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for
Real Ale

CAMRA ANGLE WINTER 2024



ISSUE 69
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WELCOME TO THIS EDITION OF CAMRA ANGLE.

THE FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH was taken at **The Black Horse, West Boldon** to mark the pub's 30th time in the **CAMRA Good Beer Guide**. Pictured from left to right are Landlady Sarah Reid, chair Ian Monteith Preston and broadcaster Jeff Brown. More on this inside on page nine.

As well as the usual local news items there is some national news about CAMRA's new chairman and a new INDIE campaign (page 10) There are also whole range of features and articles to enjoy. The middle pages are given over to our successful **Beer Festival** in pictures. Peter Tong has written another pub article (well actually a club) :- Ryhope Catholic Club. He also recognises a local figure in the area. The Wandering Bear as been to Castle Eden and Mark Taylor to Greece!. Brewery Liaison Officer Michael Wynne visits Brewlab for the day and tries not to get in the way.

Brand new **Real Ale Guides** and a branch **Local Inventory** are now available to download (see page seven) ; and if that's not all, a page is given over to recent awards, both local and national.

This, and previous issues, can be found online at <https://sst-arch.camra.org.uk/magazine>

So, many thanks to our contributors and our advertisers, without whom it would not be possible to produce this magazine. Enjoy the read, Ken Paul

Contributors :- Branch Brewery Liaison Officers, Ken Paul, Mark Taylor, Peter Tong, Wandering Bear, Michael Wynne. All photographs are by the editor unless stated.

The Branch would like to thank The Museum Vaults, Sunderland and The Steamboat for hosting our last branch meetings, and The Mid Boldon Club for holding beer festival meetings.

CAMRA ANGLE is produced in house and published by the Sunderland & South Tyneside Branch of CAMRA © 2024. Views or comments expressed in this publication may not be necessarily those of the Editor, contributors or CAMRA. 2000 copies are distributed across the branch and beyond. Printed by Pblprint of Drum Industrial Estate, Chester le Street.

CONTRIBUTIONS are welcome and can be sent to :- magazine01@sst.camra.org.uk

BRANCH CONTACTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 27

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DIARY DATES

December 2024	
Brewlab Xmas Taproom Open	Thursday 19 th December 2pm till 8pm. Brewlab, 1 West Quay Court, Sunderland SR5 2TE
January 2025	
Maxim Open Night	Friday 3 rd January - 5pm -10pm Maxim Brewery, Gladwell Rd, Rainton Bridge, Houghton, DH4 5NL
February 2025	
Maxim Open Night	Friday 7 th February Details as per January
CAMRA Great British Beer Festival Winter	Wednesday 12 th February till Saturday 15 th February Magna Science Adventure Centre , Magna Way, Rotherham S60 1FD
Darlington Beer Festival	See advert on back cover.
March 2025	
North East Regional Meeting	Saturday March 1 st 1pm. Newcastle Venue TBC.
Maxim Open Night	Friday 7 th March. Details as per January
Look out for announcements on social media or our online FUTURE EVENTS page https://sst.camra.org.uk/wordpress/?page_id=42	



https://sst.camra.org.uk/wordpress/?page_id=2126

Locale promotes pubs stocking locally brewed ale in order to reduce the number of beer miles from brewery to cellar. Online is a list of those in our branch that sell beer brewed in Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and County Durham. If you have any updates please email the branch Pubs Officer sst.pubsofficer@gmail.com

Pub News

Hebburn

Real ale has been reported in **The Iona Social Club** on Station Road, Hebburn.

Jarrow

A new pub, **The Charles Palmer** has opened in the town centre. Named after a local shipbuilder, this is an Amber Taverns pub but does not sell real ale.

South Shields

The former Railway, The Waterfront and The Mill Dam, has reopened as **The Log Fire Pizza Co.** Next door to The Steamboat, this eatery allows drinkers but does not offer real ale.

Further south real ale pubs **The Vigilant** and **The New Ship** closed when long term licensee Brian Nicholson retired. The Vigilant has reopened with Timothy Taylor Landlord reported. The New Ship remains closed.

The Simonside Arms is no more. It used to sell Draught Bass for many years, and under one of its recent guises (Florence's Bar & Bistro) real ale was briefly available. The pub closed last year and sustained substantial fire damage earlier this year. It was demolished at the beginning of November after a planning appeal overturned a local council rejection of plans to demolish. The branch opposed the demolition.



Photo - Peter Tong

Sunderland

Serving two changing real ales, a new micro pub called **The M.O.D.**, above, has opened in the city centre (opposite Chaplins).

The Lighthouse Micro Pub in Fulwell has had a redecoration. Two new keg lines have been added



Photo - Ian Monteith Preston

The Bridge Hotel Vaults, above is a Grade II listed building on High Street West and dates from the 1790's. It closed in 1998. Vaux Brewery have taken over the ground floor and reopened it in November. There are up to four handpulls serving both Vaux and local brewery beers (see next page). There is additional information on the branch

Heritage Pub website from 2023 :-

https://heritagepubs.sst.camra.org.uk/?page_id=11415



Photo - Ian Monteith Preston

After extensive work the former **Three Crowns Pub**, which dates from the 1780's, and JJB Sports building in High St West has reopened as **The Three Stories**, above.

The venue has three floors incorporating a ground floor bar, a second floor event space and a third floor cocktail bar. There is also a roof terrace. There is no real ale available

West Boldon

The Wheatsheaf intends to start selling real ale with two handpulls.

If you have any pub news to share please email pubsofficer@sst.camra.org.uk

Or complete a feedback form on the pubs and clubs section of the new CAMRA website, where more information can be found

<https://www1.camra.org.uk/pubs>

Brewery News

Reports by Branch Brewery Liaison Officers (BLO's)

Brewlab

The sale of Brewlab to Phil and Alison Douglas was finally completed at the beginning of September. Phil remains training and brewery manager, whilst Alison runs the laboratory and analytical services. Although he has retired, Dr Keith Thomas continues as a self-employed consultant.

There has been a taproom event on alternative Fridays throughout September to November. See Dairy dates on page 4 for any news and also keep an eye on social media or visit www.brewlab.co.uk.

A large 500l brew of the 6% white stout, Snowstorm is being produced for release in December in both bottle and cask. (See also page 8)

Maxim Brewery

During October Maxim recorded their 3000th brew. Apparently this equates to 15 million pints!

As well as the core beers from Maxim, their four Xmas beers will be available in December.



Pump Clip from Maxim

They are, Great Escape (pictured), Santa's Soot, Santastic and Xmas Pudding Ale.

January sees the return of seasonals Simco Kid, Raspberry Porter and Nectarone.

Brewery nights continue on the first Friday of every month. (See Diary Dates on page 4). Their brewery shop is open Monday - Friday till 3pm. Tel 0191 5848844

North Pier Brewco

In recent weeks 4.2% Dreamcatcher pale ale has been available at the Mid Boldon Club while The Marine in South Shields have taken High Tide, a 6% IPA and a 4% American Style Pale Ale, Infinite.

The newly opened Bridge Hotel Vaults in Sunderland had as one of their first

guest beers an American Golden Ale called Midas (4%)

Further afield in Co Durham, Tanfield Lea Club had Low Tide, a 3.4% Pale Ale and Falling leaves, a 5% Golden Amber available towards the end of November.

Vaux Brewery

Vaux's new pub, the Bridge House Vaults (see page 5) has opened. There were two cask ales on sale on opening; Vaux Pale Ale @ 4.7% and Vaux Best Bitter @ 4.5%, plus a large selection of keg. Inside it's much bigger than their original taproom on Monk Street.

Wear Beer

There are plans to start producing kegs, with the first, a green hop lager brewed with Sunderland grown Saaz hops. This will be available in Station East, Gateshead. An imperial stout will be ready for Christmas in bottles.

The brewery will feature at Hebburn Market on the 2nd Saturday of the month and Sunderland's Sunnyside Market on the 4th Saturday of the month.

Branch Brewery Liaison Officers.
Please contact them with any news.

Michael Wynne -
brewlabBLO@sst.camra.org.uk

Ken Paul -
maximBLO@sst.camra.org.uk

Stan Johnson -
northpierBLO@sst.camra.org.uk **NEW**

Mo Moseley -
vauxBLO@sst.camra.org.uk

Steve Thompson
wearbeerBLO@sst.camra.org.uk

SUNDERLAND & SOUTH TYNESIDE LOCAL INVENTORY OF HERITAGE PUBS

CAMRA have introduced a National Initiative called **Local Inventories**. The aim of this project is to develop lists of pub interiors that retain some sort historic interest and to include pubs where the exterior is of high quality or has specific features of interest.

In this branch we considered the following :-

- Historic England Grade II listed buildings.
- Pubs that have been awarded blue plaques.
- Of any historic interest over 50 years old.
- Pubs included in South Tyneside Councils Local List of Historic buildings. - These are those buildings that do not meet Historic England's criteria to be listed nationally, but are important to local residents. As yet, Sunderland City Council do not have a Local List.
- For completeness, those pubs that feature on CAMRA's National Inventory of Pub Interiors are also included.

The Inventory, which is an evolving document, can be found and downloaded here :-

https://heritagepubs.sst.camra.org.uk/?page_id=12380



<https://rag.sst.camra.org.uk/>

Over the last ten years Real Ale Trails have been available on our website to download as PDF files. This all started with "RATs" for Sunderland, South Shields and Washington. Over time this has expanded to cover the whole branch with 11 files. Keeping these "current" was quite time consuming in the online Branch Document Depository so a decision was taken earlier this year to redesign them as **Real Ale Guides**, on their own website.

There are still 11 Guides covering the whole branch but this time their content has been expanded to not only include real ale pubs and clubs, but those that are Grade II listed, are featured on CAMRA's Real Historic Interiors and those South Tyneside pubs that appear on their Local List of Heritage Assets.

Much has been made of referring to the new **CAMRA Experience Website**, which as official launched in October 2024. <https://www1.camra.org.uk/pubs>

It is hoped that these new online guides will prove useful when planning any outings, as well as providing a historical document of the pubs and clubs in our branch. The original PDF files are still available, although no longer updated, and can be found here :-

<https://sst-arch.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=65182>

Brewlab Brewday

Michael Wynne is in his element

At the Brewlab Taproom event at the end of August, Phil Douglas invited me for a brewday to give me the opportunity to following their brewing process from end to end.

I arrived at nine AM and the place was already a hive of activity. Brewlab holds yeast for around 20 north east small breweries and the yeast was being blended with malt extract before being sent to those breweries.

We were to brew 30 litres of an Oktoberfest- style 6% Märzenbier. The basic recipe came from the web and needed to be adapted for our purposes.

The first step was to work out the proportions of malt and hops to be used. Phil has a spreadsheet that calculates this and the length of the boil to reach the desired ABV (Alcohol By Volume). The brew required 4 kilos of Munich malt, and 2 kilos each of Pilsner and Vienna malts. 7g of Magnum hops will be added to the boil.



Hot liquor tank, mash tun and copper



These ingredients are measured by hand as we go to start the brew.

Their process is a manual one, and the ingredients are handled by a human at each stage of the brew. There are 50l kits in a room at the rear of the room. A simple set up with hot liquor



Hops

tank, mash tun and copper with gravity is used to transfer from tank to tank.

First the mash tun is filled with very hot water from the hot liquor tank. Malt is then added and mixed with the water. It is left to boil for an hour, and at the end of which, the wort is moved to the copper. As the wort is run off, a sparging arm

sprays hot water onto the grain to ensure all the essential sugars are extracted. The malt's job is complete, and it will go to a local farm to be used as animal feed.

Once the wort is in the copper, the Magnum hops are added and boiled for an hour. At the end of the boil, the wort is allowed to cool before Saaz hops are added with Carrageen, a natural seaweed product



Transfer to fermenter

used to clarify the beer. The gravity of the beer is checked before it is transferred to the fermenter.

Once complete, a German yeast culture, grown by Brewlab, is added. The brew is then left for about a week for the sugars in the wort to convert to alcohol.

The beer was available at the Oktober Taproom. A very enjoyable beer.

I already knew the basic brewing process, but I learned a lot during the day. Thanks to Phil for tolerating me getting in the way.

2025 Good Beer Guide Review and Launch

Ken Paul reports

On September 26th 2024 CAMRA published the 2025 edition of **The Good Beer Guide**.

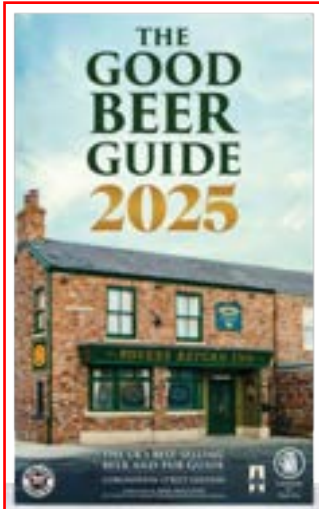
The Black Horse, West Boldon has been included in the guide 30 times so to recognise this, the branch presented a certificate to landlady Sarah Reid (see front cover) to coincide with the press launch.

The guide saw the return to the standard format of being broken down into counties, from last years grouping pubs and breweries into regions. This makes it much easier to follow.

There are two covers of the book, one showing The Rovers Return (Coronation St), the other, The Woolpack (Emmerdale).

There is an introduction by former CAMRA National Chair Nik Antona and you can find interesting articles about women in beer, beer styles, and two key CAMRA campaigns.

Former Guide editor Roger Protz is always a good read, and so he contributes with an article about the state of the British brewing industry. There is a section near the end on how beer is brewed, now a regular feature.



At the end of the book can be found a place index and a beer index.

Some facts and figures

Our branch has the usual allocation of 22 pubs/clubs in the guide, including a

new entry and three re-entries. Our branch is in Tyne and Wear and there are 26 breweries listed, two less than last time. Nationally 2023/24 has seen the closure of 190 breweries, with only eight opening to compensate.

Missing is special reference to **The Famous Five** - those pubs that have appeared in every issue of the guide. They are still mentioned as individual entries however, but you need to know what they are first. So here they are :-

- Star Tavern, London
- The Buckingham Arms, London
- The Roscoe Head, Liverpool
- The Square & Compass, Dorset
- The Queen's Head Cambridge

The Good Beer Guide 2025 is available from CAMRA Books for £14.99 plus postage (members price).

<https://shop1.camra.org.uk/product/the-good-beer-guide-2025/>



*From left to right : Jeff Brown, Ian Monteith Preston, Ken Paul, Lynn Dobson, Steve Drummond, Neil Walters, Sid Dobson and Peter Tong.
Photo by Robin Sanderson*

National Update

New CAMRA chair

In September CAMRA announced that Vice Chair **Ash Corbett-Collins** was appointed its new Chair. Ash replaces Nik Antona who stood down due to ill health. Subsequent to this fellow National Executive member **Gillian Hough** was appointed Vice Chair

INDIE BEER Campaign.

SIBA - The Society of Independent Brewers and Associates, has launched a new campaign called INDIE BEER. This is designed to help consumers seek out independent beers and

breweries. The campaign includes a 'brewery checker' so that consumers can find out if a brewer is independently owned, and an 'assured' mark for brewers to use to show their independence.

New chair Ash Corbett-Collins, said: "CAMRA is delighted to be supporting SIBA's INDIE BEER campaign. We know that finding independent and local beer is often a top priority for our members and beer drinkers across the UK. It's great that SIBA are committed to transparent communication about ownership in beer. Unfortunately, we often

see global brewers market their own brands as if they were independent, tricking consumers in the process. It is vital that consumers have access to the right information about where their beer is being brewed, and whether it's in independent ownership."

For more go to the INDIE BEER checker :-
<https://indiebeer.uk/>

These stories, along with comments about the recent budget, can be found at CAMRA's Press Releases.

<https://camra.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases>

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Real stories, real people, real ale



The Best Kept Secret in Ryhope - Ryhope Catholic Club

Words and Pictures by Peter Tong

This is a club I've been determined to write about as it's been a regular on my CAMRA Angle distribution list for a while. The staff and customers always seemed canny and, although many of the members seem to read our magazine and then put it back in the holder time and time again, there seems a genuine interest in what CAMRA is all about.

So on a rainy night in October I set off from South Shields by public transport and after a short visit to The Guide Post and Ryhope Fisheries, arrived at "*The Vatican*" (the club nickname) The land it is on actually belongs to St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church but the club is charged rent and therefore all the work required is done voluntarily. When I started delivering the Angles, Michael Lonsdale was in charge of things and he always seemed pleased to see me and genuinely grateful that despite the limited hours of opening, we hadn't forgotten about him and his regulars. His daughter Angela has been club Secretary since she was 18 and so the club has always been a part of her life. Her day job is as a Ward Sister at Sunderland



Royal Hospital and now with her partner Kev, a butcher (so I expect the pies and sausage rolls are top notch!) run the club. (pictured above). Sadly Michael passed away not so long ago.

First impressions are of this being a very happy place. The regulars are enjoying being there and their love for Angela and Kev is obvious.

There are two real ales on and both hand pulls remain in constant use. Most of the customers I saw on my visit were drinking it and very nice it was too. Firebrick's Heatwave at 4.2%, "a beer for Summer evenings" as it said on the beer clip, was

going down well in Autumn, while Blonde Star by Anarchy was equally impressive, both at just £3 a pint.

The club is much larger than it looks from the outside as it goes back a long way and going even further back in time it was initially a youth club with a football team and also had brownie and scout groups.

In 1970 alcohol arrived and Ryhope St Patrick's Club opened its doors on 21st October 1970 with a committee of 12 and 100 members paying £1 a share. At this point it was men only and Castle Eden beer was one of their best sellers.

As with many pubs and clubs, hard times were to come but not for a good 35 years in this case but, in 2005, with membership dwindling and rent to pay, an Extraordinary General Meeting took place with a view to ensure that the club didn't have to close. This meeting had the desired effect, lady members were welcomed and new and existing folk promised to do their bit to move the club in a forward gear rather than reverse.

Continued

Those folk included Jean Milburn (members remember her affectionately as "our lovely friend Jean") someone always there to call on when necessary. Jean worked very hard until, sadly, she passed away during lockdown.

So what have we got, well, great beer, a really friendly atmosphere and everyone is made so welcome. You don't have to be a member or sign in, just turn up and enjoy yourselves and if you happen to be on your own then you've nothing to worry about, just look forward to making some new friends.

I'm going back on a Saturday next time for Bills Quiz, Play your cards right,



In Memory of Michael Lonsdale (top) and Jean Milburn (above left)

Bingo, sandwiches, pies and sausage rolls!

Thank you to Angela and Kev (who are now CAMRA members) for their hospitality.

The club is open regularly on Friday and Saturday evenings from 7pm to 11pm and on Sunday lunch times between 12-2pm. You'll find it on **Dinsdale Street, Ryhope SR2 ORL**. The 39 or 39A buses from Sunderland stop very close by or there are lots of alternatives which stop at the village green. Now just try it for yourself !

A large advertisement for Maxim Brewery. The background is red. On the left is a bottle of Double Maxim beer. In the center, the text reads "THE AWARD WINNING MAXIM BREWERY" in large, bold, yellow letters. On the right side, there are three circular award logos: "MAXIM BREWERY 2017 DOUBLE MAXIM PREMIUM", "MAXIM BREWERY 2018 Swedish Blonde", and "MAXIM BREWERY 2019 MAXIMUS". At the bottom, there is a white banner with the text "The home of Double Maxim" in a cursive font. On the far left of the banner is the BBI logo, and on the far right are two SIBA award logos.

CAMRA'S Pub & Cider Pub of the Year 2024

Pub of the Year 2024

CAMRA recently announced the best four pubs in the UK as part of its national Pub of the Year 2024 competition. These four were judged from a super- regional final of 16 pubs. They are listed opposite, and the winner will become the winner will become the National Pub of the Year, one of the highest accolades afforded to pubs in the UK.

All the pubs in the competition are selected by CAMRA volunteers and are judged on their atmosphere, décor, welcome, service, value for

money, customer mix and most importantly quality of the beer. The overall winner will be announced in January 2025.

- **Black Horse, Preston**
- **Three B's, Bridlington**
- **Little Green Dragon, Winchmore Hill, North London**
- **Bailey Head, Oswestry**

Cider Pub of the Year 2024.

That Beer Place in Chester was crowned CAMRA's Cider and Perry Pub of the Year for 2024 at the beginning of October. This was to coincide with the

Campaigns Cider and Perry Month. The award recognises the best pub or club that promotes and encourages the sale real cider and perry across the UK.

The other three finalists in the competition were :-

- **The Frothblowers, Peterborough**
- **The Hop Inn, Hornchurch**
- **The Woodman, Bridport.**

CAMRA's Club of the Year was announced after this issue went to press.

REGIONAL CLUB OF THE YEAR 2024

East Boldon's **The Mid Boldon Club** in our branch is the 2024 Regional Club of the Year. At our Annual General Meeting in November Regional Director **Hubert Gieschen** (pictured on the right) presented club director **Steve Drummond** with a certificate commemorating the win. Congratulations to all at "The Mid"



Our Beer Festival in Pictures

Compiled by Ken Paul, who took some of the photos along with Robin Sanderson and Peter Tong.

For the second year, our **Beer, Cider & Music Festival** was held in over three days in September at **The Beggars Bridge Pub**, East Boldon. There were 20+ beers and ciders. These are a selection of photographs that were taken.

SET UP



SOME OF THE MUSICIANS

Over the three days of the festival, local musicians performed for free. Here are just some of them



From left to right :- Salty Dog, Lisa Waugh, Dave Bottomley

SOME OF OUR BEER SPONSORS



Julie Sullivan and son Steven from The Stags Head South Shields.



Bar Manager Stan Johnson (left) with Phil Walters and Keiran Dixon from The Marine South Shields.



Karen McKellar from the Dolly Peel, flanked by Branch volunteers Alan and Sandra Wilson.

TAKEDOWN



The art of getting it all in the van



Stan Johnson, Sid and Lynn Dobson, Steve Drummond and Ian Monteith Preston ready to leave for another year.

OUR CHOSEN CHARITY

We support our local **Royal National Lifeboat Institute Branch** every year with a donation being a mixture of beer token returns and cash donations.

The RNLI operate from Roker Marina, Sunderland doing vital work in the River Wear and the North Sea. In November some branch members, met at the Marina. **A cheque for £254.77** was presented to crew members Adam and Lee, by festival organiser Steve Drummond. Also pictured Lynn Dobson and Will Drennan. **Photo by Robin Sanderson**
Tel 0191 5673536 Email :-Sunderland@rnli.org.uk





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Saving Lives - One Bench at a Time

By Peter Tong

This is a story which needs telling and since I heard about the unbelievable work this bloke does, I've been setting my stall out to give the whole thing the prominence it deserves.

Step forward **Wayne Rambo Groves** (pictured right with the author) . Wayne changed his middle name because he didn't much care for his original one and he did that for charity. Born in South Shields 45 years ago, Wayne attended St Wilfred's School before a job at Asda beckoned, but like me back in the day, he got into DJing, following a job collecting glasses in the Venue in the town. This saw him working at a string of clubs, which apart from a stint in Leigh in Lancashire, pretty much got him settled into the South Shields night scene. Starting off in The Venue, DeNiros and Chambers, he then worked in places like Coast, Atlantic, Viva, and Life of Riley to name a few.

This kind of work is difficult and demanding, and I know from my personal experiences of working the pubs and clubs in Leeds while holding down a day job - on stage you always have to make sure you smile, are a bit "over the top" and ensure



Photo :- Rae McInnes

everybody is enjoying themselves.

Of course, in reality, it isn't always like that. Wayne has always struggled with his mental health, getting so bad he was reduced to breakdowns for no reason and hiding in the toilets crying while at work. Facebook, you may say, has a lot to answer for sometimes, but it was a post Wayne put on which changed a lot of stuff as he set out how things were for him, which even his own family were not aware of. That said, it was out there now. Following his retirement from Life of Riley in South Shields in 2015, his last DJ residency, things have taken an unbelievably different direction.

A lot of folk find it really hard to talk about how they feel and mental health is a difficult subject to write about, let alone talk about, especially when you have

hit rock bottom. Wayne wanted to do something and make sure others didn't suffer the same way as him and he threw himself into something different to turn a negative into a positive.

Wayne's "go to" place is the beach. When he's not feeling

100% he finds the beach and the sound of the sea is where he is happiest, listening to the waves while sitting on a seat in South Shields. Wayne spent many years going to "his spot" but he only ever had one person stop to ask if he was alright.

You'll have noticed many seats in area that are dedicated to folk who are no longer with us and, although Wayne always said, he would like to have one dedicated to him, why wait? Why not get one now, and even better than that, how about the seat having information for those who were struggling and in need of help. A phone number and a QR code maybe? The idea was pitched to the council who turned the idea down, but this lead Wayne to chat to a more prominent member at the Town Hall. He then got a phone call

Continued

asking "what colour would you like the seat and where do you want it?" So in 2023, **The Red Bench Project** was born.

There are now SIX benches with another TEN on their way. As well as South Shields (one in Wayne's "go to spot" is near the Sand Dancer pub which the council paid for ; you can find them at Mill Dam, Marsden, Jarrow and Hebburn and even one in the Lake District at Thurston Outdoor Education Centre, Coniston.

Talks are ongoing with North Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham councils and without any doubt lives are already being saved (four that he knows of). Donations are always welcome with a bench costing £500 but there are many other things going on with Wayne



Above members Steve Thompson (left) Stan Johnson (centre) and Peter Tong (right). Rambo is next to Peter. Taken at our Beer Festival in September 2024

ensuring that similar groups help each other which really make a difference.

" There are groups for how you feel and what you'd like to contribute", Wayne says. Like A Step Forward, which is a men only mental health group where cars and food seem to be the favourite subjects to chat about whilst you walk and talk, or Andy Man Club, a much larger organisation, where you can just listen if you feel you haven't got much to say.

I first met Wayne at the

Sunday evening quiz at The Maltings pub in South Shields, where he is the Question Master. He seemed like a man on a mission. That said, he's very humble and although he has won local awards including "Unsung Hero" and "Fund Raiser Of The Year". He wants folk who are struggling to

open up to at least one other person. He told me openly that he tried to take his own life once, but back then he was sent back out bandaged up, and ended up back to work the following day pretending like nothing had even happened. He doesn't want that to happen to anybody else.

If you'd like to know more or get involved in any way please get in touch.

info@theredbenchproject.co.uk

Home Brewing news

CAMRA recently held their **2024 Champion Home Brewer of the Year Competition**. Branch member Steve Thompson submitted his Northern Coalfields Brown Ale and he achieved a Bronze! Congratulations to Steve, (pictured above left).

CAMRA issued a press release, which gives all 10 categories and the Gold, Silver and Bronze winners.

<https://camra.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/homebrewer-wins-pipedream-prize-for-best-beer-93694>





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Castle Eden

The Wandering Bear Reports

Slightly less than a year since I last travelled to Redcar with my eldest to coach his football team in one of the largest tournaments of its kind in the country, we again made the journey on a windy but bright, warm day.



My youngest son and my wife joined us this time round, making it a full house of Bears enduring the high and lows of youth football! After battling through a tough group stage and a penalty shoot-out win in the semi-final, we were sadly pipped to the post in the final, losing 2-1 to a goal in the last 2 minutes. It's fair to say that there were a fair few tears at the end, and that was just me, but a great day was had by all.

And so to break up the journey home, and as a little treat for yours truly, we arrived at the **Castle Eden Inn**.

Castle Eden itself is a village in County Durham, situated a short distance from the A19. Famous as the home of the former Castle Eden Brewery, most of it was demolished in 2003 for a new housing estate and only the main front building remains today. This is a listed building and is now

managed office space with a popular Italian restaurant. Interestingly, the A19 used to run through the village until it was bypassed in the 1970s, hence the Castle Eden Inn was once a coaching inn on said main road.

My family and I bypassed the many outside tables in the beautiful gardens and found a seat inside the large building. Very tastefully decorated with muted, modern décor it was very clean and tidy with many tables available despite being busy.

Real ale was on tap, with two to choose from. Needless to say, I had one of each; Consett Men of Steel and Consett Porter. Both being delicious and had been well kept. The Porter was £3, and I'm not sure what the Men of Steel came to as I also had to buy food and drinks for the rest of the family. What I can say though is that all prices were very reasonable, and the food was delicious.

The service was exemplary, the staff were attentive and friendly and the locals didn't seem to mind a family of sweaty outsiders traipsing in.

It appears to be a food-led enterprise, with an almost 'restaurant-like' feel

to it, and all areas of the pub were furnished for food. Not a criticism, just an observation. And like I say, the beer was amazing so what could go wrong!

A large fireplace was just waiting for autumn and winter to return, but as it was such a lovely day, it remained dormant. It wasn't until my way out that I noticed CAMRA leaflets on a windowsill in the porch, together with editions of 'Durham Drinker'. It is of course great that they were there, but a more prominent position on the bar may garner some extra interest and enquiries.

All-in-all, a lovely place to visit with excellent real ale on tap. If you are passing on the A19, it is minutes away and is accessible both southbound and northbound. You will not be disappointed.

Editors Note; - The Castle Eden Inn appears in the 2025 Good Beer Guide.

THE STATION HOUSE, NORTH ROAD, DURHAM, DH1 4SE



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Greece is the Word

By Mark Taylor

When visiting Greece you know what to expect: nice weather, friendly people, beautiful coast, mountains, history, exceptional food and, of course, ouzo. But beer...? Well, yeah, there's the ubiquitous Mythos on offer. Look beyond the multi-national's fizzy lager and you'll discover an amazing 'craft ale' and occasionally cask scene.

This is not a definitive guide. Merely, a taster of a small sample of what the over 400 Greek independent microbrews ales have to offer the visitor, for the next time you're in Hellas; (Known as Greece to the rest of world).

On arrival, the taps that will usually greet you are either - Mythos, Alpha or Fix as they dominate the market share. So, before we get to the good stuff lets examine the credentials of the 'big 3' producers.

Mythos - a basic fizzy lager than does the job sitting in a beach bar. Weighing in at 4.7% vol its the typical mass produced product to tick the box of cold beers the world over. It's only been around since 1997 and brewed in Thessaloniki - Greece's second largest city - by the Northern Greece brewery. By 2004 they sold out to S&N (yes those of the Blue Star once located up the road). As is the way of



global capitalism they too were swallowed up by Carlsberg in 2008. So Mythos isn't technically even Greece's own anymore.

Alpha - is (for the moment) Greek owned. This uses Greek barley and at 5% is brewed in Athens by Athenian. Last summer a Alpha Sea Salt version of their standard lager was available in bottles. It was better than the average and had something rare in market leaders beers - taste!

Fix - a 5% vol lager. My personal favourite of the big hitters. Fix has been a national favourite since 1850. Making it the oldest produced beer in the country. Well, it was until the Olympic Brewery in Athens closed down in 1995. The drink and brand almost lost.

A Greek consortium rejuvenated the nation's favourite in 2010. They moved to a new brewery

70km north of Athens to Ritsona near Evia. It then regained its lost market share to become the no 1 beer in Greece. 2012 saw Fix Dark to compliment its traditional lager. At 5.2% vol it has a robust, broody taste. To me, its more like a Mild than the Dark Lager it is purportedly meant to be. Whatever, it's a decent sup.

Okay , that's the big boys.

Fun Facts - The craft beer scene is exploding rapidly- especially among young Greeks, reflecting Greece's year on year increase of beer consumption. The 2024 census put Greece's slowly declining population at 10,047,817. Which is slightly bigger than London's populous. Greece has over 6,000 islands and only 227 are inhabited. Its not just the big populated islands that have one micro brewery; for example- Crete has 10 Microbreweries. Rhodes and Santorini three and Evia four.

On the mainland there are naturally more but some parts of Greece have numerous independent breweries within small regions:- Thessaloniki & North Greece 11 Athens five, Pelopounese 10

Most beers are just locally available but there

are exceptions who are actively chasing the big three national market share.

Tino's based NISSOS come from a small island but their beers are found across the country.

Mamos is a great beer from the Peloponnese region ; it not only has a good regional following but widely available on the Saronic Island chain too.

On Corfu beers have spread nationally beyond the confines of their home island and very good they are too. While Santorini Brewing **Donkey** brand of Red, Blonde, Black & Golden beers are available across the country too. Another Santorini offering to try is the **Volken** organic beer range.

Across the Aegean Sea ; one of the many microbreweries based in Crete is Rethymno Brewery. They also produce organic beers under their **Brinks** brand name - again using colours as the descriptor. On Evia; Septem brewery produces a huge range of bottled beer (see above) and are a favourite in the restaurant trade across the country.



This just a tiny sample of what is out there. But where do you find these gems. Best place to start is the resort supermarket or grocery shop. However even in the smallest of places, if you look hard enough, there is a specialist 'craft ale' bar to be discovered.

Having just returned from the Saronic Islands and Athens I can confirm the following places as 'beer heavens' when on your holidays and wanting to escape a Mythos!

In Spetses, on the sea front was the classy Mosquito bar. On Hydra , I'd recommend a visit to Labein. While in Poros, waiting for the fast ferry; the

Manessi Hotel is must do refreshment stop.

In Athens you may find 'cask handpulled ' ale . Pulp bar is enthusiastically trying to make their version of English beer and on cask too. Round the corner is Sfika bar. They had **Zoe's Greek Beer** in plastic bottles , which while quirky did not detract from the flavour or quality. It's delivered like this directly from their brewery at Argos (the city not the retailer!)

Across the city halfway along a very dark and dodgy looking back lane with a grand name called Aristofanous you'll find the Frogs Bar . Again Cask is on offer - this time from **Nessos**.

If out by Paros and Naxos islands try to find the **Paros Brewery** 54 Islands Blonde Pilsen. Still my favourite out of the many many independent Greek beers I tried. Joy in a glass!

So don't just sit by the pool with a fizzy glass of Mythos next time you're in Greece. Get out there - it will definitely be worth while.

Yamas!

<https://www.beerologio.gr/p/greek-breweries.html>

Pubs. Pints. People. podcast

The latest episode of CAMRA's podcast, Pubs. Pints. People. is now available to listen on Acast, Apple Podcasts, Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts from. The new episode focuses on malt :- <https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/pubs-pints-people/id1502569624>.

CAMRA Discounts and Loyalty Cards

Branch pubs and clubs that offer either a discount scheme, loyalty card or accept CAMRA 50p vouchers. Loyalty cards are available to all regular customers, not just CAMRA members. If you have any updates please email:- pubsofficer@sst.camra.org.uk For discounts, please show your Membership Card.

East Boldon - Grey House - 50p off voucher & loyalty card	Sunderland North Avenue - 20p off a pint	Sunderland Centre (contd)
East Herrington - Board Inn 50p off voucher	Blue Bell - 10% OR 50p CAMRA Voucher (not both)	Dun Cow - 10% discount
Hebburn - Longship - 10% discount & loyalty card.	Flying Boat - 10% discount. Ask about loyalty card. NEW	Ivy House - 10% discount
Houghton le Spring - Wild Boar - 50p off voucher	New Derby - Ask about loyalty card	Keel Tavern - 10% discount
Ryhope - Guide Post- 10% discount	Sunderland Centre	Peacock - 10% discount
South Shields	Chaplins - 10% disc & loyalty card	Saltgrass - Mon cask ale club 25% discount
Bamburgh - 10% discount	Chesters - 50p off voucher and loyalty card	William Jameson - 50p off voucher
Fountain 10% discount	Cooper Rose - 50p off voucher	Washington
Maltings - 10% discount	Deptford Bank Loyalty Card Ship Isis, King's Arms and Saltgrass - buy 9 pints get 10 th free. Pubs also offer 20p off a pint for CAMRA members	The Courtyard 10% discount
Marine - loyalty card		Sir William de Wessyngton - 50p off Voucher
Wouldhave - 50p off voucher		Washington Arms - 50p off voucher

TRADING STANDARDS

If you have any complaint about your beer or cider, such as poor quality, short measures or no price list displayed, you should mention it to the pub management in the first instance. If you need to pursue the complaint further, we recommend contacting the local Trading Standards Office. Contact details are given below :-

SOUTH TYNESIDE	https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/68067/Make-a-complaint
SUNDERLAND	Citizens Advice consumer helpline: 0808 223 1133

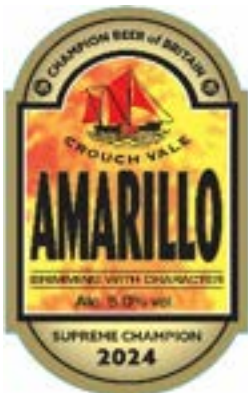
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

Some useful contact details for Tyne & Wear Metro and local bus services.

Arriva - 0344 800 44 11	www.arrivabus.co.uk/north-east/
Go North East - 0191 420 5050	https://www.gonortheast.co.uk/services
Nexus (Metro & Buses) - 0191 2020747	www.nexus.org.uk/
Stagecoach - 0191 566 0231	www.stagecoachbus.com/about/north-east
Traveline North East 0871 2002233	www.travelinenortheast.info

Pub Quiz (Answers on Page 27)

- 1 Executed in 1536, who was the mother of Elizabeth I?
- 2 The atrium can be found in which part of the body?
- 3 Published in 1988, who wrote the novel The Tommyknockers?
- 4 What was Ronnie Barker's characters full name in Porridge?
- 5 Name the Swiss folk hero who was the subject of Rossini's last opera.
- 6 Which TV sitcom's opening theme song was sung by Bud Flanagan?
- 7 As of November 2024, who is the Speaker of the House of Commons?
- 8 Who was manager of Scotland at the 1978 World Cup in Argentina?
- 9 Which is the only lake in The Lake District which is actually called a lake?
- 10 Which central Canadian city hosted the 1978 Commonwealth Games?
- 11 With which animal cartoon pair do you associate producer Fred Quimby ?
- 12 Name the river that flows through Cardiff and Pontypridd.
- 13 Who had a number one hit with When The Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get Going in 1986.
- 14 Name the doctor in Back to the Future who drove a DMC DeLorean car
- 15 What is the national flower of Scotland?
- 16 In 1950's TV, what breed of dog was Rin Tin Tin?
- 17 What is the model Twiggy's real name
- 18 With which TV sitcom do you associate The Feathers?
- 19 And The Nags Head ?
- 20 And The Clansman?



Champion Beer of Britain 2024

In November it was announced that **Amarillo** by Crouch Vale Brewery in Essex was named the overall winner of CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain award for 2024. The beer is described as *"a superb premium golden ale with wonderful aromas of Amarillo hops and a lasting spicy and orangey flavour. Cara malt provides a little burnished colour, but the light body belies its strength."*

For the full story :- <https://camra.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/crouch-vales-amarillo-named-best-beer-in-britain-93709>

Thanks to Colin at Crouch Vale for the pump clip image

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Quiz Answers

1 Anne Boleyn	11 Tom and Jerry
2 The heart	12 River Taff
3 Stephen King	13 Billy Ocean
4 Norman Stanley Fletcher	14 Emmett Brown
5 William Tell	15 The Thistle
6 Dad's Army	16 Alsatian
7 Lyndsay Hoyle	17 Lesley Hornby
8 Ally Macleod	18 The Royal Family
9 Lake Bassenthwaite	19 Only Fools and Horses
10 Edmonton	20 Still Game

SCAN HERE



FOR MORE INFO

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