

MerseyAle

CAMRA Liverpool & Districts Magazine

Summer 2017 FREE

CASK

CAMRA LIVERPOOL & DISTRICTS

PUB OF THE YEAR

Also in this issue:

Tony Williams Tribute

Drinker's find Sanctuary in new city-centre bar



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MerseyAle

CAMRA Liverpool and Districts Branch

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The opinions expressed in MerseyAle are not necessarily those of the Editor, the CAMRA Liverpool Branch or CAMRA Ltd.



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

MerseyAle




Message from the Editor

Welcome to the Summer edition of MerseyAle. It is with great sadness we report the death of Tony Williams, who passed away in March. Tony's tireless work for Liverpool CAMRA over the years cannot be underestimated. As Branch Vice Chair and regular contributor to MerseyAle, Tony's help and guidance were immeasurable. He will be sadly missed by everyone that knew him. A fitting tribute to Tony can be found on Page 5 of this issue. On a brighter note, we offer our congratulations to CASK, who are Liverpool CAMRA Branch Pub of the Year 2017. Following on from their 2016 accolade, it's back-to-back POTY awards for Ian and Michelle, who are worthy winners once more. See pages 22 and 23 for more details.

I sincerely hope you enjoy reading MerseyAle and continue to support our fantastic pubs across the region. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition of MerseyAle. As ever, your input is invaluable and very much appreciated, with contributions always welcome.


Dave MacBryde
MerseyAle Editor

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Tony Williams 1955 – 2017

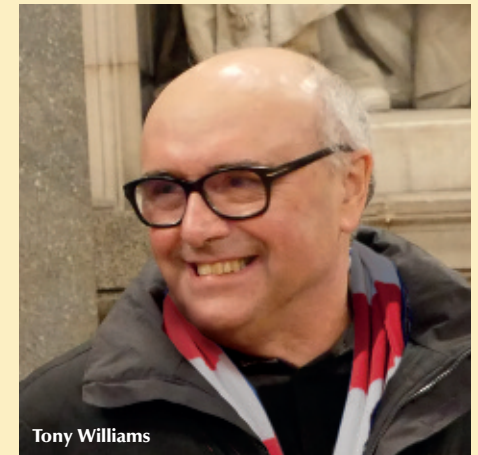
Tony Williams was born in July 1955 in Wavertree Garden Suburb, Liverpool. He attended Northway Junior School and later Liverpool Bluecoat School, where my brother Ian first met him. He then attended St Katharine's Teacher Training College in Childwall, training to become a junior school teacher. His first teaching job was at a private school in Birmingham in 1977.

He returned to Liverpool to become a supply teacher and then a librarian at the Education Offices in Sir Thomas Street in the mid-1980s. In 1990, he joined the Revenue and Benefits department of the City Council, working on the Community Charge and Council Tax until his early retirement in September 2016.

Ian first met Tony at the Liverpool Bluecoat School in 1968 and they both became firm friends. I first met Tony when he was doing his teacher training at Gateacre Comprehensive School in 1975.

Ian and Tony's first interest was train-spotting and both were members of the Railway Club at the Bluecoat School. This soon switched to aircraft spotting, spending many hours down at the then original Liverpool Airport and joining the Merseyside Aviation Society, where after a few years he was organising the coach trips for fellow enthusiasts - a familiar role for Tony for much of his life. This eventually led to the Friends of Liverpool Airport (FOLA), for whose magazine he was still writing articles until his untimely death.

Tony joined CAMRA in the mid-1980s, as his love for real ale increased. Any car trips to aviation sites led to the frequent visiting of pubs or breweries on the journey there or back. He was also visiting more and more foreign countries on numerous continents, always trying the local beers as he went, so becoming an expert on many world beers and beer styles.



Tony Williams

In March 1992, he moved to his house in Speke to be closer to the airport. It was at this time that I got to know him a lot better and well remember his New Year's Eve house parties with his firkin of ale on.

He first became active in the Merseyside branch of CAMRA in the late 1990s and took on the role of organising coach trips for the branch in early 2000, from which he finally retired in January 2016. Tony then became the Vice Chair for the branch until earlier this year. He was also the compiler of the monthly email newsletter and wrote many articles for MerseyAle over the years.

For me, I will best remember him for his immense knowledge of the real ale scene in Liverpool. Tony was always happy to take you on a pub crawl, during which you'd regularly visit pubs you had never even heard of, nor knew sold real ale.

Thoughts go out to his brother Rob at this sad time.

By Doug Macadam

With thanks to Ian Macadam



Meet the Brewer



There will be a **'Meet the Brewer'** evening featuring Robinson's at **The Queen's Picture House**, Waterloo on 20th June from 6pm (47-49 South Road, Waterloo, L22 5PE).

The Four Ashes opened its doors on 21st March. This micropub further enhances the real ale scene in and around South Road. There are **six hand pulls**, real cider and perry, as well as continental bottled beers, premium vodkas and gins. Wine and quality soft drinks are also available, as are tea and coffee. Bar Snacks also on offer. For opening hours (subject to change), see www.whatpub.com Closed Monday. 23 Crosby Road North, Waterloo, L22 0LD. Twitter:@theFourAshes

A few doors down, **The Ferndale Lodge** has been refurbished and is now simply called The Ferndale. It has now had a hand pull installed, but currently only sells **Doom Bar**,



though there are plans to have more pumps installed so a wider range of beers can be offered.

15 Crosby Road North, Waterloo, L22 0LD

The Old Bank on South Road, Waterloo, has re-opened after a short period of closure. There are four hand pulls dispensing real ale, but real cider is no longer available. There is less emphasis on showing live sport, as there is currently only one TV screen.



On a recent visit, three of the beers on sale were local. There was one from Stamps Brewery and two others from Ship & Mitre. This is the first time I have seen their beers on sale in another pub, which is to be commended. Speaking with the new licensee, Robbie, and barman, Stewie, The Old Bank is committed to selling locally-produced real ale.

34 South Road, Waterloo, L22 5PE

Sanctuary Bar opened on 31st March. This venue is **'free of tie'**, allowing a wide variety of beers to be stocked. Up to six cask ales are on offer, covering the range from light to dark and

including local beers. Craft ales on tap, Craft cider, over 50 bottled beers and ciders, which are available to drink on and off the premises. Coffee and soft drinks are also available.



CAMRA members receive a 10% discount on real ale on production of a valid card.

Monday Madness - all draught real ale £3/pint, with a further 10% off with CAMRA Membership. Just say 'Twitter' when ordering.

72 Lime Street, Liverpool, L1 1JN. Twitter:@sanctuaryBarLiv

The Scotch Piper re-opened during the Grand National event (6th April) after being devastated by a fire which destroyed the thatched roof. New licensees, Colin Rimmer and Jamie Green, have taken on the historical site. The Scotch is



now open noon - midnight every day. After an investment of over £140k, the 15th century pub - and Lancashire's oldest - is delighted to welcome customers back.

Good news for those who like to enjoy a pint or two at this famous pub during the light summer nights: **Merseytravel are funding an hourly service on the 300 bus, after the Arriva commercial service finishes, which means you can still travel back towards Liverpool late on into the evening.**

The service starts/terminates at Southport Road, Lydiate, near to **The Weld Blundell Arms**, which is only a short walk from The Scotch. The service leaves the stop to return towards Liverpool (via Maghull, **Black Bull**, Rice Lane Walton and Bootle) at 20:11 and then hourly until 23:11 (Mon-Sat). Sunday service starts from 19:11. Check online: www.merseytravel.gov.uk (for 300 timetable). Southport Road, Lydiate, L31 4HD

The lease at **The Derby Arms** (Allerton Road) has been taken over by the current licensees of **The Gardeners Arms** in Vale Road and is being run as a sister pub. They are serving real ale once again. They now have live music on Wednesday and Friday evenings. Also, simple bar snacks are being served until 6pm. A full refurb is due in the



very near future, which is wonderful news!

160-162 Allerton Road, Woolton, L25 7RH

Craft Taproom opened on 7th April. It describes itself as "a bar with a wide selection of craft beers, ciders, spirits and an awesome live space too". It has two hand pulls, as well as eight craft ales and a vast range of bottled beers. Cask ales are sourced from **'Funky Beers'**, which specialise in providing quirky and unusual real ales; recently **Tiny Rebel's Cwtch** was available. There is also a Wi-Fi signal present. Advertised opening hours are 4-11.30pm. **On Tuesdays, you can get four bottles or cans for £12 all night.**

174 Smithdown Road, L15 3JR. Twitter:@craftliverpool

The Hare & Hounds in West Derby Village re-opened on 5th



April after a £150k makeover by its owners, Stonegate. The re-vamp includes a new beer garden and TV screens. Three cask ale pumps have been added, showcasing ales such as **Bombardier**, **Greene King IPA** and **Hobgoblin**, accompanied by craft alternatives such as **Hop-house 13**. They have also added seven new botanical gins, cocktails, a vast range of wines and barista-made coffee to their offering. At the weekend, there will be DJs and live entertainment, plus Monday night poker, Tuesday night sport, Wednesday night quiz and Thursday open mic night.

9 West Derby Village, West Derby, L12 5HJ

Elsewhere in West Derby, the **Halton Castle** has sadly decided to reduce the number of hand pulls to TWO, due to lack of demand for real ale. Let's hope this is only temporary.

86 Mill Lane, West Derby, L12 7JD

In April, the manager at **The Willow Bank Tavern**, Bryn, moved to Offa's Dyke, near Chester.

By the time you read this, Bryn's



replacement should be in place. The pub continues to sell seven beers in good condition at weekends and slightly fewer earlier on in the week. It offers **10% CAMRA discount on Tuesdays. Westons Old Rosie real cider is also available.**

329 Smithdown Road, Wavertree, L15 3JA

Subject to local Parish Council approval, a community cafe in Maghull is due to become our branch's latest micropub. Mocha's Coffee & Sandwich Bar is due to be re-named as **Maghull Cask Cafe** and will operate as such between 4-9pm (Thurs-Sat) and 12-9pm (Sun). They plan to offer four cask ales, including a permanent stout/porter. Bottled craft beers will also be available.

43 Liverpool Road South, Maghull, L31 7BN

The Northern Club, Crosby

We have been asked to remind members that on Wednesday evenings only, they are allowed to use the bar at The Northern Club in Crosby on production of a valid card. This private sports club usually has three ales on offer. A beer from local brewery, **Rock the Boat**, tends to be available along with **Hawkshead Bitter**. The beer from the remaining hand pull changes, though it's usually a pale or golden ale. The bar opens 5-11pm. Elm Avenue, Moor Park, Crosby, L23 2SX

We regret to report that **The Belvedere** is no longer using lined ('oversized') glasses when



Belvedere serving cask ale. The Grade II listed pub used to be the only city centre venue to use such glasses.

We are unsure when the change took place, but this means there are now only TWO establishments left within our branch area where you can be sure of receiving a full measure.

They are CASK and Liverpool Pigeon - both previous winners of the branch Pub of the Year Award.

Belvedere, 8 Sugnall Street, L7 7EB

The Lion Tavern, you can now enjoy a pint of **The Lion**, a beer produced especially for them by



Red Star Brewery in Formby. This means the pub is once again a LocAle accredited pub. 67 Moorfields, L2 2BP

CASK have introduced an Acoustic Music Night on the first Tuesday of the month.



There is no fixed start time, but to quote the genial hosts, "It starts when folk who love beer and music arrive." 438 Queens Drive, Stoneycroft, L13 0AR

The Crosby has had yet another refurbishment and change of management. At time of writing, it had only just re-opened and it is not clear if they continue to sell real ale. More details to follow in the July newsletter.

75 Liverpool Road, Crosby, L23 5SE

Two pubs in our area have had - or are currently having - some work done on the exterior of the building. Scaffolding and painters were seen outside **The Crow's Nest (Crosby)** and **The Excelsior on Dale Street**.

MerseyAle Brewerynews

Big Bog (Speke) have installed a new 10bbl fermenter to their existing kit, making three fer-



menters in all. An additional 100 stainless steel casks have also been delivered to help them keep up with demand. They have also released a new beer: **Stog (4.1%)** is a milk stout and is available now.

Neptune

(Maghull) now have two new beers out in pubs: **Poseidon (4.8%)** is an orange pale ale, brewed using Cascade and Amarillo hops with added orange peel. **Big Sur (4.5%)** is a West Coast pale ale. As with all their beers, both are unrefined. Also available soon are **AEGIR (3.8%)** - a pale ale, brewed using Magnum, Manadrina and Wolf hops, as well as **MOSAIC (4.5%)** - a single - hopped pale ale using Mosaic hops.

Joe Murphy, the brewer from **Ship & Mitre** (Liverpool) brewed four new specials which



featured at the Wirral Easter Beer Festival at Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight: **Cuckoo**, **Mackintosh**, **Oriol** and **Futurist** were all well received.



We have been informed that **Stamps Brewery** are in the process of installing a new 15bbl fermenter at their current site. They are also in the early stages of negotiating a move of premises to somewhere in the Bootle area.

Wapping Beers

It truly was the 'end of an era' when we received confirmation that the brewing kit used to brew Wapping beers had been sold and removed from the basement of **The Baltic Fleet**, meaning Liverpool has finally lost its last remaining 'brewpub'. I was told by

Contributors:

Andre Fu	Mel James-Henry	Steve Downing	Steve Berks
Tony Morgan	Ian Rayner	Andrew Kavanagh	Austin Heath
Martin Powell	Ian Simpson	Ben Canavan	Dave Evans
Richard Lee	Sue Daniels		

Please remember to send in ANY Pub or Brewery news you have to news@liverpoolcamra.org.uk or post to Twitter and include @LiverpoolCAMRA.

If you wish to receive the monthly branch newsletter by email, please contact the same address. By Andre Fu

General Manager, **Richard Lee**, that the kit had been sold to city-based microbrewery, **Ad Hop** - and brewer, Tom, has also joined their team. **Simon Holt**, the owner, confirmed the following via email...

"After careful consideration, I have decided to stop brewing in the cellar and sell the brewery on to Anders at Ad Hop. The

Baltic Fleet is going from strength to strength, particularly our LocAle sales. We currently offer up to 12 local casks, keg and bottle. We're passing on a great kit and supporting the growth of an already established Liverpool brewer. So, for one last time, let's raise our glasses and shout, "Mine's a WAPPING!"



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Where to Find Local in Liverpool (correct as of June 2017)

Augustus John, Peach Street, L3 5TX
 Baltic Fleet, 33 Wapping, L1 8DQ
 Barkers Brewery, Archway Road, Huyton, L36 9UJ
 Belvedere, 8 Sugnall Street, L7 7EB
 Blackburne, 24 Catharine Street, L8 7NL
 Butchers, Booker Avenue, L18 4QZ
 Caledonia, 22 Caledonia Street, L7 7DX
 Cat & Fiddle, St Martin's House, Bootle, L20 3LG
 Cavern Pub, 5 Mathew Street, L2 6RE
 Childwall Fiveways, 79 Queens Drive, L15 6XS
 Clove Hitch, 23 Hope Street, L1 9BQ
 Cobden, 89 Quarry Street, Woolton, L25 6HA
 Corner Post, 25 Bridge Road, Crosby, L23 6SA
 Crown, 43 Lime Street, L1 1JQ
 Dispensary, 87 Renshaw St, L1 2SP
 Excelsior, 121-123 Dale Street, L2 2JH
 Fall Well, Roe Street, L1 1LS
 Flanagan's Apple, Mathew Street, L2 6RE
 Font, Unit 3, Arrad Street, L7 7JE
 Four Ashes, 23 Crosby Rd, North, Waterloo, L22 0LD
 Frank Hornby, 38 Eastway, Maghull, L31 6BR
 Gold Balance, Newton Gardens, Kirkby, L32 8RR
 Grapes, 60 Roscoe Street, L1 9DW
 Hard Times & Misery, 2b Maryland Street, L1 9DE
 Hub, 16 Hanover Street, L1 4AA
 Jawbone Tavern, 12 Litherland Rd, Bootle, L20 3BZ
 Lime Kiln, Fleet Street, L1 4NR
 Lion Tavern, Moorfields, L2 2BP
 Liver, 137 South Road, Waterloo, L22 0LT
 Liverpool Pigeon, 14 Endbutt Lane, Crosby, L23 0TR
 Love & Rockets, 52 Lark Lane, Aigburth, L17 8UU
 Masonic, 35 Gladstone Road, Garston, L19 1RR
 Mackenzie's Whisky Bar, 32 Rodney Street, L1 2TQ
 Navigator, 694 Queens Drive, Old Swan, L13 5UH

Newington Temple, 8 Newington, L1 4ED
 North Western, 7 Lime Street, L1 1RJ
 Old Bank, 34 South Road, Waterloo, L22 5PE
 Old Bank, 301 Aigburth Road, Aigburth, L17 0BJ
 Old Blind School, 24 Hardman Street, L1 9AX
 Pen Factory, 13 Hope Street, L1 9BQ
 Pumphouse, The Colonnades, Albert Dock, L3 4AN
 Queen's Picturehouse, 47 South Rd, Waterloo, L22 5PE
 Que Pasa Cantina, 94, Lark Lane, L17 8UX
 Ranelagh's Tavern, 15-17 Ranelagh Street, L1 1JX
 Raven, 72-74 Walton Vale, Walton, L9 2BU
 Refinery, Josephine Butler Building, Hope Street, L1 9BP
 Richard John Blackler, 1-2, Charlotte Row, L1 1HU
 Richmond Tavern, 23a Church Rd, Wavertree, L15 9EA
 Roscoe Head, 24 Roscoe Street, L1 2SX
 Sanctuary, 72 Lime Street, Liverpool, L1 1JN
 Ship & Mitre, 133 Dale Street, L2 2JH
 Sphinx, 160 Mount Pleasant, University, L3 5TR
 Stamps Bar, 5 Crown Buildings, Crosby, L23 5SR
 Stamps Too, 99 South Road, Waterloo, L22 0LR
 Thomas Frost, 77-187 Walton Road, Kirkdale, L4 4AJ
 Vernon Arms, 69 Dale Street, L2 2HJ
 Victoria Cross, 1-3 Sir Thomas Street, L1 6BW
 Volunteer Canteen, 45 East Street, Waterloo, L22 8QR
 Welkin, 7 Whitechapel, L1 6DS
 Willow Bank Tavern, 329 Smithdown Road, Wavertree, L15 3JA
 Ye Hole in Ye Wall, 4 Hackins Hey, L2 2AW

Total 60

New additions are highlighted in RED

A MESSAGE TO PUBS:

If you think your pub should be included in this feature, please email: locale@liverpoolcamra.org.uk explaining why.

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Change in planning law could help pubs survive

The Neighbourhood Planning Bill received Royal Assent on 27th April 2017, so is now the Neighbourhood Planning Act. Parliament also approved the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) (No2) Order 2017. This means that **Permitted Development Rights (PDRs)** that allow demolition of pubs will cease from 23rd May 2017. If a pub owner wishes to knock-down a pub for redevelopment, they must now gain planning permission from the local authority.

Since the decision (which was a concession by the government in the face of lobbying by CAMRA members and other organisations), CAMRA has worked with the All Party Parliamentary Pubs Group to call on supermarkets and pub companies to respect the spirit of the law by ensuring that any plan to convert or demolish a pub goes through the proper planning process from now onwards. So far, the following have responded positively: **Punch Taverns, Heineken, Marston's, Greene King, El Group, Admiral Taverns, Sainsbury's,**

Aldi, the Co-op and Morrisons. All have agreed to honour the proposal.

This does not mean that pub closures and conversions will end - rather that the companies have to go through the correct process. This gives pub-users a chance to object to any developments we do not like. Keep checking the planning notices in your local paper and on your local council website.

Metro Mayor Election 2017

Liverpool & Districts CAMRA branch contacted all the candidates for the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority election, held in May 2017.

Among the many powers the new Mayor would have, we were concerned with their control over planning decisions, particularly in relation to new housing and economic development. There is nothing wrong with that, but the new Mayor can create a Mayoral Development Corporation, which will have powers to make Compulsory Purchase Orders to aid any development.

Liverpool & Districts CAMRA emphasised that pubs, breweries and related activities are an important part of the economic activity of the region. Well-run pubs are also an important part of a community. Liverpool CAMRA asked that support

for these form a vital part of the elected Mayor's vision for the region - and any large-scale developments should strongly consider retaining existing pubs and breweries, particularly in view of the Compulsory Purchase Orders available.

Sadly, only two of the candidates replied. One said they "understand the need to ensure that pubs and breweries are included in local developments." The other said that they are "very supportive of the aims of your organisation." Positive - if brief - responses from some of the candidates.

The winning candidate, **Steve Rotheram**, had regular contact from Liverpool & Districts



CAMRA branch when he was a local MP. Now that he is a Mayor of a large region - as well as this branch - he will now have four other CAMRA branches watching what he is doing and reminding him of his responsibilities to pubs.

By Tony Morgan

PUB SUPPORT

CAMRA LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICTS



The local CAMRA branch can provide the following support to pubs. It doesn't matter if you are a new or established pub. Email: pubs@liverpoolcamra.org.uk for further details. The branch is run entirely by volunteers, so please be aware that it might take a while for us to get back to you.



Whatpub.com is a website run by CAMRA and maintained by local volunteers. We will ensure your pub is listed once we confirm a few details. Whatpub is also used by members to submit beer scores, which helps us to identify the best pubs for the Good Beer Guide. Please help us keep your entry up to date by letting us know of any changes/corrections - especially opening times.



LocAle: This is an accreditation scheme for pubs that endeavour to offer at least one locally-brewed beer at all times. By local, we mean brewed within 30 miles of the pub by road. Includes listing on our website and in MerseyAle.

Twitter/ Social media. We try and publicise pubs as

much as we can, but we can miss Tweets. Including @LiverpoolCAMRA in tweets will help, as we will then get a notification. Pubs often take photos of their pump clips and 'What's on/Coming soon' board and circulate on Twitter. It's probably the most effective way of getting news of events out to our membership.



MerseyAle: Our quarterly branch magazine - 10,000-12000 copies produced. We do publicise pubs and news snippets, but advertising is available: £70 for 1/3 page, £100 for 1/2 page, £200 for full page. Full details on website: www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk/index.php/merseyale/welcome-to-merseyale

Discounts are available if you commit to four consecutive issues. We deliver copies to pubs across Merseyside and to the Isle of Man. Stands can be provided for them to go into. We have a dedicated Distribution Manager to help ensure you receive some copies if you want them in your pub. (andre.fu@liverpoolcamra.org.uk)

Pub News: Please let us know of ANY pub news for our monthly, electronic newsletter i.e. Beer Festivals, events, increase in the number of hand pulls, beers from breweries not usually seen in Liverpool. Email details to: news@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Pub Discount: Attract more CAMRA members by offering discount on real ale for card carrying CAMRA members. You'll get supporting materials and a listing on the website and in MerseyAle.

Cider: Offering a regular real cider (as defined by CAMRA) will get you listed on the website's cider pages and provide other publicity. Contact our Cider Officer, Steve Berks, for further details: cider@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

May is Mild Month: This is a CAMRA campaign in May, during which we encourage pubs to stock at least one mild. You'll get supporting materials and a listing on the website and in MerseyAle (depending on publication date).

Liverpool Beer Festival: This is held in February. Pubs that advertise in the festival programme also receive festival tickets. Other sponsorship deals are available. Details out later in the year.



Meeting Room Available? Liverpool CAMRA are always looking for somewhere to hold a branch get-together (third Wednesday of the

month) and committee meetings (first Wednesday of the month).



Good Beer Guide (GBG): We are often asked how pubs get into the GBG. There is only one way: serving good quality beer and encouraging CAMRA members to score the beer via the **Whatpub.com** website. We do have some CAMRA materials to help support this.

CAMRA: We have a range of materials that pubs can display, from membership leaflets and beer mats to posters - provided

free of charge. For further information, email: contact@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

WARNING: Liverpool CAMRA do NOT charge for any of its services, except for adverts in MerseyAle and the Beer Festival programme. These costs will be supported by an invoice. We will NEVER ask for cash. A full list of committee members is on the website.

By Mel James-Henry





Neston Cricket Club
www.nestoncricketclub.co.uk

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JULY 2017



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TICKETS ALSO AVAILABLE FROM P.BATES ACCOUNTANTS OR THE CLUBHOUSE

HOMEBREWING

PART 4



If you've been following this series, you should now be comfortable with the types of brewing there are, the ingredients used and the techniques for creating beer. In this final instalment, we are looking at how to create a recipe for your first-ever beer.

Whilst it may be tempting to just get stuck in straight away, a well-planned recipe allows you to set out what you want to achieve with your beer and to identify what ingredients you need. It will also help you better manage your brew day. You can then track any successes with your beer, allowing you to make any necessary changes.

You may find that when you first see a homebrew recipe, there are a lot of abbreviations and instructions which don't seem to make sense, but it's a lot easier to understand than it appears.

Vital Statistics

Firstly, you will likely see some 'vital statistics'. This includes things like: ABV, which tells us how alcoholic the beer is; Original Gravity (OG), which tells us how much sugar is in the solution before fermentation starts and; Final Gravity (FG), which is how much sugar should be left in solution after fermentation is complete.

International Bittering Units

There will be other information here, including the colour of the beer (usually expressed as EBC) and how bitter the beer is, expressed as IBU's (or International Bittering Units).

These stats give the brewer a quick summary of the beer. When you are building your recipe, you should consider looking at style guidelines - such as those from the BJCP - to give you some guidance of the various statistic ranges for each beer style.



Grain Bill

Next, you are likely to see your grain bill. This list of ingredients will usually give you information on percentages and weights of each malt used in your beer (as well as any sugar additions). Different malts will have different effects on your end beer, so varying the amounts and types of each malt is one of the techniques brewers use for creating different beers.

Like cooking, the best way to learn what each of these ingredients does is to practice using them, but there is also plenty of advice online. The amount of malt you use in your beer will also have some effect on the body and strength of your beer, as well as determining how much water you need to use.



After grains, you should look at the hops you want to use. As discussed in the Ingredients article (Spring 2017), different hops added at different times will give you a huge variety of bitterness, aroma and flavour. For a homebrew recipe, you will see hop types listed along with the weight of each you should add, as well as an addition time.

These addition times are usually written as 'time left in the boil' so @ 60 minutes means there is an hour left of

boiling, @ 20 minutes means there is 20 minutes left of boiling etc. You may also see 'dry hop', which means adding hops during fermentation or 'first wort hop', which means adding hops as soon as you start collecting your wort from the sparge.

Depending on how advanced you are, your recipe may include water salt additions. These are designed to alter the profile of a brewer's water and can have various effects on the malt and hop character and the overall impression of the finished beer.

Yeast

Finally, you should have a yeast strain specified for your recipe. Yeast is



responsible for many of the final flavour compounds in your beer, so it is important to choose the right yeast for the job. You may also see a 'fermentation profile', which gives instructions on what temperature and for how

long to ferment the beer. This is primarily for brewers with temperature control, but can give you a good indication of what temperature range is best for your beer.

This is the basic information that you will need and find on most brewing recipes. If you are looking for recipe



inspiration, make sure you check out the Grainfather online recipe creator at brew.grainfather.com

By David Bawden



DRINKERS FIND SANCTUARY IN NEW CITY-CENTRE BAR

Opened on March 31st, Sanctuary Bar aims to do just what it says, with Ant and Hazel providing 'a haven for wayfarers to seek refuge and shoot the



breeze, without pomp or pretence'. Previously Harvey's takeaway, Sanctuary Bar is located next to Design 4 Life Tattoo Parlour and opposite The Vines pub. It is a much-welcome addition to an area with few real ale pubs.

The theme of the pub is a run-down 1920's hotel, with art deco lighting, holes in the plaster work and long-abandoned suitcases high upon the fine, well-stocked wooden beer cabinet. Beyond the theme, the pub has a comfortable seating area, with round tables and a pulpit at the centre of the bar. There is further seating downstairs, with the area available for hire. It is also used for ad hoc film evenings and quiz nights.

Despite the run-down theme, there is nothing run-down about the beer selection. As a free

house, the pub isn't tied to any particular beer - and with six hand pulls on the bar, there is a wide range of ales from light to dark. On this visit, the beers available were: **Neptune Black Moor**, **Neptune Poseidon**, **Titanic Iceberg**, **Titanic Plum Porter** (a regular), **Robinsons Trooper** and **Sanctuary house ale**, **Confess**. If you can't decide what to have, flight boards are available, allowing you to drink three thirds.

For cider and perry drinkers, there are two real ciders/perrys in the fridge, which on this visit were **Black Dragon** and **Two Trees cider**. In addition,



they stock over 50 bottled beers that are also available for consumption off the premises.

Free Wi-Fi and board games are also on offer, whilst there is a discount of 10% off for CAMRA members.

By Mel James-Henry

AUTUMN CIDER TRIP PLANNED

Following the success of last year's cider trip to Rosie's Cider Farm in North Wales, local CAMRA branches are planning to run a similar outing in either September or October 2017.

(we promise not to use your details for any other purpose!).

By Steve Berks

We may visit Rosie's again or even go to a new cider destination, but it's clear that seats will be highly sought after. If you wish to register your interest on our cider trip, please send your name and email address to cider@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

You will then be amongst the first to be informed of the date and other specifics



IS THE INDEPENDENT BEER BUBBLE ABOUT TO BURST?

Across the United Kingdom, small breweries are refreshing, reviving and reinventing beer as we know it. There is now a vast choice of beers, from Czech-style pilsners and golden ales, to zingy India Pale Ales (IPAs) and Double IPAs (DIPAs), through to export porters and imperial stouts. In some pubs, it can be hard to decide what to drink as there is such a variety on offer.

The number of independent UK brewers has grown 65% from 1,026 in 2011 to around 1,700 today - more per capita than any other nation in the world. Such rapid growth was made possible by tax reliefs introduced by

Gordon Brown as Chancellor in 2002 and was further fuelled by a shift in attitudes towards beer, with many people seeking out new or



IS THE INDEPENDENT BEER BUBBLE ABOUT TO BURST? contd

renewed styles of beer (helped by the desire of small brewers to experiment with those styles). So, it is an interesting time to be a beer drinker.

But are those times about to end? Signs from across the Atlantic Ocean suggest a change in the independent beer scene is on its way. The independent beer scene in the USA is currently getting a bit of a shake-up. The brewing industry there also saw a great expansion, with many small breweries opening in most major towns and cities, but there have also been failures and closures similar to those here in recent years.

Tony Forder of *Ale Street News*¹, the US beer newspaper, suggests that the industry



there is being squeezed, with sales of beers such as **Samuel Adams** and **Sierra Nevada** falling in 2016.



This is combined with take-over pressures from within the industry. Forder suggests that many of the larger independent brewers now have enough strength and support to survive take-over bids by the big beer companies, and that local Nano breweries with their own tasting rooms (brewery taps) will be fine. He is however worried about the fate of those between these extremes who have invested in fast expansion, but who are seeing volume growth in single figures for the first time in years. These are being targeted by the beer predators.

A-B InBev

A-B InBev bought **Goose Island** in 2011 and then set up a craft beer division called **High End**². Since 2011, High End has bought or taken control of a number of 'Craft' brewers,



including **Blue Point Brewing** in New York State, **Bend Brewing Company** of Oregon,

Elysian Brewing in Seattle, WA and **Breckenridge Brewery** of Colorado.

A-B InBev are not alone in this, as **Miller** (more recently **SAB Miller**) have also acquired a number of US independents since 1988, the Czech brewery **Pilsner Urquell** in 1999 and UK company, Meantime Brewery in 2015. SAB Miller was acquired by A-B InBev in October 2016, who then flogged **Meantime** and **Pilsner Urquell** to **Ashai Breweries** of Japan.

A-B InBev may have passed on two well known breweries, but they are still acquiring others. As this piece was being prepared, it was announced that **High End** had acquired **Wicked Weed**



Brewing in North Carolina for A-B InBev. **Wicked Weed** have been the winners of six US and international beer awards since the company was founded in 2012.

Should we be worried here in the UK?

Perhaps we should. In 2016, our friends from A-B InBev bought **Camden Town Brewery**. **Molson Coors** own **Sharp's** of Cornwall. Sharp's **Doom Bar** is now a national cask beer, still produced in Cornwall, though bottled **Doom Bar** is produced in **Burton-on-Trent**. Thwaites sold the rights to its **Wainwright and Lancaster Bomber** beers to **Marston's** in 2015. These and **Thwaites** own beers, **Nutty Black** and **Original**, are brewed by Marston's. **BrewDog** has received a £213 million investment from **TSG Consumer Partners** (an American Private Equity company), which values the company at £1 billion. Founders **James Watt** and **Martin Dickie**, along with other shareholders, could share up to £100 million of that investment between them, **The Sunday Times** reports.



TSG now owns 22% of **BrewDog**, as well as holding a stake in US craft brewer **SweetWater Brewing** and in **Pabst**, a US beer business with 30 brands. **BrewDog's** new American investor has said it is on the hunt for more consumer brands. Perhaps it is not surprising that brewery founders would want to trouser a nice return for all the hard work and long hours involved in starting up and running a successful business, but as we know, takeovers and mergers tend to reduce choice for the consumer.



Just think about the state of the beer scene

after the takeovers of the 1970s and 1980s, before the cask beer revolution. No one wants to see a return to those times, but we may be heading in that direction. In May, **Carlsberg** announced that they are looking to acquire a UK 'Craft' brewery, so it can add to its portfolio of smaller brands³ - and they are looking to do this soon. Carlsberg want in on the beer revolution without having to work for it.

Carlsberg

Carlsberg Chief Executive, Julian Momen, states that the company is in the "early stages" of getting involved in the 'Craft' beer market, but plans to make more acquisitions if they can find the right brands. One reason these companies are doing this is that mainstream lager brands are in decline and



the big internationals are losing sales to the more interesting

newcomers. Subsequently, they are either doing distribution deals (Carlsberg already has the rights to sell **Brooklyn Lager** in the UK) or are taking over independent brewers.



So, don't be fooled by those supermarket adverts about new 'craft beer' ranges and support for smaller brewers - many of them are internationally-owned products. The craft beer bandwagon they have jumped on may turn out to be an out-of-control juggernaut heading for your favourite brewery.

By Tony Morgan

References:

1. Ale Street News. <https://alestreetnews.com/3602-2/>
2. MarketWatch. <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/the-deal-that-shook-craft-beer-five-years-ago-is-still-reverberating-2016-04-21>
3. Morning Advertiser, 08 May 2017 <http://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Drinks/Beer/Carlsberg-plans-to-buy-UK-craft-brewery>

It's CASK at the double!



Michelle, Sonia, Ian and Andre

On a sunny spring evening in May, history repeated itself as **Ian Barton and Michelle Fleming** of CASK were presented with the Pub of the Year (POTY) 2017 certificate to mark the fact they were winners of this prestigious branch award, following on from their success of 2016.

As the co-ordinator of the competition, it fell to me to write this article to recount the events of the evening for those readers who weren't able to join us.

The evening got off to a good start, as Ian had yet again managed to secure a firkin of **Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby** to serve across the bar. This beer is a firm favourite of many CAMRA members and other real ale drinkers alike (particularly some on the branch committee) and not often seen in pubs within our branch area. Smiles got even broader as those present at the start of the announcement received a free pint, courtesy of the committee - result!

The first person to speak was Branch Chair, **Sonia James-Henry**, who welcomed everyone and thanked them for joining us in celebrating CASK's achievement and then went on to say the following:

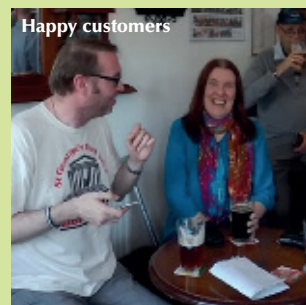
“As the number of pubs in Liverpool and the surrounding suburbs continues to grow, so does the competition to become the Liverpool CAMRA Pub of the Year. To win the award once, in a city with so many outstanding pubs, is a major achievement, but to win it twice in consecutive years takes a special kind of establishment.”

CASK is at the heart of the community, and Michelle and Ian offer a warm, friendly welcome to both locals and occasional visitors. The range and quality of the beer and cider is first class. This is still one of the few pubs in the Liverpool area where you can find a regular dark beer. Very few pubs go to such lengths to source their beers. I know Michelle often travels to breweries to pick up specific brews and has even tried her hand at the brewing process. So, congratulations to Ian and

Michelle - and here's to many more years of this wonderful micropub.”

The floor was then handed over to yours truly.

For those who couldn't make it or are simply unaware, the process of selection for our branch POTY began in September last year, when nomination forms were handed out on that month's coach trip. Voting continued until the end



Happy customers

of January, when branch members were given every opportunity to cast their vote for both their favourite city-centre pub, as well as one in the suburbs. Votes were also accepted via email, Twitter, Facebook and an online form on



Andre

the branch website. I even accepted text votes, providing a name and membership number were included.



Deserved Applause

In the first week of February, the real 'work' began, as I counted the votes, drew up the shortlist of five pubs and appointed the judges. Choosing the judges is something I take very seriously (only I knew who all the judges were) and deliberate over carefully. The licensees on the shortlist are a wily lot and know exactly when the judging period is, so are always on the look-out for 'familiar' faces. Therefore, the addition of some new faces this year helped keep people on their toes!

At this point, I would like to put on record my gratitude to all the judges (old and new) for the time and expense they went to in visiting all five pubs TWICE in a period of only SIX weeks – great job guys and girls! As well as their scores, the judges were actively encouraged to give comments (positive and negative) as to why they scored each pub the way they did against each of six criteria.

I then went on to quote the following comments made by judges about CASK:

“The pub is extremely friendly and popular with the locals. The décor is interesting, with a model railway running the

perimeter of the room and historical beer objects dotted around. It was a very relaxing, homely and welcoming space. I liked this pub.”

“Staff know their beers - of which there is a good range of styles, so something for most tastes. Beer was in excellent condition. Very tidy. Clean toilets.”

“Excellent atmosphere on both visits, friendly and with an excellent community feel - many regulars, who despite being strangers, are quickly becoming friends. Often, the entire pub will say goodbye when you leave! Service excellent on both occasions. Promptly served in (increasingly rare) oversized glasses, so short measures are unlikely, but are quickly topped up should they occur. Large, clear board indicating current and forthcoming ales. Tasters provided on request. Beer quality exceptional. Very difficult to find a better conditioned pint in Liverpool, in my opinion, and always a good selection of beers, with frequently something entirely new (at least to me).”

Praise indeed. Ian and Michelle

were then formally presented with the POTY 2017 certificate by Sonia and myself, followed by the obligatory photographs seen here (thanks to Ian Rayner for taking these).

Ian then thanked all his regular customers for their support, particularly for their efforts in raising much-needed funds for the local branch of RNLI (CASK's nominated charity). With the speeches over, festivities continued with a rush to the bar to get a last pint or three before the towels were put on. Now...where are the rest of those 'free beer' vouchers?!

CASK now goes forward as our branch's representative in the next round of the competition, Merseyside POTY (about which, another article on pages 45-46 in this edition describes). Good luck!

Ian and Michelle will be invited to our Awards Event to be held at the end of June at the KIND Centre and will be joined by the other shortlisted pubs, each of whom are recognised as a 'Pub of Excellence'. Expect to see an article regarding this event in the next issue (Autumn), due out in September.

A special mention must go to The Grapes (Knight Street) who ran CASK very close this year. In fact, if some of the judges had given them an extra point here and there, the result could have been different. They can justifiably call themselves a 'Pub of Excellence', so well done to Paul, Anna, Wilson, Mick and the rest of the team.

*By Andre Fu
Photos courtesy of Ian Rayner and Joel Garnett*



Liverpool Pubs CAMRA Discount



Discounts on production of a valid CAMRA card

- **Central & Commercial**, Ranelagh St - **20p off (pints only)**
- **The Crown**, 43 Lime Street - **20p off (pints only)**
- **Willow Bank Tavern**, Smithdown Road - **10% off except Tuesday after 6pm (see below)**
- **Flute**, Hardman Street - **10% off except Tuesday (see below)**
- **Ma Egerton's**, Pudsey St - **10% off**
- **Pumphouse**, Albert Dock - **25p off (pints only)**
- **Hare & Hounds**, Liverpool Road North, Maghull - **20p off (pints only), ex Monday: £2.49/pt**
- **Richmond Tavern**, Church Rd, Wavertree - **20p off (pints only), ex Monday: £2.49/pt**

- **Abbey**, Hanover St - **10% off**
- **The Liver**, South Rd, Waterloo - **20% off**
- **Yates**, Queens Square - **10% off**
- **Ale House**, Prescot Road, Old Swan - **20p off (pints only)**
- **The Baltic Fleet**, Wapping - **20p off pints and 10p off a half**
- **The Punchbowl**, Lunt Road, Sefton Village - **20p off pints and 10p off a half**
- **Victoria Cross**, Sir Thomas St - **20p off (pints only, except Saturday)**
- **Sanctuary**, 72 Lime Street, Liverpool - **10% off**

Discount available all day, every day unless stated otherwise

Discount Days (available to anyone)

- **Flute**, Hardman St - **Tuesday ONLY: £2.10/pt**
- **Willow Bank Tavern**, Smithdown Road - **Tuesday ONLY: from 6pm - £2.25/pt**
- **Masonic**, Gladstone Road, Garston - **Discount Card (£1.00) 10% off real ale for a year. Tues (from 6pm) 4 pints for £5 (discount card cannot be used)**
- **Mackenzie's**, Rodney Street - **£2 Monday to Thursday (pints only)**
- **The John Brodie**, Allerton Road - **Tuesday ONLY: £1.95/pt**
- **Hard Times & Misery**, Maryland St - **Cask Ale Club (Tuesday - Thursday): 50p off pints + Buy 10, get 1 free; ask for stamp card at the bar.**
- **The George**, Moor Lane, Crosby Village - **Tuesday ONLY: £1.95/pt**
- **The Lion Tavern**, 67 Moorfields - **Monday ONLY: 20p off a pint**
- **Sanctuary**, Lime Street - **Monday Madness: £3/pt & 10% off with CAMRA Card**
- **Ranelagh's Tavern**, 17 Ranelagh Street - **Ale of the Day: £2/pt**
- **White Star**, Rainford Gardens - **Monday to Thursday, Selected beer £2.50**

Note: All discounts at management's discretion; Subject to change at short notice.

This list is correct as of 1st June 2017; E&OE
Any new offers since the last issue are in **RED**

Message to licensees / real ale drinkers:

This list is not exhaustive, so if we have left anyone off OR if the discount no longer applies, please let me know by emailing: locAle@liverpoolcamra.org.uk with details.

By **Andre Fu**



WirrAle Drinker

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Wirral Pub and Brewery News

Brimstage Brewery have brewed an **Elderflower**



Wheat beer at 4.3%. The initial batch was sold on cask at various Wirral pubs and also in bottle form. Due to its popularity, it is going to be re-brewed.

Le Jardin, West Kirby, has started serving real ale. **Brimstage Trapper's Hat** is a permanent beer with one other rotating guest from Brimstage. They have also signed up to CAMRA LocAle.

Plans to sell **The Dee Hotel** in West Kirby have



been scrapped by **JD Wetherspoon PLC** and the pub is staying open.

The Lion in Market St, Birkenhead, has reopened with new licensees after being closed for a few weeks. There are three real ales from **Purple Moose** brewery available.

The Refreshment Rooms, Rock Ferry, has signed up to CAMRA LocAle, serving either **Peerless** or **Liverpool Organic** beers at all times.

The Cleveland, New Ferry, has closed for repairs after



being damaged by the recent suspected gas explosion in the area. The pub will reopen as soon as possible.

The Boathouse, Parkgate,



has re-opened following a refurbishment.

The Dibbinsdale Hotel, Bromborough, has signed up to CAMRA LocAle, serving a rotating trio of Peerless beers.

The Perch Rock in New Brighton is currently closed for refurbishment.

A new microbrewery, **Brooks Brewhouse**, has started production of small batch bottle-conditioned ales in Hoylake.

THE LAZY LANDLORD MICRO PUB

56 MILL LANE LISCARD
WIRRAL CH44 5UG



Opened in December 2014, we are proud to be Wirral's first micro pub.

Serving fine cask ales from local breweries with guests from further afield.



**PUB OF THE SEASON
SPRING 2015**

We have no lager, spirits or alcopops. No television, juke box or gaming machines.

- Up to five cask ales
- Small range of bar snacks (with delicious locally sourced pork pies coming soon)
- Warm friendly atmosphere in traditional pub setting punctuated with pub memorabilia to encourage good conversation
- Selection of good wines
- Boxed cider

Buses from Liverpool 432 and 433; from Birkenhead 410; From New Brighton 118 and 119; from Moreton 413 and 414

Opening hours Mon Wed Thurs 4pm-10:30pm Fri 2pm-10:30pm Sat Sun 12pm-10:30pm Closed Tuesday



5 cask ales
Selection of Bottled Conditioned Beers to drink in or take out

HARP INN

19 Quayside, Little Neston, CH64 0TB

0151 336 6980

Opening hours:

12pm - 12am Monday - Saturday

12pm - 11pm Sunday

Food Served 12pm - 3pm daily

Monday night - fun quiz in aid of Cancer Research UK and Clatterbridge Cancer Charity

Tuesday night - Curry night



A traditional pub overlooking the Dee Marshes with a warm friendly atmosphere and a strong sense of community. Five cask ales.

No TV, no games machines, dogs welcome.



**WIRRAL CAMRA BRANCH RUNNER UP
PUB OF THE YEAR 2017**



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

The Harp – a pub with great history, character and a sense of community

The Harp is Wirral CAMRA branch's runner-up for Pub of the Year 2017. Located looking out over the Dee Marshes - often with great views of North Wales - it serves five well-kept real ales: **Holt's Bitter, Peerless Triple Blonde and Timothy Taylor's Landlord**, plus two guest ales. I've delved back into its rich history and looked at what makes this pub rather special.

The Harp is one of Wirral's oldest pubs. Unconfirmed



stories say that the pub was originally a fisherman's house dating from around 1780. The fisherman's wife began brewing beer as a sideline to give the miners from the nearby colliery a watering hole.



Evidence of the colliery can still be seen a short walk along the marsh from the pub at Denhall Quay.

The pub was bought in 1963 by Birkenhead Brewery and got its full public house license around this time, operating before this as a beer house. In



the mid 2000's, the pub was acquired by Admiral Taverns, who still own the pub.

The current licensee is Sue Cameron, who worked behind the bar for 11 years under the previous landlord before taking the pub on herself in September 2015. Sue has done a fantastic job with the place. Not only is the beer quality excellent, I would venture that the welcome you receive and the community spirit at The Harp must be up there with some of the best in the UK. Sue knows all her regulars by name and seems to have time for everyone. She is also a real ale enthusiast. The Phoenix Black Bee - which is sometimes served as a guest ale - is one of the best pints I have had so far this year.

While sitting talking with her one evening, I witnessed something quite magical. She looked out of the window and excused herself for a second, saying "The oldest member of my pub has just arrived". An elderly gent was standing outside, supported by two walking sticks. Sue went outside and helped

him with the step down into the pub, then took his walking sticks, hung up his coat, asked some people to move so he could sit down and took him to his chair. She then took his money and pulled him a pint, which she brought to him. The guidelines for judging Pub of the Year talk about 'community focus'. I fail to see how a landlady could go further than this to provide for a member of the community - and this is on top of the extensive charity work the pub does for local cancer charities.

I think this great community focus and atmosphere, coupled with great real ale, makes The Harp very deserving of its award. Very well done to Sue and her team - keep up the great work guys.

By Rob Carter

Thanks to Ashley Standidge, Sue Cameron, Jerry Harris and Paul Wilkinson for assistance with the history of the pub. Harp Inn, 19 Quayside, Little Neston, CH64 0TB





Wirral LocAle

Where food and drink come from has become a hot topic over recent years. People seem increasingly interested in where ingredients are sourced, local products and their provenance.

Real ale is no exception. Gone are the days of the big six breweries mass-producing beer and maintaining a stranglehold over the British beer market. Worryingly however, the likes of Marston's, Carling and Heineken dominate the British real ale market, transporting casks sometimes hundreds of miles from where they were brewed. How many times have you walked into a pub to be greeted with a selection of the same national brands and nothing else?

In most of these cases, within less than 20 miles there will be some fantastic beers being brewed by small local breweries, but instead, national beers are being transported with their extra 'beer miles' and providing little choice and variety.

CAMRA's LocAle scheme seeks to address this. Pubs signed up to the scheme agree to serve one locally-brewed beer at all times. In return, they receive promotional materials plus extra publicity and are listed as a LocAle pub on www.whatpub.com. This helps provide a market for local breweries (many of them small businesses), supports the local economy and helps the environment by reducing the

number of 'beer miles'. On Wirral, we have three microbreweries - **Brimstage Brewery** being the first to start producing in 2006. This was



followed by **Peerless Brewery** in 2009 and latterly they have been joined by **Britman Brewery**, based in Burton Manor stables. In addition to these, there are no less than 29 real ale producing breweries that are 20 miles or less from the Wirral by road. All these breweries qualify for **CAMRA Wirral Branch's LocAle scheme**. Between them, they produce a mind-boggling array of fantastic beers.

Currently, we have 16 pubs signed up to the scheme - only a fraction of the 125 Wirral pubs that serve real ale. I am not saying there is anything wrong with national brands. I drink and enjoy many of them myself. However, I think allowing them to dominate could be dangerous for both our small breweries and therefore customer choice. Allowing a local beer to be served on one hand pump out

of five or six is not going to greatly damage the business of the larger breweries. If you see a locally-brewed beer being served in a Wirral pub, I urge you to try it.

Pub Co's

Large Pub Co's discourage and even block their licensees from stocking locally-produced ale, preferring to stick with what they can get through their large distribution networks. However, remember as consumers, we do have power to change things. If you go into a pub and are greeted with a selection of national branded beers and nothing else, I urge you not only to ask the staff in the pub why there is no local beer available, but also to contact the owning Pub Co to challenge the practice.

Customer feedback

Many have websites with customer satisfaction surveys that are easy enough to complete. Then there is always the option of writing to a Pub Co's management. It won't be easy, but if enough customer feedback comes in, then hopefully practices of large Pub Co's may change. If they do, it will secure local jobs in the brewing industry, have a positive effect on the environment and create a richer and more diverse choice of beers available in most pubs. Stand with me! Viva the LocAle revolution!
By Rob Carter

LocAle pubs on Wirral and what they serve

- Gallaghers** - Brimstage Trapper's Hat, plus other guests from Brimstage and Liverpool Organic
- Dee View Inn** - Brimstage Trapper's Hat
- Lazy Landlord** - Hafod Landmark
- West Kirby Tap** - Always at least one Spitting Feathers beer
- The Ship Inn** - Brimstage Trapper's Hat
- Le Jardin** - Brimstage Trapper's Hat, plus one other guest often from Brimstage
- The Magazine Hotel** - Brimstage Trapper's Hat, plus regular guests from Big Bog, Peerless and Brimstage
- Oxton Bar and Kitchen** - Brimstage Trapper's Hat
- Red Fox** - Facer's Sunlight, plus regular guests from Brimstage, Spitting Feathers and Peerless

- Wheatsheaf** - Brimstage Trapper's Hat, plus other regular guests from Brimstage
- Jug and Bottle** - Brimstage Trapper's Hat
- Harp Inn** - Peerless Triple Blonde
- Knockaloe** - Brimstage Trapper's Hat, plus other regular guests from Brimstage
- Freddie's Club** - Brimstage Trapper's Hat, plus regular guest from Brimstage
- Refreshment Rooms** - Always a beer from either Liverpool Organic or Peerless
- Dibbinsdale Hotel** - Rotating beers from Peerless
- Ship Hotel** - Brimstage Trapper's Hat, plus regular guests from Brimstage and Peerless

You can find out more about LocAle on Wirral by visiting <http://wirral.camra.org.uk/LocAle.php>

Magazine Hotel – Pub of the Season



Congratulations to Steve Brady and his staff at The Magazine Hotel, New Brighton, for winning Wirral CAMRA's Pub of the Season for Spring.

This multi-roomed, low-beamed pub, dating from 1759, suffered from a fire in 2010 but has been restored without losing its unique character. It features a dart



Steve Brady and Gareth Owen of Wirral CAMRA

board and real fire, plus there is live music on certain nights of the week.

Overlooking Egremont Promenade, the pub has fine views over the River Mersey to Liverpool. Three rooms lead off the main central bar area. Renowned for its **Draught Bass**, it also has **Brimstage**

Trapper's Hat on as a permanent beer, plus offers three guest ales - usually including beers from one of the local breweries.

The beer is kept in great condition and the atmosphere is very wel-

coming, both to drinkers, families and dogs. Card-carrying CAMRA members can enjoy a 10% discount. It is every inch a traditional pub and a worthy winner.

By Rob Carter

Magazine Hotel, 7 Magazine Brow, New Brighton, CH45 1HP.



HOYLAK BEER FESTIVAL

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Ticket Sales: www.hoylakebeerfestival.co.uk
 Tickets also available at Hoylake Parade reception or call 632 2889



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Red Fox Wirral Cider Pub of the Year 2017



managed to try five of the ciders between us (good job we were using public transport!). Each one was in excellent condition - nicely chilled by being kept in the cellar, but not too cold, which can affect the taste.



As the newly-elected Cider Officer for Wirral CAMRA, my first task was to find a Cider POTY. So, my partner and I took up the challenge and spent a couple of days visiting pubs around the Wirral to see what was on offer. Thankfully, the weather was quite kind to us and we even managed to include a nice stroll along the prom at New Brighton one day, whilst on our travels.

A friend had recommended we try The Red Fox for a cider or two. So, Saveaway ticket in hand, we took the bus to Thornton Hough early one evening to try said ciders and have a bite to eat. We were greeted by friendly bar staff, who upon our enquiries regarding cider availability, directed us to a large chalk board on the wall, listing six real ciders. Yes, that's right -

SIX! Nowhere else had provided such a choice on our travels - even some beer festivals are hard pushed to offer that kind of choice.



Dave Green Landlord, with Gareth Owen and Jan Nash of Wirral CAMRA

We stuck to halves (not much stronger than 4%), enjoying the great range of traditional, dry or sweet ciders and perry. A couple of fruity varieties were also on offer, including pineapple - which would perhaps appeal to drinkers not used to cider. Over the course of the evening, as well as enjoying a wonderful fish dinner each, my partner and I

The Red Fox - although perhaps considered a little out of the way - is very accessible by public transport. The 487 bus runs half hourly, until early evening when the service is then hourly. The route takes in Birkenhead bus station for links to other Wirral destinations and it travels through the Queensway tunnel to Liverpool. A Merseytravel Saveaway ticket will get you as far as the pub, which is located within the Wirral boundary.

So, after our travels were completed and score sheets compared, we had a clear winner, The Red Fox. Their certificate was presented by the Wirral Chairman at the recent beer festival, held there in early May, at which they had a range of twelve real ciders on offer.

By Jan Nash

The Red Fox, Liverpool Rd, Thornton Hough, Wirral, Merseyside, CH64 7TL



FROM PINTA'S TO PINTS

Tim Smith in conversation with Lenny Henry, former milkman and now proprietor of The Lazy Landlord



The Lazy Landlord Alehouse, owned by Lenny Henry (and run with his brother Mick and other staff), is Wirral's first Micropub and Wirral CAMRA's Pub of the Year 2017. I have been a regular since it opened, but did not take part in the judging. However, I was happy to volunteer to interview Lenny, the proprietor.

So, Lenny, what did you do before embarking on a life in the pub trade?

In the early 1970s, I spent five years in the RAF (the relevance of this will become apparent later). I was a milkman for 15 years and was involved with the union. I took a change of direction, went back to college and trained in the field of Social Work - some may say this was great training for working behind the bar.

When did you first get a taste for - and find you enjoyed - Real Ale?

I think it was probably when

being posted to Wolverhampton with the RAF. I tried the local beers and really enjoyed them. They were a change from the bland keg national brews that were dominating the market at the time. My brother

Mick was getting into Morris Dancing with the Mersey Morris Men and was required to drink traditional ales, so when we met up, we would look for cask beers to enjoy.



Where did the idea for opening a Micropub come from?

I made a great mate in the RAF, George, who I kept in close touch with over the years. He opened the Wentwell microbrewery in Derby and then opened a micropub, The Little Chester Alehouse. I helped him with my plumbing and DIY skills in setting up both. Perhaps it comes under 'it

seemed like a good idea at the time' or was just the dream of owning a pub I'd like to drink in (which didn't quite work out, as I have to drive home each night). Anyway, I decided I'd give it a go and here I am.



What made you choose Wallasey and Liscard in particular?

I was brought up on the Wirral and went to school in Moreton, so I knew the area; the property market gave good value for money and Liscard is a densely-populated area ("lots of chimneys" as they say). There are also quite a few pubs in the Wallasey district selling cask beer, so there was a demand locally.

When did you get the premises on Mill Lane - and how long did it take to set up and open?

The quick answer would be 2013 and too long! I bought the former shop in 2013 and it took until December 2014 to be ready to open. There were some hurdles to overcome with Planning Permission, as I don't think the Council really understood the concept of a

micropub, but I took up the challenge and got the approvals required after about eight months. It then took my brother Mick and I a further eight months to do the necessary



building work and fitting out to meet regulations. There were late nights and some sleeping over on site to get the work done. We got a lot of the fittings off eBay, including the bar, hand pumps and some of the items now decorating the bar and walls. Some of the other items were donated by customers to add 'character'. We have an almost complete set of the Higson's beer mats, including Pierre Head, Gwladys Street etc.

How do you feel about the awards you have won?

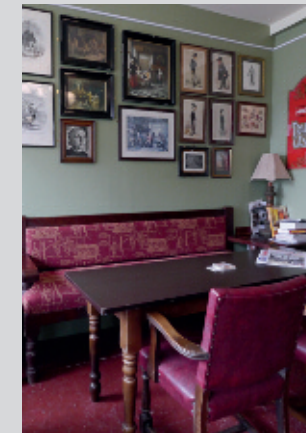
To win Pub of the Season for Spring 2015 - only a couple of months after we opened - was a great boost and let us know we were on the right track. It also put us on the real ale map locally and across Merseyside.

Being 'runner up' in Pub of the Year 2016 was fantastic, but it meant we could still improve. We had some cooling equipment works done in our cellar to help keep our beer in top condition during the summer months.

Winning 'Pub of the Year 2017'...Well, I've got to say I was absolutely made up! It means all the hard work has been worth it. I don't feel that I myself have won it, as The Lazy Landlord wouldn't be the great pub it is without the fantastic staff and customers who give the place its friendly and welcoming atmosphere.

What do you think has contributed to the success of The Lazy Landlord?

I think there are several things: firstly, being part of the community and listening to the



customers and what they want from us. For example, always having a range of beers on: a darker Mild, Porter or Stout and a Best Bitter alongside our lighter, hoppier beers and a Cider. We also sell wines and a selection of bottled beers and ciders, but no spirits or lager.

We are one of very few outlets for Wirral's newest brewery - **Brooks Brewhouse** in Hoylake - and sell their range of bottled beers. We also have clubs and societies holding meetings here - the local Allotment Society and CND branch. One of the regulars is involved with the



local children's Cerebral Palsy charity, 'Stick 'n' Step'. Our customers have raised over £500 for them. I would also like to thank Wirral CAMRA for their support and advice from day

one (and the awards we have received), but mostly I have got to pay tribute to my fantastic staff and customers who make The Lazy Landlord the great little alehouse it is.

The Lazy Landlord at 56 Mill Lane, Liscard, CH44 5UG, is less than 20 minutes from Liverpool city centre, close to the 432 or 433 bus routes and is near to the 410 bus route from New Brighton to Clatterbridge. It is open Mon, Wed & Thurs 4 - 10.30pm, Fri 2-10.30pm and Sat & Sun 12-10.30pm. Last orders 10pm



WIRRAL BEER CLUB

Founded in February 2014 by volunteers from Hoylake and West Kirby beer festivals, we are a club run by locals, supporting and promoting Wirral's pubs, brewers and breweries.

We enjoy occasional jaunts to other areas like Liverpool, Formby and Chester and also support local festivals such as those at Hoylake and Hulme Hall. We also champion local events like **Thirsty Friday and Super Saturday (at Peerless Brewing Co.)** by volunteering our help and promoting in any way we can.

When setting up the group, we decided that there would be no politics or favouritism - just exploring and supporting the pubs, clubs and breweries in the great watering hole that is Wirral.

How it works is simple: anyone and everyone are welcome. No one person is in charge, as the club is run collectively. We just turn up and support Wirral's numerous pubs (no need to drink beer if it's not your choice - it doesn't matter what you prefer), enjoy many laughs - and in most cases become friends. It's that easy.

Forthcoming get togethers will see us visit **Parkgate** in June (including **The Harp** in Little Neston), **Thornton Hough** in September, whilst our fabulous

annual **Chester jaunt takes place in November**. We are always open to new pubs, places, festivals or events on the Wirral - just tell us your suggestions.

So, feel free to join us. We would love to see you and are sure you'll have a great time in the process, supporting our local pubs and breweries. You don't need to live or work on the Wirral to take part.

As mentioned, Thirsty Friday at **Peerless Brewing Co.** is the last Friday of every month (4.30-11pm), with the following Saturday afternoon being Super



Saturday (12-5pm). Entry is FREE - just turn up! **Eight ales, cider, whisky and wine are available**, as well as occasional experimental brewery ales. Feel free to bring your own food. You will find most of us there.

By John McNamara

All details can be found on: Twitter @wirralbeerclub
Our group 'Wirral Beer Club' on Facebook
or by emailing wirralbeerclub@gmail.com



St Helens CAMRA News

News for the St Helens Ale Drinker

What a tumultuous six months St Helens CAMRA has had!

In December, both our long-standing Chair and Secretary resigned, leaving the branch rudderless for a while. The committee would like to thank **Alan and Debbie Healey** for their amazing and tireless work in turning St Helens CAMRA into a vibrant and successful branch - and also Regional Director, **Nick Bosley**, for stepping in and keeping the branch on track while we re-grouped and recovered. Fortunately, following an AGM at the end of April, we now have a new Chair and committee raring to go and start a new chapter for the branch.

Also on a brighter note, we have named our **Pub of the Year and Cider Pub of the Year**. Branch members had a great time surveying all six pubs on the shortlist, namely: **The Talbot Ale House, The Turks Head, The Phoenix, The Griffin (Eccleston), The Cricketers Arms and The Sefton**. All scored well and it is wonderful to know that we have such great pubs for people to visit.

The Pub of the Year is The Cricketers Arms; they were presented with their certificate in April and the **Cider Pub of the Year** certificate in May. Again, congratulations to all the pubs surveyed. The range of beer and cider in St Helens is amazing at the moment. One of the first jobs for the new committee is to re-open lines of communication with



branch members via social media and the re-vamped branch newsletter, so watch this space. We are also intending to reinstate



celebrating our pubs with seasonal awards and Branch Socials to outlying areas, as well as continuing trips to other parts of the country. We would like to re-energise and encourage our members

to be more active in the branch, beer scoring and reporting activity within their local pub. We would like to see as many pubs as possible on our shortlist for next year's Good Beer Guide and Pub of The Year voting.

Later in the year, we will be investigating the possibility of holding a long overdue St Helens CAMRA Beer Festival and also having a celebration event for our pubs. So, all in all we are going to have a busy year.

Why not join us on our journey: as any organisation is only as successful as its members, we hope St Helens CAMRA will be motivated to become an even better branch to which everyone can be proud of belonging.

If you haven't visited us for a while, why not pick up a St Helens Pub Map and see what fabulous pubs we have in the area. Don't forget - we have three (soon to be four) excellent breweries as well.

Hoping to see you at a meeting, social event or in one of our great pubs soon (I'm usually the one in a brightly coloured hat).

Gillian Yates (Branch Chair)

MARINE HOTEL

SHORE ROAD PEEL
TEL 01624 842337



Welcome to the Marine Hotel with an extensive range of real ale, real cider and great food



We continually stock Okell's bitter and rotate other guest ales from both local and external Brewers including Bushy's and Hooded Ram



The Marine has an extensive home cooked menu sourcing locally produced fresh meat, fish and vegetables.

Opening hours are Monday to Saturday noon until 9pm for food and noon until 5pm on a Sunday. We open noon until midnight for drinks Monday to Sunday inclusive

Expansive views of Peel bay, harbour and Castle

ManxAle

From Dave Halliwell, MerseyAle Isle of Man Correspondent

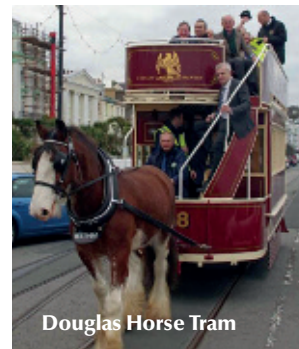
This issue, we report on a second brewer launching into the UK pubs market, the arrival of a new brewer on island and a national newspaper accolade for one of the island's water-

front pubs. In addition, there is a report on a highly successful CAMRA Isle of Man beer festival.

In April, CAMRA Isle of Man presented the third beer festival to be held in the prestigious Villa Marina complex and now the sixth annual event in total. This year, the entire event including bands, beers and ciders was held in the main Royal Hall, which proved to be a great success, with visitor numbers significantly up on last year.

Lietenant Governor opens the festival

Over 150 beers were on offer from throughout the British Isles, with the event being sponsored by Okell's, the island's main brewer. To



Douglas Horse Tram

celebrate this sponsorship and open the event, the island's new **Lieutenant Governor, Sir Richard Gozney**, did the honours by formally opening the festival. Sir Richard was taken to the event via a historic and unique,



Isle of Man Beer and Cider Festival

A full house



world-famous Douglas horse tram. The tram used was a double decker, in Okell's livery, celebrating one of the British Isles' oldest regional brewers, with Okell's being founded in 1850 by Dr William Okell. The festival notably featured a



Sir Richard Gozney

specialist bar serving beers from the Kent region, pleasing the newly arriving brewer as we will report later.

Beer of the Festival

The Beer of the Festival Award was won by Titanic Brewery, for their **Titanic Chocolate Vanilla Stout (4.5% ABV)**, which has previously won several awards. The brewery, based in



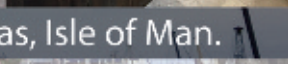
the Stoke area, has long been renowned for only ever using uncompromisingly high-quality ingredients in the brewing process. This certainly

VISIT THE ISLAND'S NEWEST REAL ALE PUB & ENJOY AWARD WINNING CASK ALE.

(8 Cask Ale Hand Pumps)



HOODED RAM
PUB CO.



facebook.com/hoodedram

Hooded Ram, Clinch's, North Quay, Douglas, Isle of Man.

shows through in many of their beers, particularly Titanic Plum Porter, which perhaps will be more familiar to many readers.

Cider of the Festival



Cider of the Festival was **Cockbird (5% ABV)**, a sweet English cider by the **Cockeyed Cider Company** in Devon. Once again, the ciders and perrys proved hugely popular at the festival, surpassing expectations. Though cider and perry availability on island is

increasing slowly, the festival consumption certainly suggests the demand is there. This year, the charity supported was The Alzheimer's Society, and a significant sum was raised by festival goers by way of donations.

Hooded Ram

Hooded Ram brewed a special beer for the festival - Pullyman - from which 20 pence per pint will be donated to the charity. The full total will be detailed in



a further issue when figures are available.

Bill Smith

Finally, a tribute to Bill Smith, the beer festival organiser, who is standing down after a number of years running and organising the festival. Behind the scenes, there is a tremendous amount of voluntary work involved in organising all aspects of the event and Bill will be a hard act to follow. On behalf of all at CAMRA and the thousands that have attended in recent years, MerseyAle extends a huge thank you to Bill for all his hard work.

Hooded Ram expansion into the UK pub market



In what is the first of an ambitious series of planned openings, Hooded Ram has now launched its first UK outlet in a prime location in the heart of Wolverhampton, less than half a mile away from tram, bus and train links. This large corner sited building has been refurbished with very much the same branding and décor as the Douglas Clinch's venue, but on a much larger scale.



In early May, several Hooded Ram beers were featured, along with three or four guest ales and - like the first outlet, Clinch's (Douglas) - a shuffle



board in the corner. There is an extensive menu and an excellent range of seating areas, both for diners and drinkers alike.

Plans are afoot for several further outlets in the UK, with one possibly in Newcastle-under-Lyme and a Deansgate site in Manchester also earmarked. What stands out very clearly from this first UK venture is that there is a real statement of intent here from the company.

The quality of the refurbishment, the prime sites being chosen and the very high attention to detail are all immediately apparent. In Wolverhampton, the young



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PREMIUM MANX ALES

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THE ONLY BEERS TO CONTAIN MANX GROWN BARLEY

student bartender was very well briefed and knowledgeable on the Hooded Ram beers, given that the outlet had only just opened at the time of the visit.

It is these small attentions to detail that make all the difference. One can readily see the format slotting perfectly into a Deansgate setting for example. This expansion can only be of benefit to The Isle of Man as an entity and MerseyAle wishes Hooded Ram well. In the meantime, brewery expansion plans on island are continuing, with canning and improved brewing facilities coming closer to fruition.

Heron & Brearley

Some will be aware that IOM based Heron & Brearley (H&B) already own a substantial number of pubs in the UK and have done for many years. Starting off some time ago with four or five pubs in the Liverpool and Chester areas, the group went on to acquire the well-respected Market Town Tavern chain, largely situated in Yorkshire, adding in one block purchase substantially to their UK portfolio. However, in contrast to Hooded Ram, Heron & Brearley acquired an existing operation, electing to tweak the pub estate over time. Interestingly, the Liverpool pubs are now marketed under the Market Town banner, not H&B.

Thomas Rigby's and Fly in the Loaf

Thomas Rigby's is perhaps the best known Okell's pub in

Liverpool for Isle of Man readers, due to its proximity to the Isle of Man boat and landing stage. However, over the other side of town on



Hardman Street lies **The Fly in the Loaf** - a historic and stylishly-fronted building, always stocking one or two Okell's ales, along with many guests. The pub, sympathetically restored as a building by H&B, features a large outdoor seating area towards the front, with a very long bar extending deep into the property, with seating extending to the rear.

Food is served until 7pm and there is an unusual raised area set back from the bar, partially



screened by wooden panelling with distinctive light fittings, providing a fantastic mix between the modern and the traditional, in a pleasant and often lively atmosphere, particularly on match days for the football.

New brewer for Okell's arrives



Okell's has a new full-time brewer, **Ed Wray**, who arrived on island in the last few weeks. With a Microbiology degree and diploma in Brewing and Distilling, he also

has experience of several breweries, including Kent's Old Dairy brewery (hence his favourable impression on finding a Kent bar at the recent Isle of Man beer festival!).

Ed will be working alongside **Dr Mike Cowbourne** and former brewer **Harry Eastham**, who many years after official retirement is still working on reduced hours. In the interests of research, Ed has already been working his way round the Good Beer Guide pubs at an impressive rate.

MerseyAle caught up with him in The Prospect and Horse and Plough. He has been particularly impressed with the brewing kit and laboratory facilities for quality monitoring - something which many breweries do not possess.

To date, his favourite beer of the core Okell's range is the award winning **Okell's IPA (4.5% ABV)** and he is particularly pleased with Okell's return to producing the seasonal beer range this year, after an absence. Frustratingly for many, there had been a suspension of this policy for a time in 2016. The 1907 brew is due out for the TT races, and it is hoped that **Okell's Olaf** - a replacement for the mild - may be seen again at some point this year, after a considerable absence. We wish Ed well and welcome the new input to the small, but experienced island brewing community.

ManxAle continued

Creek Inn receives National acclaim

The Creek Inn, on the west of the island in Peel, recently featured in an article in The Times newspaper, highlighting 20 of the best pubs by the sea in The British Isles. It is heavily praised for its outdoor seating areas, waterfront setting and Okell's beers, as well as live music. However, there is much more to The Creek. The food menu is extensive and hugely popular, with seafood being a particular speciality. The beer range is one of the most extensive on island. At the time of visiting,

Manx cider, Branscombe Golden Fiddle, Blacksheep Gold and Caledonian Golden XPA were each available in addition to beers from **Hooded Ram, Okell's and Bushy's**.

Waterfront Pubs

The Peveril

Three other waterfront pubs - each of varying styles and contrasts - are situated on the west coast, and make an excellent series of choices for the visitor in which to sample the island's beers and coastal atmosphere. A few hundred yards towards the sea from The Creek lies **The Peveril**, a free house usually stocking well-kept **Okell's bitter and MPA**, with **Bushy's bitter** available at peak periods. In contrast to The Creek, The Peveril does not serve food, but it does have an extensive outside area overlooking both the impressive



Peel castle and harbour, as well as having an overspill marquee area for summer months.

Perhaps one of the more traditional local's pubs in town,



The Peveril has two bars - one featuring a highly eclectic array of themed teapots/pouring jugs



adorning the walls, from telephone boxes to washing machines and even polo mints

no less! For beer drinkers, note the huge Okell's traditional logos painted on the building's exterior facing seaward - the most impressive on the island.

The Marine

Further round and facing the outer harbour and open sea, The Marine is the third remaining



waterfront pub in Peel. To the right is an attractive traditional wooden bar area, with superb views overlooking Peel Bay, the castle, and larger boats moored along the outer sea wall. This



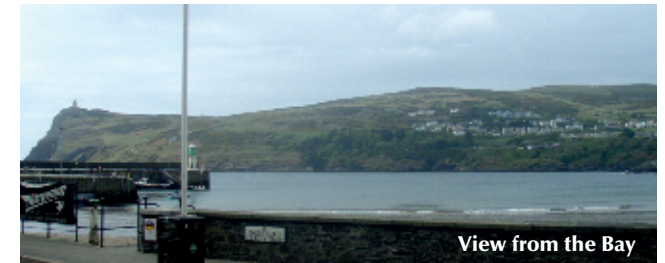
bar always features guest ales, as well as Manx cider and beers supporting all the island's three main brewers.

There is a comfortable seating area to the middle, again with seaward views. Further to the left side of the building is an entrance that is well-known to locals, but less obvious to the visitor. This opens out into a large informal back room dining area. The Marine is renowned locally for generously proportioned and good quality, value-for-money food, worth seeking out for visitors and locals alike.

The Bay



Lastly, on the west coast, in the south of the island, with superb views over Port Erin Bay lies The Bay - a flagship Bushy's pub, stocking a large range of Bushy's beers and also the island's most extensive real cider range. Food is served in the right-hand area of the pub and there are two sections to the left, where the main bar is situated. Two guest ales are ever present, and during the TT period, bands feature daily on



View from the Bay

the outside beach areas just across the road.

There is a range of outdoor seating to enjoy the views. The pub, which was restored and reopened by Bushy's circa 2002, has had the beer lines completely renewed and separated from lager lines in order to enhance temperature control. Furthermore, later in the summer, look out for a bespoke **Bushy's beer** - unusually for Bushy's an IPA - yet to be named, but at a strength of around 4.5% ABV. This is currently under development. The Bay invited regulars to the brewery recently to sample the new brew, during a brewery tour hosted by the owner, Martin Brunnschweiler.

TT logo

As the TT motorbike races approach, there has been huge controversy surrounding the TT logo. The Manx Government quite rightly have attempted to copyright the TT name and logo, to protect it for island use. In doing so, it has got itself into hot water by upsetting many local firms who have used similar logos for many years - Bushy's being an initial example. However, Bushy's had wisely already undertaken measures to protect use of their Bushy's

TT logos. After worldwide motorcycling outrage on social media, the government softened its tone and reached an



accommodation with Bushy's. However, as the races approached, the issue had further raised its head with other local firms, a matter which the government is finding it hard to reconcile and police.

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Judging Merseyside Pub of The Year

CASK is Pub of the Year (POTY) 2017 (see pages 22-23) and now goes forward as Liverpool's representative in the next round of the competition - **Merseyside POTY** - where they will be up against the POTY's from Wirral, Southport and St Helens.

This year, the other local POTY's are:
SOUTHPORT
Tap & Bottles,
Cambridge Walk,
ST HELENS
Cricketers Arms, Peter Street,
WIRRAL
Lazy Landlord Ale House,
Mill Lane, Liscard

As Co-ordinator of the Liverpool competition, I am precluded from being a judge as well, though no such restrictions apply for the Merseyside competition. So, for the last few weeks and until the middle of June, I have been visiting the aforementioned pubs (except CASK) and must do so at least TWICE before submitting my scores and comments to the Area Co-ordinator.

This article is intended to provide insight into the judging process and exactly what is involved, but first a little about each of the other pubs. The following excerpts are taken from the WhatPub website, written by a member of the local branch (not by me).

Tap & Bottles

The Tap and Bottles...has a huge bottle selection - not all Real Ale in a Bottle though. It has a choice

of four real ales from virtually any brewery, with a slant to North West England. It has a cosy upstairs seating area, with benches and tables. It has a small beer tapas menu served all day.

Cricketers Arms

Now with 13 handpumps on the bar, the beers come from newer regional brewers and local microbreweries. This is a very friendly community pub, which hosts darts and pool teams. Entertainment is offered on the weekend and regular social events are held, including for local charities.

Lazy Landlord

Wirral's first micropub opened in December 2014. The two small cosy rooms - decorated with breweriana, local art works and a small library - are served from the front bar. Mostly frequented by a more mature, discerning clientele, the pub is a venue for meetings of local societies.

Unlike in the local branch competition, experienced judges like myself volunteer to evaluate our neighbour's pubs rather than being appointed. This is the third time I have opted to be a Merseyside judge and I do so using the nationally approved criteria and guidelines.

There are SIX categories in all (viewable to CAMRA members by logging into the national website):

Quality of Beer/Cider/Perry

■ Is the beer, cider and/or perry sold of good/excellent quality?

Style/Decor/Furnishing and Cleanliness

- A comfortable and safe environment should be provided throughout.
- The pub and glasses should be clean. Toilets should be hygienic and clean with hot water, suitable hand drying facilities etc.
- Are décor and furnishing appropriate to the style of pub?

Service, Welcome and Offering

- Service should be welcoming and polite. If the pub is busy, a friendly acknowledgement of your presence is desirable.
- You should be treated like a valued customer and made to feel at ease.
- Staff should be knowledgeable about real ales/cider/perry and know how to pick up and hold a customer's glass.
- Where possible, products from local producers should be included.
- Are other products/services offered which may enhance a visit: good-quality soft drinks, food, Wi-Fi etc.?
- Did you feel that you received reasonable value for money (CAMRA discounts should not influence this)?

Community focus and atmosphere

- Where appropriate, does the pub have a community focus: e.g. supporting local groups, sports teams etc.? Look out for noticeboards/listings of local events/sports teams linked with the pub.

Judging Merseyside Pub of The Year contd

- The pub must be inclusive and feel welcoming to all age groups and sectors of the community.
- Considering the time and day of the week, is the pub busy enough to create a good atmosphere?

Alignment with CAMRA principles

- Prices and opening hours should be clearly displayed.
- You should get a full measure or a top-up without asking. Does the pub use oversized glasses?
- There shouldn't be any inappropriate, noisy electronic amusement machines.
- Where possible, there should be a range of beer styles and strengths. It should be noted that it is better for a pub to sell a small range to maintain quality, if that is what suits their trade.

Overall impression

- Did you enjoy your visit?
- Did you spend more time there than you had anticipated - or wish you had been able to stay longer? Would you look forward to a return visit?

In addition to scores, judges are also encouraged to make comments (positive or negative) to help explain why a pub has been marked low or high on one or more criteria. Sometimes, it might be necessary to include mitigating factors - e.g. the pub was visited on a quiet lunchtime and therefore wasn't seen at its liveliest. So, as you can see, a lot of factors are taken into consideration when judging and it is far from simply a 'tick box' exercise, but shouldn't be a chore nevertheless.

After scores are submitted to the Regional Director in June, the winner is announced soon after, before then going forward to the next round of the competition (Regional POTY), where Merseyside goes up against the whole of Cheshire. There are more rounds after this (NW POTY & super-regional) until the final four in the country are assessed, with the National Pub of the Year being announced the following February.

Nominations for Liverpool POTY 2018 start to be taken in September this year, so expect to see more details in the Autumn edition of MerseyAle.

By Andre Fu

Liverpool CAMRA Coach Trips

Coach trips are run every month to a variety of destinations.

Coach Trips depart at 10am from opposite the Ship and Mitre, Dale Street, and return there around 9pm. Cost is £12 for CAMRA members, £15 for non members – so it pays to join CAMRA!

For full details of upcoming trips and how to book, please check out the coach trip page on the branch website. To book, contact social@liverpoolcamra.org.uk or phone Ian Macadam 07521 741 586

The page is updated after the 1st of each month with details of the next trip being launched.

Any non-member considering coming on a CAMRA coach trip can save £15.

Jun 10th: Hinckley and Rugby.

Jul 15th: Skipton, Barnoldswick, and Colne.

Aug 12th: Hull.
Sep 9th: Harrogate and Otley.
Oct 14th: Nottingham (for beer festival. Date to be finalised).
Nov 11th: Shrewsbury area (possibly another brewery visit).

£12
CAMRA Members



FREE
COACH TRIP

Anybody who joins CAMRA for the first time and affiliates to the Liverpool & Districts branch, will be offered a free seat on a future branch coach trip. Check Liverpool CAMRA website for details

CAMRA Branch Diaries

Liverpool CAMRA Branch Diary

Sun 4th June: First Sunday meet-up. 1pm, Baltic Fleet.

Sat 10th June: Coach to Rugby area. 9.30am, Ship & Mitre.

Wed 21st June: Childwall walk, leaving Fiveways at 6pm (meet 5pm to eat).

See webpage for further details.

Sun 9th July: Annual Burscough Classic Bus Day, arranged by Merseyside Transport Trust. Meet Ormskirk Bus Station at 11.30am.

Sat 15th July: Coach to Skipton/Colne/Barnoldswick. 10.30am, Ship & Mitre.

For further details email contact@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Wirral CAMRA Branch Diary

All welcome.

Wed 7th June: Committee Meeting. The Lion, Market St. Birkenhead at 8pm.

Thurs 15th June: Branch Meeting. Gallaghers, Birkenhead at 8.30pm.

Sat 1st July: Coach Trip to Leek and Congleton. Coach leaves Brass Balance, Birkenhead at 10.15am. To book, please contact davehutchinson@wirral.camra.org.uk

Wed 5th July: Committee Meeting. Rose and Crown, Bebington at 8pm.

Thurs 13th July: Branch Meeting. Gallaghers, Birkenhead at 8.30pm.

No committee or branch meetings in August.

Isle of Man CAMRA Branch Diary

Thurs 8th June: 7.30pm Douglas - Bushy's Beer Tent Social.

Thurs 15th June: 7.30pm Port Erin -Start at The Haven, then a stroll to visit The Falcons Nest and The Bay.

Saturday 15th July: 4pm Ramsey-Start at The Royal George, then a stroll around the town's pubs.

Tuesday 15th August: 7.30pm Douglas - The Terminus Tavern.

Thurs 14th September: 7.30pm Braddan - The Horse & Plough.

St Helens CAMRA Branch Diary

Committee meetings: Second Wednesday of each month. 8pm start.

Branch meetings: Fourth Wednesday of each month. 8pm start.

Trips: 10th June: East Lancashire Railway Ale Trail £8.

9th September: Ossett Brewery Tour and Rat Craft Beer Festival £15.

For all trips, contact Andy Evans at the Cricketers Arms, St Helens.

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Liverpool CAMRA



MerseyAle

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Can you volunteer to help us distribute MerseyAle?

Andre Fu
MerseyAle Distribution Manager
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We need volunteers to deliver MerseyAle to pubs in places such as Huyton, Garston and Old Swan. Or if you could take some copies to pubs anywhere on Merseyside where you know they would be appreciated, please contact me on the email address below.

Advertising Rates:

Full page £200

Half Page £100

Third of a page £70

The final copy date for our next issue August is 15th 2017. Submit your artwork as early as possible.

Advertising Email details/enquiries to : howard.perry@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

PLEASE NOTE WE DO NOT TAKE CASH FOR MERSEYALE ADS LICENSEES AND STAFF - BEWARE OF PEOPLE ASKING FOR CASH PAYMENT FOR ADS

St Georges Hall **BEER FESTIVAL**



28th - 30th September 2017

200⁺ Real Ales & Ciders

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Friday 29th	September 11.30 - 16.00	£7
Friday 29th	September 18.00 - 22.30	£9
Saturday 30th	September 11.30 - 16.00	£8
Saturday 30th	September 18.00 - 22.30	£8



Tickets and further information:

www.realaleevents.com