundraising effort for Young Lives vs Cancer and to fund the festive give-away.

Santa and Mrs Claus sat amid the fulsome festive decorations and happily chatted to children and their parents.

Kimberly said: "I actually know Santa. I have seen him around town being Santa and bumped into him one day and asked him whether he could visit the pub. He was so believable as he has a full natural white beard and white hair."

Happy children gladly received presents wrapped up by pub staff. The gifts included toys, colouring books and confectionery selection packs.

The Company Row (Consett)Well Done Folks!
£777
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

In the 14 years that Shelley Hobbs has been at The Company Row (Consett), her colleagues and customers have never seen (or heard) her so quiet.

Pub manager Shelley, who loves nothing more than chatting with her regulars, took part in a seven-and-a-half-hour sponsored silence.

Shelley reported: "It was all for a worthy cause – just to shut up."

She continued: "It was a fun idea, to lighten the mood, after the terrible year we have all had."

"Everyone knows me, and we usually have great banter and a great craic together."

"The Company Row is a fantastic community pub and community local; it is a wonderful place with lovely people."

"I like to chat with my regulars – that's what we are all about and it's what keeps them all coming back."

Shelley concluded: "Everyone was more than generous in their sponsorship and charity donations, helping me to collect an amazing £777."

"If I can raise money just by keeping quiet, then happy days."

The Plaza (Rugeley)Well Done Folks!
£550
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Local traders set up stall at The Plaza (Rugeley) as the pub hosted a Christmas market.

The pub's manager, Sian Siddall, and shift manager Jordan Holmes hatched the idea in a brainstorming session – then contacted local businesses to ask them to join in.

Featured stalls included purveyors of such items as bath bombs, jewellery and cakes, with a tombola sideshow helping to raise £310 for Young Lives vs Cancer. A Christmas raffle and 'name the teddy' added a further £240 to that total.

But the eye-catching star of the show was a giant snow globe which kids could clamber into and bounce around.

Staff and customers joined in with visiting carol singers, from Etching Hill Academy and Churchfield Primary School, as they gave renditions of festive favourites such as Silent Night and Jingle Bells.

Jordan said: "It was a real success. We'd like to thank the local businesses which got involved."

"We are hoping to make the event an annual fundraiser and to see it grow year on year."

Jordan is pictured in the snow globe (back, left to right) with local trader Helena Durant, from Illusion Bath Bombs, and shift leader Edward Willows, together with (front, left to right) bar associate Izzy Acton and pub manager Sian Siddall.

The New Fairlop Oak (Fairlop)



Well Done Folks!
£1,574
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Staff and customers raised more than £1,500 for Young Lives vs Cancer in a Christmas raffle at The New Fairlop Oak (Fairlop).

The raffle saw a sweet hamper, a beauty hamper and a brand-new undercounter fridge – donated by Curry's Distribution depot at Tilbury – offered as prizes.

The pub's manager, Karen Burdett, said: "We were delighted to raise so much money.

"We would like to thank customers who took part in the raffle, as well as those who donated prizes."

Pictured are bar associate Tracey Harmer (left) and team leader Elaine Grizzle with one of the prize hampers.

Captain Ridley's Shooting Party (Bletchley)



Well Done Folks!
£1,030
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Team leader Tracy Lineker (pictured) raised more than £1,000 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Tracy, who works at Captain Ridley's Shooting Party (Bletchley) put out an appeal to customers and local businesses for donations for a Christmas charity raffle – and they responded brilliantly.

A keen football fan who supports Tottenham Hotspur, Tracy approached local club MK Dons which generously donated a family ticket.

Pub regulars donated hundreds of pounds to buy other prizes, including hampers, vouchers and a Nokia smartphone.

The raffle raised £1,030.

The pub's manager, Jessica Spooner, added: "We are all so proud of what Tracy has achieved for our chosen charity."

The Queen's Head Hotel (Tavistock)



Well Done Folks!
£1,217
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Plucky Richard Hatchett gave up drinking beer to sell Christmas raffle tickets for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Richard, a regular at The Queen's Head Hotel (Tavistock), helped raise £1,217 – partly by using the money he'd saved from giving up ale and drinking coffee instead to buy raffle prizes.

But most of the money came from his excellent and energetic efforts to sell tickets to as many other customers as possible. He also donated prizes, including a bottle of wine.

Staff at the pub also sold tickets to contribute to the impressive total.

The pub's manager, Jo Huckle, said: "All of the staff appreciate Richard's fundraising efforts."

Pictured with Richard are (from left) bar associates Ann McClean and Ellie Greenwood and Jo Huckle.

The Red Well (Wellingborough)

Eight pubs held a simultaneous 12-hour static cycle ride to raise £2,400 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The event was staged as a collective fundraiser in support of their area manager, Calum Brennan, as he prepares to take part in the London-to-Paris bike ride in May 2022 for the charity. Calum visited all of the participating pubs and pedalled for around 30 minutes in each.

Ben Gardiner, pub manager at The Red Well (Wellingborough), took part in the event, as did Teresa Warren, Wetherspoon's head of personnel systems.

Ben, pictured at The Red Well, said: "This really was a tremendous effort. Staff at the pubs cycled a total of 1,500 miles on the day."

His pub contributed £386 to the total. The other pubs which took part were Captain Ridley's Shooting Party (Bletchley), which raised £280.91; Wetherspoons (Milton Keynes), which raised £337.48; The Crown Hotel (Biggleswade), where £541 was raised; The Moon Under Water (Milton Keynes), where £152 was raised; The Earl of Dalkeith (Kettering), which raised £170; The Gary Cooper (Dunstable), where £173.69 was raised; The Pilgrim's Progress (Bedford) which added another £363.87.

Well Done Folks!
£2,400
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY



The Elihu Yale (Wrexham)

Well Done Folks!
£1,450
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Bar associate Calan Jones (pictured) raised almost £1,000 by selling charity badges and T-shirts.

Calan, who has worked at The Elihu Yale (Wrexham) for more than 12 years, took just eight weeks to reach her total of £950.

Customers and staff at the pub were so impressed with her fundraising that they decided to sell more T-shirts and badges at the pub, raising an additional £500.

Calan said: "I was thrilled to raise so much money and delighted that staff and customers took it on themselves to boost the total with their own efforts."

"In total, we raised £1,450 for our charity."

The pub's manager, Andrew Hodgson, said: "We are all very proud of Calan for her tremendous effort."

The Captain Alexander (Liverpool)

Dumbledore – also known as shift manager Greg Hewitt (pictured) at The Captain Alexander (Liverpool) – hosted a Harry Potter quiz to raise cash for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Customers paid a donation to enter the quiz, with a chance to win prizes, including a bottle of Prosecco and a Wetherspoon gift card.

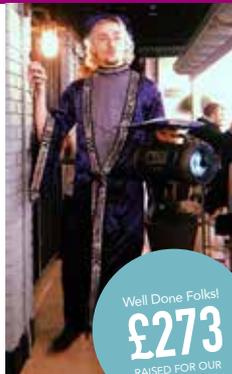
Shift manager Hannah Jones came up with the idea as part of a longer-term plan to raise charity cash centred around shift manager Hannah Wilkinson and shift leader Cole Proctor's entry in the London-to-Paris bike ride in May 2022.

Hannah said: "It was a really successful night."

"A big thankyou to everyone who came and thank you to our kitchen manager Matt Caveney for compiling the quiz."

"Our aim is to have a different themed quiz every month."

A total of £273 was raised through the quiz.



Well Done Folks!
£273
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

The Benjamin Fawcett (Driffield)

Well Done Folks!
£310
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Twenty children were treated to some festive fun when Santa arrived at The Benjamin Fawcett (Driffield).

Santa hosted a day of activities as £350 was raised for Young Lives vs Cancer and a local charity.

Santa made an early start to have breakfast with the children, all from the local area.

After that, the kids received presents, having chatted to Santa about what they'd like for Christmas and whether they'd been good boys and girls.

The pub also staged a cake sale, a tombola and raffle. Local charity St Margaret's Close Playgroup lent the pub some Christmas décor and received £40 of the total raised.

The day was organised by shift manager Jessica Allison, assisted by shift leader Claire Dennis, who said: "We are very pleased to have raised so much money and, at the same time, to have put smiles on the children's faces."

Claire's children, Katy and Tilly, who are both six, and Hannah, three, are pictured (left to right) with Santa.

The Moon Under Water (Wigan)



Well Done Folks!
£371
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Brave Jo Hoyle raised £371 for Young Lives vs Cancer by having her head shaved by a colleague at The Moon Under Water (Wigan).

Shift leader Jo lost her locks as shift manager Hayley Bentley mowed through her hair with professional clippers. It took just 10 minutes to take off what had taken Jo years to grow.

Jo said: "I was nervous beforehand, because I didn't know how I'd look, but I actually quite like it now and am getting a lot of compliments."

"I'm also grateful to customers for their generosity in donating to our charity."

Hayley and Jo are pictured before and after the charity head-shave outside the pub.

An Ruadh-Ghleann (Rutherglen)



Well Done Folks!
£200
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

A festive party was enjoyed by 40 regulars at An Ruadh-Ghleann (Rutherglen). The ticketed event cost £5 each, for which customers received a drink and a small fish and chips or scampi with chips, both served with peas or mushy peas, with £200 raised for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The event featured a tombola, bingo and a version of popular TV quiz Play Your Cards Right.

The pub's manager, Kat Scouller, said: "We really wanted to give the locals a good night out – so much has closed down around here, including other pubs and the bingo hall.

"There is just not a lot for them, so we decided to bring them some cheer."

The pub holds a regular Monday bingo night in an area of the pub which can seat 40. This was used for the party, so that the rest of the pub could carry on as usual.

Kat, who has worked at the pub since its opening day, added: "Everyone had a fantastic time – and we will make this an annual event from now on.

"We are looking forward to holding two Christmas parties in 2022, because a lot of people couldn't get tickets for this event and the pub will celebrate its 10th birthday in December this year."

Pictured from left are duty manager Tracey-Anne Doherty (back), pub manager Kat Scouller and regulars Ian McKenzie, Matt Mitchell, Rab Butterworth (pulling a cracker with Kat).

The Quay (Poole)



Well Done Folks!
£200
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

Kitchen manager Emma Cox and her two nieces ran a bake sale at The Quay (Poole) for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Emma, Darcie and Grace joined forces to raise £200 for the charity through the sale of Christmas-themed treats, including cupcakes and buns.

Emma said: "I made most of them myself, but staff contributed as well. It was great to be able to involve my nieces."

The event coincided with some work Christmas parties which had booked tables on the same day.

"This was lucky for us, as people came over, donated money and bought treats from the stall," added Emma.

Emma is pictured with Darcie (centre) and Grace.

The Hedgeford Lodge (Hednesford)



Well Done Folks!
£220
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

A kids' event at The Hedgeford Lodge (Hednesford) saw children hone their skills in cake decoration and drawing.

Coloured pencils, colouring-in sheets and coloured icing were all on hand to help the young ones to express themselves creatively.

Parents made a donation of their choice, so that their kids could take part – with £220 raised for Young Lives vs Cancer.

It was organised by shift leader Olivia Keaney and team leader Natalie Clay (pictured with youngster Lexi Mirza).

Children also had their face painted with a variety of Christmas images.

The pub's manager, Kat Prince, said: "It was really good to spend some time with the children and help them to decorate cakes. They all enjoyed themselves thoroughly."

The Looking Glass (Warrington)

Brave Emma Foster had her head shaved, at The Looking Glass (Warrington), to raise cash for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Emma is auntie to one of the pub's team leaders, Grace Butterworth, and, thanks to generous customers, raised £457 for the charity.

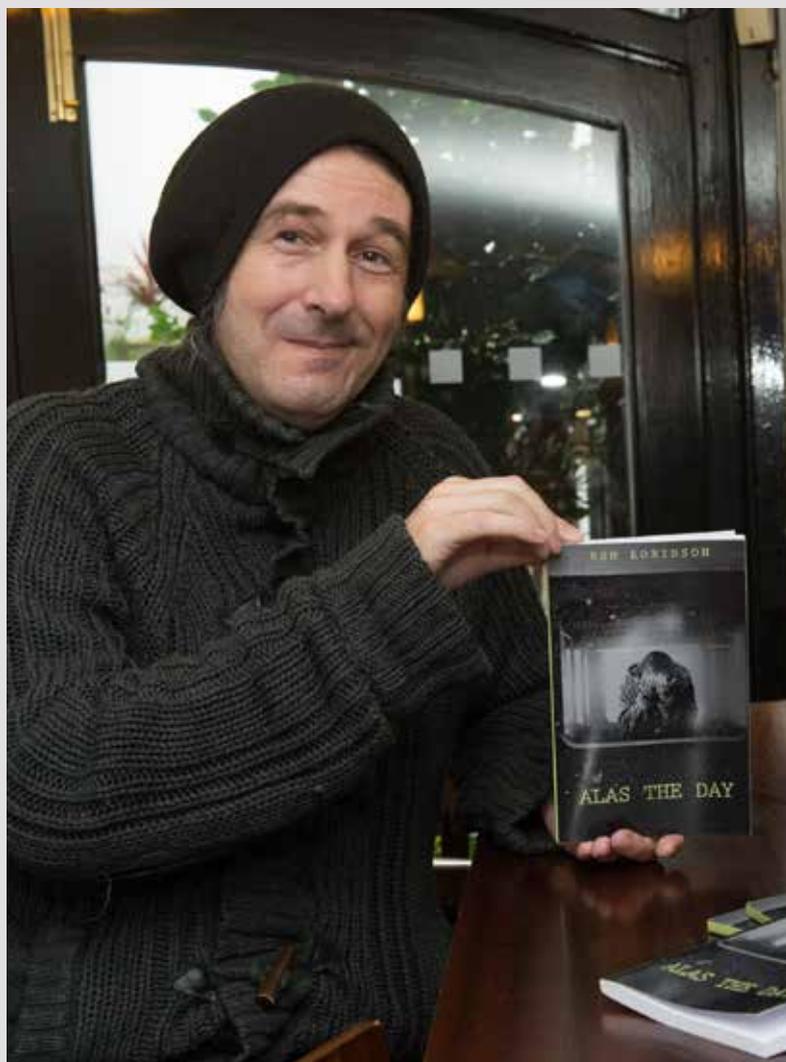
Emma is a regular at the pub and has twice before had her head shaved for cancer charities.

Grace stepped in with the clippers to perform the head-shave in the pub.

The pub's manager, Hayley Willis, said: "Emma is well known and well liked locally – a lovely lady. She helps us to sell raffle tickets and works in local charity shops as well."

Well Done Folks!
£457
RAISED FOR OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

WORDS FLOW LIKE ALE FOR PUB FAN AND POET BEN



Ben Robinson is a self-employed author and poet, as well as a Wetherspoon enthusiast.

He has released a new poetry book, entitled 'Alas the Day', available to buy via Amazon in hardback and paperback, as well as on Kindle: tinyurl.com/2p97cd3y

Ben said: "I first began writing poetry at around the age of 10.

"I had a very good English teacher at school who was brilliant, encouraged me and truly inspired me.

"During the past three years, I have written 30 books of poetry, which I have found a very therapeutic process."

Dorset-born Ben finds writing outdoors especially inspirational.

However, visits to Wetherspoon's pubs have also compelled him to put pen to paper.

At the beginning of November 2021, on a visit to The Greyhound (Bridport), he wrote 'Wintry wind' (see opposite).

Listing Blake, Wordsworth, Byron and Tennyson among his favourite poets, Ben is also embarking on a series of eight novels. The first, with the working title 'Space 2047', is planned for release in 2023.

Ben added: "I have now been visiting Wetherspoon pubs for more than two decades and have always enjoyed the friendly and welcoming customer service.

"The staff are always cheerful and truly fantastic – and the very reasonable food and drinks prices make it a great place to socialise."

Ben concluded: "I love coming to Wetherspoon – and am looking to visiting more on my book promotion tour during 2022."

● www.writingandpoetry.com

Wintry wind

Where do we go,

*When the cold wind blows and the sky is full of snow,
Indoors in the pub to save our souls from the icy
bitterness that bites at us and that tries to freeze us,
And that tries to bury us in the icy cold,*

The icy cold,

That we happily retreat from,

Into the heat that cannot be beaten,

*And to the pint that reinvigorates us so delightfully,
And how glad we are to savour the food that is filled
with flavour and so happily eaten,*

As I think to myself,

You winter and the icy wind, you will not eat us whole,

For we long to be with our friends and our family,

And here there is only happiness

And merriment inside,

*And how much better company are our friends and
our family,*

Than you the wind outside,

The wind outside that could freeze us and kill us all,

For misery is not for us you see,

And you are better left alone,

The icy winter of snow and discontent,

How glad we are to see the back of you inside,

*Whilst we toast each other and laugh at
each other's jokes,*

And smile great big smiles,

And happiness fills our eyes,

Whilst outside,

Outside you bitterly cry,

Oh wintry wind,

Will you not at least repent,

Because we have a long walk home,

And we all have no wish,

No wish to be chilled to the bone,

No,

No,

No,

*And so, here we will linger in the pub and eat and
drink and be merry,*

Whilst outside you bitterly roam,

*As we happily delay the inevitability of the cold
walk home,*

With another drink,

And as we toast our friends with the clink,

The clink of our glasses,

And eat our puddings contentedly,

As the heat of dinner it fills us so wonderfully,

And warms us thoroughly,

How grand it is this welcome heat inside,

And yes, how much better here it is in the pub,

Than in the wintry wind outside,

*The wintry winds that freezes us and brings icy tears
to our eyes.*

SHREWSBURY

ANGE SPOKE OUT AFTER BIKE SMASH

When 14-year-old Joe Warren was knocked off his bike by a car, his mother Ange began a campaign to improve road safety in the area of Shrewsbury where the incident happened.

Ange Warren, a kitchen shift leader at Montgomery's Tower (Shrewsbury) invited to a meeting local residents, police, councillors, road safety experts and Daniel Kawczynski, the town's MP.

The meeting agreed to campaign for a better road layout, a 20mph speed limit and pedestrian crossings to improve safety.

The next step was to have the issue discussed at a council meeting. In the meantime, police stepped up speed checks.

Ange said: "We need to protect children and others better than we have been.

"Our campaign will carry on until appropriate steps are taken, but I'm very pleased with the response so far from the council's road safety people and elected representatives.

"Thanks to the help and support of Cllr. Chris Lemon and fellow parent Katie Blant, we have had further meetings, and improvements have been made."

Joe was taken to hospital with leg injuries.

He has recovered fully, after some time with his leg in a cast, but is still reluctant to cycle as much as he loved to before his accident.

He is pictured with his mother and his ruined bicycle.



BRIDGEND

BRIDGEND BIGWIGS HELP TO CELEBRATE LOCAL LEGEND'S 80TH



Special birthday celebrations for a well-known local man and regular customer took place at his favourite pub, in Bridgend.

The Wyndham Arms Hotel marked David 'Dai' Dobbs' 80th birthday with balloons, cake and gifts. The mayor of Bridgend Town, Steven Bletsoe, and Councillor David Unwin (both pictured) also joined the celebrations.

Mr Dobbs (centre) is a local legend, known by everyone in the Welsh town, especially The Wyndham Arms Hotel's team, a pub which he has visited every day since it first opened more than 20 years ago.

He was previously 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 is also a loyal supporter of the local rugby and cricket teams.

The Wyndham Arms Hotel has also paid its own tribute to Dai by creating a special beer in his honour – Dobbie's Delight – an exclusive dark ale first brewed by Brecon Brewing in 2018.

The idea of shift manager Emma Thomas, the name Dobbie's Delight was chosen by vote on social media.

The manager of the hotel side, Lisa Driscoll, said: "I have been working at the pub and hotel for 19 years and have seen Dai every day. He is a truly amazing man. We all love him, as does everyone in the town."

Shift leader Meg Matthews added: "He is our local legend, and we were thrilled to be able to celebrate his special birthday with him at The Wyndham Arms Hotel."

GATESHEAD

KAT LOSES HER LOCKS FOR COUNTY DURHAM CHARITY

A charity head-shave at The Tilley Stone (Gateshead) raised awareness and funds for a local charity based in Chester-le-Street, County Durham.

Bar associate Kat Taylor lost her locks in aid of If U Care Share foundation, raising cash for the cause, thanks to generous contributions.

If U Care Share (www.ifucareshare.co.uk) was founded 10 years ago with the goal of saving lives, supporting communities and preventing suicide. Over the past decade, the charity has supported thousands of people, providing training, talks and awareness to many more.

Kat's head-shave was completed by Keano Kenton, head barber at local Key Kutz Barbershop.

On the day, Kat raised £206 in donations from colleagues, customers, friends and family.

The pub's manager, Martyn Flatley, said: "Well done to Kat on her terrific fundraising event. Thanks to Keano for his time and skills and to our customers for their generous contributions."



HALIFAX

BOXING CLEVER AT BARUM AS SECRET SANTA GETS THE SACK

Staff at The Barum Top Inn (Halifax) raised £550 to spend on Christmas presents for local children.

The team decided to scrap the annual secret Santa workplace gift exchange event by pooling donations and making up 17 Christmas Eve boxes.

The boxes were presented to Halifax charity Mothershare, which provides families with the essentials – such as clothing, cleaning and safety gates – which they may need as they bring up their children.

The pub's manager, Stephanie Taylor, said: "I'm really proud of our team, as we all know just how much in need some families are, especially at this time of year."

And Kim Shedden, founder of Mothershare and chair of its board of trustees, added: "We are very grateful to the team at The Barum Top Inn for what it has done. The money really will make a difference to local families."

Pictured are (left to right) duty manager Amy Bennett, pub manager Stephanie and kitchen manager Shaun Clarke.



HAVERFORDWEST

MRS CLAUS AND ELF TIM GET FESTIVE AT FOOD FEST

The team at The William Owen (Haverfordwest) certainly got into the festive spirit for a local food festival.

Shift manager Nicola Hayton, dressed as Mrs Claus, and shift leader Tim Watson (disguised as a Christmas elf) are pictured at the front of the pub in the Welsh market town during the Haverfoodfest event, organised by the town's Haverfoodfest committee.

The pub's manager, Jon Blayney, said: "The road outside the pub was pedestrianised for the event and involved 30 local food producers and sellers.

"We offered a pizza-tasting session, with pizza menu samples for people to try, as well as free mulled wine for the locals.

"During the day, Nicola also raised £144 with a cash collection and Christmas raffle, in aid of Young Lives vs Cancer.

"We look forward to being part of the next Haverfoodfest – on 7 May 2022."



HEYWOOD

SADDLE SOAR: SHIFT LEADER MEGAN GETS A SHIFT ON

The team at The Edwin Waugh (Heywood) has continued its support for its local community by fundraising for the local foodbank.

Shift leader Megan Ellis completed a 12-hour static bike ride at the pub to raise funds to buy additional supplies for Heywood Foodbank, as well as donating £550 to Young Lives vs Cancer.

Last year, Megan raised £1,000 for the local foodbank charity, run by a group of volunteers and supported by the Heywood St Vincent de Paul (SVP) Society, providing food and support for those who need help.

The latest challenge helped to top up that fundraising amount, as Megan has clocked up a further £500 for the foodbank charity during 2021.

The Edwin Waugh's pub manager, Siobhan Higgins, said: "Congratulations to Megan for her incredible fundraising efforts. We are all proud of her."

Megan added: "Many families who thought that they would never have to go to a foodbank have been reliant on it, because of COVID's impact.

"Our fundraising appeal has touched a lot of people – and their response has been absolutely fantastic, again.

"A massive thankyou to everyone for their support."

Megan (on bike) is pictured with bar associate and cleaner Jen Kelly.



MORPETH

ELECTRICAL WIZARD SPARKS A HUGE FOODBANK EFFORT

The Electrical Wizard (Morpeth) became a food donation point during the festive season, in support of a local foodbank.

Staff and customers at the pub collected and donated tinned and dried food stuffs, toiletries and essentials, as well as baby products, to deliver to the nearby Wansbeck Valley foodbank.

As the largest independent foodbank in Northumberland, Wansbeck Valley takes pride in helping to relieve the consequences of poverty or financial hardship (since 2013), by providing food to the those who need it.

Pictured (left to right) with the donations are bar associate Kevin Smith, shift leader Jake Weatherburn, pub manager Kelly Graham, shift leader Andrew Green and kitchen manager Kieran Robertson.

Kieran said: "We collected more than £600 worth of food, toiletries and gifts to donate.

"It was a monumental effort from our staff and customers, who should be congratulated."



SHEFFIELD

BAND'S PERFORMANCE HELPS PUT BRASS IN CHARITY'S POCKET



Chapeltown Silver Band descended on The Wagon & Horses (Chapeltown, Sheffield) to play Christmas carols as staff and customers joined in with the singing.

It's an event organised every year by local churches at the pub and helps to get the festive season off to a suitably jolly start.

Chapeltown Silver Band is Sheffield's premier brass band in a region famous for music of that style. The band's history dates from the 1870s, during Queen Victoria's reign. It is nationally graded and represented Yorkshire in the UK brass band championships, in 2019.

Pub shift leader Beth Truelove, who helped to organise the event, said: "The band is terrific and obviously local to us in Chapeltown.

"It was great to hear it perform at the pub. Our customers, as well as staff, thoroughly enjoyed listening."

A total of £188 was raised through donations on the night in aid of Young Lives vs Cancer.

Beth is pictured (crouching, grey T-shirt) with team leader Rebecca Peckover and the pub's manager Peter Bryan, with band members (each carrying a musical instrument).

SOWERBY BRIDGE

COMMERCIAL INN FAYRE FUELS SPIKE IN DONATIONS TO HEDGEHOG CHARITY

A Christmas fayre at The Commercial Inn (Sowerby Bridge) helped to raise more than £300 for a local hedgehog charity.

The event showcased homemade products brought in by local craftspeople and artisans.

Goods included bath bombs, makeup and confectionery, such as hot chocolate stirrers.

The community event was organised by shift manager Poppy Hutchinson.

She said: "It was a lovely atmosphere and a good opportunity for local artists and craftspeople to meet the public and sell their wares. We are grateful to them for coming and to the customers who spent their money."

The pub also organised a quiz, a bake sale and a coffee morning as part of a programme of events to raise money for Halifax Hedgehogs, which rescues the spiky creatures and rehabilitates them back into the wild.

Poppy is pictured (left) with confectioner Tracey Brocklehurst and children's book-maker Karen Baker (right).



MALTBY

BRASS BAND BRINGS COMFORT AND JOY TO QUEENS HOTEL

Several days of Christmas events at The Queens Hotel (Maltby) included a Christmas market and a brass band carol-singing evening.

An evening of carols was led by the Maltby Miners' Welfare Band as staff and customers sang along to Christmas classics.

This was followed by a Christmas market at the pub, with local traders running stalls, including Spuddy's Paintings and Savvy Scents.

The pub ran its own stall, offering mince pies, Christmas cakes and party bags as hampers were raffled to raise money for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The events were organised by the pub's manager, Beth Burns, who said: "We wanted to do everything we could to raise as much money as possible and provide some cockle-warming entertainment for customers at Christmas."

In the end, they raised £300.

Pictured (front) with band members are (left to right) bar associate Chloe Aitken, pub manager Beth Burns and shift manager Eleanor Hill.



BRIDLINGTON

PRIOR JOHN'S CUSTOMERS BRING CHILDREN PRESENT JOY

A giant collection of 150 presents was sent to a children's centre by staff and customers of The Prior John (Bridlington).

The gifts were donated after staff at Bridlington Children's Centre issued a plea for 77 presents – one for each child on its books.

The centre puts on activities and provides support for local children and their families.

Shift leader Samantha Harriman drove the effort at the pub, with activities including a non-uniform day for staff and a name-the-bear competition.

Gifts included baby toys and scented gift sets for older children.

Samantha said: "We thought we'd struggle to get 77 presents, so were overwhelmed to receive 150."

"It's thanks to the generosity of our customers and team here."

Bar associate Sam Arkless, who helped with the fundraising effort, is pictured with some of the gifts.





★ WREXHAM

THE NORTH & SOUTH WALES BANK



The North & South Wales Bank (Wrexham) took the opportunity to recognise its longest-serving staff member as colleagues celebrated its 20th birthday.

Kitchen associate Sharon Griffiths was given flowers as she marked 20 years at the pub, starting on day one in December 2001.

The pub has several other long-serving staff, including sisters Rachel and Gemma Jones, who have worked there respectively 12 and 10 years as a shift leader and bar associate.

Kitchen team leader Lisa Baker has notched up 18 years' service, while Hayley Jones (no relation) has been a cleaner at the pub for 15 years. Between them, the five have worked a total of 75 years at the pub.

Customers enjoyed cake amid a party atmosphere to celebrate the pub's birthday.

The pub's manager, Louise Williams, said: "It was a really nice occasion and was good to be able to recognise those who have stayed with us so long."

Pictured are (left to right) shift manager Tim Hosken, pub manager Louise Williams and kitchen associate Sharon Griffiths.



★ PRESCOT

THE WATCH MAKER



A special birthday cake was commissioned to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the opening of The Watch Maker (Prescot).

Customers were invited to share a slice or two, when a small party for regulars and staff was held inside.

Kitchen shift leader Daniel Hoy has worked at the pub since it opened in December 2011.

He said: "This is a good community pub and a good place to work. I'm glad we were able to celebrate that."

Shift leader Jeff Bowman and team leader Michelle Comer are pictured holding the cake, with icing used to create the words 'Happy 10th Birthday The Watch Maker'.



★ WORKINGTON

THE HENRY BESSEMER



Pub manager Kirsty Hands is pictured (front) with cakes, to mark her pub's 20th birthday. Kirsty has been pub manager at The Henry Bessemer (Workington) since September 2014.

Also pictured are (left to right) long-serving staff members kitchen manager Barbara Wahl and shift manager Sarah Wilson, together with shift leaders Katy Graham and Stephen Burrow.

Other long-serving team members (not pictured) are kitchen shift leader Gemma Hodgson and shift manager Gareth Herbert.

The pub first opened its doors as a Wetherspoon in December 2001, in the premises which once hosted the Oxford Cinema.

It closed in July 1971 and was later home to the Rendez-Vous nightclub, a market and town cinema the Ritz, closing down again in 1988.

Our pub is named after the inventor who became one of the great names in steel-making. Henry Bessemer devised a converter which blasted air into molten pig-iron to produce steel at one-fifth of the previous cost.

More than 120 years of iron- and steel-making in the Workington area came to an end in 1981 when the town's British Steel works finally closed.



★ NEWPORT

THE GODFREY MORGAN



Cakes, bunting and balloons set the scene as The Godfrey Morgan (Newport) celebrated its 23rd birthday.

Pub manager Jensen Clarke celebrates his pub's birthday each year by inviting regular customers to celebrate with staff.

Jensen, pictured with shift leader Alicia Harty (left) and bar associate Sian Williams, said: "I always celebrate the pub's birthday, no matter whether it's a big round number or just another anniversary, because it's a good excuse to give something back to our regulars. We made a bit of a deal of it because we weren't able to celebrate it last year."

The Godfrey Morgan opened on 24 November 1998 and had previously housed the Maindee Cinema.





★ WATFORD

THE COLOMBIA PRESS



The Colombia Press (Watford) celebrated its coming-of-age with a retro DJ night and a fun-day inside the pub.

A raffle and a tombola featured prizes including Wetherspoon gift cards and free meals at the pub. A total of £150 was raised for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Music in the evening focused on popular songs from the early part of the century – the pub opened its doors in November 2000.

Pictured celebrating the pub's 21st birthday are (from left) bar associate Sebastian Antonesi, shift manager Karl Haney and team leaders Liam Lane and Cameron Rayner.

The pub's manager, Maddy Clark, said: "It was a pleasure to celebrate the pub's coming-of-age in such a fun way, while raising money for our charity as well."



★ MOTHERWELL

THE BRANDON WORKS



Pictured marking the 20th birthday of The Brandon Works (Motherwell) are (left to right) kitchen associate Lynne Cairns, pub manager Suzy White, shift manager Garry Hands and team leader Thomas McCourt.

The Brandon Works opened in December 2001 in the building once occupied by Baird's department store until the early 1990s.

The pub name recalls the local history of steel production at The Brandon Works, which first opened in 1884, and covered a wide area immediately behind the pub.

Suzy also celebrated a milestone at the pub in January, having been pub manager there for 10 years.

The pub's longest-serving staff member, kitchen manager Steven Hislop, started as a bar associate, beginning a week before the pub opened two decades ago. Lynne is the second-longest-serving team member, with 15 years' service.



★ GAINSBOROUGH

THE SWEYN FORKBEARD



Pub manager Amanda Fretwell baked a cake to celebrate the 21st birthday of The Sweyn Forkbeard (Gainsborough).

Amanda shared the large cake with staff and customers as they looked back to when the pub opened – December 2000.

Several of the staff have notched up long service records at the pub – duty manager Hollie Forrest has worked there for 15 years, while manager Amanda and kitchen associate Charnee Chapman have eight years' service each.

Balloons also set the backdrop as regulars tucked in to the cake and enjoyed a party atmosphere.

Amanda said: "It was a good opportunity to reward our customers for their loyalty over the years."

She is pictured (centre) with kitchen associate Charnee Chapman (right) and duty manager Hollie Forrest.



★ RUNCORN

THE FERRY BOAT



The Ferry Boat (Runcorn) celebrated its 15th birthday – by highlighting the long service of some of its staff.

Some, including shift leader Natalie Joyce, newly promoted kitchen manager Sarah Booth and shift manager Gemma Jones, have worked at the pub since it opened in December 2006.

The pub is managed by Jimmy Quinn, who said: "Natalie, Sarah and Gemma are some of our key people and have contributed a great deal to the pub's success over the decade and a half it has been open.

"It was great to celebrate the pub's birthday with customers and to recognise the staff for their long service."

Area manager Mike Morrissey joined in the pub's celebrations and is pictured (left to right) with Gemma, Sarah and Natalie.



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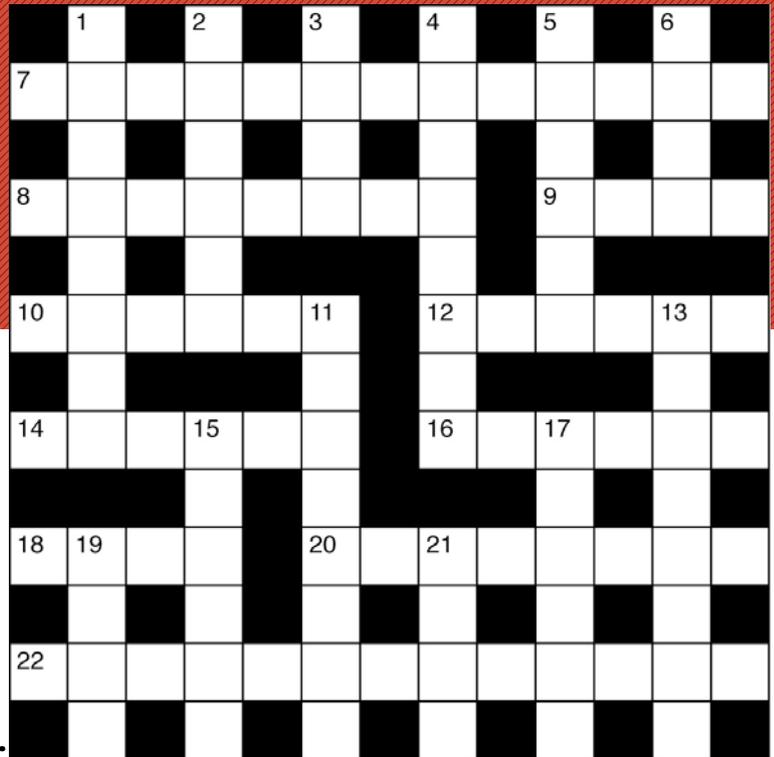
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Across

- 7. New York-born violinist who at the age of seven appeared as soloist with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra (6,7)
- 8. Form of comic verse named after the middle name of writer Edmund Bentley (8)
- 9. See 3 Down.
- 10. Daryl, actress who played 1987's Roxanne (6)
- 12. Currency of Indonesia (6)
- 14. Island in the Aegean, birthplace of lyric poet Sappho (6)
- 16. Olympic field event won in 1992 by Romas Ubartas (men) and Maritza Marten Garcia (women) (6)
- 18. "The --- Game", play by John Galsworthy (4)
- 20. Name coined by the Soviet magazine Red Star for British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (4,4)
- 22. President of Nationalist China 1950-75 (6,3-4)

Down

- 1. "The --- Heart", story by Edgar Allan Poe (4,4)
- 2. Kevin, Wimbledon men's singles runner-up in 1985 (6)
- 3 & 9Ac. 1952 Fred Zinnemann film with Gary Cooper and Grace Kelly (4,4)
- 4. "From the ---", subtitle of Dvorak's Symphony in e Minor (3,5)
- 5. Cruciferous plant of the Mediterranean region with a large white or yellow edible root (6)
- 6. Joan, Spanish surrealist painter who died in 1983 (4)
- 11. Gavin, Scottish rugby union player who scored 105 points in four matches in the 1995 World Cup (8)
- 13. Roald, first man to navigate the Northwest Passage and to reach the South Pole (8)
- 15. The art of growing dwarfed ornamental varieties of trees by selecting pruning (6)
- 17. 1984 film starring 10 Across as a mermaid (6)
- 19. Helmut, German Chancellor since 1982 (4)
- 21. Large deep-sea fish, Lampris regius, also called the moonfish (4)

SOLUTIONS (Winter 2021 issue)

- Across:** 1 Abba; 8 Red Admiral; 9 Al Jolson; 10 Trey; 12 Turpin; 14 Silica; 15 Trilby; 17 Panama; 18 Lyle; 19 Rhomboid; 21 Lee Trevino; 22 Ness.
- Down:** 2 Bill Murray; 3 Argo; 4 Edison; 5 Adonis; 6 Biathlon; 7 Clay; 11 E.E. Cummings; 13 Palmetto; 16 Yorker; 17 Peoria; 18 Lily; 20 Boon.

The winter 2021 crossword winners were:

★ MG, Bradford ★ HP, Stafford ★ IW, Glasgow ★ BP, Frome



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Nik Antona is national chairman of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

Cheers

FEELING THE DRAUGHT, BUT NOT BLOWN AWAY

Makers of cask beer and cider, and the pubs and clubs serving those tipples, are eyeing better days ahead, after two years of COVID-19 strife, says CAMRA's national chairman Nik Antona

It is hard to believe that the year is 2022 and that the beer, cider, pub and club industry has now been dealing with the pandemic's consequences for almost two years.

Despite the struggles faced, it is heartening to witness the resilience and stamina of an industry which has essentially been shut down and restricted, in one way or another, over and over. The fact that we still have pubs, clubs, breweries and cider-producers operating across the UK is down to the fact that consumers – readers like you – love these institutions and have rallied together to support the industry in every possible way.

For campaigning, 2021 was truly an amazing year for those of us who love beer, cider, pubs and clubs. Many of you tuned in, last February, to the relaunch of our #PubsMatter campaign, during which thousands of people took to social media to call on the chancellor, Rishi Sunak, to rescue our fragile pubs with an emergency package of support. In Scotland, your support helped to secure a victory for tied tenants as the Tied Pubs Bill became law. In Northern Ireland, changes to pubs' opening hours and licences for brewers and cider-producers formed a first step to modernising Northern Ireland's alcohol licensing laws.

DUTY

In quite a major development at the end of the year, we received some fantastic news in the UK Government's autumn budget – that a draught duty rate would be introduced, a game-changer for cask beer-drinkers, cider- and perry-drinkers and the great British local. The new draught duty rate will have a wide-reaching impact, including recognising the benefits for our community and well-

being of pub-going and drinking beer and cider, as well as the positive changes for the environment and the future of cask ale.

This is something on which CAMRA has campaigned for many years – and we are delighted that the government has listened, supported our locals and introduced the important principle that beer, cider and perry served in a pub or social club should be taxed at a rate different from that on alcohol purchased at places like supermarkets.

These changes are the biggest reforms to alcohol duty in recent memory and will benefit both consumers and producers of beer and cider.

Alongside the new draught duty rate, we will see changes to the tax band for lower-strength products. Also, for the first time, we will see a small-producer relief scheme for cider-makers and brewers.

IMPORTANT

That being said, there are still some very important questions to be clarified and details which need deciding. While the current proposals are a huge leap forward, we would like some changes made to the current offering to ensure that consumers, producers, brewers and publicans get the most support possible after several difficult years.

For instance, CAMRA, along with many brewers, cider-makers and campaigning groups, will be pushing to ensure that the draught duty rate applies to containers of 20L or over, instead of the currently proposed 40L. This change will mean that more small brewery beers and bag-in-box ciders will qualify for the draught duty rate, ensuring that smaller producers, too, can benefit from the draught duty rate.

At the time of writing, the UK Government is consulting on more details about the new duty system. This is a chance for brewers, cider-makers and campaigning groups to ensure that the new draught duty rate applies to as many draught products as possible and that the new small-producer relief schemes are designed in a way which will allow small producers to thrive, increasing consumer choice in future.

Let's give our locals all the support they deserve to get people back through the door, after being told for so long to stay away.

LEGISLATION

CAMRA will continue to work with producers and the government to ensure that the voices of the industry are heard and their needs represented, wherever possible, in legislation and parliament.

We will also continue to work on behalf of pubs, if restrictions do return.

While we are awaiting the final details on what the new duty system will look like, we are encouraging people to support their locals in any way they can – and just like many of you have done throughout the long months of this pandemic.

To get involved in our campaigns and to add your voice to the supporters who love beer, cider, pubs and clubs, ensure that you visit camra.org.uk and check out our 'current campaigns' pages.

Of course, the best and simplest way to support the industry throughout this time is to continue to head to the pub for a pint – throughout 2022 and beyond.

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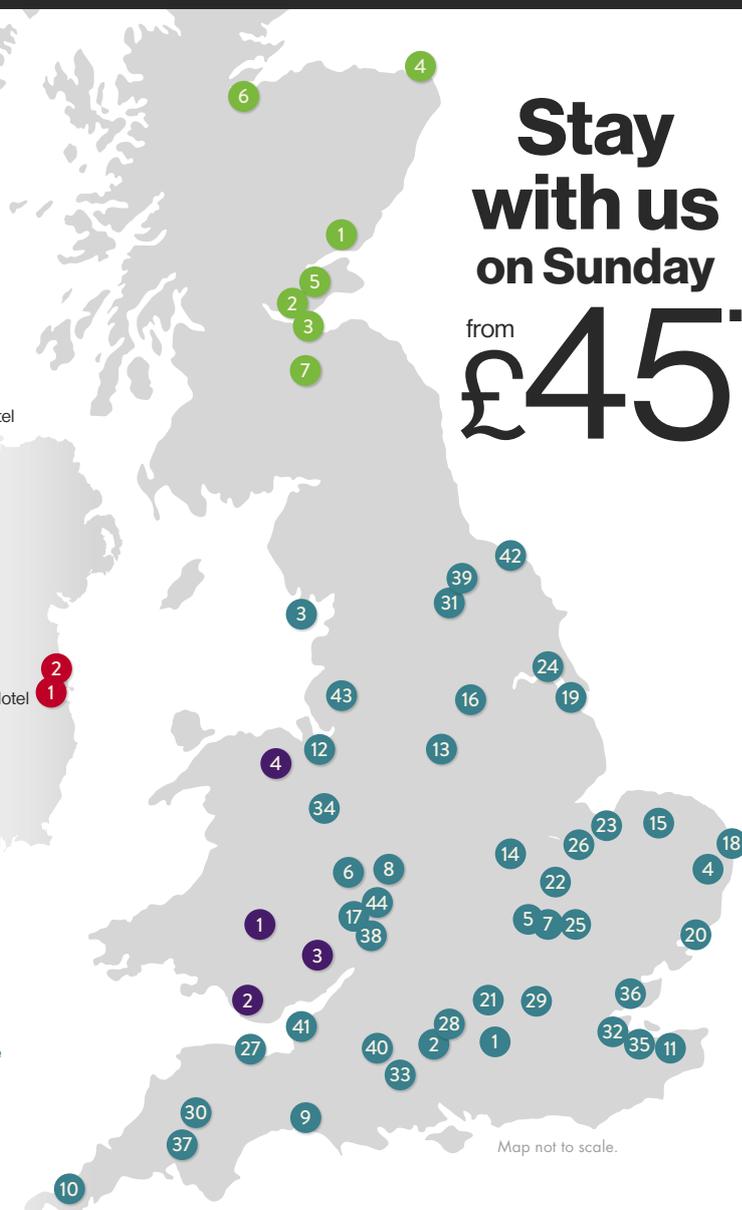
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