Canny Bevvy

Tyneside & Northumberland CAMRA

FREE

Issue 270 • Winter 2027



Local Pub and Brewery News

A Gander at Gosforth

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CAMRA Tyneside & Northumberland


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Talking Ed

A Friday night bus ride to Gosforth became a habit that's lasted 35 years for David Russell. He takes us back up the High Street in this issue, starting at the County. Over in Gateshead, we've a pub map, a bike and a camera for the first instalment of our Pub Month report. And if you fancy stretching your legs, there's a CAMRAmble from Blaydon to Ryton.

Ryton is also home to Ye Olde Cross, our North East Regional Pub of the Year. We take a look at how the award is decided and how members can help judge next time round.

There's plenty to catch up on in the pub news, from a new taproom at Six Barrels in North Shields to the Rockcliffe Arms celebrating 130 years in Whitley Bay. Our campaigning update looks at the end of Newcastle's Late-Night Levy, and our Canny Christmas Gift Guide has a few ideas for the beer lover on your list, including a look behind the scenes at Full Circle.

Thanks to everyone who's written for us, taken photos or carried a bundle of magazines into their local this year.

Have a canny Christmas, and I'll see you at the bar.

Anthony

Front cover photo: Shaun Cutler

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Branch Diary

Monday 14 December
Festive Wander
The Bacchus, Lady Grey's and Fitzgerald's.

Tuesday 22 December
Christmas Ouse
Meet at the Cumberland Arms at 2.00pm for a stroll around the Ouseburn pubs.

Tuesday 12 January
Branch meeting
7.30pm. Venue to be confirmed.

Saturday 13 February
CAMRAmble - Boldon.

Tuesday 16 February
AGM
Followed by a branch meeting and *Good Beer Guide* selection.

Saturday 27 February
Regional meeting
1.00pm at the Masonic Centre, Chester-le-Street.

All events are subject to change.
Please check the *Canny Bevvy* website www.cannybevvy.co.uk for up to date details.

Readers Pubs

We are looking for photographs of pubs that our readers love.

Please send a photo, with your details to: editor@cannybevvy.co.uk



Pub and Brewery News by Paul Hillhouse

The Sandpiper - Tynemouth is set to be demolished to be replaced by a Tesco store.

The pub that was built in the 1970s has served the Farringdon Road area well; however, in recent times there has been controversy, with a planning application to replace the pub with a block of flats being rejected and the decision appealed before Malhotra Leisure were granted permission.

The current tenants, who had been running the pub for five years, having initially been told they would have six months, marked the last weekend with a live band and a chance for locals to say goodbye to the piper.

Six Barrels - North Shields opened their long-awaited taproom on Northumberland Street in North Shields in September. The beer distributor has been exploring options to open an area to serve some of the beers they bring into the region since they first opened in North Shields in 2017, but the expansion into the larger unit next door made the process viable.

The taproom will serve two cask ales and 12 keg lines and is currently open Thursday to Sunday and aims to showcase the best beers on offer from independent breweries across the UK.

Full Circle Brewery - Newcastle has opened its first pub as they take over the former Greggs bakery pub, The Golden Flake, in Fenwicks department store in the city centre. The breweries first permanent pub has 12 keg lines and two cask lines, and feature seasonal beers, collaborations and tap takeover events as well as smash burgers and chicken from Peckin' Order. The pub itself is very welcoming with views over Grey's Monument and a fun screen giving production facts from the brewery (they had brewed 43,257 pints this week when I visited a drop of 11% on the previous weeks efforts). Open Sunday 11-5, Monday to Wednesday 11-7 and Thursday to Saturday 11-10, the pub can be accessed even when Fenwicks store is closed via the entrance by Greggs on Blackett Street.

The Cluny - Ouseburn has received funding of £334,000 from the government's Arts Everywhere Fund. The money is to improve accessibility at the pub/music venue and its sister site Cluny 2 as well as reducing the carbon footprint of the venues. Savills Architecture has been chosen to manage the project, with work expected to start in January and continue across the year with the goal of creating a more welcoming space for all visitors supporting increased capacity and help attract a wide range of artists and events.

The Schooner - Gateshead
A planning application has been sought to alter the use of The Schooner on South Shore Road, Gateshead into a home of multiple occupancy (MHO). The pub has commented on social media that they do not plan to close anytime soon, and the change of use had first been discussed in May before the pub took off, becoming busier. “We have no plans to change in the immediate future; however, it wouldn't hurt to have this if we ever decided to sell”

The Ink Spot Micropub - Newbiggin have revealed plans to open a second pub in Ashington, Hoppy Days micropub and coffee shop in North Seaton, aiming to open by the end of the year with the same vibe as the Ink Spot but with its own identity, opening during the day for cake and coffee and in the evening for craft beers alongside cocktails and gins, including the house gin NewBIGgin.

Pub and Brewery News

Eight keg lines of changing beer are available that may include Hold Fast, the house beer from the Ink Spot brewed by Three Brothers Brewery in Stockton.

It's walkable from the original Ink Spot, and in an area the owners really wanted to invest in as more houses are built locally.

The Bay Horse - Woodburn has reopened under new owners after its 84-year-old landlady Hilda Wright retired, having run the pub for two decades across two stints dating back to 1983, Her final weekend running the pub included a surprise party organised by regulars of the pub.

The pub reopened its doors on October 15th with the new owners Andy and Debbie from Hastings taking over. The pub, which dates back to 1790, also comprises a bed and breakfast and claims to offer Northumberland's best carvery.

News Roundup

The Drunken Baker - Cresswell is a new bottle shop at the Drift Cafe offering fresh bread and beer to take away.

The Joiners Arms - Morpeth is set for a refurbishment following the acquisition by Punch Taverns, including a brief closure of the pub in early January, with a reopening scheduled for mid-February

The Gander - Newcastle is being opened by Amber Taverns and replacing the short-lived Magpie pub on Percy Street, the former site of The Goose (see what they did there), with an extensive refurbishment planned and no opening date announced at the time of writing.

The Tyne Valley Tap - Stocksfield has closed, having been denied a change of use planning permission following complaints from neighbours. The bar had been open at weekends across the summer and was popular with local branch members.

The Fox - Hexham reopened under new management in August. The Admiral Taverns pub on West Terrace has new tenants, Michael and Laura. The venue has a reputation for being a great live music venue and has a lineup of bands every Sunday going forward.

The Rockcliffe Arms - Whitley Bay is celebrating 130 years. The backstreet pub situated close to Whitley Bay Metro held a sing-along on October 25th to mark the occasion. The pub serves a changing selection of four real ales and is well worth a visit. Happy 130th Birthday, and I hope you are very careful with all those candles around the old wooden bar!

If you have any pub news to share, please email us at chairman@cannybevvy.co.uk

The branch would also like to thank the following pubs for hosting recent branch activities:

Brandling Arms, Gosforth
The County, Gosforth
Black Bull, Blaydon
Victoria Comet, Newcastle
Five Swans, Newcastle
The Chillingham, Heaton



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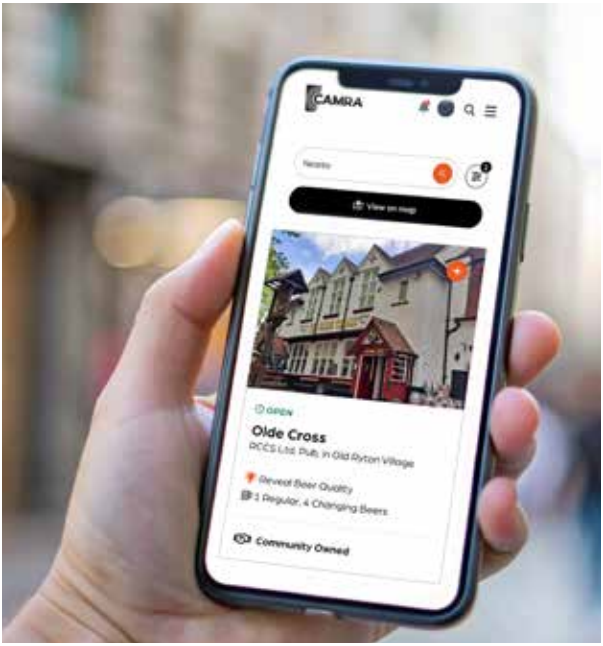
Regional Pub of the Year



As you may have read in past editions of *Canny Bevvy*, Ye Olde Cross in Ryton has been voted Regional Pub of the Year for the North East region. But how was this decided?

Every year all branches of CAMRA choose their Pub of the Year and decide their entries for the *Good Beer Guide*. The *Good Beer Guide* pubs are chosen by people scoring their beers via the CAMRA app (branches can help those who don't have smart phones). The list of pubs is considered by the members and agreed upon.

It is thought a branch Pub of the Year should sell decent beer so members are asked to nominate their favourite pub bearing this in mind.

After the nominations are received the top three in Newcastle region and the top three in Northumberland are announced. At this point any member may judge the pubs up against eight criteria. These include quality of the beer; knowledge of real ale; cleanliness; community focus; service and welcome; atmosphere; CAMRA'S aims and your overall impression of the pub. All you have to do is judge all the pubs put forward. Please don't feel you have to be an expert. Everyone knows when a pub is good. A crib sheet is available to help you score. It is fine to go in small groups but the more people who score on different days the better so we get a full picture of the pubs.

After the five branch pubs of the year have been announced these are judged against each other. Again any branch member can do this following the guidance. Just be prepared to judge the four other branch pubs. You don't need to rejudge your own branch pub. You also don't need to do them all on the same day. You can also help judge the club of the year which last year went to the Catholic Club in Billingham in our region.

Ye Olde Cross went on to the last 16 of the best pubs but alas missed out on going through to the last four.

Campaigning Update

Branch Public Affairs Officer, Mike Allaway with the latest on local and national campaign issues.

A mix of good and bad news this issue. Being Positive I'll start with the good.

Repeal of Newcastle's Late-Night Levy.
A welcome development for pubs, clubs and the nighttime economy in Newcastle generally. Newcastle City Council, meeting in October, took the decision to scrap the city's Late-Night Levy with immediate effect.

Newcastle was one of only three cities outside of London to apply the Levy which cost businesses between £299 and £4,400 annually depending on the size of venue. Proceeds were used to fund safety measures. Introduced in 2013 industry leaders and CAMRA locally had called for some time for it to be repealed.

Quoted on BBC Local News, Council Leader Colin Ferguson said "The Late-Night Levy was a measure introduced when the character of the city's nightlife was different to what it is today.

"Now, at a time when our pubs, bars and clubs are under so much pressure, it is no longer fit for purpose and places an unfair burden on a small number of licensed venues in the city,"

He also said the council's commitment to safety of the nighttime economy remained "as firm as ever".

"The positive work that the Levy supported will continue,"

Commenting on the decision, CAMRA's Tyneside and Northumberland Branch Chair Paul Hillhouse said ''Ever since it was introduced in 2013, the branch has campaigned against the Late-Night Levy.

Our feeling was that the Levy was a broad brush used to charge a lot of struggling businesses to fund the policing of a few bad apples, and that licensing should have looked at alternative measures to achieve the same goals.

We felt it was poorly implemented, with not enough planning or transparency on where the money earmarked for policing the late-night trade was actually being spent, and it led to a lot of Newcastle pubs operating reduced hours to avoid paying at a time when the income would have been sorely needed.

It is great to hear the Council has changed its approach to the issue of the late-night trade, and we very much hope to see the good work of the community groups that received funding continue to make Newcastle safer but funded in a much fairer way".

Pub is the Hub and hospitality grants.
Turning to a positive development nationally.

A hospitality scheme of £10m funding over a three-year period has been introduced by the UK government.

Funding will go towards projects like opening new independent venues, bringing empty buildings back into use or training and skills.

Pub is the Hub has been designated £3m to help pubs diversify and expand their services to publicans, rural pubs and community services.

Pubs Code for England and Wales Review.
In the long-awaited response to the Pubs Code the Government has confirmed that pressures for the code to be scrapped or weakened have been resisted.

Both the code and the adjudicator for England and Wales will remain. Additionally, the Government plan to "develop proposals with stakeholders" to make changes to the market rent only right – tenants will have opt-out provisions in return for investment from their pub-owning business – and new ways to give tenants better opportunities when going free-of-tie. CAMRA's proposal for a Scottish style guest beer line has not been adopted. However, something similar was included in the Government' Autumn Budget Statement.

Carlsberg Brewery Closure.

CAMRA has reacted with anger to the news that Carlsberg intends to close its Burton brewing site in 2027.

Closure of the historic brewing site in Burton puts around 300 jobs at risk, with dramatic consequences for the town which has been a centre of brewing knowledge for centuries.

Commenting on the decision, Ash Corbett-Collins, CAMRA Chair said:

"I was born and raised in Burton, and I'm proud of our place at the centre of British brewing. Unfortunately, statements from Carlsberg about understanding the importance of the brewery to the town come far too little too late for most people, CAMRA included.

"This announcement is an absolute disgrace, and the latest in a string of actions that show how little they care about our brewing heritage or the nation's drinkers.

"However, we do agree with Carlsberg on one thing. The time is right to think about alternative, independent, brewers who are willing to become custodians of Carlsberg's cask brands and will finally do the beers the justice they deserve.

"Like the rescue of Jennings in Cumbria by passionate and experienced brewers, I hope the Burton brewery can be saved. I've got fond memories visiting the brewery in better days, and maybe I'll be able to go again if it's handed over to independent owners."

Autumn Budget Statement

Overall, the Chancellor's Autumn Budget statement can best be summed up as a mix of good and bad for pubs and drinkers.

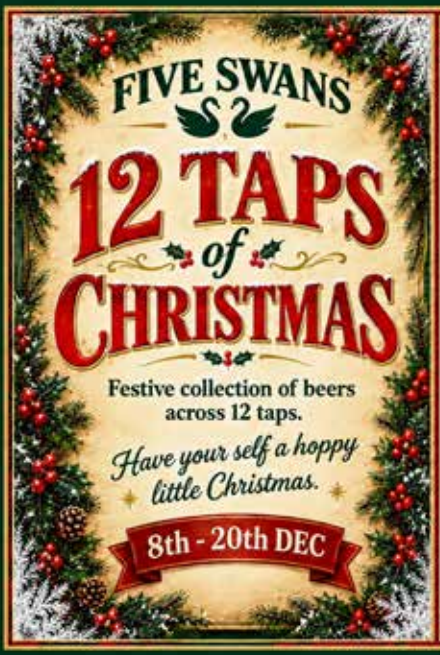
Small Producers Relief has been made more generous. A welcome development in the support of local and independent producers.

Also included in the budget statement and welcomed by CAMRA were proposals to allow pub tenants to serve a guest beer of their choice. This is good news and the inclusion of a measure CAMRA had originally sought to include in revisions to the Pubs Code. Arguably, and depending on how it is introduced, this may be a better solution given that the Pubs Code only covers a limited number of tenanted pubs. Potentially a much larger number of tenants could benefit from the proposals.

Much less welcome to drinkers will be the inclusion of a beer tax rise. Similarly, it was disappointing that the statement contained no measures to address CAMRA's calls to reduce the burden on pubs arising from VAT, energy bills and employment taxes.

Acknowledgements:

That's all for this issue of *Canny Bevvy* other than to acknowledge with thanks that much of the above has been sourced from the web sites of CAMRA and BBC Local News. Both are worth a visit if you want to read more on any of the items covered.



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A Gander at Gosforth by David Russell



The County, Gosforth

David and Anne Russell visit Gosforth High Street.

One Friday night about 35 years ago, bored with the local we frequented at that time, and looking for a change, we took the bus to Gosforth, and we've been going regularly ever since, so what's the attraction? Let's have a look.

Our first port of call is a multi-award-winning traditional pub. **The County** dates back to 1826 when it was originally a dwelling house. At that time, it belonged to the Bulman family who lived in the area. In 1866 the property was converted to a pub and was named The County Hotel. Currently owned by Greene King, this lively bar offers a selection of fourteen cask ales. Eight regularly changing guest ales from national brewers and six regular ales including JARL and Landlord. An interesting range of keg beers are also available. There's a small snug that can be reserved for sporting events, which often hosts CAMRA committee meetings. Outside there a partially covered outdoor drinking area. Major sporting events are shown on large screens in all areas of the pub. CAMRA members enjoy a 10% discount on cask ales.

A short walk north takes us to the **Job Bulman**, formerly a post office. At this Wetherspoons pub, named after a member of the family mentioned above, the usual food and drink options are available, there's a nice courtyard for those hot summer nights. A bizarre claim to fame is this was where Sandro Tonali ate one night soon after he arrived in Newcastle, having been recommended as a prank by the first team squad. CAMRA vouchers are accepted in this pub.

Continuing our wander north, the next stop is the **Brandling Arms**, a pub since the 1920s, thought to have once been a stable house for the wealthy Brandling family. This venue features a spacious, modern, open plan room and a large outdoor drinking area to the front. A full food menu and usually a choice of three cask ales are available. There's an upstairs function room which has hosted CAMRA Branch meetings and a weekly quiz night.

A short walk further north we come to **Barca**, formerly the Earl Grey, and Montpellier's. Here we find a bohemian theme, one real ale usually Tyneside Blonde is on offer. There is artwork from local artists on display throughout the bar which are available to buy.

A Gander at Gosforth

Our next stop is the **Queen Victoria**, an inviting pub with its visually striking red-brick façade dating back to at least 1825. The management has changed on a very regular basis ever since we first went. A major refurbishment took place about five years ago at great expense adding an upstairs bar and there's an outside area to the rear. Currently no real ales are available.

Our final call is the **Gosforth Hotel**, a Stonegate house offering a good selection of seven changing real ales. The main bar area hosts regular music nights and a quiz, there's a back bar and an upstairs function room, which CAMRA use on a regular basis for meetings. It's also the home of St Nicholas Freemasons. This pub has several claims to fame. It was during a band night in this pub that the first copies of VIZ were sold. Famous musicians have played in the pub including Gordon Sumner, better known as Sting. The pub was built in 1878 and bought by Arthur's Hill brewery in 1900. The tiled façade dates back to 1913. In the early days it was an important stop on the main A1 route to the north. Reasonably priced food is available, and major sporting events are shown in all the rooms. CAMRA members have a choice to use either the CAMRA vouchers or claim the 10% CAMRA discount.

Transport suggestion: Stagecoach service 30/31 from St Mary's Place or Arriva service 43/44/45 stop close by the County Hotel. Many Arriva "X" Services from Haymarket bus station stop opposite the Brandling Arms. The Gosforth Hotel is approximately a 10 minute walk from Regent Centre.



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More Beer Vicar! By David Russell



The Pele, Corbridge

Fancy a beer in the church yard? Here's your chance.

I caught the Stagecoach 685 to Corbridge to have a look at a pub in a unique building. The Pele stands on the south-east side of the churchyard of St. Andrew's Parish Church in the centre of Corbridge village.

Built in 1300 for the vicar of Corbridge, The Pele Tower, or 'The Vicar's Pele', was lived in as a fortified vicarage until the early 17th Century. After this time, it laid abandoned until substantial restoration by the Duke of Northumberland in 1910. In 1969 the building was grade 1 listed and passed to Tynedale Parish Council, it was bought by the current owners Shaun and Jayne Cutler in 2013.

Shaun had recently retired from a manufacturing company and was completely new to the hospitality industry. Following substantial restorations, the building was leased out as a micro pub.

Five years later, the owners took back control of the pub and following alterations it opened in its current format.

The pub is on three levels and has a few outdoor tables, there is a bar area on the ground floor a seating area upstairs with a balcony above. A quiz takes place once a month and regular folk music nights are held, including a Piper on New Year's Eve. The building can be hired out for a range of functions.

The cask selection is two ales usually from First and Last, some craft keg beers are available including the house beer Pele lager. A varied selection of bottled beers from Allendale, and First and Last, are available for drinking or to take away. An interesting range of wines spirits soft drinks and coffees are also served.

There's not too many occasions when you will be drinking a house beer in a stone building that's over 700 years old. It's well worth the trip out.

Opening times: Thursday to Sunday 11.00 -11.00

Transport: Bus 684/685 from Newcastle Eldon square or a 15 minute walk from Corbridge Railway station.



The bar interior

Distance	6.5 – 7.0 miles total approx.
Terrain	Mostly on tarmacked paths but also pavements, country lanes and footpaths. Good strong walking shoes or boots are recommended. 5 stiles in reasonably good condition
Grade	Moderate to Strenuous
Starting Point	The Half Irish Micropub, 20 Shibdon Road, Blaydon, NE21 5AE
How to Get to the Starting Point	Arriving at Blaydon railway station, The Half Irish Micropub is 5 minutes walk away. See www.northernrailway.co.uk/ Regular buses arrive at Blaydon Bus station which within minutes walk of The Half Irish Micropub. See www.gonortheast.co.uk/
Description	Starting at a pub in Blaydon the walk continues to two other pubs in the town. Then a long stretch of walking to a pub in the village of Greenside. The walk concludes by visiting two pubs at Ryton.
After The Walk	After The Walk: regular buses depart from Main Road, Ryton. See www.gonortheast.co.uk/
GPX Files All CAMRAmbles	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11S1ycvtVP3gpXLz1mxrZ59rQgb7OAhXR?usp=sharing

The Morpeth Wolf enjoys a linear walk from Blaydon to Ryton

Blaydon has transformed from a heavy coal-mining, iron-forging, and chemical hub into a residential and commercial Tyneside town with reclaimed green spaces. The Blaydon Shopping Centre was built in the 1970s and later updated to modernize local retail and business spaces.

It is at the rear of this shopping centre, tucked away and almost hidden on Shibdon Road, that you will find the **Half Irish Micropub**. Formally the Yard Micropub it is spread across a couple of basement rooms with a collection of records and autographs on the walls.

A log burner was ablaze in the main room and there was a very warm welcome from our host Alison as we entered on a cool October lunchtime as we began to gather for the next CAMRAmble.

I enjoyed a pint of locally-brewed *Firebrick - 70 Shilling Scottish Heavy (3.9% ABV)* as other members of our group began to arrive. Most of them had not visited this hostelry before and they were delighted with its charm and quirkiness.

Our group now complete, we took a very short walk through the bus station and over the road footbridge near the railway station to find the **Black Bull**.

This traditional roadside pub with its impressive stained glass Smoke Room and Bar windows at front of pub has recently been refurbished. But the Black Bull still retains all of its previous traditional surroundings.



The Black Bull

Tina at the bar swiftly served us our drinks and, after a very enjoyable *Firebrick – Propa Belta (4.6% ABV)*, gladly obliged by taking our group photo.

The next leg of our walk took us down under the railway line to a riverside path along the south bank of the River Tyne which is shared with cyclists and other walkers.

We passed a wonderful tribute to The Blaydon Races. A Geordie folk song of 1862, with the lyrics by George Ridley, "Blaydon Races" celebrates the horse races held at Blaydon. Prior to 1862 they were held just north of Blaydon on an island in the River Tyne called Dent's Meadows. The revival lasted only until 1865, but the races began again in 1889 until the final meeting in 1916.

Leaving the riverside walk we passed through a fairly new housing development before meeting a road and crossing the railway line again. Our group was temporarily divided as the barriers descended for an oncoming train.

Very soon we were crossing the main A695 road and at our third pub visit of the day at the **Board Inn** located in an area called Stella.

This family-orientated sports bar has no cask ales available but it does usually have a very extensive and budget friendly food menu. Unfortunately, at the time of our visit the kitchen was undergoing a transformation and only pizzas and burgers were available. Some of our group took advantage of this and enjoyed some welcoming food alongside a variety of refreshments.

Gathering on the pub car park the next section of walking was to first ascend the steep incline of Stella Lane. On reaching Hexham Old Road we paused to catch our collective breaths before crossing and entering a wooded area. Here we followed a very pleasant trail around a former quarry to eventually reach the very busy A695.

On the roadside path and heading west we were now alongside an industrial area which used to be the site of Stargate Colliery (also known as Towneley Main Colliery). Shaft sinking began in June 1800 by the Dunns of Stella Hall to reach the Brockwell coal seam. A pit disaster in 1826 claimed the lives of 38 men and boys (aged 10 to 60). A replica colliery tub unveiled in September 2018 near the Stargate roundabout lists the names and ages of all victims of this tragedy. Final operations and pit closures concluded in June 1963

Taking great care in crossing this very busy main road with fast moving traffic, we entered a kissing-gate and wound our way following footpaths, tracks and country to the village of Greenside.

The White Swan is listed on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors (https://camra.org.uk/heritage-pubs) and retains its traditional plan of four rooms and a corridor with only minor changes. One of the most delightful of these rooms is the 'Select Room' at the front of the pub where a group of real ale enthusiasts now sat down to enjoy their beers acquired from the



The White Swan

bar in a separate front room on the right. *Wainwright – Gold (4.1% ABV)* was very enjoyable and refreshing.

It was now time to enjoy the most pleasant of all of todays walks as we left the village of Greenside and descended towards Ryton. In bright late afternoon sunshine, we enjoyed lovely views across the Tyne Valley.

Once again taking great care in crossing this very busy A695, we entered a wooded area to find an information board. We paused briefly to read about the ancient boundary between the two townships of Ryton and Ryton Woodside which was where we were now standing.

Due to closed footpath to our north, we turned left at this information board and walked along what was the Towneley Main Waggonway. This was the last in a long line of such colliery waggonways in the area of Ryton. The oldest part of the line was opened in the 18th century to carry coal down to the Staiths on the River Tyne at Stella. We passed another well detailed information board about this waggonway before turning off and heading into a housing estate.

The difference in housing developments we then walked through was very evident; newly built houses, then houses possibly built in the 1970s, then through tree-lined streets with huge period houses presumably owned by wealthy residents of the past.

Arriving at the village of Ryton we continued through the village and into Old Ryton Village and our next pub: **Ye Olde Cross**.

Ye Olde Cross, a 117-year-old Edwardian half-timbered building, won CAMRA's North East Pub of the Year 2026 title and advanced to the top 16 competing for the UK's overall National Pub of the Year. Unfortunately, it was not included in the final four contenders announced in October 2026.

The pub was very busy this Saturday evening with a mixture of locals and visitors enjoying an excellent selection of real ales and food served from a mobile food outlet parked adjacent to the pub.

I enjoyed *Sonder (5.2% ABV)* from local brewery *Wylam* as we all sat in the garden area. It was a surprisingly cool but not unpleasantly cold on this darkening October evening.

The last walk retraced our steps to the main road of the village and to the **Lane Head Micropub**. It is to my delight that I once again found that the pub serving beers from *Firebrick Brewery* located locally in Blaydon. Their *Pagan Queen (4.0% ABV)* was very good. With still most of our group intact we chatted amongst ourselves and with locals reflecting on an excellent day's walking and the real ales in the pubs that we had visited.

Please check out our website and social media for the details of our walk in February next year when I am hoping to lead a CAMRAmble in South Tyneside.

Tara-a-bit!
@MorpethWolf



Just behind the Chantry / Tourist Information Morpeth

South East Northumberland Pub of the Year 2024

Opening times
Mon - Sat 5 - 10.30
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CAMRA THE GOOD BEER GUIDE ★2026★ WE'RE IN IT



Red Kellie is Brewer of the Year!



Northumberland's very own Red Kellie, co-founder and head brewer at The First & Last Brewery in Bellingham, has been named National Brewer of the Year at the Women in Beer® Awards 2026.

The announcement was made at Cloudwater Brewery's taproom in Manchester, launching the five-day Women in Beer® Festival. Judged by a panel of industry leaders (including beer writer Melissa Cole, Cloudwater owner Paul Jones, and Burnt Mill head brewer Sophie de Ronde), Red topped a UK-wide shortlist and beat off competition from Laura Gillott (Thornbridge Brewery), Kate Hyde (Hand Brew Co.), and Georgina Young (St Austell Brewery).

The judges recognised Red's dedication to small-batch brewing, sustainability, and her innovative use of local, hand-foraged Northumberland ingredients, from wild spruce tips to seasonal fruits and blossoms. The award also celebrates First & Last's 10th anniversary project, '10B410Y' (10 Beers for 10 Years), where throughout 2026 the team has collaborated with regional small businesses and community members who have supported their decade-long journey.

Talking about her award win, Red said "*The Women in Beer Awards are such a wonderful celebration. It was such a massive surprise to win, and a really proud moment to celebrate all that is special about what we do at First & Last.*"

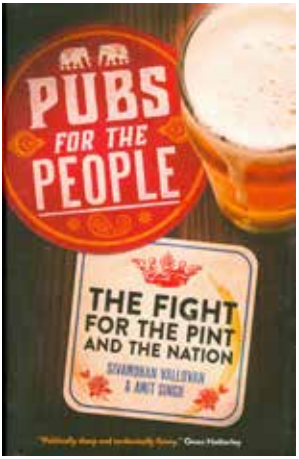
This latest award caps off a stellar year for the family-run brewery, following their Silver Overall Champion win at the SIBA Indie Beer Awards for their foraged Spruce Saison.

Many congratulations to Red and the team, as they once again shine a well-deserved spotlight on our wonderful North East brewing community!



Red Kellie foraging for ingredients

BOOK REVIEWS by Martin Ellis



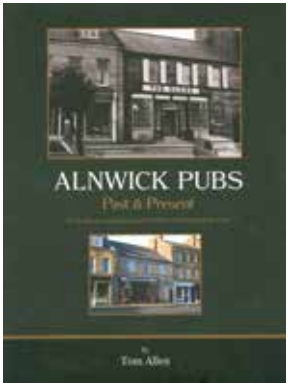
Pubs for the People: The Fight for the Pint and the Nation

Sivamohan Valluvan & Amit Singh
Hardback
£18.99

There are many books about British pubs, mainly they fall in to one of three categories; history and heritage, declining numbers and struggle in today's difficult trading conditions, or a celebration of the country's best pubs. This book is different. It has been written by academic sociologists and explores contemporary English society, the recent rise of nationalism is a key part of the authors evaluation of the English pub in 2026 (the book is very much about English and not Scottish and Welsh pubs). Whilst it covers the history of pubs and the problems facing the pub trade, it is also enthusiastic about pubs.

Clearly both authors have a passion for pubs. As sociologists they consider the roles of the pub in contemporary society. Wetherspoon's gets a chapter, hipster and gastro pubs also get a chapter. CAMRA gets a positive mention for pub campaigning.

It's an accessible and very readable book covering issues close to the heart of people who consider pubs to be a central part of life. Interesting, informative and an enjoyable read.



Alnwick Pubs: Past and Present

Tom Allen
Paperback
£12.00

A few years ago 'Alnwick Pubs, Lanes and Alleyways' was published by Tom Allen. The positive reception and feedback to the book demonstrated the level of interest in Alnwick's past and present. The result is this well researched and presented A4 book that documents the town's pubs from medieval times to the present day.

Reading the book, I discovered that back in 1965 there was a proposal to 'redevelop' Alnwick by knocking down the town's historic core, the proposal boasted about modernisation. Local people voted 600 against the scheme with only four in favour. So, Alnwick resilience has saved a town now enjoyed by thousands. It also has many pubs, my favourite is The Tanners on Hotspur Street which is covered over two pages.

A short section covers Alnwick's brewing history and today's brewing scene.

A well researched book with many illustrations ranging from archive photographs and maps, to photographs of today's Alnwick pubs. It's a must have book for everyone who enjoys visiting Alnwick and its pubs.

The book is on sale from The Accidental Bookshop, Bailiffgate Museum, Taste of Northumbria and The Post Office in Alnwick, or directly from the author (tom.allen2020@btinternet.com) for £12 + £2 p&p.

CAMRA North East Pub Of The Year 2026

Ye Olde Cross

Community Owned Fine Ale Emporium

Old Ryton Village, Gateshead, NE40 3QP



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Facebook/Instagram : yeoldecrossryton

Pub illustration by Nola Jade Holmes

From your first pint to the Committee

A good pint, a welcoming pub and a few friendly faces. There's plenty to enjoy as a CAMRA member, and plenty of ways to lend a hand.

Here in Tyneside and Northumberland, everything from the *CannyBevvy* you're reading to the Newcastle Beer & Cider Festival happens because members give their time, share their skills and get stuck in. Everyone brings something, and you can give as much time as suits you.

Here are a few ways to get involved.

Make your next pint count.
Beer scores help our branch select pubs for the *Good Beer Guide*, while branch votes help decide our Pub of the Year. If you appreciate a well-kept pint, share your scores and give our local pubs the recognition they deserve.

Join us at the festival. Members get free entry to the 49th Newcastle Beer & Cider Festival, from 7 to 10 April 2027. Tickets are on sale now: reserve your free member ticket online, as advance bookings take priority. Come along, try something new and meet some of the people who make it happen.

Come along for the ride. Our bus trips are a chance to explore pubs in other towns and villages, enjoy good company and discover a few new favourites. With the driving taken care of, everyone can enjoy the day.

Help keep *CannyBevvy* flowing. Could you drop copies into a few pubs near you? Or perhaps you have a story to share: news from your local, a visit to a brewer or a pub you think more people should discover. We'd love to hear from you.

Lend a hand at a festival. From putting the bars together to welcoming visitors and serving beer, there's a team behind every festival. Help at one of our smaller events or get involved with Newcastle. There's a real satisfaction in seeing it all come together.

Help shape the branch. A committee role gives you a say in what we do next, supporting our pubs, planning activities and helping more people enjoy what CAMRA offers. Not sure you're ready for a role? You can learn one alongside someone who's done it before.

What could you bring? We're asking members, new and long-standing, about the skills and interests they could share.

These might include:-

Practical skills: technical work, electrics, plumbing or joinery.

Bar and cellar: looking after beer and cider, or experience behind a bar.

Numbers and organisation: budgets, spreadsheets, administration or running meetings.

Publicity and creative: marketing, PR, public affairs, design, social media, writing, photography or video.

Working with people: welcoming, supporting and developing volunteers, selling, or first aid and health and safety.

Tell us what you enjoy and what you're good at. It could be the start of something you'll really enjoy being part of.

Joining us? Visit camra.org.uk/join, then scan the QR code to complete our short skills survey.

Already a member? We'd love to hear from you too. Scan the code and tell us what you could bring.



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Luckies Brewery by Martin Robertson



L-R: Emily McNaughton-Murray and Chris Lee

Luckies Brewery and Tap Room, Ponteland and Jesmond Micropub.

There is no luck involved. Well maybe a little. Twenty years of working as brewers and in logistics in the region for Chris Lee and Emily McNaughton-Murray have given them the experience and the passion to develop a thriving business.

Chris gained brewing experience with Wylam, Almasty, Full Circle and King Ales. When King Ales in Seaton Delaval stopped brewing Chris and Emily bought the brewing kit and set up in a small shop at the Cradlewell, Jesmond Road Newcastle. With empty shops in many areas, you would think it would be a simple process to find a property to start up a business, but in fact it took a year.

How Chris managed to fit the brewing kit into a cupboard in the Jesmond tap room will never cease to amaze me. They could have named it Tardis Brewing and, due to space restrictions, starting in February 2025 they were restricted to four casks plus a selection of keg and can beers.

This year there has been a major change in their brewing capacity as they have taken over premises formerly occupied by Flying Gang in Ponteland. The previous limited brewing capacity in Jesmond only allowed them to supply the Jesmond outlet where Chris was brewing session IPA, Bitter and Stout, with the available beers as varied as possible to provide a better choice for customers.

In the Jesmond location the micro brewing cupboard has been converted into a pizza kitchen, and with seating inside and out, it is popular with locals and dog walkers, open every day from 12.00.

In Ponteland the tap room and outside area, popular with families and regulars to enjoy a pint and a pizza, continues as before. Ponteland tap room is open Friday – Sunday, check website for details. Both venues are accessible by public transport.

Martin Robertson BLO

Luckies
139, Jesmond Road
Newcastle
NE2 1JY

Luckies Brewery and Tap Room
Meadowfield Industrial Estate
Ponteland
NE20 9UG

Isle of Man Beer by Hattie Rowling



A selection of local beers on offer at the Queen's Hotel in Laxey

Hattie Rowling takes a look at beer on the Isle of Man.

When people think of the Isle of Man the first thing that comes to mind is often motorbikes owing to the annual TT races which have been running since 1907, or if bikes aren't your thing, maybe it conjures up images of the Manx cat, a breed famous for not having a tail. Beer, however, is probably not one of the top things people would associate with the island yet there is much of interest for real ale lovers on the island.

The Isle of Man is located in the Irish Sea and is not part of the UK instead being a self-governing Crown Dependency with its own parliament called Tynwald which sets laws for the island. The Tynwald is the oldest continuous parliament in the world and is said to have been established in 979AD when the island was under Viking rule. This means the island has separate laws to the UK and the one most of interest to beer drinkers is that the Isle of Man, like Germany, has its own beer purity law, the Brewers' Act which stipulates that beer brewed on the island cannot contain ingredients other than water, malt, sugar and hops. This law was passed by Tynwald in 1874 and is still in effect on the island today, although amendments in 1999 relaxed the law slightly to allow for additional styles to be brewed on the island such as lager, wheat beer and fruit beers.

The beer purity law was enacted following campaigning by Dr William Okell, who founded Okell's Brewery in 1850 and which is still the major brewery on the island today. Originally based in the city of Douglas, the island's capital, the brewery moved to a new site just outside the city in 1994 where it remains today. The beer range consists largely of cask ales and the beers that were most commonly available during my visit were a 3.7% traditional bitter and MPA or Manx Pale Ale which was 3.6% although the brewery does also produce some seasonal beers and a porter. Okell's beers can be found throughout the island not least because the brewery owns an estate of around 30 pubs located across the island. Alongside the cask ales Okell's brews a keg IPA and a couple of lagers including their Snaefell Pilsner which is very pleasant and named after the island's only mountain the summit of which can be reached by a narrow gauge railway from the village of Laxey.

Unfortunately though it is not possible to sup a pint of Snaefell on Sneafell as the cafe at the top only serves cans from major global brands. A good pint can be enjoyed however at the Queen's Hotel in Laxey village, a traditional, community focused pub which serves a variety of ales from the island's breweries.

A pleasant place to enjoy Okell's beers is at the Terminus Tavern in Douglas. This pub is located at the joint terminus of the historic Manx Electric Railway and the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway. There is a pleasant seating area outside the front of the pub from where you can enjoy a pint while watching the trams of the electric railway arrive and depart and the workings of the horse tramway – arriving by horse drawn tram has to be one of the most unique ways of getting to the pub I've ever come across. The horse tramway was opened in 1876 and has been in use almost ever since, with the exception of a few years during the Second World War and more recently during maintenance work on the promenade. The trams used to run the entire length of Douglas Bay but now only start halfway along the prom. The horse tram even has a beer related connection through sponsorship from Bushy's, another Isle of Man brewery.

Bushy's is the next oldest brewery on the island having been established in 1986 in the basement of a Douglas bar before moving to a separate premises in 1990 where a range of cask, keg and bottled beers are produced with the focus very much on the cask range. Bushy's beers can be found in free houses across the island at their pub, the Rovers Return in Douglas, so called not due to Coronation Street but the collection of Blackburn Rovers material on display!

The island is also home to some smaller breweries of which Kaneen's and Odin are the most commonly found with both producing a range of cask ales which can be found in pubs throughout the island. Odin also own two pubs including the Trafalgar Hotel in Ramsey which is a regular winner of the Isle of Man CAMRA Pub of the Year and a pleasant spot to enjoy a pint or two of their beers with a range including pale ales and bitters as well as a porter and a dark mild frequently on offer.

So, while motorbikes and tailless cats may dominate the postcard racks, the Isle of Man is a surprisingly rewarding destination for the real ale enthusiast. Between its unique beer purity laws, historic transport and thriving local pubs, the island promises a fine pint or two alongside its distinct heritage.



The horse tramway in action

Gateshead Pub Month Report - part one

Armed with a pub map, bike and camera, I set out to complete Gateshead Pub Month.

Felling
Two cracking pubs within easy walking distance for me, and just a couple of minutes' walk from Felling Metro station, or the 27 bus stop.

Starting point is **The Wheat Sheaf**, a lovely old traditional pub. No longer tied to Big Lamp Brewery, it now has four cask lines. Ossett Brewery's White Rat and Silver King are two regulars, with two rotating guest beers, generally from local breweries like Firebrick, Anarchy & Allendale. Quiz night (including 'Find The Joker' and 'Play Your Cards Right') happens every Thursday, bingo on Mondays. A local pub of choice for televised football, cosy in the winter with a real fire. Plus a summer bonus, a fine little outdoor beer garden out the back.

Fifty yards up the road, even closer to the Metro, lies **The Old Fox**. Well known as a live music pub, with live bands ever Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon, occasional Friday nights and a well supported buskers night every Monday.

Five rotating cask lines, and a cracking (partially covered and heated) beer garden out the back. Two open fires in the winter mean it's always a warm welcome.

Sheriff Hill
It was good to see cask ale back on the menu at **The Three Tuns**. Two local beers on at present, from Two By Two and Tooth & Claw. Popular music venue with bands every Friday & Saturday evening, plus assorted alternative events.



The Three Tuns

Railway Quarter / City Centre
In the heart of Gateshead's vibrant Railway Quarter: the **Station East**, in an interesting site partially under the railway tracks. Large back room in a railway arch, and a mezzanine floor above the bar area.

Several rotating cask lines, usually with at least one from Hadrian Border Brewery (who own the venue, I believe), occasional live music, and other events in this central Gateshead pub.

On every bus route that crosses the High Level Bridge (or Askew Road if heading into Toon). Regular live music in Gateshead's original micropub **The Microbus**. Six rotating cask beers, ten keg selections always available.

Two 'Dirty Black Weekends' a year for dark beer lovers. And occasional beer trips, usually in conjunction with neighbours Station East. Real-time bus departures are shown inside the bar; it's hard to miss the bus home.

Located just outside Gateshead Town Centre, the **Black Bull** can rightly claim to be Gateshead's only punk bar. A live music venue in the back room, specialising in punk bands.

The front bar has two cask lines these days; Sunday lunches are available.

Sadly, the Black Bull will be closing down in January. The owners of the building have terminated the lease. The good news is that the pub will be moving to a new site in early 2027.

Bruce Renwick

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A Canny Christmas Gift Guide

I hate to use the C word, especially in print, no less, but we can't avoid it at this time of year. Christmas is upon us! It's estimated that people in the UK spend a combined £26 billion on gifts, yet only 8% of that is spent at independent or small businesses.

So, to help redress the balance and offer an alternative to a gift box of beers with names like Rudolph's Revenge from an unnamed mass-market brewery, we've gathered some ideas for beer lovers. Whether you're buying for a friend, loved one, cherished publican or yourself, these gifts will also help keep small independent businesses thriving into the new year.

Now, let's not mention the C word again... unless it's cider.



Full Circle Brewery Tour | £15

The first may seem a tad obvious, but whether you've walked around dozens of breweries or this would be your first experience, Full Circle offers a great tour at Hoult's Yard, close to Newcastle city centre. It's ideally placed for pairing with a visit to the Free Trade Inn or food at Two Knives Kitchen. You'll be welcomed by one of the Full Circle team, who will take you through the inner workings of the brewery and explain how they create their award-winning beers.

There's also a live Q&A, giving you the chance to ask anything about Full Circle's beers or the brewing process. Whether it's a burning question you've always had about craft beer or something that comes to mind during the tour, it's a great opportunity to learn more about brewing. The experience finishes with a flight of three third-pint measures of beers recently brewed on the very equipment you've explored. Tours cost £15 and take place most Saturdays and Sundays. fullcirclebrew.co.uk



Brinkburn Street Brewery Imperial Gift Pack | Various Prices

Another brewery with a great reputation for tours and tastings is Brinkburn Street, based, funnily enough, on Brinkburn Street in Newcastle's Ouseburn.

The brewery bar and kitchen offers a range of merchandise, including Born and Brewed in Byker T-shirts and art prints by local artists such as Emily Ward. However, what owner Lee Renforth is particularly proud of this year is his Imperial Ale Gift Pack.

The pack features three twists on a 10.4% ABV recipe. The first, Sparta FC, named after a song by The Fall, is a luxurious Imperial Chocolate Milk Stout with no frills (like the Spartans), offering deep chocolate, coffee and molasses notes with a thick, satisfying mouthfeel.

Imperial Raspberry takes the original recipe and infuses it with raspberry essence to produce a sweet and sensuous dessert beer, best enjoyed at the end of a meal with dessert or as a digestif.

The third beer is a vanilla stout aged in a bourbon barrel, offering a more complex and less sweet stout to complete the collection.

Art Prints by Zoe Cotterill | From £3

Zoe is a Newcastle-based illustrator specialising in architectural watercolours, particularly buildings across the North East, including many of Newcastle's famous pubs.

Originally from Hull, Zoe studied at Northumbria University and fell in love with the Toon.
"I don't think I'll ever run out of incredible buildings and local businesses to illustrate."

Her style has evolved since she started in 2018, moving from black-and-white ink sketches to watercolour and ink paintings.

"My favourite thing is getting to sell my work at markets and meeting customers, especially when they recognise the places I have illustrated. Whether it's the pub they had their first date in with their partner, or their favourite local cafe, I love seeing people's reactions to places I have illustrated."

Zoe has a wide range of prints on her website, from beautiful old pubs to more modern businesses, so she's bound to have captured one of your favourites.



Coaster sets, tea towels and greetings cards are also available, with prices starting at £3. Visit **zoecotterillart.co.uk** or check her social media for upcoming markets and events.

Davenport's Eclipse Stout Truffles | £14
Davenport's founder, Jane Williams, trained under master chocolatier Philippe Burger for seven years. She travelled throughout Europe in search of chocolate inspiration before establishing Davenport's Chocolates in 2007, and has been turning heads with creative flavours ever since.

The business is part of the Cocoa Horizons partnership, which works to create fair and sustainable livelihoods for cocoa farmers. Creating exciting new flavours remains central to what they do.

"Chocolate is an incredible medium to work with, and we love to harness its creative potential to bring you the yummiest and most beautiful chocolates that we can."
For their latest creation, they've teamed up with First & Last Brewery to produce a chocolate truffle laced with Eclipse Milk Stout, bringing sweet, malty, roasted flavours balanced by smooth bitterness and vanilla notes.

The chocolates are available from the brewery and directly from the chocolatier's website: **davenportschocolates.co.uk**

One More Round by Jonny Garrett | £11.45
When I'm not talking about beer or drinking a beer, I often like to read about it. One of my favourite beer writers is Jonny Garrett, one half of the Craft Beer Channel on YouTube and a regular CAMRA contributor.

Jonny has a knack for championing all that's good about beer, pubs and the people around them.

His new book, *One More Round*, is a tour of the best of British pubs, warmly written as a series of visits. He goes well beyond listing the beers and superficial details, seemingly summing up the reasons I love some of these pubs in a far more eloquent way than I ever could.

Among his local misadventures is a night with Recce from Donzoko around the Ouseburn and the Free Trade Inn, while Leeds, Sheffield, York and Edinburgh also get special mentions.

His previous books, *The Meaning of Beer*, a guide through beer's history and how it has shaped civilisation, and *A Year in Beer*, exploring seasonality throughout the year, are also highly recommended.

His books are available from all good bookshops and multinational websites offering next-day shipping.



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A Canny Christmas Gift Guide



First & Last Bobble Hats | £20

First & Last Brewery has always offered a good range of clothing and merchandise, from T-shirts to hoodies, with plenty to keep you warm while foraging for the fruit for their latest beer.

Perhaps the most striking, and certainly fitting for this time of year, is their range of hats. These include Alpine-style bobble hats and slightly less colourful beanies made using organic cotton. Organic shirts and hoodies are also available, alongside mini-casks, gift boxes and a build-your-own beer box, with free local delivery or courier delivery available.

firstandlastbrewery.co.uk



Firebrick at Grainger Market | Various Prices

Newcastle's Grainger Market may be slowly becoming a Geordie answer to Borough Market, with its growing collection of food-led stalls and even a miniature version of the stepped seating.

There are still plenty of interesting independent shops and businesses within the Grade I-listed Victorian market hall, including Firebrick Brewery.

Its inviting space is filled from floor to ceiling with cans and bottles, perfect for putting together a gift box. There's also merchandise, including hats and T-shirts featuring the eye-catching Tyne 9® Tyne Bridge design, available in multiple colours.

You can even pull up a seat, order a beer from the keg taps and watch the world go by.

While you're there, take in the brewery's many awards, including its Battle of the Beers winner's certificate from last year's Newcastle Beer & Cider Festival. Open Monday to Saturday, noon to 5pm.

Newcastle Beer & Cider Festival Tickets | From Free

Speaking of the Newcastle Beer & Cider Festival, although the event isn't until Easter, tickets will be on sale before Christmas! With over 100 beers and ciders, alongside spirits and alcohol-free options, there's plenty of choice. Expect lots of new local beer launches in the annual Battle of the Beers, alongside rare and lesser-seen beers from across the UK.

CAMRA members, of course, receive free entry, but can also book entry packages to speed up admission.

CAMRA Gift Membership | £37

And that's a nice way to round off our gift ideas, with a CAMRA gift membership, the gift that lasts a whole year! CAMRA membership helps keep the organisation campaigning for pubs and breweries, putting pressure on Parliament and championing local causes.

Benefits include free entry to over 100 CAMRA beer and cider festivals each year, more than 30 partner benefits offering discounts on everything from beer boxes to holidays, £30 in real ale vouchers, discounts on real ale at participating local pubs and *BEER* magazine delivered to your door.

Closer to home, the Tyneside & Northumberland branch hosts over 50 meetings, socials and bus trips a year. Members also organise or help out at a wide range of beer festivals, campaign for our pubs and, of course, produce the very magazine you're reading! This really could be the gift that keeps on giving!

camra.org.uk

Quiz!

Canny Bevvy Quiz

1. In what year was home brewing legalised in the UK
2. How many pints does a Pin hold? And a Firkin?
3. London Pride and ESB are brewed by which brewery?
4. What does the acronym IBU stand for on a beer label?
5. What are tegestologists?
6. Which country legalised beer on 1st March 1989, an anniversary now celebrated as "Beer Day"?
7. What is a cicerone?
8. What year was the first commercially published edition of the *Good Beer Guide*?
9. What is the Champion Beer of Britain 2026?
10. Which local breweries produce:-

    a) Grainger Ale

    b) Wye-Aye PA

    c) Whapweasel

    d) Reiver

Answers:

1. 1963
2. 36, 72
3. Fullers
4. International Bitterness Units
5. Beer mat collectors
6. Iceland
7. Beer expert
8. 1974
9. Independence from Bristol Beer Factory
10. a. Hadrian
    b. Firebrick
    c. Hexhamshire
    d. First and Last

LAST ORDERS

Editor's Corrections: We would like to correct a few errors and omissions from our previous edition of *CannyBevvy*.

Heaton Pubs Article
The article covering pubs in Heaton was incorrectly attributed in our last edition. The article was written by **David Wells**, and we apologise to David for the error.

A thank you to our host pubs
We inadvertently omitted our thanks to the pubs that have generously provided meeting spaces for our branch. Their hospitality and continued support are greatly appreciated, helping us bring members together and carry out our activities.

Our thanks go to the Five Swans, Newcastle, The County, Gosforth and The Strawberry, Newcastle.

Clarification on beer taps
In our previous edition, we used the phrase "16 taps of real ale and craft beer". To clarify, this referred to **16 taps in total**, offering a selection of beers, of which a proportion are real ales. We apologise for any confusion caused.

We are always keen to ensure *CannyBevvy* is accurate and that those who contribute to the magazine and support our branch receive the recognition they deserve.

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