

Darlington Drinker - Issue 183

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Newsletter of the Darlington Campaign for Real Ale - Spring 2012

Thirty Years of Campaigning !

2012 is shaping up to be a busy year. May 19th is the 30th anniversary of the founding of Darlington CAMRA. To celebrate there will be a beer festival at Darlington Snooker Club with 30 ales for 30 years and we are re-launching the very popular 'Real Ale in and Around Darlington and Teesdale' Guide, which was last published in 2008.

The launch party will be at Number Twenty-2 on Tuesday 29th May from noon until 4pm. Card carrying members of Darlington CAMRA and their guests will be very welcome. Please let Malcolm Dunstone know if you are coming so we have an idea of numbers by phoning him on 01325 362462 or via email by clicking [here](#).

Before that we have the Spring Thing Beer Festival at the Arts Centre from 29th to 31st March. This is a little later than usual so make a note of the date. The downside of this is that local government cuts mean that the Arts Centre is threatened with closure so we have decided not to have a festival in September. We will have to look for a new venue for next year, so if anyone has any good ideas about this, do get in touch with one of the committee, plus we need somewhere to store our equipment. As well as this, some of those who regularly volunteer to set up and run the festival are getting a bit older and are thinking about taking more of a back seat. Our branch has over 300 members and we really need some of the younger ones to help take the festival forward. If you would like to help out, come to the festival and talk to one of us.

Darlington Spring Thing Beer Festival 2012

29th to 31st March 2012 at The Arts Centre, Vane Terrace, Darlington

Come and join us at Darlington's 26th Annual Folk Festival in a celebration of folk music and real ale.

Help us also celebrate Darlington CAMRA's 30th year of bringing real ale to our area. This festival will have 55 independent ales from local breweries and further afield. In addition we will have 6 real ciders, 3 perries and imported bottle beers.

This is potentially the last Beer Festival at the Arts Centre. So what will happen after the Spring Thing? Darlington CAMRA has decided that due to the uncertainty of a venue we will not be participating in the Rhythm n Brews festival in September this year (even though the Darlington RnB club may hold their event elsewhere). However, we will be back next year and we would like your ideas on how to make it bigger and better than before. Have your say by emailing opinion@darlocamra.org.uk or finding us on Facebook.

Entry to the festival is FREE at all times. Volunteers required for all sessions please contact Paul Appleton via email at paul.appleton103@hotmail.co.uk or telephone 07908 558307.

Local MP Supports CAMRA

In December Malcolm Dunstone and Veronica Burningham had a meeting with Jenny Chapman, Labour MP for Darlington. Malcolm had been invited to attend the Time to Free up the Great British Pub Rally at the House of Commons, but was unfortunately unable to attend. This prompted him to seek the meeting as a way to keep CAMRA, and Darlington CAMRA in particular, in the public eye.

The first item on the agenda was the fate of the Arts Centre, the closure of which Jenny seemed to think was inevitable. She had one or two ideas about alternative venues.

We brought up the subject of Greg Mulholland's Early Day Motion, which seeks to bring in legislation to curb the activities of some of the major pubcos, as self-regulation has clearly not had any effect. As a Shadow Minister, Jenny is not supposed to sign EDMs, but was supportive of the aims of this one.

There were several students at the meeting, who were shadowing the MP, and when we discussed the below-cost sale of alcohol, one of them had some interesting thoughts to contribute. He said cheap lager was not the main problem, but cider, which was much stronger and could be purchased for the same ridiculously low prices. Also, some supermarkets sold half litres of vodka for as little as £5, which, at 37.5%, was enough to get several underage drinkers extremely drunk. Jenny thought that 50p per unit should be the figure to aim for, but all agreed the main thing was to get this on the statute books in the first place, and then work on raising the minimum prices. She also supported the idea of a freeze on beer duty, especially for real ale producers.

We are lucky to have an MP in our Branch area who is both interested and supportive of our aims, and it was suggested that a three monthly meeting would be useful for both sides.

CAMRA LocAle

Background

CAMRA LocAle is about increasing the sale of local real ales in local pubs. The benefits of a successful CAMRA LocAle scheme are:

- improved consumer choice due to more locally brewed ales being available in pubs
- local brewers selling more real ale allowing them to expand, benefiting the local economy and real ale choice
- fewer "beer miles" resulting in less road congestion and pollution
- an increase in tourism as successful local brewers give the area greater distinctiveness and therefore tourist appeal
- thriving pubs as wider availability of local real ales boosts the number of pub visits
- an increase in local identity and pride

In short, CAMRA LocAle is about consumer choice, local jobs, supporting a sustainable environment, creating local distinctiveness and promoting local pubs.

The CAMRA LocAle scheme was created in 2007 by CAMRA's Nottingham branch who wanted to support their remaining local brewers following the demise of local brewer Hardy and Hansons.

All of the above are of benefit to pubgoers as well as licensees as they can be confident that they will find local ales in local pubs and also support the local economy.

The CAMRA LocAle Rules

Licensees joining the scheme must agree:

- that they will endeavour to ensure at least one locally brewed real ale, as defined by the local CAMRA branch, is on sale at all times.
- only real ale, as defined by CAMRA, can be promoted as a CAMRA LocAle

Joining the Scheme

Because of the rural nature of much of our branch, Darlington CAMRA have chosen a distance of 35 miles from pub to brewery as a suitable qualifying distance. If you would like to join the scheme, please click [here](#) where you will find a form. We will then check that you qualify and, if so provide you with publicity material.

Northumbria's Blonde

A trip by festival workers to Mordue Brewery, on North Tyneside, to present an award to the brewery for winning the Beer of the Festival Award at the Rhythm 'n' Brews Beer Festival held back in September. Its beer, "Northumbrian Blonde", described as a blonde ale, fresh and zesty with a hoppy lemon and grapefruit aroma, beat off competition from over fifty beers to win the award. On arriving at the brewery, Managing Director Garry Fawson welcomed us, and supplied refreshments in the form of Geordie Pride at 4.2% and IPA 5.1%, and gave a brewery tour during which glasses were topped up !.

Following the tour, Beer Festival Committee Member Ian Jackson, presented Garry with the award. Unfortunately supplies of the winning brew were unavailable at the brewery due to its popularity. However, good "insider information" from Garry pointed us in the direction of the Lady Grey pub in Newcastle, where the beer is a popular drink - and luckily his information didn't disappoint !.

Ian Jackson

Belfast Beer Festival 2011

The Ulster Hall in Belfast is a beautiful building, opened in 1862, designed by Irish architect William Barre, and featuring, as well as an impressive English Pipe Organ, built by William Hill and Sons, 13 paintings by local artist Joseph W Carey, commissioned in 1902 and depicting scenes from Belfast's history. Both were restored in the late 20th century. The Hall was purchased by Belfast City Council (then named the Belfast Corporation) in 1903 for £13,500 and it has been used as a public hall ever since.

During World War II, the Ulster Hall was used extensively as a dance hall providing entertainment for the US troops based in the province. Mysteriously, a shipment of American white oak planking arrived in Belfast to refurbish the dance floor. The Hall was extensively refurbished at a cost of £8.5m in 2009. Situated right in the heart of the city, close to City Hall, it is also the home of the Belfast Beer Festival which in 2011 took place from 17th-19th November, and celebrated both 40 year of CAMRA and 30 years of the Northern Ireland Branch.

Attracting 3500 visitors over the three days, the Festival had 97 beers and 18 ciders and parries on offer. A large 4-sided central bar was provided, with each side named after a White Star Line ship built by Belfast makers Harland and Wolff. Each bar served beers from a specified geographical area, fine in theory, but this meant four separate alphabetical sequences, the significance of which was lost on many of the visitors, many of whom were new to this sort of thing. The result was that all too frequently customers were asking for beers on one of the other three sides from where they were standing, which meant the bar staff having first to locate the correct bar themselves and then struggle past others serving to make their way to and from it. The 97 ales were from all parts of the UK; sadly none from the Republic of Ireland (which does produce some excellent ales) as none of the Irish brewers were able to ship their product in a form suitable for serving at a real ale festival.

Northern Ireland was represented by the well-established Hilden and Whitewater breweries, along with the recently established Ards Brewery, near Newtonards. Their offering was the 4.6% Ballyblack Stout, a full-bodied, easy-drinking traditional Irish stout, which like others before it, just goes to show that these days the world no longer really needs Guinness!. Whitewater had also produced Belfast Black, a stout along with the popular Clotworthy Dobbin, a rich ruby porter, and their regular hoppy Belfast Ale. From Hilden came Hilden, a full-bodied Irish ale and Scullions Irish, an amber ale with a long dry finish. From Wales came Purple Moose Cwrw Madog (Madog's Ale, (which customers would insist on calling 'Mad Dog'!) and Otley Oxymoron, aptly named since it was that rare beast, a jet-black IPA!.

Another oxymoronic beer, this time from Yorkshire, was Saltaire Raspberry Blonde, which proved immensely popular with many of the young female drinkers. Not for the purist, maybe, but the sight of them all so enjoying their first taste of real ale surely made it worthwhile. Fruit flavours were also present in Green Jack Orange Wheat Beer and Fuzzy Duck Tangerine Duck. Otley also provided one of the strongest beers at the festival, O8 at 8%, pipped only by Orkney Skullsplitter at 8.5% and Burton Bridge Thomas Sykes at 10% which was only sold in halves!.

Other strong dark ales included Box Steam Dark & Handsome, Acorn Gorlovka Stout, Elland 1872 Porter, Naylor's Pinnacle Porter, O'Hanlon's Port Stout and York Centurion's Ghost. Less strong, but no less tasty milds included B&T Black Dragon, Bank Top Dark Mild, Ilkley Black and Mauldon's Micawber's Mild. Paler, more hoppy beers were Dark Star Hophead, Titanic Iceberg, Bradfield Farmers Blonde, Wolf Golden Jackal, Hawkshead Red, Houston Killellan and Phoenix Arizona. Ales from the north-east were represented by Village Brewer Old Raby, Mordue Newcastle Coffee Porter, Northumberland Bucking Fastard and Hadrian & Border Ginger Beer.

Northern Ireland is dominated by Diageo with Guinness having a complete stranglehold. If you want bitter then mostly only Smithwicks is on offer. The Festival was a real campaigning affair, probably like Festivals on the mainland were when CAMRA first started. Lots of the visitors had not tasted real ale, did not really know what it was, and needed lots of help and

advice as well as tastings. Quite a number had just come in off the street, which testifies to the fact that holding the festival right in the middle of the city is a really good idea. Wetherspoons in Belfast are very supportive of Northern Ireland CAMRA and as well as sponsoring the T-shirts, their manager could be found dispensing pints behind the bar – a real busman's holiday!. We spoke to a group of four young men who used to get together at weekends and just buy a big box of whatever beer was available at the supermarket. Then one of them discovered bottles of real ale and started taking them in. Eventually they all brought bottles of real ale and had a tasting. We then found out that their nearest real ale pub was 27 miles away, so thank goodness for the supermarket bottles.

We had a great time and really warm welcome at this very well run Festival. One of their problems is staffing as they don't really have adjacent branches. Some people, including us came from the mainland, especially the Scottish branches with whom they have close links, but they can always do with more help. If you fancy a trip to a really friendly festival and a chance to drink some good beers, as well as do a bit of campaigning, then you will be welcomed with open arms.

Mike and Vron Burningham

Three Go To Liverpool.

Liverpool City of Culture 2008 is used to being maligned by people who really should know better. The locals are friendly and down to earth and they take the plethora of pubs for granted, so Ian and Peter and I decided to take the plunge and investigate.

Arriving at 2 pm we found our hotel rooms were not ready so, armed with the excellent CAMRA MerseyAle Magazine and Real Ale Pubs map, we headed to the nearby Crown Hotel. From the 8 real ales we chose pints of Wooden Hand Pirate, Brentwood Blonde, Acorn Barnsley Bitter and Marston's EPA. Three pints for £5.80 had Peter checking his change but no, this was the correct price - what good value. The Crown was built in 1905 in Art Nouveau style and is Grade 2 listed with moulded coffered ceilings and lots of engraved glass.

A late check in, then dinner, then out to the 2010/2011 Liverpool & Districts CAMRA Pub of The Year, The Dispensary, which was very busy. It had 6 beers on offer and we sampled George Wright's Pure Blonde and Fernandes Two Brewers. Off around the corner to the Roscoe Head, which had 7 beers on sale, and soon 3 pints of Blackwater Kangaroo Court were dispatched. Next stop was the Fly In The Loaf, named after the slogan 'no flies in the loaf', to down Okells Bitter and Salopian Sienna. It was now getting towards midnight so the last call of the day was Ye Crake, which claims John Lennon drank there in his student days, to finish off with Slaters Top Totty and Spitting Feathers Old Wavertonian before a slow stagger back to the hotel.

Next day after breakfast the first call was the magnificent Grade II listed Philharmonic, which is an absolute gem. We were so busy admiring the interior we almost forgot to have a beer from the 6 on sale and settled for halves (yes its going to be a long day) of Dorset Ammonite and Thwaites Original, before we arrived at The Shipping Forecast which had been recommended by Richard Jones, the branch's Publicity Officer. The interior was bare brick and wooden floors but it had 6 beers on which were served in oversized glasses, so we tasted Sharps Doombar and Thornbridge Pica Pica, though £1.70 a half was a little steep. The next bar was the Bier, which despite having 5 beers for sale was empty with no sign of any staff, so we passed on the opportunity to serve ourselves and left. Now with a gale force

wind behind us we were blown down to Wapping Dock to visit another Grade 2 listed building, the Baltic Fleet, which is built in a flat iron shape and home to the Wapping Brewery, 6 of their beers were on so we tried Gold and Mine's Wapping.

When we left, we didn't have the courage to take the ferry across the choppy River Mersey to Birkenhead and opted for the Merseyrail to find the unique Gallaghers Pub & Barbers Shop. As the name says it includes a barbers shop. Fortunately this CAMRA Wirral 2011 Pub of the Year also had 6 beers on sale of which we tried Brimstage Trappers Hat and Aldgate Napoleons Retreat served in over-sized glasses. Next stop the Stork hotel which, with ceramics, mosaic floors, glass and wooden partitions, is on CAMRA'S inventory of pub interiors. It was a pity the Blackmere Gold and Milestone Crusader beers weren't as good.

We caught the Merseyrail back to the Moorfields Station and to the Ye Hole in The Wall where we reverted to pints of Triple fff Alton's Pride and Brains IPA. We drank Okells bitter and IPA in both Thomas Rigby's and the Lady of Mann, then into the Grade II listed Lion Tavern, which is named after the locomotive that ran between Liverpool and Manchester. Here we had Lees Rising Sun and George Wright's Lion's Return from the range of 8 beers. Next stop the Vernon Arms for Liverpool Organic Johnnie Handsome, and onward to the Ship & Mitre with its impressive Art Deco exterior. From the 12 real ales on tap we chose Hornbeam Voyager and Mallinsons Luna, then back to the hotel for dinner. Suitably sated off we went to the Globe with its sloping floor, being careful not to spill our Everards Tiger Triple Gold.

A few streets away was the White Star on Rainford Gardens which was filled with local memorabilia from the White Star liners, and we drank Liverpool Organic Gold and Bowland Nicky Nook. Despite being in Liverpool, no Cains beers had passed our lips so we visited Doctor Duncans, which is named after the Victorian campaigner against poor living conditions. Back to the Ship & Mitre for a nightcap, after which our branch night owl Peter headed for the Lime Kilns. Next morning only two of us made breakfast (yes Peter we know who it was) and later headed to see the celebrations for Chinese New Year. At the stroke of midday we entered the Swan, and in the gloomy interior managed to find the bar to choose our final beers from the 8 real ales, Plain Innocence and Nelson Thunderer. A satisfying weekend and thanks to all the people we met in this remarkable city.

John Magson

News, Brews and Views.

The Strathmore Arms at Holwick changed hand before Christmas. Selina and Anthony Goldstraw moved from Derby city centre to take over this rural pub. Open 7 days a week from 12 noon, they serve food at all reasonable times. The beer range comes from Allendale Brewery, Golden Plover being the regular, and two others as guests. They also stock real lager and a cider on handpump from Thistly Cross. There is a Quiz Night on Wednesday and music on Friday.

On Saturday 14th January 2012, Darlington Snooker Club reached another milestone with the tapping of their 2000th different cask of real ale during its Midi Beer Festival. All the pump clips from the featured beers were put in a bag and drawn out by Jill Day of Cleveland Branch. The winner was Backyard Brewhouse's Gold from Walsall, described as a 4% classic

golden ale, light and refreshing with a blend of hops offering hints of spice and lime. Infused with fresh root ginger to add a touch of the exotic.

Langdon Beck Hotel in Teesdale is having a Beer Festival over the Bank Holiday 2nd - 5th June, with over 20 beers as well as a cider and perry. Most ales will be from the North East with a few from further afield. Food will be available from Noon until 4pm and then again from 6pm. Fabulous location, a friendly atmosphere, and great walking make this a family-friendly festival.

Branch Diary:

MARCH

Tuesday 6th Branch Meeting Quaker House, Mechanics Yard, Darlington 7.30pm

Friday 9th 3rd North Yorkshire Pub of the Season surveying trip.
Scorton x 2, Atley Hill, East Cowton, Great Smeaton, Dalton on Tees
7pm from Dolphin Centre

Thursday 29th - Saturday 31st CAMRA Darlington Spring Thing Beer Festival.
Arts Centre, Vane Terrace, Darlington

APRIL

Tuesday 3rd April Branch AGM at Cricket Club, Feethams, Darlington 7.30pm

Friday 13th 4th North Yorkshire Pub of the Season surveying trip.
East Harlsey, Welbury, West Rounton, Appleton Wiske, Hornby
7pm from Dolphin Centre

Fri 13th - Sat 14th April 1st Guisborough Beer Festival.
Go to www.clevelandcamra.org.uk for details

Wed 18th - Sat 21st April. 36th Newcastle Beer and Cider Festival.
Northumbria University. Go to www.cannybevvy.co.uk for more information

MAY

Tuesday 8th Branch Meeting Glittering Star, Stonebridge, Darlington 7.30 pm

Friday 11th 1st Darlington Town Pub of the Season surveying trip.

White Heifer That Travelled, Model T, Highland Laddie, Springfield, Railway Tavern, Snooker Club

7pm from Dolphin Centre

JUNE

Wednesday 13th Branch Meeting Britannia, Archer Street, Darlington 7.30 pm

Visitors and new members are always made welcome

Details for all trips from Pete Fenwick 01325 374817 or 07889 167128

PUB OF THE YEAR RESULTS

TOWN

1st Quakerhouse, 2nd Number Twenty 2

COUNTRY

1st Crown at Manfield, 2nd Foresters at Coatham Mundeville

OVERALL

1st Quakerhouse in Darlington, 2nd Tanners Hall

COUNTY DURHAM PUB OF THE SEASON

1st County at Aycliffe Village, 2nd Foresters at Coatham Mundeville

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Issue 184 of Darlington Drinker will be published end May/beginning June 2012. Please send news and features to Vron Burningham and any adverts to Peter Everett by 11th May.

Advertising Rates

It is over 8 years since we put up our rates so we have decided on a 10% increase from issue 184 of Darlington Drinker. Rates will be:

Quarter-page £33, Half page £55, Full page £88, Back cover £100

However, if advertisers pay in full when submitting their copy they will be offered 10% discount thereby enabling them to, in effect, stay on the current rate. Regular advertisers will continue to be rewarded with every 6th advertisement being free as at present.

Contact Peter Everett for further information on 01325 241388 or via email at:

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The views and opinions expressed in Issue 183 are not necessarily those of the Editor or Darlington CAMRA