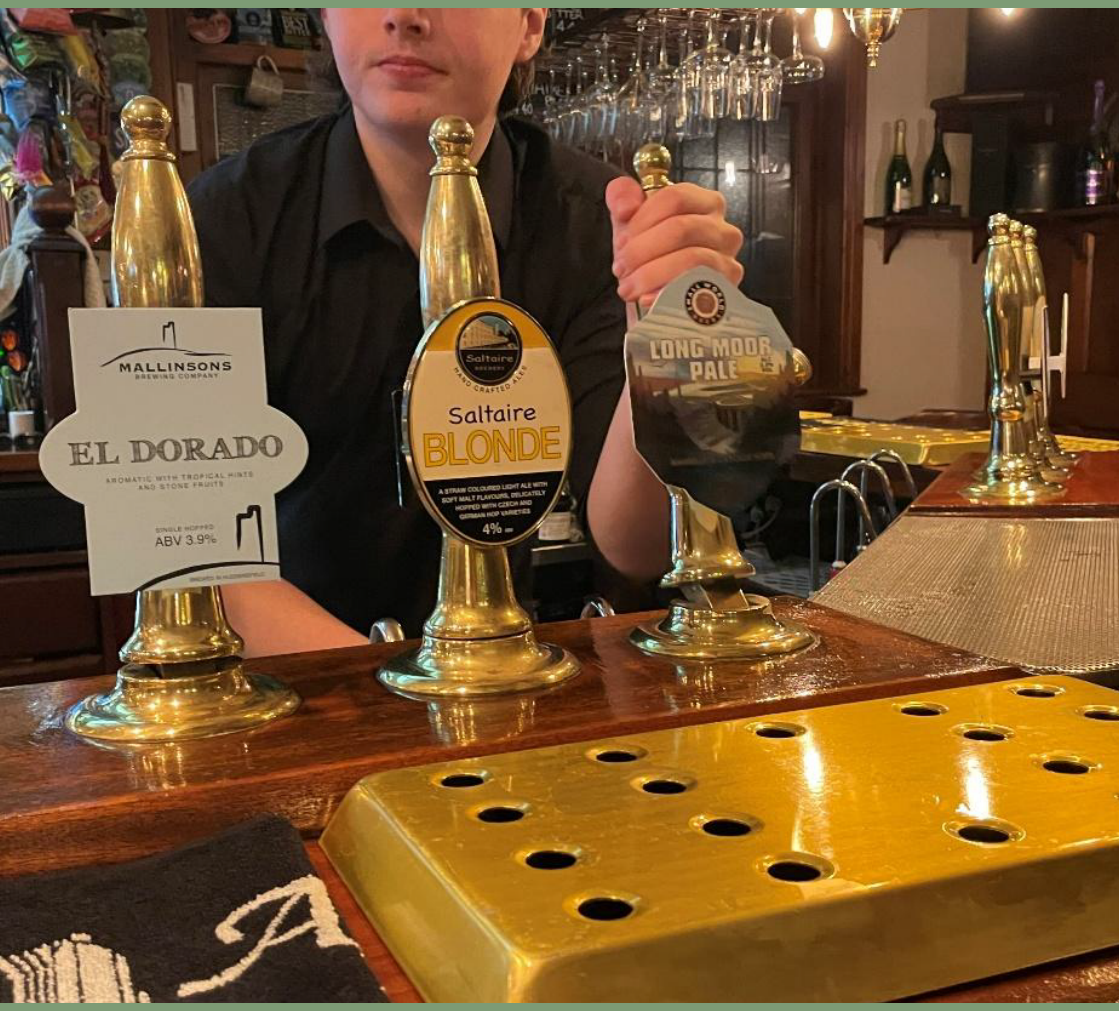
ALE TALK

CAMRA



AUTUMN 2026

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CHAIRMAN'S RANT

Since I typed my last column, we have had a change in Prime Minister, the sixth new incumbent in just ten years. David Cameron, who resigned in 2016 after losing the Brexit Referendum, spent six years in office, by no means the longest incumbency in my lifetime. Post Cameron, the longest serving PM has been Boris Johnson, at three years and 44 Days. Our new Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, can only beat that by winning the next General Election, something which will need a marked turn around in the government's fortunes.

So, what can the hospitality trade expect from Mr Burnham? Well, we have had a headline grabbing announcement of a 20% cut in business rates for pubs, clubs, and live music venues. On the face of it, the measure sounds generous, but the reality is that the average pub will benefit by only by £1100 per year, a figure far exceeded by the financial burdens placed on pubs in the two years this government has been in office. Secondly, pubs will have to wait until April next year for the relief. Thirdly, it does not apply to other high street business such as bookshops, cafes, and other shops which attract footfall in town centres, some of which diverts itself to a pub.

The previous Chancellor Rachel Reeves had clearly never heard of the Laffer curve. Arthur Laffer is an American economist who has argued (and been vindicated) that carefully targeted cuts in taxation can actually bring about increased revenue because of the stimulus it gives to the businesses concerned. The new Chancellor, John Healey, served as Number two to Gordon Brown at the Treasury, during Tony Blair's premiership, so, unlike his predecessor, he has more than a passing acquaintance with economics. Mr Healey will be much pre-occupied with increasing the defence budget, but he would do well to listen to industry professionals who are calling for a Laffer style stimulus through a large cut in V.A.T. paid by pubs. As a measure, it would not galvanise the temperance lobby in the same way as a major cut in alcohol duties.

Sir Tim Martin, founder and owner of the Wetherspoon's chain, has argued that the playing field between pubs and supermarkets be levelled by imposing V.A.T. on supermarket alcohol sales, thus encouraging more people to go to safe and welcoming haven of the pub, rather than consume copious amounts of cheap supermarket alcohol in the unregulated solitude of their own home. I wrote in my last column about the decline in voluntarism. I could just as easily write about the dangerous decline in sociability and the increasing atomisation of society, exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

The budget is set for 28th October. Then it will be time for Mr Burnham and Mr Healey to be judged by their deeds rather than their words.

Paul Laxton
Chairman, Hudderfield and District Branch

ALE TALK

Previous editions available online

Summer Pub of the Season
THE ARK, FLOCKTON



The Ark was built in 1485, the same year that Henry VII came to the throne. It's said that the King frequented the inn on his travels to the Yorkshire Dales.

The pub was originally called Noah's Ark and renamed the Chained Poker, after the two pokers that are chained either side of the fireplace. Legend says that the pokers were chained up to prevent unruly customers duelling, and that the inn keeper's wife was apparently murdered with one of the chains and hung in front of the fireplace. Folk lore says she is still present to this day! The half-timber framed inn is said to be haunted by several spirits and in 2020 an episode of Ghost Hunters was filmed inside the pub.

The name was changed again in early Victorian times to the George and Dragon.

Another milestone in the pub's history came in 1967 when, around the time drink driving laws came into effect, a petrol pump was installed.

The pub name was later changed again to Jack's bar and kitchen/Jacks Craft Ale house and Diner.

The pub was subsequently closed for two years and with a price tag of £330,000 the local community feared it would never reopen and this historic pub would be lost. That was until Leah and David Lockwood of Nailmaker brewing Co. rescued the building.

They fell in love with the pub's beauty and charm instantly.

The pub has undergone extensive restoration and has been renamed The Ark taking it back to its roots. A traditional country pub with a modern twist. The Ark is dog friendly and there's a large beer garden to the rear of the pub, with plenty of seating, a perfect for setting for enjoying a pint!

Opening times are Monday-Thursday 1600-2200, Friday 1400-2300, Saturday 1200-2300 and Sunday 1200-2200. Nailmaker Clout Stout, Yorkshire Bitter and Cardinal Sin are the regular beers and there is also a guest beer available, (Acorn, Empire, Nightjar and Vocation seen on recent visits). On Monday-Friday there is a happy hour 1600-1700, plus a two cocktails for £15 offer. Wednesday is pie night from 1700-2000 and on Thursdays, speed quizzing takes place from 2000. Graze boards (antipasti, cheese and pork pies) are available Thursday-Sunday, priced at £15 for 2 people sharing. There is live music on Friday and Saturday along with food trucks in the summer, on Fridays only in the winter.

The Ark is accessible by public transport, Arriva 231 232 Huddersfield – Wakefield services stop nearby.



Licensee Bev Walker and her team

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OBITUARY
ROY THURWELL

Roy Lincoln Thurwell, to give him his full name, was a publican in Huddersfield, running at times, The Peacock near Huddersfield Town football ground, Lincolns in Northumberland Street and Abrahams in Westgate. A hands-on landlord, he swiftly made connections with customers and staff alike and was very much respected by those he came into contact with. He liked to promote Real Ale and would insist on all the paraphernalia that accompanied the beer, for example pump clips, beer mats, bar towels etc. If not, he refused to sell the beer.

When a beer became a slow seller, he used to offer two pints for the price of one thus to hasten an empty barrel and put a new beer on. He was a good friend of CAMRA and always sought opinions on his beer.

Roy looked after his staff. Indeed, on his wedding day to Sue, they both worked the night bar at The Peacock to enable the staff to enjoy the rest of the day. His staff remained loyal and spent long periods working with him, going against the usual quick turnover in the licensed trade.

Roy was a chef by trade, but morphed into running pubs which expanded his repertoire. Always on the lookout for a business opportunity, Roy was an entrepreneur at heart, and he helped other small businesses by running computer programmes such as payroll services for them. He was very pleased to gain a degree in Business Studies while still finding time to run two pubs.

As he approached retirement he moved into property development and rented out houses. This venture continued and he obtained a small portfolio of rented properties in the Huddersfield area. Sadly in retirement, he lost his wife and best friend, Sue, a few years ago.

At his funeral it was noticeable how many of his former employees paid their respects, showing the high esteem in which he was held.

Roy's father liked a flutter on the horses and backed a winner named Barnes Park at 33/1 around the time of Roy's birth. The name of the race - The Lincoln!

Roy died on March 7th 2026, and his funeral took place on 14th April. He will be missed by all who knew him. RIP.

Paul Robinson

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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

Empire Brewery – Freudian Slip, a Citra pale ale 4.3%.

Escapade Brewing – Golden Goal 3.9%.

Zapato – new cask beers are Raspberry River Stout 4.5%; Tropical Tent, 4.5% Guava Pale Ale; Mango Oro, 3.8% Ultra Pale Ale. Also available on keg is Beaucoup Berliner Weisse Apricot 3%.

Pub News

COWCLIFFE
Shepherds, now closed.

HINCHLIFFE MILL
Stumble Inn, under new management. Beers available when Aletalk called in were Ossett Blonde, Hobgoblin Gold and Wainwright; Emma, the new landlady says her intention is to vary the beer range and also to start serving food once she is established.

HOLMFIRTH
Magic Rock is now called **Perfect Hive**, sells 4-5 real ales with a focus on local breweries - recently featured breweries include Ossett, Roosters, Small World and Vocation. The pub also offers a 10% discount to CAMRA members on cask beer. Card payment only.
Nowhere Bar, now offering a 10% discount to CAMRA members on Cask Beer and also has cask beer at £4.00 a pint on Wednesday to Sunday from 4pm until 7pm.
Y Bar under new management, usually has one cask beer. Open every day.

LOWER CUMBERWORTH
Forester's Arms is closed.

UPPERTHONG
Royal Oak, has been visited by a Telegraph reporter and been highly commended in the newspaper as one of the best pubs in England, ap proper community pb and offering a great range of beers – these include Mallinson's Bitter and Simcoe and Millstone Stout and Tiger Rut.

Scene at the Bar...

ARMITAGE BRIDGE
Monkey Club, Goose Eye Chinook, Empire Chocolate Porter, Brunswick White Feather and Nailmaker Citra.

BERRY BROW
Liberal Club, two changing beers though only Small World Summer Daze left when Aletalk called in.

BURNLEE
Farmer's Arms, Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Mallinson's Nectaron, Timothy Taylor Landlord.

HADE EDGE
Boshaw Trout, six changing Nook beers plus one real cider.

HEPWORTH
Butcher's Arms, Acorn Supersonic, Craven Brew Yorkshireman Blonde, Timothy Taylor Landlord.

HOLMBRIDGE
Pickled Pheasant, Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Small World Holme from Holme, Vocation Bread and Butter.

HOLMFIRTH
Box Office, Timothy Taylor Boltmaker, Wainwright.
Elephant and Castle, Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Timothy Taylor Landlord plus an Adnams beer.
Harvey's Bar, Bradfield Farmer's Blonde
Nook, Eight changing Nook beers.
Nowhere Bar, Nowhere First Gold and Wobbly Ron ESB, Udders Orchard Cider.
O'Brien's, Fyne Ales Jarl.
Old Bridge, Craven Brew Yorkshireman Best Bitter, Saltaire Blonde, Small World Long Moor Pale.
Postcard, Ossett Blonde, Bradfield Farmer's World Cup.
Shoulder of Mutton, Ossett Pale, Theakston Old Peculiar, Timothy Taylor Boltmaker and Landlord.
Y Bar, Timothy Taylor Landlord.

HUDDERSFIELD
Cherry Tree, Hawkshead Windermere, rarely seen in this area.
King's Head, selling Timothy Taylor Blonde 3.8% Wensleydale Never a Dull Moment, Skipton Dragonfly, Fell Crag, Ilkley By 'Eck, Lunebrew Pineapple IPA, Little Critters Endeavour, and Zapato River Stout.
King Street Social, has various Saltaire beers plus Old Speckled Hen.
Lord Wilson, Lymestone Cowboy.

JACKSON BRIDGE
Red Lion, Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Timothy Taylor Boltmaker and Blonde.
White Horse, Black Sheep Bitter, Ossett White Rat, Theakston Bitter, Timothy Taylor Blonde.

KIRKHEATON
Beaumont Arms, Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Timothy Taylor Landlord.
Cask, Ossett Blonde, Silver King and White Rat.

LINDLEY
Liberal Club, Three changing beers every week. JW Lees, Craven, Wensleydale, Harrogate and Theakston's feature regularly. Old favourites Boddington's Bitter, Draught Bass and Courage Directors all appear from time to time. The 'coming soon' board is a nice feature.

LINTHWAITE
Broad Oak Bowling Club, reported to be selling Hobgoblin Fresh Ale.

SCHOLES
Boot and Shoe, Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Ossett White Rat Timothy Taylor Landlord.
Cricket Club, Phoenix Arizona, Hopsack and Misty.

WOODALE
Wooldale Arms, Bradfield Farmer's Blonde, Timothy Taylor Boltmaker and Landlord, Tetley Bitter.

New Ratings for Cask Beer Scoring

Beer Scoring Advisory Group (BSAG) exists (in brief), to:

- Promote, support and monitor the National Beer Scoring System (NBSS).
- Ensure NBSS is effective, coherent and aligned with the Campaign's aims.
- Encourage and promote beer scoring, including providing tools and training to help branches.

In 2025, BSAG were asked to come up with recommendations to improve the scores and descriptors currently used in NBSS. This naturally led to discussion of more improvements, evolution, and recommendations.

This paper outlines the initial results of the review, which we propose to implement first. There may be a secondary set of recommendations with their own implementation proposals.

Premise

Beer Scoring Advisory Group has been asked to review improving scoring and descriptors for cask beers.

These proposed improvements have been put forward with the aim of:

- Simplifying the beer scoring process.
- Developing a greater, and shared, understanding of the scoring system and when each score should be used.
- Increasing the number of scores being submitted, and the number of members submitting scores.
- Separating 'no cask beer available' from the scoring scale.

New Ratings and Descriptions

The ratings replace the score scale and remove the use of half points.

The ratings will still have the numerical value (0-5) attached to them for 'back end' purposes to allow for calculation of and analysis of scores for pubs.

Using features from the current descriptions, we have added a set of 'reactions' that should help members choose the rating most aligned to the beer they are drinking.

There will be a new tick box, separate from the ratings, for 'no cask beer available'.

We will also add automated pub update messages where someone submits a rating in a pub with no cask beer, or for a pub marked as serving cask is rated as 'none available'.

How's your cask beer?

Rating	Description	Your reaction
Excellent	Exceptional and clear (if intended to be) with fantastic aromas, flavours and ideal carbonation.	Superb! You tell your friends and compliment the cellar manager.
Very good	Satisfying and well-kept with a great appearance, good carbonation and enticing aromas and flavours.	You consider having another and may cancel plans to move to another pub.
Good	Nice appearance, good carbonation, aromas and flavour.	Pleasant but not memorable. You're happy to have another but might consider something else.
Acceptable	Unremarkable and ordinary, with no noteworthy characteristics.	You're unlikely to have another unless it is all there is and there isn't another pub to go to.
Poor	Noticeably imperfect.	Drinkable with resentment, but you politely ask for a replacement.
Undrinkable	Unpleasant to drink, likely with a disgusting taste, incorrect appearance and off/foul aroma.	You politely ask for it to be replaced and consider asking the publican to take it off.



ASK, "IS IT CASK?"

The launch of 'Fresh Ale' by Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company (CMBC) is a handpump hijack, which misleads consumers into thinking they will be served a cask-conditioned beer – which is far from the case.





A new website for pub walks in the area has been launched by the NCOM walking group: **https://holmevalleypubwalks.org.uk/**.

These walks, between 4 and 10 miles long are generally half-day walks starting and ending at a pub, followed by a few beers and pub lunch afterwards. The pub descriptions have a link to the pub page on the CAMRA website!

Over the years, NCOM have walked and recorded 150+ pub walks in the Holme Valley area and surrounding countryside of the South Pennines, visiting some 75+ local pubs in the process. Our intention is to share these walking routes and maps on our website for others to use and enjoy the fine walking and rugged scenery of the South Pennines.

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BRANCH DIARY

FORTHCOMING BRANCH MEETINGS

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21st September: The County, Huddersfield
19th October: Lindley Liberal Club
16th November AGM: Rat and Ratchet
7th December: TBC

FORTHCOMING SOCIALS

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

Thank you to *Monkey Club - Armitage Bridge, Victoria - Newsome and Golcar Liberal Club* for hosting our recent meetings

Contributions to Aletalk are welcome from any CAMRA member and may be sent to **Aletalk@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 change, 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.

Aletalk *is produced by the Huddersfield Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. All content © Huddersfield Branch of CAMRA. The views expressed in this magazine are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily supported by the Editor or CAMRA.*

DENBY DALE DELIGHT

"I've been thinking...", said Graham. "...about our next trip out and Denby Dale seems a possible destination, and we can get there by train." As the bus pass and railcard had been burning a hole in our pockets, we decided there and then to visit the Dale of Denby. Then the question arose: "Are there any pubs left in Denby?"

Graham did the research and found three establishments whereby cask ales could be sought. Thinking this would be a journey constrained by the limited number of suitable licensed premises, we decided to go in the afternoon and then repair to our usual haunt for our monthly supper gathering of the Sausage Appreciation Society at the Lower Royal George at Scammonden.

Calling in to Huddersfield Rail Station, we bought reasonably priced return tickets (thanks Amanda!) to Denby Dale and went to the platform to wait for the ten-past-two train. We didn't have long to wait... for the notice to arrive to say the train was delayed by twenty minutes. I know it's not unusual for the Northern Rail service to be unreliable, but these things happen.

We found entertainment by inspecting the partially completed refurbishment works on the station. Remnants of the supports of the Victorian canopy remain protruding from the masonry where they have been brutally hacked away and stumps left like macabre skeletal remains. There is still a great deal of scaffolding to navigate and, yes, I managed to walk into some of it! No damage done, though. and I only received a mild knock on the shoulder.

The train arrives and we are on our way just half an hour behind the scheduled time. This journey passes through some surprisingly pleasant countryside to deposit us at Denby Dale Station, which is immediately adjacent to Myers' Building Supplies on Wood Lane (other builder's merchants are available). Take the exit from the station and turn left to the bus stop where a bus was conveniently awaiting our arrival.

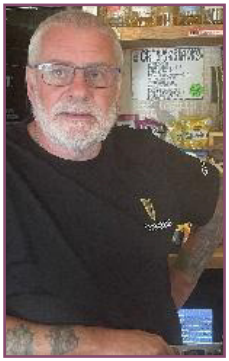
Hopping (hobbling, in my case) on the bus we need to travel just two stops. Graham says watch out for the White Hart and ring the bell. Done and done, but when we had sight of the pub and rang the bell we ended up at the third stop with a 240 yard walk back. Get off at the second stop, Wood Nook by the Sun Rooms, and you only have 180 yards to walk. The distance from the station to the White Hart is only 730 yards in total so, knees allowing, there are options (N.B. You get more yards per mile than metres!).



DENBY DALE DELIGHT

The White Hart is a prominent, white painted building located at the hub of the village. The interior is well laid out and tastefully modernised. Sporting a pool table, gaming machine, board games and outdoor seating there is something for all.

The landlord, Drew, (pictured left) welcomed us and presented the beers: The permanent 'house beer' is Ossett brewery's Silver King GF (4.3%) supported by a changing beer, which at this time was Timothy Taylor's Landlord (4.3%). Cask ales are £4.60 across the board. Theakston's XB (4.5%) is the next cask ale ready to be put on the third pump at the weekend. It is worth noting that the hospitality team have gained membership to the Timothy Taylor's Champion Club. The beer here is indeed testament to that accolade.



Comfortably ensconced, we stayed a little longer than usual as our next two targets, Bottle & Co. and Denby Dale Club, were not scheduled to open until 4pm. You see what hardships we endure for our readers!

Talking with one of the regulars at the bar, we told him our itinerary and he informed us that we would be made very welcome at the Denby Dale Club. Bidding farewell to Drew, we set our course for Bottle & Co. located in the terrace of buildings directly opposite the White Hart, across the busy main road. There looked to be nothing happening and the door was locked even though it was past 4pm. With the hope that this was just a temporarily delayed opening, we decided to come back later after visiting the Club, which is just around the corner on Norman Road. In fact, the three establishments we had found to review are located conveniently close together.



Turning on to Norman Road, the Denby Dale Club is just 30 yards from the road junction. Easily seen by virtue of the large sign attached to the gable wall.

Entering we were indeed greeted with a warm welcome by the members present. The lady steward was friendly and highly informative. CAMRA members, we were told, are always welcome to call in to this club.



To the left of the bar is the lounge area. This is an inviting, well laid out area that includes a pool table and television. The teatime trade, however, appear to congregate around the bar creating a genial atmosphere and allowed us to get into conversation with the club members.

DENBY DALE DELIGHT

The bar sports three handpulls, each connected to popular cask ales. From left to right we have Abbeydale Moonshine Pale Ale (4.3%), The Famous Barnsley Bitter (3.8%)



from Acorn Brewery and The Illustrious Blonde Pale Ale (4.0%) also from Acorn Brewery. Even better, as we had arrived during Happy Hour, the beer was ever so reasonably priced at £3.20pp. Happy Hour is 4pm to 6pm Monday to Thursday (choose your own 60 minutes to be happy in or start at 4 and let the window of opportunity slide with you!). We are pleased to report that each of these beers were in top condition and went down beautifully! As we had enjoyed our time here so much, we promised ourselves a return visit later in the year. Many thanks Denby Dale Club.



Back around the corner and we are in luck: The Bottle & Co. is now open! This very modern bar resembles some French Bistro I have visited in the past except there are three handpulls on the counter. Two of the pumps are occupied whilst the third is in abeyance for the better weather - although the weather has been kind to us this day.

There is Kaleidoscope Pale Ale from the Wiper and True Brewery in Bristol (4.2%) and



Deepdale GF Pale Ale (4.0%) from Buxton Brewery. Both beers are light and refreshing without harsh citrus overtones.

The early evening trade is lively and friendly with the mistress of the house, Leah, pictured left, awaiting our order and ready to dispense the cask ales. Venturing downstairs to use the facilities, I found a dartboard set-up in what appeared to be a broom cupboard. I also discovered, outside the rear door of this subterranean room, a salubrious beer garden. This took me by surprise as it isn't something you'd expect to see downstairs. Going outside to further investigate, I found that it was well positioned for catching the late afternoon sun.

Returning to Middle Earth, we got into conversation with a bar prop called David Dobson who, when he found that we had arrived from the western side of Huddersfield, introduced himself as an ex-licensee of the Bull's Head at Linthwaite in the Colne Valley. David informed us that Leah was the beating heart of this establishment. Her hard work and personality is what makes this such a popular bar. It was interesting to meet someone away from the usual habitat and discuss common experiences and acquaintances.

Bidding Leah, David and the general flock farewell, we went to catch the bus to the rail station at an extremely well-placed bus stop barely twenty yards from the door.

All in all, it had been a Delightful Day in Denby Dale and highly recommended.

Graham and Ron©2026

Friezland Ale

by Ammon Wrigley

This the first in an occasional series of articles about traditional songs and verse about beer. The idea for which, and this first article, was sent to me by Paul Walker of Mossley. Ammon Wrigley was born in Friarmere, Delph, in what was then the West Riding of Yorkshire, in October 1861. He was a prolific writer and is commemorated by a plaque on Marsden Moor overlooking Castleshaw. This extract from 'Friezland Ale' is taken from Ammon's book 'Songs of a Moorland Parish' republished in 1980 and provides an insight into the fascinating Pennine life of bygone days.

Whene'er I drink of Friezland ale,
Drawn from an old brown bottle;
I feel as if a summer morn
Was running down my "throttle";
A pint of sunshine as a draught,
All sparkle, grip, and mettle;
There never is a cloudy day
When Friezland ale's in fettle.

As white as milk when newly drawn,
And never milk is richer!
With creamy puffs, in bunches blown
Like roses in a pitcher;
But never roses half so sweet,
So dewy, cool and sappy;
A mellow cup of Friezland ale
Would make a gatepost happy.

It flings the sunlight through your blood,
And brims you full of laughter!
It drives old care from weary hearts
And brings no headaches after;
It does not tie your legs and feet,
And set your head a "tuppin";
It takes you back into your teens
Because it's brewed for "suppin."

You're ten years younger with a pint,
And if you've two, you're twenty!
They ne'er grow old on that hillside
Because they swallow plenty;
For Friezland folk they live at home,
They're decent folk, and 'warty'
With ruddy cheeks and double chins
And always hale and hearty.

There is a lassie on the hills,
Lives at and old farm steading;
So fair to see, I used to think
I'd ask her to a wedding;
But women folk are hard to please,
And fond of fine apparel;
If e'er I wed, I'll take for wife
A ripe old Friezland Barrel

Now brewery ale is noise and boast,
And foolish talk and 'fratchin';
But Friezland Ale is mirth and wit,
And Music that is 'catchin'
With homely sermons quaint and wise,
And racy old-world teaching;
I'd go to chapel thrice a day
If Friezland Ale we're preaching

Now he who drinks that mellow ale,
Grows riper than the cherry,
He walks on daisies all his life,
His heart is always merry;
And in his hand you find a grip,
That tells you he's your brother,
For Friezland Ale does Parson's work
And makes us love each other

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