

ALE TALK



SUMMER 2026

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CHAIRMAN'S RANT

The last two editions of Ale Talk have seen my column rechristened 'Chairman's Rant' rather than 'Chairman's Notes,' temporarily reviving the original title from 2012. I'm still angry about the policies of the government with regard to the licensed trade, but in the interests of avoiding unnecessary repetition and keeping my blood pressure under control, I've decided to refrain in this column. I'm writing these notes just before the local elections, and by the time you read this, the broader electorate, not just CAMRA members, will have given their verdicts on the performance of the Government after just under two years in office. You don't need a crystal ball to know what that verdict will be.

Another pet concern of mine is the decline of voluntarism. The pre-Covid target of 250,000 CAMRA members now seems light years away. My first branch meeting in my first stint as Chairman was in December 2011. In the minutes, national membership was recorded at 132,493, and local membership as 569. In October 2017, national membership had stormed up to 190,240, and local membership was also up markedly to 761. CAMRA was badly hit by Covid. It's easy to understand the viewpoint of those who dropped out, when the pubs were closed and breweries going bust. In December 2021, some three months after Huddersfield CAMRA resumed live meetings, the national membership had dropped to 161,688, and the local membership to 614. Our local membership in February 2026 was 618, so we have pretty much flatlined, but the national picture is far worse at 141,902.

The decline in total membership will be a huge concern for the National Treasurer. Those for whom CAMRA has been a thorn in the side will probably be watching with growing pleasure. It is not just the total

losses that are significant; there is also the decliner in active membership. In a future issue, I will compare attendances at Branch and Regional meetings, but I can tell you anecdotally that the decline in active membership is serious. I can remember our voting meeting having 40-plus attendees in 2012. This year it was in the mid-teens.

There are all sorts of reasons why voluntarism is in decline, ratcheted further downwards by Covid. Left unchallenged, we will run out of volunteers at local level. CAMRA is the most successful pressure group of the last half century. It can only continue to be so if members attend meetings and socials in greater numbers, and gravitate towards taking up Committee roles. Have a look at the branch diary and come and meet us. You will be made welcome.

Paul Laxton

Chairman, Huddersfield and District Branch

Did you know?

Research commissioned by CAMRA found that people who have a 'local' felt significantly more connected to their communities



Source: Dunbar, S. 'Friends on Top' (2016)



ALE TALK

Previous editions
available online



Branch Awards

Huddersfield and District branch of CAMRA have awarded **Golcar Central Liberal Club** with the **Spring Club of the Season** award. The steward, Mark Sykes, was presented the award at the club on Monday 13th April by Local CAMRA Chairman Paul Laxton. Mark has consistently served high quality real ale at the club which currently has a regular *Timothy Taylors Landlord* and a changing guest beer. Located in Church Street not far from the centre of the village the club offers crown green bowling as well as traditional club games of darts, dominoes and pool. On the presentation evening the changing beer was **Bosuns Blonde**.



LOWER ROYAL GEORGE Rural Pub of the Year Winner 2026

Huddersfield CAMRA members have voted the **Lower Royal George** at **Scammonden Rural Pub of the Year for 2026**. Steve and Margaret Lowe still own and run the pub and have now been there for over 40 years.

The pub usually has Revd James, an amber beer from Brains brewery, as a regular beer but at the moment Brains SA is on. In addition, a changing blonde beer, currently Blonde Beauty from Dark Horse brewery. Blonde beers are often sourced from Pennine brewery, Bradfield brewery and Stancil brewery. The beers have been consistently kept in excellent condition

which has resulted in high beer quality scores from CAMRA members.



There is always a warm welcome from the landlord and, in wintertime, the 2 real fires!

Known for good food, it is frequented by visitors as well as a loyal following of loyal customers. There is always some good conversations created which makes the pub have a homely feel. It has hosted the Lower Royal George Sausage Appreciation Society (SAS!) on a regular basis for over 25 years. The Society tasted 117 sausages from 59 different butchers last year.

THE GEORGE INN Winter Pub of the Season 2025

Huddersfield CAMRA has voted **The George Inn at Upper Denby** its *Winter Pub of the Season*. The CAMRA award comes close on the heels of The George's latest award when it was recently judged "Best Traditional Country Pub for West Yorkshire 2026" in the LUXlife Restaurant & Bar Awards 2026.

The George is a traditional family run real ale establishment, owned and run by licensee Dean Wyatt and his family. The pub is well-known for its real ale and involvement with the local Community and is a shining example of the rural pub. As Dean says, "It is pub for the village, and the village is for the pub!" It is a simple country pub at the heart of village life.



The original roadside stone-built pub has been extended over the years. It has one of those time-honoured taprooms with a real fire, part wooden floorboards and stone flags and bench seating. The back bar opens into a comfortable lounge area with an open fire, and this is where food is served and social meetings take place. Outside, there are a beer garden and marquee.

The George is a free house with 4 hand pulls in each bar serving award winning real ales from **Timothy Taylor's** brewery and a range of local and regional beers. The pub is Cask Marque accredited and a member of the Timothy Taylor's Champion Club. **Timothy Taylors Landlord** is a permanent fixture with a second Taylors beer and two rotational guest ales drawn from local and regional breweries. All the beers are well-kept and served at cellar temperature.

Dean and his father are no strangers to real ale. Their passion for beer quality has resulted in them gaining Cask Marque accreditation for their beers in addition to winning numerous CAMRA awards. This is all down to good cellarmanship and service as shown by Dean, his family and loyal staff.

The award is made in recognition of the quality of its cask ales, support for local brewers and the promotion of real ale. This is the third time the George has been presented with a Pub of the Season award having first won one in 2013. The pub subsequently went on to win the Branch's Rural Pub of the Year in 2016 and again in 2020 just as COVID hit the country. Furthermore, it has been a regular listing in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide, first appearing in the

Guide in 2015. In addition to these awards, The George was named and voted as "Welcome To Yorkshire's" Favourite Pub 2021.

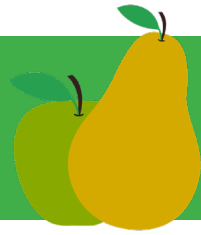
The speciality of the pub is the homemade pies prepared by Dean's mum Celia. These have been recognised with a Culinary Excellence Award 2026 for Homemade Pies in the LUXlife Restaurant & Bar Awards 2026, voted for by the pub's diners. The menu features a variety of fillings, including steak, steak & potato, steak & mushroom, steak & kidney, beef chilli, pork, pork & black pudding, chicken & mushroom, chicken & ham, and chicken phal curry. Food is not normally served during the day but homemade pies are served from 4pm to 8pm early evening. The pub is also well known for its popular 'Pie and Pea' walks.

At Christmas there is a centuries old tradition of local secular carol singing with mulled wine and mince pies. This often accompanies the lighting up of the Christmas lights. The Lions usually call in on their rounds with Santa and his Elves to celebrate the season.

At weekends there is occasional live music and local entertainment which regularly play to packed audiences. There is a darts team which plays in the winter league, a bowls team during the summer months and a pool team. Wednesday night is Quiz Night.

With a homely feel, great atmosphere, muddy boots, cyclist and dog friendly, you're sure of a very warm Yorkshire welcome and some great ale. The opening times vary and it advisable to ring ahead (01484 861347) to confirm times for food and opening. The George is open every day of the week, usually from 3pm – 8pm Monday; 3pm – 9pm Tuesday; 3pm – 9.30pm Wednesday; 3pm – 9pm Thursday; 12noon – 10.30pm Friday; 12noon – 10.30pm; 12noon – 9pm Saturday; and 12noon – 8pm Sunday; Upper Denby can be reached by Team Pennine bus route D3 from Huddersfield which stops near the pub. You can also travel on the D2 from Huddersfield and remain on the bus at Denby Dale as it changes to a D3 and serves Upper Denby on its return to Huddersfield.

Huddersfield Cider Pub of the Year



This year's winner of the Branch's Cider Pub of the Year is a departure from the usual choice of pubs that have previously won this award. Although a new entrant to the competition, the **'Udders Orchard Cider and Tasting Rooms'** at Lindley has been a show case for its range of local ciders and perries since 2018 when it first opened its premises for the sale of cider.

'Udders Orchard Cider was established in 2008 when Dave Kendall-Smith gathered some apples from trees growing at the side of the road and bought a small apple press on eBay. The fruit was milled and pressed at his home and fermented in barrels in the cellar. After initial success and encouragement, Dave went on to produce real, full juice, naturally fermented cider and perry from locally sourced apples and pears

at his cidery in Lindley. His passion for cider became the ultimate in recycling making use of unwanted fruit which would have probably gone to waste.

Every year after that, Dave picked and foraged unwanted ordinary apples and pears from the gardens around Lindley and Huddersfield and turned them into cider or perry. In 2011, his Whisky Cask Cider 2010 won CAMRA's Yorkshire Cider of the Year 2011. 'Udders Orchard's reputation for quality ciders also earned it a place in the Campaign For Real Ale's definitive guide to ciders 'Modern British Cider.'

What started as a hobby selling cider at festivals and Farmers markets has now turned into a full-time business. Based in Acre Street, Lindley, Dave now supplies his award-winning

ciders to pubs, bars and other outlets across the North of England. The Cidery and Tasting Rooms is also an off-licence with a fully licensed bar selling direct to the public. The 'Udders Orchard Cider and Tasting Rooms' features an extensive range of ciders and perries from both its own cidery and other cider producers, allowing the cider drinker to explore a range of different styles not normally seen in other local pubs. This has kindled a new interest in cider and seen a growth in demand from the public for real juice ciders and perries.

The Cidery and Tasting Rooms is open at weekends and for special events each month. Dave hosts the annual Lindley Cider festival which first started in May 2019 and has now become a permanent feature of the village calendar. There are occasional cider tasting evenings with the opportunity to sample exciting, new and rare ciders, perries and even pyders at the festival.

Cider lovers can usually identify pubs that serve real cider or perry by keeping an eye out for the "Real Cider & Perry Sold Here" window sticker. There's often promotional material, including posters on display and leaflets to explain about real cider and perry.



CAMRA celebrates Cider and Perry Month throughout May to coincide with the blossoming of orchards and to promote traditional real cider and perry. Accordingly, the Branch Chairman Paul Laxton presented owner and cider maker, Dave Kendall-Smith with the Cider Pub of the Year award on the first evening of the Lindley Cider Festival.

The festival featured 30 different ciders and perries, low alcohol cider, apple juice and Calvados and Apple brandy. Examples were

sourced from Kent, Sussex, London, Sussex, Devon, Somerset, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Newport and Avon, and even Zapiain from the Basque Country and Templars Choice spirit from Normandy in France. Margaret's Jamaica Flava provided a Caribbean twist to the food alongside Broster's pork pies and vegan rolls. Abi's Ukelele band serenaded everyone on Friday evening while goodtime blues, jazz and skiffle band, Hokum entertained on Sunday afternoon.

Later in the year, there is a Cidery Apple Drop-Off Day in mid-September when donors are encouraged to drop off their fruit and windfalls and are rewarded with cider. Any dessert, cider or culinary apples can be used but the fruit must be ripe (with brown pips), relatively clean and with unbroken skin. Windfalls can be used, however, as the odd bruise is not a problem.

Daniel Cheney 1994–2026



Daniel was doing a PhD in Chemistry at Huddersfield University when he first attended a Huddersfield CAMRA Branch

meeting in January 2019. He became a regular at our meetings and socials, and at our AGM in November 2019 he was elected Young Members' Officer and was a well-respected member of the committee.

He served in this role until he left the area for the University of Liverpool in March 2022. There he joined the Liverpool Branch of CAMRA and was also their Young Members' Officer. Daniel was in the middle of organising a social event for young members. This event will go ahead and be dedicated to his memory. Unfortunately, he passed away at his home in Liverpool in early March 2026. His funeral was held in Rugby on April 1st. It is tragic that he died so young, and our thoughts are with his family and friends.

BEER, PUB AND BREWERY NEWS

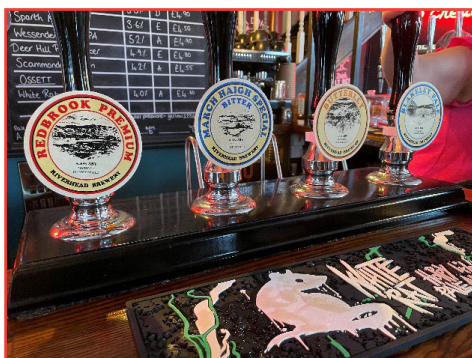
If you run a pub or have any news or information about your local that you want to tell us about email aletalk@huddscamra.org.uk

REAL ALE

CAMRA defines real ale as live beer: 'beer that, when first put into its final container, contains at least 0.1 million cells of live yeast per millilitre, plus enough fermentable sugar to produce a measurable reduction in its gravity while in that container, whatever it may be'. Within this definition comes cask-conditioned beer which is defined as 'live beer that continues to mature and condition in its cask, any excess of carbon dioxide being vented such that it is served at atmospheric pressure'. It should be left to settle and condition in the cellar, for up to ten days if necessary and served at cellar temperature, which is 11 to 14°C

Brewery News

Riverhead Brewery – Riverhead have relaunched their core beers as the Heritage Collection with some beers renamed to reflect the connection to local reservoirs. There are new pump clips for all beers; Happy Valley is renamed *Blakely Pale*; Sherbert Lemon is now *Scammonden Lemon*; Deer Hill Porter is now *Deer Hill Plum Porter*; there is a new permanent beer-*Wessenden IPA 5.2%*



Pub News

Golden Cock, Farnley Tyas – has reopened following a £500,000 refurbishment, Black Sheep Bitter, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Theakston's Best Bitter

Honley Socialist Club – permanently closed

Scene at the Bar...

BERRY BROW:

Railway - Ossett Blonde and White Rat, Timothy Taylor Landlord plus a guest beer

BURNLEE:

Farmer's Arms - Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Mallinson's Vista, Timothy Taylor Landlord

HEPWORTH:

Butcher's Arms - Stancill Blonde, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Vocation Chop and Change

HINCHLIFFE MILL:

Stumble Inn - Hobgoblin Gold, Hobgoblin IPA

HOLMBRIDGE:

Pickled Pheasant - Bowland Brewers Gold, Bowland Pheasant Plucker, Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Vocation Bread and Butter

HOLMFIRTH:

Elephant and Castle - Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Green King IPA, Timothy Taylor Landlord

Harvey's - Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Small World Longmoor Pale

Magic Rock - now renamed Perfective and opens Mondays. Local beers now available including Escapade Stout, Ossett White Rat, Roosters Yorkshire Best Bitter, Vocation Bread and Butter

Nowhere - Nowhere Gold and Irish Stout
O'Brien's - Fyne Ales Jarl
Old Bridge - Craven Brew Yorkshire Bitter, Saltaire Blonde, Small World Long Moor Pale
Postcard - Bradfield Farmer's Ale, Ossett Blonde
Shoulder of Mutton - Leeds Pale, Ossett Blonde, Timothy Taylor Boltmaker and Landlord
Underbank Rugby Club - Bradfield Steel Cow
Y Bar - under new ownership, new hours: closed Monday/Tuesday, Wednesday-Thursday 1500-2300, Friday-Saturday 1400-2400, Sunday 1300-2000. Timothy Taylor Landlord has replaced Millstone Tiger Rut

JACKSON BRIDGE:

Red Lion - changes to weekday opening hours are Monday - Thursday from 1600, Friday from 1500. Anthem Pale Ale, Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Timothy Taylor Boltmaker
White Horse - Theakston's Best Bitter, Barista Coffee Stout and Old Peculiar

LINDLEY:

Lindley Lib - Draught Bass
Wireworks - Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Thornbridge Jaipur

SCHOLES:

Boot and Shoe - Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Ossett Blonde, Timothy Taylor Landlord
Cricket Club - Nook Blonde, Phoenix Arizona

UPPERTHONG:

Royal Oak - Mallinson's Bitter, Vista and 2K (celebrating Mallinson's 2000th beer); Millstone Stout and Tiger Rut

WEST SLAITHWAITE:

Zapato - Raspberry River Stout

WOOLDALE:

Wooldale Arms - Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, St Austell Proper Job, Tetley Bitter, Timothy Taylor Landlord

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It's Eighty Bob beer but not as we know it, Jimmy.

I recently attended the Bradford Beer & Cider festival at Saltaire and made for one of my favourite breweries, Abbeydale. To my surprise and enjoyment there was a limited edition Scottish-style 80 Shilling Ale. This had been brewed as part of their "Restoration Series" and was a modern interpretation of a historic Scottish Heavy ale, inspired by a recipe from 1957. It was as described, "a malt-forward ale with a rich dried fruit character with caramel and toffee notes and gentle bitterness in the finish." It was delicious!

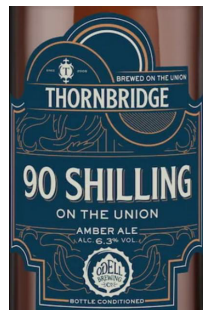
The term "Scottish Shilling Ales" is probably one which most people will be unfamiliar with unless you live in Scotland or are of a "certain age." In case you didn't know a shilling was a coin equivalent to 1/20th of one pound Sterling (£1) and was famously known as a "bob" before it was replaced by the 5 new pence coin during decimalization in 1971.

The "shilling" designation originates from a 19th-century Scottish tax system where ale was taxed based on the price per hogshead

(54 imperial gallons or 240 Litres) of beer. The shilling rating (often written with a slash, e.g., 80/-) was a direct reference to the tax paid in shillings, which generally correlated with the strength (ABV) of the beer; the higher shillings meant a higher price and higher alcohol content.

For example, Harvest and table beers were taxed at 28/- and 35/- per barrel, Light and Mild ales at 42/- and 48/-, Pale and India Pale Ale were 54/- and 60/-, Scottish and Export ales at 70/- and 80/-. The term 90/- was never an arithmetic progression but simply a hogshead (a barrel and a half of 60/- ale). Where a brewer had a surplus of 60/- ale it would often be bottled with the label showing 90/- which may have made the beer appear more interesting than the 60/- ale it actually was.

After the Second World War the range of beers was reduced and standardised to 60/-, 70/- and 80/- ales representing light, heavy and export beers. These beers are generally better known down the pub by their 'shilling' price name rather than the beer style.



It's Eighty Bob beer but not as we know it, Jimmy.

For example:

- **60 Shilling (Light): Lower ABV, lower tax.**
- **70 Shilling (Export): Medium ABV.**
- **80 Shilling (Heavy): Higher ABV, typically 3.9% – 4.9%.**
- **90 Shilling (Export/Wee Heavy): Highest ABV, often 4%–10%.**



Strangely, the 60/-, 70/- and 80/- beers are all Pale Ales. It can get very confusing because the same system was used for other styles. There were also 60/- Mild Ale, 54/- Stout and 60/- Scotch Ale. Basically, it's unwise to assume a style based purely on the number of shillings assigned to it.

During the Real Ale boom period from the mid-1970s these terms were being used on pump clips and beer labels. The 60/- and 80/- ales were particularly bad in this respect. The trouble is, they have absolutely no connection to the modern beers with the same names. When these antiquated terms are used, the modern drinker simply knows to expect a beer of "normal" strength (4.5% to 5.5% alcohol by volume) badged as "80 shillings" and something less strong at 60 or 70 shillings and something stronger above it at 90 shillings.



From a marketing point of view, the higher numbers signify a higher abv and maltiness, commonly seen on labels like Belhaven 80 shillings (3.9% abv), Stewart's 80/- (4.4% abv), Abbeydale's 80 Shilling Ale (4.6% abv) and the higher strength McEwen's 90/- (5.5% abv), Thornbridge's 90 Shilling (6.3% abv) and Broughton's Wee Jock 90 Shilling (5.2% abv). So, there you have it.

Bob Shilling

Did you know?

Research commissioned by CAMRA found that people who have a 'local' are happier and have higher levels of life satisfaction than those who don't.



Source: Durbin, R., 'Friends on Tap' (2016)



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FOUR NIGHTS IN SCOTLAND

1ST – 4TH APRIL 2026

Carol had five days off from work, so we decided to make the most of it and have a few days north of the border in Glasgow for a beer or three and football.

WEDNESDAY 1ST APRIL

Today saw us making our way up to Glasgow on the train. We'd split our journey into 3 separate trains, Huddersfield to Leeds, Leeds to Carlisle then Carlisle to Glasgow. We were delayed for roughly 35 minutes in Carlisle, so we had a quick pint in the **Scott and Brassy** on Carlisle Station, a pub that has been shut for a while but reopened at the back end of November and taken over by *Lancaster Brewery*. We then caught the train and arrived in Glasgow at approximately 4.00pm and booked into our abode for 4 nights, a Holiday Inn Express hotel. Once settled in, we had noted a public house next door, the *Scotia*, then made our way to one of the football matches we had planned – Albion Rovers v Edinburgh University. We did get rather wet on the way to the game!!

THURSDAY 2ND APRIL

We'd purchased pre trip a 3-day Central Scotland Rover - £37.90 with our Two Together Railcard. We headed off to Edinburgh Waverley and decided to make our way to Kirkcaldy. The train wasn't due for half an hour, so we called into the **Booking Office**, a Wetherspoons establishment just outside the station for a quick drink. *Belhaven 80 Shilling* and *Williams Bros Seven Giraffes* were had and rated good. Once we had got on our train (going to Dundee) we got off at

Kirkcaldy and found ourselves in another Wetherspoons, the **Robert Nairn**. In here we had *Stewarts XPA* and *Inveralmond Ossian*, both in fine fettle. We then made our way to Dumfermline where we had sussed out the **Commercial** which is located on the corner of Douglas Street. There are six handpumps, one of which was a real cider. First off, we tried *Happy Chappy* from *Cromarty Brewery* which went down rather well. As we'd not eaten since our breakfast, we thought a filled roll and chips sounded a good idea – very enjoyable. It would have been rude not to!!! A dessert was also had, and a pint of Ka Pai was also had. It's a little basic but well worth a visit. Next port of call was yet another Wetherspoons, just round the corner from the Commercial – **The Guildhall and Linen Exchange**. The beers we tried in here were from *Mor Brewery*, which we've not heard of, *Hazy Days* and *Winchman* both very palatable. We decided to call it a day and headed back to our abode. The rain which was forecast for the day held off until we got back to Glasgow which made it a great day.

FRIDAY 3RD APRIL

Today saw us on the second day of our 3-day pass so we started off getting a train from Glasgow Queen Street to Stirling. A short trot into town and we came across **The Crossed Peels**, once more a Wetherspoons house. In here we tried *10 Fifty* from *Grainstore brewery* which was very good. Across the way was **No 2 Baker Street**, *Stewarts Ka Pai* and *Future Brewers (Greene King)* Spring Break both of which were ok. A few doors

FOUR NIGHTS IN SCOTLAND

up we tried **Nicky Tams bar and bothy**. A bit of a disappointment – only one handpump on, today it was *Doctor Morton's Snake Oil*. It was ok, scored it a 3. We'd had some football on in the evening – East Stirling v Hearts B. A quick trip back to Glasgow – Nigel had to nip back to the hotel, so I waited for him in **The Counting House** (Wetherspoons) where I tried *Orkney Raven* which was good. We had noted that a beer festival was on at Larbert, so we got on the 1518 train from Glasgow Queen Street station and stayed there until it was time to make our way to the football. It was run by Forth Valley CAMRA and the food that was on was from Michael R More, a quality butcher and caterer from Cambusbarron in Stirling. The steak pie that Nigel tried and the veg and lentil soup Carol tried were wonderful. The game we went to was definitely on so after a 10-minute walk we made it then made our way back to Glasgow.

SATURDAY 4TH APRIL

Today was the last day of our pass. As we'd already planned some football – Cowdenbeath v Civil Service Strollers – we just decided to have a mooch around on the trains. Although we didn't get to have any beers today, our game was on and we thoroughly enjoyed the day. Storm Dave had been mentioned on the weather forecast so it was rather unpleasant but other than that we had a great time here in Scotland.

SUNDAY 5TH APRIL

Today saw us going home. It had decided to snow when we were going for the train back to Carlisle so not a pleasant start to the day. We had an hour and a half to wait in Carlisle, so we called into the pub on the station before catching the train back home. We are already planning another jaunt up to Glasgow and getting another 3-day Central Scotland pass – which we certainly made the most of. Thoroughly great trip.

Carol & Nigel Fox

BRANCH DIARY

FORTHCOMING BRANCH MEETINGS

All Mondays at 8pm unless stated otherwise:

20th July: Victoria, Newsome

17th August: Golcar Liberal Club

21st September: The County, Huddersfield

FORTHCOMING SOCIALS

Details tbc, please check online at huddscamra.org.uk

Thank you to *Sair Inn - Linthwaite*, - *Head of Steam- Huddersfield, Riverhead – Marsden* for hosting our recent meetings

Contributions to Aletalk are welcome from any CAMRA member and may be sent to [Aletalk@](mailto:Aletalk@huddscamra.org.uk)

huddscamra.org.uk Contributions may be edited for reasons of space and may be held over for future issues. Copies are distributed quarterly, free of charge, to outlets in Huddersfield, surrounding areas, and further afield. Thank you to Bob Tomlinson, Graham and Ron, Paul Laxton, Nigel and Carol Fox, Marcus Garside, for their various contributions.

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Huddersfield's First Beer Festival

Anyone attending a CAMRA beer festival for the first time will probably be unaware of the planning and organisation that goes into staging the event. Control is exerted at every point, from the numbers attending, the supply of the beer and food to the behaviour of the drinkers. Nothing is left to chance. Enjoyment and appreciation of the different styles of beer is the order of the day whilst drunkenness and disorder are frowned upon. However, 183 years ago things were quite different.

Huddersfield's first recorded beer festival took place on a Monday afternoon on the 24th July 1843. It was an event unprecedented in the history of the town, and possibly the very first beer festival in the country.

In the early part of 1843, the Reverend Theobald Mathew aka Father Mathew, a well-known preacher in the Temperance Movement, visited Huddersfield preaching against the evils of drink and promoting teetotalism among the working classes. He appears to have been successful causing a drop in the sale of "intoxicating liquors" in the locality. In fact, so much so, that a group of publicans and beer shop owners decided to fight back. They proposed to organise an "Anti-Teetotal Demonstration" or what today we might call a beer festival to encourage people to "drink more beer."

A person known as "St George the Druid" (George Mitchell of the Druids Arms), a "plumber" (W. Gawthorp of the Plumber's Arms) and two or three others formed a committee and approached the local brewers in the town and surrounding vicinity, soliciting beer and sponsorship for the event. A task most beer festival organisers are familiar with.

By all accounts the organisers were successful. They persuaded the brewers to donate 10 barrels (equivalent to 360 gallons) of strong ale. In the 1840's the average strength of beer was between 5% and 6% alcohol by volume (o.g. 1055) and mainly Porter or dark ale. Only one brewer, Bentley & Shaw, refused to co-operate in the venture. Others were more willing. Thomas Wilson of the Birkby Brewery donated the largest amount with two barrels

(72 gallons). Thomas Marshall of King Street, Huddersfield, Thomas Blenkhorn of the Aspley Old Brewery, George & Henry Scarlett of the Watergate brewery, James Mills & Co. of Quay Street, Elizabeth Green of Spring Mill Brewery, and others all contributed their share.

The venue for this "Demonstration" was the Circus Royal in Temple Street at the top of Westgate, hired for the occasion from Messrs. Armytage and Kaye. The Circus Royal, formerly the Huddersfield Theatre, was little more than a fleapit and said to be in a dilapidated state. Under the management of William Woolgar, it had staged a variety of attractions ranging from a wonderful machine for "Shaving by Steam" to a mock "Baptism Service" for factory children conducted by the Rev. J.R. Stephens. The building was eventually closed two years later on the 31st May 1845 due to a fall in patronage and its general state of disrepair. It was finally demolished in 1846 when Temple Street was razed for the construction of railway tunnels for the Huddersfield & Manchester Railway Company. Today, all that remains of the street is Temple Close off Station Street.

The Circus Royal opened its doors at 2 o'clock that Monday afternoon. Above the door was draped a pink banner proclaiming "Good Ale and Roast Beef for Old England; God save the Queen and Peace with all the World."

Stephen Dickinson, a beer shop keeper, occupied the ticket office and acted as Treasurer. Entry was three pence (3d) – a not inconsiderable amount given the wages of the day! In order to keep out the teetotalers, a man was stationed at the entrance to present a "tot" of ale to be drunk by everyone who entered. Mother Gawthorpe of the Plumbers' Arms and Balderson of the Neptune acted as guards to prevent anybody passing into the hall without first drinking their glass.

Around 3 o'clock, a thirsty contingent of the Lindley band started parading the streets, accompanied by a rag-tag bunch of boys, preceded by a banner promoting the demonstration.

The beer had arrived but the beef failed to materialise much to the consternation of the

Huddersfield's First Beer Festival

crowd. By about 4 o'clock there was between 400 to 500 people assembled in the circus and the beer still hadn't been broached! The crowd was getting rather noisy and irritated by this time so the beer was tapped – with cans, pitchers, pots, etc being emptied as soon as they were filled.

"When beer's in, wit's out" so the saying goes. The usual effects of a drunken rabble were soon apparent – noise, tumult, confusion and quarrelling started. Fortunately, according to reports, no women were present.



An old day-bill woodcut of the "Circus Royal."

As the crowd began to get unruly, the constables were called in towards 7 o'clock in the evening. It took the police nearly three quarters of an hour to empty the hall and turn the "intoxicated savages" out onto the streets, much to the annoyance of the decent folk of the town.

While this was going on, Mitchell and his companions rolled a barrel out of the back doors and in doing so knocked out the bung. The crowd rushed forward, while some headed down to catch a mouthful of beer others filled whatever container came to hand. Fighting soon commenced with the barrel fight lasting half an hour, making its way from Manchester Street, over two or three pig styes, into Westgate and ultimately finishing near the White Hart in Cloth Hall Street.

The filthy and disgusting scenes both inside the Circus and outside on the streets were said to "beggars all description." Many parts of the town continued in a state of disorder until 2 o'clock in the morning. About half a dozen or more individuals were arrested by

the police and watchmen and kept overnight in the lockups. A scene which sounds vaguely familiar after "kicking out time" on a weekend's night out.

On the following morning (Tuesday), the drunkards were brought up to the Guildhall to answer for their behaviour before the magistrates. Thomas Larwin had to pay 11 shillings (55p); William Child, for fighting, was fined 15 shillings (75p) and to find sureties to keep the peace; Edwin Hirst, fined 13 shillings and sixpence (68p); Michael Walker, to pay 7 shillings (35p) and find sureties to keep the peace for 12 months; John Beardsworth and John Stott, for drunkenness, had each 13 shillings and sixpence to pay.

One offender was committed to the House of Correction for one month, while others fined and bound over to keep the peace. During the summing up, the magistrates were highly critical of the conduct of the promoters and managers of the Demonstration. The money raised was offered as charity to the Huddersfield and Upper Agbrigg Infirmary but was honourably declined.

Great as the extent of the drunkenness was, there were still three or four barrels left untapped after the event. These were, according to reports, given to the "poor." The event did more harm than good to the cause of beer drinking and probably contributed more to Teetotalism than it discouraged. Fortunately, beer festivals are better organised and more civilised events. Riotous acts of drunkenness are more commonly associated with lager louts and football hooligans than with real ale drinkers.

Owd Bob

References

- Halifax Guardian and Huddersfield and Bradford Advertiser, 29th July 1843
- Bradford Observer 3rd August 1843
- Leeds Times 29th July 1843
- Theatre Royal, the Romance of the Huddersfield Stage. Stanley Chadwick. The Advertiser Press Ltd. Huddersfield 1941, pages 2 -4.

Whilst out delivering copies of Ale Talk to the Honley area via Meltham, our route took us past a road that I suddenly recalled led to an isolated old pub; **The Cricketer's Arms** at **Deanhouse**. It is well hidden from view and passing traffic doesn't really pass near, in fact you have to be going there to find it – serendipity can only do so much! The building is unobtrusive, blending in so well with the surroundings that you have to give it a second look to make sure you are at the right location (*To avoid ambiguity, the what3words location is **armed.summer.kite***)

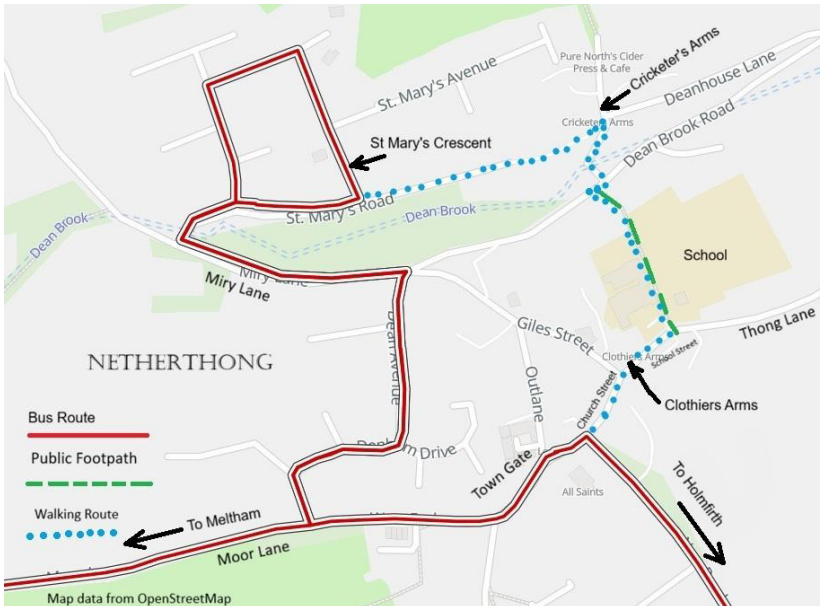
Luckily, the Cricketer's Arms can be reached by way of the local 335 bus service, operated by Stott's coaches, which can take you from Slaithwaite to Holmfirth bus station via St Mary's Crescent (see map).

Alight at St Mary's Crescent and walk away from Miry Lane towards

Deanhouse Lane. You will encounter an unsurfaced road running alongside a row of terraced cottages; do not be deterred by the absence of tarmac as this is a normal rural phenomenon! At the end of this unsurfaced road, the Cricketer's is on your left, comfortably ensconced within a quaint Yorkshire hamlet. An easy walk of approximately 250 yards.

This has to be one of the best-kept secrets of recent decades. An absolute gem of a place which embraces you with that often missing, wonderful, Olde-Worlde feel when you enter. Greeted warmly by staff and customers alike, we felt valued as customers.

At the time of our visit, *Ossett White Rat* (4%) and *Ossett Blonde* (3.9%) at £4.50pp were available. Both beers nicely conditioned and beautifully clear as crystal. We discovered that



BRIEFLY OFF-PISTE

the range of beers on offer will expand as the weather improves and demand increases.

The charming Landlady, Sarah Priestly-Hey, readily engaged us in conversation, answering our questions and filling in some details about the pub. One of the main points being the pub is owned by Red Oak Taverns, which appears to be a company that supports and helps publicans retain a profitable margin and remain in business. Sarah also confirmed that the opening times on the CAMRA website were correct and added that food is available for breakfast and lunch in the attached restaurant. Many thanks, Sarah, for your hospitality. We are looking forward to our next visit.

Our next destination to an equally easily missed pub off the beaten track is the **Clothiers Arms at Netherthong**.

This can also be reached by the 335 bus, but if you begin at the Cricketer's there is a steep public footpath that runs alongside the school and exits near the Clothier's Arms. Shown on the map in blue, this is a challenging gradient, and the route is approximately 270 yards long. If you are not in the Olympic class of walkers, I would

recommend starting at the Clothiers and then down to the Cricketer's. If you do go this way, you will need to alight at Town Gate in Netherthong and walk along Church Street to the Clothier's Arms, about 100 yards of easy walking.

The Clothier's Arms, sometimes irreverently known as 'The Cloth Ears Arms', is a Thwaite's house still in the classic pub style. There is an Indian takeaway operating from here in an adjacent room that does not interfere with the bar or the pub generally. Talking to some of the regulars, they said it was a handy thing to have at times.

Helen, tending the bar at the time, greeted us pleasantly and we ordered the *Thwaite's Bitter* (3.4% £4.50pp). A good session beer and well-kept it went down well.

As time was against us, we had to say farewell and finish delivering the copies of *Ale Talk*. Good job someone remembered what we were out for that day!

Graham and Ron



Pubs, Pints, People.

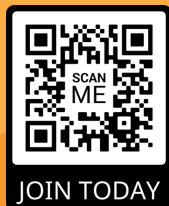
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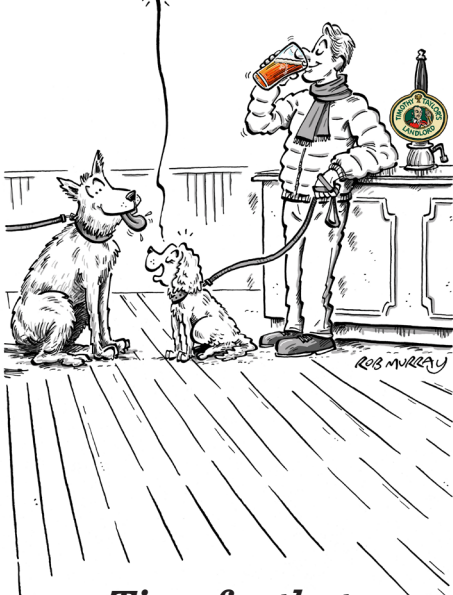
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