

Darlington Drinker - Issue 189

07 October 2014 09:55

Darlington Drinker 189

Newsletter of the Darlington Campaign for Real Ale - Winter 2013

From the Editor

Welcome to Issue 189 of Darlington Drinker. Firstly congratulations are in order!.

We entered Darlington Snooker Club and the Quakerhouse into the North East Club of the Year and North East Pub of the Year competitions respectively and they both ended up being the overall winners - well done indeed!. However, the branch were denied a hat trick of regional wins as The Crown at Manfield, our entry in the Yorkshire Pub of the Year and a winner of the competition back in 2005, was pipped by the No 7 in Barnsley to this year's award. It's fair to say it would have been an amazing feat had all three entries been winners, something which I imagine has never happened on a branch scale in CAMRA's history.

Since the "Real Ale Renaissance" in our last issue, it's sad to report one pub having closed and applying to be converted into housing. Another pub which has been closed for a while is rumoured to be also applying for a conversion. CAMRA's Pub Watch Survey found 18 pubs per week closed permanently last year, and it is hoped that in our branch area we won't be adding to this year's statistics. The British pub remains a vital part of community life where people meet up for a drink and socialise. Pub closures lead to job losses along with the loss of a meeting place.

On a much happier note, it's pleasing to report another brewery in the branch area. The nano brewery at The Half Moon in Northgate is now up and running, thus bringing brewing back into Darlington itself once more.

I'll drink to that !.

Ian Jackson, Editor, Darlington Drinker

Regional Successes

Results for the North East Club of the Year and Pub of the Year have been announced. And it's been a success on both counts with our entries scooping the top prizes!

The Quakerhouse, became the winner of North East Pub of the Year for the first time following up its third place in last year's competition. Brian Dourish, co-owner of the Quakerhouse was described as being "blown away" at winning the award. Runner up was the Tap & Spile in Framwellgate Moor, while The Boathouse at Wylam, winner in 2009 and 2011 finished third. It is the first time that Darlington has won North East Pub of the Year when Number Twenty-2 triumphed in the competition back in 1999.

In the North East Club of the Year competition, it was victory again for Darlington Snooker Club making it the ninth time it has won the award and on hearing the news proprietor Peter Everett was reportedly "buzzing". Runner up in the award was the Comrades Club at Haltwhistle in Northumberland while Durham City Rugby Club in Durham finished third.

Meanwhile there was success in another competition for one of our real ale pubs. The Foresters Arms in Coatham Mundeville recently won the Regional Community Hero Award organised by

Enterprise Inns. Licensee Kate Umpleby was thrilled to win the award thanking her staff and to customers for nominating the pub. Kate hosts many events to raise money for local charities and the pub is also a drop off point for donations to a local animal sanctuary. Customers have had the opportunity to have their say on the community awards website about Kate's work in the community and charity fund raising events, not to mention also being a landlady offering excellent hospitality !. The winner of the national award was due to be announced just as we went to press and hopefully Kate and the team at the Foresters Arms will have scooped the national award. It would be well deserved.

It was also good news in the Yorkshire Pub of the Year competition as The Crown Inn at Manfield finished third overall. The winner of the award was the No 7 in Barnsley while the Ferryboat in Thorganby near York, winner in 2010 was runner up. Licensees Peter and Karen Hynes were "gobsmacked" at The Crown Inn finishing third in the competition, a competition which they won back in 2005.

Darlington Snooker Club and The Quakerhouse now go forward into CAMRA's Super Regional round where they will be up against pubs and clubs from the north of England and Scotland. A presentation to Darlington Snooker Club was made on the afternoon of Saturday 2nd November while details of presentations to The Crown Inn and Quakerhouse will be announced in the coming weeks. Check our branch events page for further details.

Meanwhile, Darlington branch area can now boast CAMRA's best real ale club and pub in the North East along with the third best real ale pub in Yorkshire plus Enterprise Inn's best community pub in the region.

Enough said !.

Support For Tax Reduction

By John Clark

The different rates of tax levied on pubs as compared to supermarkets were highlighted recently by national pub chain JD Wetherspoon with its 'Be Fair To Pubs' campaign, which featured prominently at the Tanners Hall on

Skinnergate in Darlington at its recent beer festival.

Supermarkets subsidise the price of alcohol just as they do with bread or beans, to act as a loss leading incentive to draw customers in. It's no worry to them that the alcohol is cheap – it ensures they pay a proportionately lower amount of tax too. They don't have to worry either about the consequences of the binge pre-loading that their mass sales enable. Sophisticated marketing ploys are then used to ensure we part with more of our cash on their untaxed food offerings.

Pity the hard pressed pubs. In many cases alcohol sales are their prime income source so subsidising its price from food sales is not an option. Even where food is a viable option, the poor publican is clobbered by a 20% VAT levy that the supermarkets avoid. And when the supermarket alcohol kicks in and the unruly behaviour kicks off, it's the publican, not the supermarket that cops the blame and the rest of us who pick up the bill.

Wondering what other publicans feel about JD Wetherspoon's initiative, I asked proprietors in four of Darlington's cask ale pubs for their views. Unexpectedly, I found a remarkable consensus amongst what outwardly appear otherwise rival businesses and a willingness to support the campaign with comments and good-naturedly join in with some self-effacing pictures of support !.

Garry Hewitt, co-owner of the Quakerhouse, Darlington CAMRA Pub of the Year and CAMRA North East Pub of the Year believes "VAT should be geared to the size of the business - after all it is an income tax". At the multi-award winning Number Twenty-2 on Coniscliffe Road, Ralph Wilkinson has been forced to cease full meal service, precipitating redundancies following the 20% VAT burden. He

agreed with Garry; “All we’re saying is give business a chance”.

Sue Carr, landlady of The Britannia on Archer Street added “It’s so unfair. VAT, excise duty and all the others. They’re a huge burden”. James Buxton, of the Old Tapas Yard in Bondgate explained, “In addition to all the taxes, pubs incur costs not levied on off licence retailers through having extra security and trained licensed staff to police the result of the supermarket’s largesse when people turn up inebriated”.

So there you have it. High taxes close pubs to the benefit of supermarkets who sell alcohol without restriction or repercussion and when it all unwinds, the pubs get the blame and along with the rest of us the financial cost.

Darlington CAMRA Beer Festival

By Ian Jackson

Since the closure of the Arts Centre in Vane Terrace last year which was a longstanding venue for the branch’s beer festivals, Darlington CAMRA hosted a beer festival at a new venue, this time at the Northern Echo Arena, home of Mowden Park Rugby Club on Neasham Road back in August.

Held in the President’s Suite, over 50 real ales plus ciders and perry were available. Darlington CAMRA member Andy Scott had the honour of being served the first pint at the new venue. As with previous festivals, punters enjoyed an excellent selection of real ales from brand new and existing microbreweries, thus bringing in the “beer ticking” fraternity!.

A number of specials were produced for the festival including T.E.A. Break from Just A Minute Brewery in Spennymoor along with FosSDale from Yorkshire Dales in Askrigg. Mowden First from Mithril Ales was another festival special and this ale ended up winning the Beer of The Festival award.

However, with the festival being held in early August coupled with the warm weather, attendances were down compared with previous festivals held at the Arts Centre. Despite this we received great comments who praised the excellent choice of beers available along with transport links to and from the venue. Besides the local bus services, transport links included a shuttle bus running from the town centre to the arena organised by Darlington Sea Scouts, our chosen charity at the festival. Over £160 was raised by punters for this charity.

Plans are now being made to possibly stage a beer festival in spring next year in a venue yet to be decided, and hopefully there will be more details of this in the next issue.

Darlington Drinker ... Ten Years Ago

It’s amazing how some of the biggest brewing companies find it difficult to do what the very smallest do simply. Like putting draught beer into containers.

Scottish Courage, the brewing arm of Scottish & Newcastle – global giant, in the top ten by sales in the world – has announced it is to cease filling barrels at its Tyne Brewery in Newcastle at the end of the year because the process has become “less viable”.

The filling of carbonated kegs will be contracted out to the workingmens’ clubs-owned Federation Clubs Brewery across the river in Dunston. The filling of real ale casks will remain in house but at the company’s John Smith Brewery at Tadcaster, 100 miles down the A1. The beers - all Theakston’s Best Bitter and Cool Cask and a proportion of other Theakston products are produced in Newcastle - will be carried there in bulk by tankers.

Which means that brands heavily marketed as being from one brewery (Theakston's original in Masham) will be brewed at a second (Tyne) but racked into casks at a third (Smith's). Peculier.

Darlington Drinker Issue 148, Autumn 2003

Working Like A Victorian

By John Winterburn

When I started work in 1961, jobs were ten-a-penny. You could walk in to a job on Monday and if it didn't suit you, you could walk out and get another job the next day. When I heard there were jobs going at Simpsons Maltings on Neasham Road in Darlington, I thought "Why not give it a try ?."

When I arrived for the interview, the size of the building was unbelievable and the smell of the damp barley was off putting to say the least. I was offered a job and started the next day. The building was built in 1874 so it was like going to work in Victorian times because nothing had been altered or changed. Everything was shifted manually with shovels or wheelbarrows so to me it was a challenge.

Every day the workforce gathered in a small room to be given their orders and where to go. The first job was to put on our wellies and go to wherever we were working, which in my case was to go and rake the malt floor. The barley had been soaked over the weekend to increase germination, then on Monday morning the water was run off and the malt was conveyed to the malt floor which was about the size of a football pitch.

The next job was to spread it all over the floor to a depth of about eight inches. We then had these huge wooden rakes which we had to use to turn the barley grains to stop the roots tangling. The barley was also sprinkled with water from a watering can to keep it moist and fool the grain into germinating (known as green malt). After about four to five days the barley was swollen to half its original size which meant the grains were now full of starch. We would then proceed to shovel the malt into wheelbarrows to go to the drying ovens where it was kilned for a certain length of time which determined the type of malt. Malts such as roast barley and dark crystal malt were kilned longer to achieve the darker colour whereas pale malt required only a small amount of kilning.

The varying types of malt were then bagged up and go to the breweries for use in the brewing process. During my time at Simpsons Maltings plenty of malt went to Jameson's in Dublin and to Camerons Brewery in Hartlepool even though they had their own maltings. The maltings closed in 1968 and the site is now occupied by Matalan on a small retail park near to Darlington Station.

Simpsons Malt's headquarters are based in Berwick-upon-Tweed and celebrated their 150th anniversary in 2012. Family owned, they are now managed by the fifth generation of the Simpsons family and also have a maltings at Tivetshall St Margaret in Norfolk, an area also renowned for growing barley.

Another City Bimble

By John Magson

Following our visit to Rochdale in the last issue, Ian and I decided to have a jolly day out in "Tetley City". Or at least it was until the brewery closed. And yes you have guessed it – it's a trip around Leeds !.

Wetherspoons at Leeds Station is always a good starting point so the day was planned over pints of Kirkstall Brewery's Pale Ale and Three Swords. First stop was the Victoria Family and Commercial Hotel, behind the Town Hall which retains the original Victorian frontage while the interior has been

tastefully restored. The assize courts used to be at the back of the pub where many a soul enjoyed a last pint here before being sentenced !. But come Grey Owl, a Bristol rarity was most welcome among the beer range.

Just around the corner is Veritas Ale and Wine Bar, which sold eight beers and has a deli attached to either eat in or take out. Beers included Ilkley Everest, a Market Town Tavern charity special beer as Simon Midgley, their managing director was doing a charity trek to Everest Base Camp in aid of a local hospice with 20p from every pint sold going to funds. Walking past the Merrion Centre we called into the Stick or Twist, another Wetherspoons pub so named after the adjoining casino and a vastly underrated pub in Ian's opinion. It was pleasing to see no "Coming Soon" signs on the pumps and whilst downing two pints of Ilkley Funfair, we spied a few familiar local CAMRA members who were surprised to see us a long way from home.

After a little banter we were off again, next stop The Reliance. It is based on a bar/bistro layout with a dining room to the rear and two large rooms at the front. A house beer, Reliance Best Bitter from Acorn Brewery was been enjoyed when half a pig (literally !) went by albeit on the shoulder of a butcher and it was explained to us that pork is a speciality dish and the extensive menu confirmed this. We passed on the pork though and moved on. We had been recommended to visit The Reliance by Ray Blythe, a Cleveland Branch member and we were not disappointed - thanks Ray !.

A short walk back towards the city centre and next stop The Wrens with ten real ales so Wren's Blonde, brewed by Ossett and Great Heck Voodoo Mild were dispatched. By now Ian had noticed a common factor was becoming evident in a number of pubs: how many are now painted with darkish green and white decor. Whilst we thought it may be a throwback to the Victorian era or maybe some enterprising person had bought a tanker full of cheap paint!. Across the road at the top of Briggate is North, a favourite of mine with its mix of real ale drinkers and art lovers. The beer range is always a surprise and from the choice of five we had North Bar Prototype and Tempest Cascadian.

It was top to bottom on Briggate now starting at the Swan which had eight beers and good food washed down with Leeds Yorkshire Gold. Next port of call was the Ship, so called not after any connection with the sea but because of the long galley like bar. What can you say about the grade II listed Whitelocks ?. Opened in 1718 and originally called the Turks Head, it is probably the most famous pub in Leeds and if you have never been it is definitely worth a visit.

Off to another of my favourite pubs, the Adelphi. Another grade II listed building which was built in 1901 as a Victorian Drinking Emporium and lots of the original décor has survived. Pints of Leeds Pale Ale and Caledonian Flying Scotsman were consumed before we caught a taxi to Hunslet to visit the Garden Gate, a pub neither of us had visited before. The interior fittings have been virtually untouched since 1902 and it has etched glass panels, lavish tiling, moulded plasterwork and mosaic floors. The pub has been given the title of 'Jewel in the Crown' of historic pubs in Yorkshire and it is a gem of a place. We needed to steady our nerves after all this architectural splendour and as befitting the pub we toasted it with Leeds Best.

A return taxi took us to The Hop tucked away in the railway arches under Leeds Station, somewhere that I've never been before. The Ossett Ale I tasted was not up to scratch and although they changed it for Nottingham Legend they did not take the beer off. Last stop was the Scarborough Hotel with ten beers on the bar where last drinks of the day were Stonehenge Eyeopener and Kirkstall Three Swords, thus ending a jolly day out.

Thanks to Leeds CAMRA branch for the Leeds Pub Trail Compendium and CAMRA's Yorkshire Real Ale Heritage Pub Guide.

Brewery News

By Ian Jackson

Following the publishing of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2014, it's been boom time for the microbrewery industry with now over 1100 breweries in the UK with 187 brand new breweries appearing in the guide. There were 10 new North East breweries opening, taking the total in our area up to 42. West Yorkshire remains the county with the largest number of breweries totalling 57.

After our pubs "Real Ale Renaissance" in our last issue of Darlington Drinker, it's pleasing to report it's the turn of the breweries this time. The Crafty Pint nano brewery in the cellar of the Half Moon in Northgate has done a number of trial brews, one of which included a 4.5% porter style beer and was reportedly well received by the customers. Brewer John Anderson is currently doing trial brews using his 10 gallon craft brewing kit at the moment, but John and business partner Dave Walker are looking into investing in stainless steel equipment for the brewery.

Meanwhile in Aldbrough St John, Mithril Ales held an open day at the brewery in August as part of Aldbrough Feast Week. Proprietor Pete Fenwick gave tours of the brewery while a number of regular and seasonal beers were available with proceeds going to the upkeep of the local village hall. It's also been a success for the brewery on the festival front as Mowden First, a 3.9% festival special, was beer of the festival at Darlington CAMRA's Beer Festival held at the Northern Echo Arena. Richmond 10K, an amber coloured beer, was beer of the festival at the recent Richmond Ale Festival and brewed to celebrate the annual Richmond 10K Road Race which takes place on the Sunday of the festival when runners can and do pop in for a much need post race pint !.

At the Yard of Ale Brewing Company at the Surtees Arms in Ferryhill Station, proprietor Alan Hogg has taken on a brewing apprentice reporting he is "very keen to learn". Brewery tours are now available for groups at £10 per head which include pie and peas and a complementary pint. A bottling kit has now been installed allowing bottle conditioned beers to be produced on site with the first batch scheduled to appear at the Halloween Beer Festival at the Surtees Arms. Brewery T-shirts are also now available.

Following the return of brewing back into Darlington by The Crafty Pint, there are rumours of another brewery opening. On the site next to North Road Station, a Goods Shed dating back to 1833 is reportedly going to be converted into a brewery. In Manfield on the outskirts of Darlington, there are also reports of another brewery set to open, this time in the school house of the now disused school. Hopefully, we will have more information on these ventures in the next issue of Darlington Drinker.

Inn Brief...

Congratulations to Darlington Snooker Club and the Quakerhouse, our winning entrants in the North East Club of the Year and North East Pub of the Year competitions respectively. Well done also to The Crown at Manfield as it didn't disappoint in the Yorkshire Pub of the Year competition by finishing third, bettered only by The Ferryboat at Thorganby near York with the No 7 in Barnsley being the eventual winner.

In Darlington, The Forum on Borough Road stocks a guest beer with Village Brewer White Boar being the regular choice. Congratulations go to John Anderson and Dave Walker of The Half Moon on Northgate which recently won the Town Pub of the Season award for 2013. Well deserved after all the hard work they and their staff have put in since the pub reopened in June. Tasters of trial brews from the pub's own nano brewery have been appearing on the bar and have been well received. The pub now opens at 5pm on a Wednesday as John is busy brewing during the day !. Hoskins on Blackwellgate has a new manager, David Tattershall. It now stocks two real ales during the week increasing to three on a weekend, one of these ales being permanent and the others as rotating guests, one of which is a seasonal. Plans are also to stock a real cider.

David is no stranger to real ale having been involved with the Keswick Lions Beer Festival in Cumbria for the last ten years. Peter and Anne Martin have now left The Quays in Tubwell Row and the new tenants are carrying on and keeping on the good work.

Up in Teesdale, congratulations go to Richard Robinson of the Red Lion at Cotherstone on triumphing in the Teesdale Pub of the Season 2013 award, winning the award again for the first time since 2009. You may recall that Richard wrote a feature on this stone built gem back in issue 187. Bad news from Staindrop where it is rumoured the Black Swan is to be converted into housing having being closed for a while leaving The Wheatsheaf as the only pub in the village. The Lord Nelson in Gainford could well be heading the same way after closing back in September and like Staindrop, it would leave only one pub in the village. Just down the road in High Coniscliffe, the owners of The Spotted Dog are rumoured to be applying for a change of use and wanting to turn the pub into housing. The plans are reported to also include building houses in the large car park at the rear. If the plans are approved, this would mean closure of the only remaining pub in the village after the Duke of Wellington closed back in 2010.

Following in the footsteps of Pete Morgan's Rat Race in Hartlepool micropub is another, this time in the suburbs of Middlesbrough. Phil Thompson PhD is the brains behind Dr Phil's Real Ale House on Roman Road in Linthorpe and his idea for the micropub came over a few pints along with persuasion from Pete at the Rat Race. Popular with locals and students alike, many of the students who frequent it are members of Teesside University's Real Ale Society (TURAS). In the first few weeks the place was so popular that at one point Phil ended up selling beer that was actually ready to go on sale !.

And finally, pleased to see that the latest issue of CAMRA Angle, the newsletter produced by Sunderland & South Tyneside CAMRA which cites "Three Good Reasons to go to Darlington" - The Quakerhouse, Darlington Snooker Club and Taylor's Pies! The first two I'll definitely vouch for but being a Great Ayton lad I'm afraid to say that Petch's Pies do take some beating !.

If you have any pub or club news for inclusion in future editions of Darlington Drinker please email us at newsletter@darlocamra.org.uk.

Quaker Tours

Quaker Tours are monthly social outings run by Quakerhouse regulars Gordon Pentland and John Reed. Annual trips over the years have included a visit to the Huddersfield CAMRA Oktoberfest and pub beer festivals such as the Crown Hotel in Malton and Captain Cook Inn at Staithes. Other trips have included a visit to the "Valley of Beer" in Sheffield and a mini north east crawl of pubs in the County Durham area.

Anyone is welcome to come along on the trips, however they run on a "first come first served" basis and do sell out. Also, if you have any suggestions about future trips Gordon and John would like to hear from you.

SATURDAY 16TH NOVEMBER

Trip to the "Valley of Beer" in Sheffield.
Depart Dolphin Centre at 9am, £16 per person.

SATURDAY 14TH DECEMBER

Trip to Suddaby's Winter Beer Festival at the Crown Hotel in Malton.
Depart Dolphin Centre at 9.30am, £16 per person.

Gordon Pentland and John Reed look forward to seeing faces old and new at these 'not for profit' social outings. Contact John via email: john.reed263@ntlworld.com or Gordon on 07790 534412 for bookings/enquiries.

All tours arrive back at Houndgate, in Darlington no later than 7.45pm

Branch Diary:

NOVEMBER

Fri 8th – County Durham Pub of the Season Surveying Trip, 7pm. From Sadberge to Hurworth Place.

Tue 12th – Branch Meeting, Voodoo Cafe, Skinnergate, Darlington, 7.30pm

Sat 30th - North East Regional Meeting, The Central, Half Moon Lane, Gateshead, 1pm

DECEMBER

Tues 10th – Branch Meeting, The Travellers Rest, West Auckland Road, Cockerton, Darlington, 7.30pm

Fri 13th – County Durham Pub of the Season Surveying Trip, 7pm. Newton Aycliffe to Preston-le-skerne.

Fri 27th - Christmas Social, Darlington Snooker Club, 1 Corporation Road, Darlington. From 7.30pm

JANUARY 2014

Tues 7th – Branch Meeting, Sloans, Grange Road, Darlington, 7.30pm

All trips leave from round the corner from the Dolphin Centre and return there. Trips are open to CAMRA members and non members. Visitors and new members are always made welcome.

For details of all trips please call Pete Fenwick on 01325 374817 or 07889 167128

The Who's Who of the Branch ?

Chairman: Peter Everett

Tel: 01325 241388

Email: peterdsc@yahoo.co.uk

Secretary and Branch Contact: John Magson

Email: john.magson@ntlworld.com

Membership Secretary: Angus Gair

Email: angusgair@ntlworld.com

Darlington Drinker Editor: Ian Jackson

Email: newsletter@darlocamra.org.uk

Social Secretary, Pubs Officer and Cider Officer: Pete Fenwick

Tel: 01325 374817 (home) or 07889 167128 (mobile)

Email: mithril58@btinternet.com

Darlington CAMRA website (you're surfing it at this moment in time !) : www.darlocamra.org.uk

Find us on Twitter ([@darloCAMRA](https://twitter.com/darloCAMRA)) and on Facebook - log in and search for 'CAMRA Darlington' and 'Like' us !.

Darlington Trading Standards: Telephone: 01325 388799. Email: tradingstandards@darlington.gov.uk

Advertise and Reach 6000+ Real Ale Drinkers & Pubgoers:

Quarter-page: £65.00 + vat

Half page: £125.00 + vat

Full page: £225.00 + vat

Book four editions and receive a 10% discount: Free design

To book your space, please contact Capital Media on 01636 302302 or via email by clicking

Inserted from <<http://darlocamra.org.uk/darlingtondrinker189.html>>