

## Real Ale Saves Pubs !

FORGET the old images of flat caps and old men, cask ale drinkers are younger, getting richer and many of them are female finds The Cask Report 2011-12. The report turns the traditional stereotype of the cask drinker as being older, working class, northern and exclusively male on its head. One in six cask drinkers is now female, 38% of cask drinkers live in London and the south east, compared to 27% in the north.

Cask continues to outperform the UK beer market and now has a 15% share – that's around one in every six pints drunk. While the recession, closing pubs and cheap drink from supermarkets hit on-trade beer sales hard with volumes falling by 7.8% in 2010, cask only dipped by an estimated 2% and all the signs are that it is moving back into growth this year.

The signs for real ale are looking good as 2,500 new pubs and clubs started to sell cask ale last year – a 4% increase in distribution, and 7.8 million people drink cask beer in the UK – an 11% increase since 2007. The number of 18-24 year old cask drinkers increased for the second year running and the total women real ale drinkers has doubled since 2008. Cask is recruiting new fans as 37% of current drinkers tried it for the first time within the last 10 years and 10% within the past 12 months.

Although cask drinkers are frequently described as traditional or set in their ways, the report's author, Pete Brown, says they are in fact more adventurous than non-cask drinkers, both in their drinks repertoire, social choices and general life outlook. Indeed, their appetite for variety creates one of the paradoxes outlined in the report – cask lovers are more likely to sup wine, cider and other types of beer than non-cask drinkers.

Even the most enthusiastic cask drinkers switch to wine when ordering a meal, more out of a sense that "it's what you do" than having any basis in what drink provides the best match to food. Witness the growing band of chefs who agree that beer is frequently a superior choice to wine.

The report highlights the importance of CAMRA's 130,000-plus members and the LocAle initiative to the future success of pubs. The desire to buy local remains strong among consumers as 46% say they try to support their local economy and local beer still means cask beer. Despite the decline in pub visits, cask drinkers are still going to the pub, spending on food and drink when there and, frequently, bringing groups of non-cask drinkers with them, and it's usually the cask drinker who chooses the pub. "If there's a product out there that's better designed for getting people back into Britain's pubs, I can't think of it", said Brown. The Cask Report is backed by CAMRA, SIBA, the Independent Family Brewers of Britain, Cask Marque, Adnams, Caledonian, Fuller's, Greene King, Marston's and Wells and Young's. Check the CAMRA website by logging on a [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) for the online Cask Report in full.

## 165 Declared !

Brendan Boyle, one of the founder members of Darlington CAMRA edited Darlington Drinker from edition 1 in May 1982 (the day of the founding meeting of the Branch) until edition 89

dated March/April 1992, and then again from edition 105 of August 1995 until edition 180. That makes an amazing 165 of the 180 editions. The interim 15 editions were edited by Steve Last, who now lives in his home town of Doncaster.

Apart from being a founder member, Brendan has made his mark as a campaigner in our Branch, something that was acknowledged when he was nominated as one of the 100 top campaigners in the National Campaigner of the Year competition 2011. This was a great achievement and richly deserved.

### Inn At The Beginning

The Buck Inn is a seven bedroom inn overlooking the green and cricket pitch in the picturesque village of Thornton Watlass. The village lies at the entrance of Wensleydale; the gateway to the stunning Yorkshire Dales National Park. It is an ideal country retreat for those seeking to get away from the busy pace of modern life. Whether you are looking for a romantic break, a family holiday or to indulge in outdoor pursuits, The Buck Inn can cater for all.

Being just a few miles from the A1 we make a much better stop off than those nasty service stations, or if you're travelling a long way, why not stay with us and break up your journey ?. For those long winter evenings our real open fire in our cosy bar will be a welcome sight. And in the summer we have a large garden at the rear shaded by mature trees where you can relax and refresh with a long cold drink and a bite to eat.

We have just reached our 25th Anniversary, and when we first arrived we started advertising in Darlington Drinker – the very first advertiser !. Since then we have had more than 2,500 guest beers on the bar. Michael has been a member of CAMRA since it started in 1971. Before that he was a life member (at the cost of £1 or 3 pints!) of the 'Society for the Preservation of Beer from the Wood'. We open all day every day serving food lunch-time and evening, and the finest cask ales.

Margaret and Michael Fox

### Table Football - The New Pub Game

I am the Secretary of Darlington Table Football Club, [www.darlingtontfc.co.uk](http://www.darlingtontfc.co.uk), a newly formed not-for-profit organisation which a group of enthusiasts set up to promote the pub sport of Table Football, also known as Foosball or Bar Football. We are trying to reach a wider audience and to re-ignite interest in this traditional pub game.

There is currently a lot happening nationally with our sport, the first national Cup competition gets underway in November (click [here](#) for details) and the sport now holds an annual world cup tournament in Nantes in France every January - a young lad from our Darlington league, Matthew Warr, a pupil at Hummersknott School is expected to be picked to play for England in the under 18s section (click [here](#) to read about the competition).

Our club raises money to expand our league by placing tables in venues that are willing to accommodate them. Tables are of international standard, set to 50p per play and we hand back 30% of the income to the hosting pub. Ideally we are looking to site tables in as many

venues as possible, including colleges, universities, schools and work place canteens to lay the foundations for future inter-venue leagues.

We already run a monthly league night meeting at Northgate Club, High Northgate. However, we require a larger venue as around 20 of us have to squeeze in a small lounge. We really need a pub or club large enough to allow us to install two tables permanently so we not only have a home for the league but also a venue in which we can hold regular tournaments and exhibitions.

Our plan is to grow interest in the game attracting a whole new generation of players of any age. We believe that the best way of achieving this aim is to work with partners such as colleges, universities, schools, employers, pubs & clubs to create a network of venues with tables. The more tables there are the more opportunities people have to enjoy the game.

The formula we devised to achieve our aim is simple - if you own or have influence over such a venue, we will happily provide you with a Retro Italian Garlando table for FREE and you never pay us a penny. Tables are coin operated (set to 50p per play) and the income from the table is divided between the venue hosts (you) and us. This is how we cover our costs. We use our share to maintain the tables and re-invest in promoting the game and you can use your share for whatever you like, it's as simple as that !.

This wonderful game is not just for pubs and clubs, it's also a great way for student groups, schools, office or supermarket staff to raise money for worthwhile causes. Just install a table in your canteen or old smoking room and watch people having fun while the money rolls in.

That's not all – if you need support setting up or running leagues or competitions we can help. Just let us know how many people you want to take part in your league and we will e-mail you a free Excel based computer programme to get your competition off to a professional looking start.

Martin Landers

Mithril Magic

Saturday August 6th was a very wet day, but this didn't deter a large crowd from gathering at Mithril Ales for their Open Day.

There were free tastings of three different beers, Feast, Tyke Ale and Route A66. Alongside the beers was some very tasty food, including sausages and chutney made with Pete's beers. A presentation was made to brewer Pete Fenwick by Publicity Officer Richard Jones for coming first and second at the Spring Thing Beer Festival with Route A66 and Folk 'n' Ale respectively, a notable achievement for a relatively new brewery.

Games Day 2011

On Saturday 13th August at the Black Bull at Melsonby battle was joined between Darlington and North West Yorkshire branches of CAMRA for the annual pub games cup. Darlington, the holders, were supported by seven members whilst North West Yorkshire, who saw an opportunity to regain the trophy arrived with twelve members and after a few beers the contest began.

The quoits games which were held on the village green, progressed under various rules, the one held with correct rules lasted 40 minutes whilst the other games held under slacker rules lasted around 10 minutes each.

Back at the pub the games consisted of shove halfpenny, ring the bull, darts, dominos, bagatelle, bar billiards, skittles and the most addictive of games, shut the box.

After a day of nip and tuck the final result came down to the quiz, which was won by North West Yorkshire who regained the cup. The weather was kind, the competition and company friendly and the hospitality of the Black Bull with beer and food all made for a pleasurable day, and thanks were given to Pete for arranging the games.

Can't wait till next year for the return match.

John Magson

Can Pub Games save the Great British Pub ?

New research highlighted at the Great British Beer Festival by CAMRA suggests the return of traditional pub games would encourage more young adults to visit pubs at a time when 25 pubs across Britain are closing every week.

National Winter Ales Festival 2012

The National Winter Ales Festival takes place from 18th-21st January 2012 at the Sheridan Suite, Oldham Road, Manchester, M40 8EA. For more information visit their website by going to [www.alefestival.org.uk/winterales](http://www.alefestival.org.uk/winterales)

With a selection of 300 real ales, plus ciders and perries you are sure to be able to find something to suit your taste. It's not all dark, heavy beers either, there is a good selection across the board of styles. If you would like to read about a visit to the Festival in January 2011 that Vron and I made, please go to the Away Days section of our website by clicking [here](#).

Mike Burningham

Real Ale in Barney

Two pubs are really flying the flag for real ale in Barnard Castle. At the Old Well Inn situated on The Bank, Peter Cockerill has just won Teesdale Pub of the Season, a great achievement as he only took over this large 17th century pub, hotel and restaurant last year. Five real ales are always available as well as an extensive wine list. What the pub does not have are fruit machines, pool tables or juke boxes, but it does have a great atmosphere, airy conservatory and lovely enclosed beer garden, with the Castle wall forming part of the boundary. There are ten en suite bedrooms and facilities for business meetings including wireless internet access.

Rob Marshall and Vanessa Teasdale recently took over The Black Horse on Newgate and have refurbished it and installed two hand pumps. Rob is passionate about beer and has Deuchars IPA as the regular ale with a second handpump for rotating guest beers. Vanessa is putting her cooking skills to good use with their popular Sunday lunches, and the couple plan

to serve food from 2pm-7pm every day except Monday. As well as meals, there is a state-of-the-art coffee machine for those who pop in for coffee and muffins in the morning, and fine bone china for a proper cup of tea morning or afternoon. At present they are refurbishing the first floor to provide three letting rooms, all en suite and one with a four-poster, as well as a function room which they hope will be used by local clubs and groups.

## Norwich – The City Of Ale ?

Following a recent survey undertaken by Norwich and Norfolk CAMRA , Norwich now appears to have more real ales per capita than any other place in Britain. It's been ten years since I was last in Norwich so time to see if this was indeed the case, writes Ian Jackson.

On arriving in Norwich I headed to the Coach and Horses, the tap for Chalk Hill Brewery, and having been referred to the blackboard, I went for the CHB (Chalk Hill Best) at 4.2%, described as being 'a quality premium bitter which is everyone's favourite'. Tasting notes for each beer were also listed against each beer on the blackboard - a great idea.

On leaving the Coach and Horses, I headed towards the city, and on reaching the Wensum turned right, following the river and ring road until I reached the Kett's Tavern. This is one of two brewery taps for the Norwich Bear Brewing Co Ltd, the other pub being the Rose Inn situated on the other side of the city centre, where a microbrewery is being installed, and the owners also want to give enthusiastic brewers and guests the chance to get involved.

I was staying in the west end of the city known as the 'Golden Triangle' and a short walk from my hotel was the Alexandra Tavern, a street corner local stocking three Chalk Hill beers: CHB, Gold and Tap along with Oakham JHB and Robinson's Young Tom.

Not far from the 'Alex' was the Fat Cat, twice the CAMRA National Pub of the Year in 1998 and 2004 - ironically in 1998 it beat the Number Twenty-2 in Darlington as a finalist in the competition. Twelve beers were on handpump and sixteen on gravity, including ones from the Fat Cat's own brewery: Bitter at 3.8%, Honey Ale at 4.3% and Cougar at 4.7%.

The following day, I was in the Tombland area of the city and popped into Take 5, a cafe bar which had four real ales plus two ciders, including Wolf's Moonlight at 2.8% which, despite its low strength, had flavour and was easy drinking! A short walk along Palace Street from Take 5 brought me to the Wig and Pen, a Grade II listed building dating from the 16th century. Alongside five real ales on offer were an excellent range of whiskies.

The Duke of Wellington on Waterloo Road was next, with a large selection of real ales on tap, consisting of five on handpump and fourteen on gravity, the gravity ones being served from a small tap room visible from the bar. From the cellar I had the Oakham Citra, an excellent session ale with citrus flavours. Also available on the bar was a keg lager produced by Wolf Brewery, at 4.4% in strength.

Near to the Duke of Wellington, at the far end of Lawson Road, is the Fat Cat Brewery Tap, which until February this year was known as the Cider Shed. Though not as many beers available as its sister pub, the Fat Cat, it still had eight beers on handpump and seven on gravity, including six of their own Fat Cat beers brewed on site. Also available were ciders, draught fruit beers and continental bottled beers. One thing that caught my eye was a set of traffic lights on one of the beams close to the bar. At the time the green light was on and I

assumed the colours related to bar service ie. green meant bar open, yellow meant last orders and red indicated time at the bar. If this was the case, a very clever idea.

Just across the ring road was the Milton Brewery owned White Lion. I had hoped to try the Pegasus at 4.3% which had just run out, but as the rest of the Milton beers were strong, I had Vale Brewery's Wychert Ale.

From here, heading eastwards, I reached the King's Head with a choice of eleven ales to choose from, among them a house beer 'KHB' at 3.7% brewed by Winter's, plus beers from two breweries I hadn't heard of in Elmtree from Snetterton and Panther from Reepham. The Ribs Of Beef was just a short walk from the King's Head next to the River Wensum. Eight handpumps dispensed beers from large regional breweries plus a cider from King-fisher Farm. On the beams above the bar it gave a detailed history of the city of Norwich. Did you know that in 925 AD Norwich was first mentioned on coins, and in 1927 the Round Table charity was founded by Louis Marchesi in the city ?.

Just in time for last orders was the Gardener's Arms on Timber Hill, also known as the Murderer's, due to an ex-Cavalry man bludgeoning to death his estranged wife in 1895, and the two names for the pub have stuck ever since. Nine ales were available from six Norfolk breweries including Blackfriars, Spectrum and Winter's but the house beer, Murderers Ale at 3.6% is brewed by Coors. Blackfriar's Mitre Gold at 4.2% was a good night-cap.

My last day in Norwich covered an area of the city close to Queen's Road. The Trafford Arms, pictured, had eleven hand-pumps on the bar from nine different breweries. It's an unusual pub in that, after being bombed in World War II, one half of it was rebuilt so that the licensee could reopen it up as a pub, while the remainder of it carried on being rebuilt.

Heading out of the city, and at least a good half hour walk in the sunshine, I reached The Beehive and a choice of six beers including ones from Golden Triangle, Wolf and a Winter's beer, 'On The Beer City', brewed to celebrate Norwich City Football Club's return to the Premier League. This was a great pub and a hub of the local community.

Retracing my steps back to the city, I moved on to the King's Arms in Hall Road, one of the pubs I visited during my last visit to Norwich. Twelve handpumps served a selection of Bateman's beers plus guest beers, my choice being Beeston's Worth The Wait which after a good walk from the Beehive certainly was !.

Following a visit to the Rose Inn on Queen's Road, the sister pub to the Kett's Tavern, the last port of call was the Vine, Norwich's smallest pub, having reopened a few years ago with a Thai restaurant upstairs. I took the opportunity to indulge in an excellent beef curry washed down with a pint of Humpty Dumpty's Nord Atlantic.

It was time to head off to the railway station and catch the train home.

On the evidence of my visit, it was clear to me that Norwich is the 'City of Ale', and that besides the ales on offer, the hospitality shown by the staff and regulars in the pubs was second to none.

\* In the survey conducted by Norwich and Norfolk CAMRA, they found 215 real ales on sale in 136 of the city's pubs and in one evening 489 handpumps were being used and 24 real ciders and perries were also on offer.

(Information courtesy of What's Brewing, August 2011)

(A much more detailed version of the above article can be found in the Away Days section of this website, please click [here](#) to see this article).

### Val Moss - A Tribute

Members of Darlington CAMRA were recently saddened to hear of the death of longtime branch member Val Moss following a long illness. Val was a familiar figure at the branch's twice yearly beer festivals held at the Arts Centre working on the glasses stall and he also held the position of social secretary for a couple of years.

Ian Jackson, a former Beer Festival Organiser said, "Val was always willing to volunteer to work at the festivals on the glasses stall and as organiser, he was very often the first to contact me so his name would be one of the first I put down on the work rota. Even though he worked for a couple of hours or so at the sessions, the commitment was always there because he enjoyed doing it". Val also kindly stored equipment for the beer festivals in his garage and when it came to setting up at each festival it was a case of "hire the van, collect the scaffolding and then onto Val's garage."

The funeral for Val was held at Darlington Crematorium on Tuesday 30th August and was attended by past and present members of Darlington CAMRA, which showed the popularity of the man. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him, and there is a proposal to site a bench at the Cricket Club in his memory.

### Acceptable or Accessible ?

There's a silent revolution going on, but where will it end? In a high-profile move at this year's Great British Beer Festival, Brains of Cardiff launched a re-branded SA Gold – at a reduced ABV of 4.3% instead of 4.7%. Now Brains aren't the most widely available beers nationally, but what about Wells Bombardier, down from 4.3 to 4.1, or Wychwood Hobgoblin, a huge drop from 5.2 to 4.5 ?.

Are they simply looking to pay less duty, or is there a dumbing-down process going on, pandering maybe to the anti-drinking lobby ?. To be fair, reduced strength doesn't necessarily mean loss of flavour as that depends on the skill of the brewer. And both Wells and Youngs and Marstons point to increased sales as drinkers feel they can drink more safely. All I'm saying is don't let it go too far !.

### GOM

### Brews, News and Views

August was a busy month for events including several surveying trips to various parts of Teesdale, a trip to the White Swan at Gilling for their Beer Festival, as well as a 'mini fest' at Darlington Snooker Club and an Open Day at Mithril Ales.

Cask Marque have produced a leaflet whereby you can find real ale pubs, beer festivals and breweries wherever you happen to be via your Smart-phone, Sat Nav or text. Find out more at [www.cask-marque.co.uk](http://www.cask-marque.co.uk)

The Good Beer Guide 2012 is now available. It is fully revised and updated with details of more than 4,500 pubs selling real ale and can be purchased online at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk).

The latest Pubs of the Season are the Number Twenty-2, Coniscliffe Road in Darlington for the Darlington Pub of the Season and for the North Yorkshire Pub of the Season award it's the White Swan in Gilling West.

The Beer of the Festival at Richmond Ale Festival in October was Mithril Ales' Flower Power

Thanks

Thanks to the following for hosting our monthly branch meetings:-

Darlington Snooker Club, Darlington (May)  
Forester Arms, Coatham Mundeville (June)  
Old Yard Tapas Bar, Darlington (July)  
Quaker House, Darlington (August)  
Glittering Star, Darlington (September)  
The Britannia, Darlington (October)  
Darlington Cricket Club, Darlington (November)

Branch Events:

Forthcoming Branch Meetings

Tuesday 6th December: Hole in the Wall, Market Place, Darlington. Meeting starts at 7.30pm

Tuesday 10th January: Darlington Snooker Club, Corporation Road, Darlington. Meeting starts at 7.30pm

Tuesday 7th February: Old Yard Tapas Bar, Bondgate, Darlington. Meeting starts at 7.30pm

Tuesday 6th March: Quaker House, Mechanics Yard, Darlington. Meeting starts at 7.30pm

North East Regional Meeting

Saturday 11th February: Darlington Cricket Club, Feethams South, Darlington. Meeting starts at 1pm

Social Events

Friday 9th December: 3rd County Durham surveying trip from Creebeck to Bishopton.  
Bus departs from Dolphin Centre at 7pm.

Thursday 29th December: Darlington CAMRA Christmas Social  
Darlington Snooker Club, Corporation Road, Darlington  
From 7.30pm onwards.

Friday 13th January: 1st North Yorkshire surveying trip from Barton to Piercebridge.

Bus departs from Dolphin Centre at 7pm.

Friday 10th February: 2nd North Yorkshire surveying trip from Middleton Tyas to Kirby Hill.

Bus departs from Dolphin Centre at 7pm.

### Rhythm 'n' Brews

September at Darlington Arts Centre produced a good combination with a music festival and another successful Rhythm 'n' Brews festival. Around 1000 visitors came to enjoy the 55 beers and 9 ciders and perries which were on offer from Thursday 15th to Saturday 17th. The beer choice was highly commended having being sourced from 25 local breweries, 18 new breweries and also included two festival specials.

A core of CAMRA real ale enthusiasts built the bars and fitted the pumps and piping, as well as arranging the casks to ensure the beer was in its best condition. As a break from the tradition of voting for the beer of the festival, it was decided that first to sell out would be given this honour.

The beer flowed well and early Friday evening the first beer to run out was Mordue Northumbrian Blonde, closely followed by Mithril Bullfrog Blues and then Brewdog Trashy Blonde. A festival workers trip is currently being organised to make the presentation. The spot the mistakes in the festival programme competition also proving to be a festival favourite.

The Spring Thing festival has now been confirmed for 29th-31st March, but unfortunately this could well be the last at the Arts Centre in its current form. This festival is set for another celebration as it will be Darlington CAMRA's 30th year of existence, so please offer your support not only in helping with the running of the festival, but in the drinking of excellent real ale.

### Snooker Club's Seventh Heaven

Members of the North East Branches of CAMRA have recently judged Darlington Snooker Club as their CAMRA North East Club of The Year for 2011.

The club, situated on the corner of Corporation Road and Northgate, won this accolade by beating off competition from three other clubs in the area, the Ashbrooke Sports Club in Sunderland, Chester-le-Street Cricket Club in Chester-le-Street and the Comrades Club in Haltwhistle in Northumberland. It is the seventh time in eight years the snooker club has won this prestigious award and owner Peter Everett was 'chuffed' to win the award once again.

The Snooker Club held a beer festival from Thursday to Sunday early in November, which was in full swing on Friday night for the presentation of the award. Making the presentation, CAMRA North-East Regional Director, David Brazier said, "This club has won because it is in tune with CAMRA's aims. There is always a warm and friendly welcome and it offers beers from small local breweries".

The club goes through into the final round of CAMRA's National Club of the Year award, and our best wishes go to Darlington Snooker Club in this competition and also our congratulations go to Peter and all his staff in winning the award once again - well deserved !.

The Who's Who of the Branch ?

Chairman: Peter Everett  
01325 241388  
[peterdsc@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:peterdsc@yahoo.co.uk)

Secretary and Branch Contact: John Magson  
[john.magson@ntlworld.com](mailto:john.magson@ntlworld.com)

Treasurer and Webmaster:  
Ian Jackson  
[id\\_jackson@btinternet.com](mailto:id_jackson@btinternet.com)

Membership Secretary:  
Mike Burningham  
[mikeb09@btinternet.com](mailto:mikeb09@btinternet.com)

Darlington Drinker Editor:  
Vron Burningham 01833 640587  
[weavervron@gmail.com](mailto:weavervron@gmail.com)

Publicity Officer and DD Deputy Editor:  
Richard Jones  
[qidev.rich@gmail.com](mailto:qidev.rich@gmail.com)

Social Secretary, Pubs Officer and Cider Officer:  
Pete Fenwick 01325 374817 / 07889 167128 / 07792 093245  
[mithril58@btinternet.com](mailto:mithril58@btinternet.com)

Beer Festival Organiser:  
Paul Appleton  
[paul.appleton103@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:paul.appleton103@hotmail.co.uk)

Printers:  
Marford Lithographic, Victoria Road, Darlington. 01325 358456

Web : [www.darlocamra.org.uk](http://www.darlocamra.org.uk)  
Twitter (@darloCAMRA) and on Facebook - search for DarloCamra

The next Darlington Drinker will be published on 10th February 2012. Please send news and features to Vron Burningham by 1st February and any advertising to Peter Everett by 23rd January.

Advertising rates are: Quarter-page £30, Half page £50, Full page £80

Contact Peter Everett on 01325 241388 or via email at: [peterdsc@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:peterdsc@yahoo.co.uk)

The views and opinions expressed in Issue 182 are not necessarily those of the Editor or Darlington CAMRA

Inserted from <<http://darlocamra.org.uk/darlingtondrinker182.html>>