

# BEER LEEDS

SUPPORTING REAL ALE AND CIDER IN LEEDS

SPRING 2024

ISSUE 10

FREE



THE MAGAZINE OF LEEDS BRANCH OF CAMRA



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for  
Real Ale

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# BEER LEEDS

**SPRING 2024**

**ISSUE 10**

Hello and welcome to the Spring issue of Beer Leeds. Most people will have heard of the recent brewery closures and difficulties they face in the current economic climate. The takeover of North Brewing was heartening but other well known breweries have had to cease trading. The whole hospitality trade needs government help.

CAMRA asked the Chancellor to announce a package of support for pubs, social clubs, breweries and cider producers in the upcoming Spring Budget, including tax on draught beer and cider to be 20% lower than supermarket alcohol – targeting support to pub goers, licensees and breweries.

Our Branch was formed 50 years ago and we are planning to celebrate this with a few events over this year, watch out for these in social media.

Leeds CAMRA were contacted by the Leeds University Real Ale Society and it was refreshing to see some new faces at our January meeting. Read about their interests and activities in the magazine article.

In this issue we have an introduction to the Save our Inn Signs Society, pub visits to Armley and Beverley, a visit to Tartarus Beers and for dark beer fans read about the "Back in Black" festival.

Hope you enjoy reading this magazine, perhaps come along to a meeting or event and have a beer with us.

**Nigel Halton**  
Magazine Editor



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# BEER LEEDS

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# PUB & BREWERY NEWS

## PUB NEWS

The news that the **Victoria Family & Commercial Hotel** in Leeds will re-open again later this year (possibly September) was good to hear. It has been closed since March 2020. The team behind Kirkstall Brewery are joining forces with the owners of Whitelock's Ale House and The Five Points Brewing Company to take over, revive and restore this famous Grade II-listed pub. As well as restoring the pub's traditional interior, Kirkstall and Whitelock's will be installing a new kitchen.

The management team of the **Brunswick** in Leeds and **Melbourne** in Alwoodley have added a third venue to their ever-growing family of food and drink destinations in Leeds. They've taken on the former Tyke Bar at Gateway North and have started the transformation to a neighbourhood bar & eatery to be called **Woodside**.

A pub that has been closed for a lengthy period is the **Arabian Horse** in Aberford. After closing its doors over a year ago and leaving the village without a pub, this re-opened under new management towards the end of 2023. 4 cask ales on the bar.

The **Functional Drinks Club** is a new bar to open in Otley that specialises in alcohol free refreshments - beers, wines, kombucha and more. It's an interesting opening this one as it shows the growing confidence in the alcohol-free market. They even showcased an alcohol free cask beer from local brewery **Shadow**.

In the city centre the **Northern Market** have two hand pumps with Taylors Landlord, and a rotating Northern Monk beer on.

**Foleys** are getting two hand pumps installed from Kirkstall Brewery in exchange for agreeing to put their beers on.

The **Eagle** on North Street has become the latest casualty from Samuel Smiths, and closed in January.

The **Garden Gate** in Hunslet, a Grade II listed pub, re-opened on 2<sup>nd</sup> February under new tenants after being shut for over a year. The building has deteriorated over the years, some repairs have been carried out. Plans are to offer cask ale from Kirkstall brewery.

**Oscars** in Morley is now under new ownership, no news yet of beers available.

## BREWERY NEWS

### RIDGESIDE BREWERY

We start with the sad news that **Ridgeside Brewery** ceased trading at the beginning of January. It was formed in 2010 by Simon Bolderson who sadly passed away in 2014. Since then Matt Lovatt and Juan Mendoza took over and established the brewery with taproom.

### NORTH BREWING

It was a surprise to hear that **North Brewing Company Ltd** had filed a notice of intention (NOI) to appoint administrators in mid January. They explained that like the rest of the hospitality and brewing world, over the last four years they had endured the turbulence of Covid, Brexit, material cost increases, cost of living crisis and interest rate rises.

Within a week **North** was saved by Kirkstall Brewery founder and owner Steve Holt. Although Steve now owns the brewery, he is leaving original North founders John Gyngell and Christian Townsley, plus their management team in place and North will continue to operate as an independent brewery out of Springwell.



## HORSFORTH BREWERY

**Horsforth Brewery** launched a crowdfunder in February to help them buy a new canning machine. They hit their original target of £15k, and are looking for contributions to now reach their stretch target.

## MEANWOOD

Positive news from **Meanwood** this week is that increasing demand has seen them reorganising the brewery to up production, and confirmation that 2024 will see them producing cans again. Recent releases include "Stupid Cluepid" a 4.5% pale ale

## NORTHERN MONK

Hop City 2024 will be taking place on 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> May, **Northern Monk** have now confirmed the full brewery line-up. Tickets here: <https://www.universe.com/users/northern-monk-brewing-co-ltd-HWC3KF>

## QUIRKY ALES

The **Quirky Ales** taproom in Garforth is undergoing a few upgrades during February and March. Their new milk stout "It's a Stout time" is proving popular, other new releases are MMMQ:01 and 02.

## AMITY BREW CO



**Amity Brew Co** have been nominated for Best Independent Brewery Taproom and Best Independent Brewery Webshop at the national beer awards.

It was founded by Russ Clarke, Richard Degnan and Verity Clarke (see image) and has been recognised at the Society of Independent Breweries Association (SIBA) and the winners will be revealed at the BeerX trade show in Liverpool in March.

Taking place at their Farsley premises will be AmityFest on 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> July, the annual craft beer and food event. Tickets from:

<https://www.amitybrew.co/amityfest>

Brewery taprooms opening up after the winter are **Piglove Brewing Co**, **BINI Brew Co**.

Monthly open brewery days begin again at **Wilde Child Brewing Co**.

Although not in our area a final mention should be made to the loss of award winning brewery **Elland Brewery**. 1872 Porter was last year's Champion Beer of Britain.



# THE STUDENT ANGLE



Hello CAMRA Magazine reader, my name is Alex Dale, current President of the Real Ale Society at the University of Leeds. The folks at Leeds CAMRA have kindly donated some space for me to talk about the society, the student beer experience in Leeds, and why it's so important to enlist the next generation into the fight for better beer.

Our Society exists on the ideal that better beer is available for students, that we can enjoy it for its flavour and its character, rather than simply as a vessel for inebriation. I have heard

far too often 'beer doesn't get me drunk quick enough, I'll stick with the vodka', oblivious to the fact that they can enjoy the act of drinking, as opposed to just the consequences of it. That is the mindset we are attempting to change, showing students that they can easily find better beer than whatever they lashed down on their last Otley Run, and that they can get better for cheaper.

That's why we partnered with Kirkstall Brewery to release Mitigating Circumstances (3.4% ABV), a Hazy Pale Ale made with students in

mind (and partially made by us too), an introduction to cask beer that's both fruity and sessionable. It can be quite daunting for students who come to our events, conditioned to cold lager, to see the high-percentage, tastebud-melting sour beers enjoyed by many of our members; so Mitigating Circumstances (served in the Student Union) is the perfect way for us to introduce the world of Real Ale. Accessibility was a central issue to us as well, many students are put off by 'artisan' bars where the price begins with a six. We held our birthday party for Mitigating

## THE STUDENT ANGLE

Circumstances on the 21<sup>st</sup> February, and at £3 per pint (£3.50 normally) was very well received. There is an enormous, untapped (not just the app) audience receptive to Real Ale; once they have been guided onto the path. That is our mission.



If a student happens to be reading this, firstly well done for choosing a pub sympathetic to the CAMRA cause, I highly encourage you to try us out as well; our weekly events can include pub crawls around areas seldom visited by students,

which recently involved the pubs by Leeds train station (Tapped, Bankers Cat etc.). We also host beer tastings to broaden your horizons, tour breweries of all sizes (we recently visited DMC Brewery, featured in the last edition, I would highly recommend 'Ales from the Crypt' - 5.5% ABV) as well as trips to places like Manchester and York. The society also hosts an annual abroad trip, this year being Bratislava. I can biasedly say that our members are an incredible group of people, who I am proud to call my friends.

I reached out to CAMRA initially as I believe our two groups have very similar goals; of campaigning for lower pint prices, and for local breweries over the multi-national, mass-produced beers so depressingly ubiquitous to modern drinking. It is essential for both our groups to target the student market, being some of the biggest drinkers they will form the next generation and bringing them around as soon as possible will only strengthen us

in the long term. Students have been blinkered by the big brand breweries, the sooner their horizons are broadened the better.

In summary, there is a world of wonder out there to drink your way through, don't just settle for the familiar. To quote the song by James: 'If I hadn't seen such riches, I could live with being poor'.

If you are a student, come along to one of our events and see what all the fuss is about (check out our Facebook for details), and tune into The Otley Run-Down on Leeds Student Radio (Fridays 4-5pm) to listen to more of my rantings. Thanks again to CAMRA for giving us this platform, I hope to see some of you soon.

Alex Dale



# Be part of the CAMRA story

## Real ale is just the start...

Real stories, real people, **real ale**



## Sarah Hughes Brewery's Snowflake named CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2024



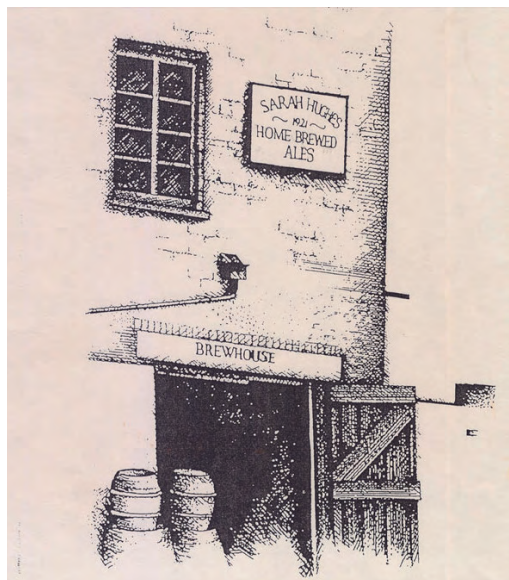
The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has awarded Sarah Hughes Brewery's Snowflake the title of Champion Winter Beer of Britain (CWBOB) 2024 at the Great British Beer Festival Winter.

The Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition marks the first day of CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival Winter 2024, which is running from February 15-17 at Burton Town Hall, Burton-upon-Trent. The annual beer festival provides an opportunity to showcase the best traditional winter brews in the country, with categories such as barley wines, strong old ales and stouts.

Staffed by beer-loving volunteers, the Great British Beer Festival Winter brings hundreds of UK and international beers, plus real ciders and perries, to a different venue every two years.

After over a year of local blind-tasting panels and vigorous regional heats, Snowflake (8% ABV) an amber barley wine from Sedgley, West Midlands based brewers Sarah Hughes Brewery was named overall champion in the prestigious competition.

Accredited European Beer Consumers Union beer judge and chair of the CWBOB judging panel Christine Cryne described Sarah Hughes' beer as: "A beautiful amber barley wine. The fruity, slightly spiced nose invited the drinker to indulge. The rich, smooth, sweet palate had orange spicy notes balanced by a growing bitterness, leading to a spicy dry bitterness. Remarkably moreish."



Christine added: "The judges were impressed with the quality of the beers in the final and thought they all had something to say."

Simon Massey, Director of Sarah Hughes Brewery and the Beacon Hotel said: "This is fantastic news! Quality is what we strive for, and it is all down to the brilliant team who work in the brewery and the pub. This batch of Snowflake was brewed in September and sold out in

two weeks over the Christmas period. We always put it out at the start of the Dudley Winter Ales Festival, where it sold out there too.

"I am very proud for my Head Brewer Ricky Follos. This is a massive achievement, and he should be very chuffed. The hard work really has paid off!

"The brewery closed in the mid 50s, but my uncle, John Hughes, reinstated the brewery in 1987. He had a vision of what it could be, and I hope this award makes Sarah Hughes Brewery and the Beacons Hotel pub a must-visit destination in the Black Country."

In response to the struggles facing the pub and brewing trade, Simon said: "It is going to be another tough year for the industry. My overhead costs have doubled."

The joint runners up in the competition were Elland Brewery's 1872 Porter 6.5% ABV and Muirhouse Brewery's Magnum Mild 4.5%.

CAMRA's Awards Director Laura Emson said: "Congratulations to Sarah Hughes Brewery on their well-deserved win, Snowflake is an incredible example of a barley wine. Each year, judging this competition gets harder and harder as the quality beer produced by UK brewers continues to astound us.

"This year's runner up and last year's CWBOB winner, Elland Brewery's 1872 Porter, went on to clinch the celebrated Champion Beer of Britain 2023 award as well. It was deeply upsetting to hear that this multi-award-winning brewery is now facing liquidation, just six months after claiming CAMRA's top prize. The pub, brewing and cider making industries are in turmoil and unless government offers meaningful support to the sector in the upcoming Spring Budget, the UK risks losing many more of its talented brewers.

"I want to thank the hardworking volunteers and judges who have made the festival and the Champion Winter Beer of Britain possible. Congratulations once again to Sarah Hughes brewery and all our fantastic category winners. I wish them all the best of luck in the overall Champion Beer of Britain 2024 competition."

This year's Gold and Joint Silver award winners will be available at the Great British Beer Festival Winter this week while stocks last.

The category winners from the Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition will be entered into the overall Champion Beer of Britain competition later this year.



Sign up to receive Ale Delight, our monthly email with full details of all Leeds CAMRA news, meetings and social events.

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# BEVERLEY

Opportunity arose for a mid-week visit to the east Yorkshire market town of Beverley with an overnight stay. The town, population 30,000, is the county town of east Yorkshire. Founded in the 7th century it was part of Northumbria until invaded by the Vikings in 850. It grew after the Norman conquest and became a significant wool trading town. It is famous for its minster, North Bar gatehouse, Westwood common and racecourse.



*Beverley North Bar*

Only having the afternoon session, owing to other commitment, Paul and self made our way along Norwood, over the level crossing to the CORNERHOUSE.



*Beverley Cornerhouse*

This is a lovely old inn which recently re-opened. Split into three sections, a dining area on the right on entering and two large drinking parts, it has wood floors, padded church pews and an assortment of wood tables and chairs. It has a black leaded

open fire, glazed tiled bar and two large gilt framed mirrors. Colour scheme is grey/green walls and cream woodwork. Eight beers were on the bar: 2 Abbeydale, Deuchars I.P.A, Black Sheep bitter, Theakstons Old Peculier, Wainwright and Otter Over the Bar. (N.B. look for the comic murals outside the pub!)

From here it was a long walk to the North Gate Bar, passing St Mary's church and down North Bar Within and Lairgate, until we reached the minster, at the rear of which is the oldest pub in Beverley. The SUN INN.



*Sun Inn*

This is a large open-planned building with a dominant bar/lounge, a beautiful separate snug and dining conservatory. The ceiling is black beamed, the floors brick and flagged and the walls rough brick. The beams are adorned with horseshoes and pump clips and numerous brick pillars further divide the pub. Furniture is an eclectic mix of old wood seats and benches. On the bar five beers: Black Sheep bitter and Respire, Theakstons Lightfoot, Ossett Yorkshire Blonde and Taylors Landlord.

We made our way past Wednesday Market to the Saturday Market. Here we made our first stop the GREEN DRAGON. This is a subtly lit, open plan pub with a modern interior, and with a dining room to the



## BEVERLEY

rear. The only interesting feature was the unusually curved grey painted wooden bar, with the equally curvy brass foot rail. Eight hand pumps, but only four beers. Leeds Pale, Theakstons Old Peculier, Landlord and Wainwright.

Across the market square, around a corner, sits the DOG & DUCK. This was a very busy multi-roomed pub, with comfortable cushioned bench seats, buffets and armchairs and wrought iron and wood tables. The walls are half and half burgundy and cream, with rich wine carpets throughout. In the lounge a real fire crackled merrily. The walls were decorated with pictures and prints of old Beverley. There were a collection of plates and pottery displayed on shelves throughout the pub. A choice of five beers: Black Sheep bitter, Taylors Landlord, Great Newsome Holderness Dark and Sleek Dust and Helmsley Stridding the Riding.

Our next choice was a bit of a disappointment. The BEAVER is a long narrow pub, off North Bar Within, and divided into three. The décor is turquoise and grey with a black floral carpet. The bench seats and buffets were grey and the bar turquoise panelled. This is very much a sports bar with 11 T.V. screens by my counting. Although advertised as having three beers in 'What Pub' there was just the single beer – Wainwright.



*White Horse black leaded fireplace*

Passing the church of St Mary we wandered down Hengate to one of the town's legendary pubs – WHITE HORSE. The White Horse, (a.k.a. Nellies, after a previous owner of the pub,) was originally a 17th

century coaching inn. There must be about seven or eight individual rooms and snugs, all inter connected by panelled corridors lit by gas lamps and mantles. The colour scheme throughout is best described as antique cream. The floors are either wood or uneven stone and the only one level room is the pool room. Throughout the pub are a good number of open fires. The furniture could be described as primitive. This being a Sam Smith's pub the only cask was Old Brewery bitter, unfortunately there didn't seem to be any on. But nonetheless, an absolute historic masterpiece!

Back to the beginning of our trail and next door to the Cornerhouse, on New Walkergate, is to be found the ATOM BAR. This is a very contemporary venue with equally contemporary iron and wooden furniture. The walls are a mix of bare brick and white and grey painted and the floor is stone flagged. It is very light and airy and perhaps, because of this, there is a great collection of house plants. The bar is a strange breeze block effect and is keg dominated, with probably a dozen keg fonts and only one cask dispenser. This turned out to be a nice rye stout from the Atom brewery in Hull – Atom Kelvin.

We must have visited about 20 pubs throughout the afternoon and ended up having a drink in only six. A goodly number did not open until 3pm. or 4pm. and a fair few others had only one or two beers. Dinnertime supping on a weekday seems to be becoming more of a problem unless you are in a city centre or large town and one I don't see improving in the near future, if at all!

The next day, on our way home, Paul took us through some Wolds villages in search of a couple of pubs he thought looked interesting. The pubs had been checked on 'What Pub' and they opened at 12.00pm. The first we arrived at 12.50pm and the doors were locked shut, (a notice board informed us it would open at 4.00pm. The second we reached at 2.00pm. with the same result. Fortunately we had another in mind.)

Not two miles from the town of Market Weighton, in the village of Goodmanham, is the GOODMANHAM ARMS. The village has population of less than 200

## BEVERLEY

and the pub stands adjacent to the grade II listed All Hallows church, the original of which stood on the site of a pagan temple. The village itself appears in the Domesday Book of 1086.



Goodmanham Arms

The pub is modest, detached and built of brick. In the yard to the side is a micro-brewery, All Hallows brewery, and a courtyard for outdoor drinking, with further to the rear, a beer garden. Internally there are three distinct rooms and bar area with stools. It is full of wonderfully old rustic furniture. Benches, chairs and tables, no two alike. Every room filled with memorabilia and ephemera, agricultural implements, tools, kitchenware, a collection of dinky toys, even a motorbike, part BSA, part Norton. (For those of an age think of the old Bowling Green in Otley.) In the two front rooms open fires blazed merrily and on one a large pot of gravy sat on the iron range, (for the roast dinners!) The flooring was a mix of tiles and stone flags. The ancientness shone through the dimly lit atmosphere of smoke and candles.

Disappointingly, there were no All Hallows beers on the bar so we contented ourselves with Theakstons Bitter and Old Peculier, Small World Home from Holme, Hambleton Stallion, Ossett White Rat and Yorkshire Blonde and Pennine Last Drop. A fine end to a pleasant couple of days.

R.I.P.



### Why our yeast needs to be locked up

You might well wonder why we lock away our yeast. Until you learn how important it is to the flavour of our beer. We use our own unique strain called, appropriately, *Taylor's Taste*. The properties of this particular yeast are vital to giving Landlord its deep and complex yet crisp and clean flavour. It's so valuable to us that every year two samples of Taylor's Taste are carefully transported to separate secret locations and stored securely under lock and key, just in case the precious yeast here at the brewery is ever compromised or damaged. It might seem over cautious, but it's *all for that taste of Taylor's*.

All for that taste of Taylor's





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# A CURRENT HISTORY OF BREWERIES IN BEER MATS

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## TARTARUS BEERS

Tartarus Beers are another example of something good coming out of the pandemic with enforced spare time being spent on fulfilling a passion.

Co owner and brewer Jack Roberts worked for Northern Monk before being furloughed from Brew York during the pandemic. By this time Jack was already using a nano brewing kit at home, and used the unexpected free time to take the plunge into commercial brewing on a larger scale.



By February 2021 Tartarus was born (Greek term for the Underworld/dungeon of torment and suffering for the wicked), and within 8 months this had grown sufficiently for Jordan Orpen (Jack's partner) to join in the venture, and for them to cuckoo brew at larger sites.



In November 2022 just 13 months later the business had sufficiently taken off for even more ambitious plans to take fruit. North Brew were moving from their original site at Taverners Walk (just behind North Street) to a much

larger site at Springwell Works just off Meanwood/Buslingthorpe Roads. Jack and Jordan saw an opportunity, and moved into the old site complete with taproom.

The greatly increased capacity gave them the chance to produce more European and strong styles of beer as well as to experiment with barrel aged products. Their beers have sci-fi/fantasy names with artwork to match, and the cans are worth buying for the artwork itself never mind the contents!

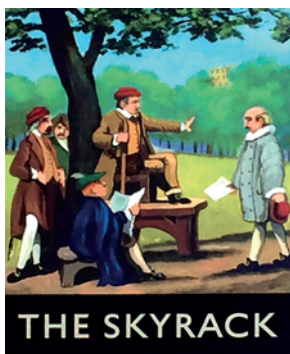


Their canned beers are available from a wide range of stockists (see site for details) or can be had in person from their brewery tap which opens on Fridays from 5pm to 10pm, and Saturdays from 2pm to 10pm (check site in case of changes). The tap is at Unit 6 Taverners Walk, Sheepscar Grove, Leeds LS7 1AH, (& on Saturdays Bini brewery tap is open just across the road as well).

The brewery have also recently issued their first beer mat, and both sides of the mat are shown here together with a photo of the tap room.

Well worth a visit, and definitely not a site of torment and suffering except after last orders!

Keith Sunderland



**THE SKYRACK**

*Skyrack, St Michaels Road,  
Headingley, Leeds, W Yorkshire*



*General Elliott, Vicar Lane,  
Leeds, W Yorkshire*



*Botanist, Boar Lane,  
Leeds, W Yorkshire*

# Save our Inn Signs



Founded in 1990, the Inn Sign Society raises awareness of the nation's pub signs and compiles a record for the benefit of future generations. Many pub names have links with events from the past or personalities of national and local importance, and the Society provides a forum for members to research the history of inns and pub names.

It has an active web site and a quarterly full-colour journal to which members are encouraged to submit articles, pictures of pub signs and news from their areas.

As inns and pubs close at an alarming rate, much local heritage is in danger of being lost forever. Pubs are not just a place to enjoy a drink, they are often at the heart of the community and can reflect its history.

Many members take a general interest in all signs, with some specialising in particular breweries, counties, aircraft or railways, to name but a few.

The local Midlands Group meets three or four times a year at the Mare & Colt, near Kidderminster, to enjoy a lunch followed by a slideshow of pub signs.

The Inn Sign Society is seeking to recruit more members and bring in new blood to help continue the good work done over the last 32 years.

For more information, including on how to join, see the website at [innsignsociety.com](http://innsignsociety.com)

If the Inn Sign Society doesn't research, capture and save our pub sign heritage, perhaps no-one else will.

**Iain Perks**

*Membership Secretary  
Inn Sign Society*

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We salute our advertisers and you can do the same by visiting them.

Why not say you found them in Beer Leeds at the same time?





## Warren Yabsley has again been exploring an area that's lesser known for its pubs

**Spoiler alert: *There isn't much!***

Given the infamous Gyratory, I can't resist saying you might choose to circle around Armley rather than visit if you're only interested in cask beer. Will the Editor let such a poor attempt at humour be printed?

Where there's a conurbation, it's always debatable where one area ends and another begins. For this article, I'll start at Travellers Rest near Armley Hill Top Cemetery then head down towards Farnley Reservoir before generally heading east to Armley town centre.

At the time of 'research' – and I do classify it as such given the paucity of cask beer – on a Friday in early February it was still cold and dark quite early. A planned mid-week visit had to be aborted due to extremely heavy rain. You still get wet when cycling despite being in full waterproofs and the gear makes you highly conspicuous, which is not helped by having a strong Cornish accent and drinking halves!

So, an early finish at work was specifically required together with a doubling of the minimum cycling distance to take a photo of each pub whilst there was still light then returning to have a swift half. This explains why timings aren't contiguous between consecutive pubs in the article.

### Travellers Rest

(Hill Top Road, First 16/16A, outside)



The pub was very busy though it was 5pm on a Friday. There was a mixture of solos, couples, small groups of various ages and families (children welcome until 9pm) with many taking advantage of very competitively priced food. For example, two meals for £11.49 and two-course seniors' meals for £5.49.

I'd say there was once separate rooms, perhaps four, that have been opened up though distinct areas remain. Standard, somewhat generic Greene King décor is present throughout though it was warm and cosy with old pictures of Leeds on the walls together with short histories, such as for Armley Mills.

The rear left area hosts a pool table and unusually three dart boards including one at a reduced height for children, which I've never seen before.

Outside, a covered seating area is to the side with a large space at the front complete with many benches and artificial grass.

Butcombe Bitter and Greene King IPA and Yardbird were the cask beers available. The 10% discount for CAMRA members, available in many managed Greene King pubs, is prominently displayed beside the bar and I was pleased to see membership leaflets in a stand prominently displayed near the entrance.

Thank you for encouraging pub-goers to join an organisation that campaigns for pubs and therefore all those who visit, irrespective of whether they drink cask beer.

## ALE AROUND ARMLEY

### Nook

(Heights Drive, First 15, 1 min walk. 12 min walk from Travellers Rest)

This estate pub has one of the least inviting exteriors of any I've visited and there's no apparent activity when heading for the small entrance on the building end because the main room is on the far side that looks down the hill. The swinging pub sign is so worn all I could make out was John Smith's.

I thought there was a 'tinned-up' door inside the entranceway but after passing through a spartan area containing a pool table to reach the small, main room I realised the piece of galvanise was part of the design. Surprisingly, the interior is quite pleasant with modern 'spider' lighting and wooden strip flooring, ceiling and walls. Many Leeds United Football Club flags are present.

The bar hosts one handpull but it isn't in use. While ordering a half of generic, keg cider a regular asked – twice – if I was in the police then not believing me asked if I worked for the council as he hadn't seen me before.

Given the location and exterior I'm not surprised there isn't much passing trade.

### Main Line Social Club

(Pudsey Road, First 4/4F, 1 min walk. 6 min walk from Nook)



According to WhatPub at the time of my tour two cask beers were available. However, as it's a club and you needed to buzz to gain entry, I didn't venture in. As always, any updates via WhatPub are much appreciated.

### Brick

(Tong Road. First 4/4F and 15. 13 min walk from Main Line Social Club)



This traditionally furnished pub retains its two small, separate rooms – the Bar to the left and Lounge to the right – that have distinct décor and a connecting bar that is bereft of handpulls.

The Lounge has patterned carpet and cloth fixed seating whereas the Bar has wooden strip flooring and green, leather-styled fixed seating. Additionally, there are some black and white photos on the green tartan wallpapered or neutrally painted walls together with a dart board and multiple trophies.

Both the temperature and welcome were warm and despite not being particularly busy at 6.30pm there was much conversation between the regulars, who were primarily solos, of various ages.

### Commercial

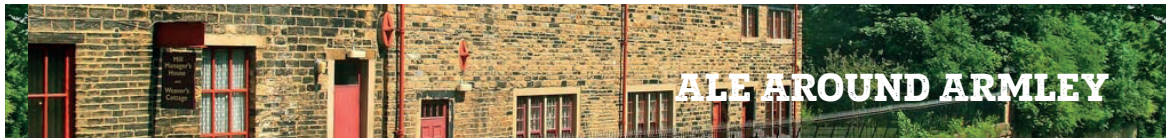
(Whingate/Wortley Road crossroads.

First 15 and 16/16A, 2 and 4 min walk, respectively. 8 min walk from Brick. 12 min walk from Travellers Rest)

Although this is a Craft Union pub it's without the distinctive black signs with white, block capital text that, I believe, are indicative of managed premises.

I mentioned in my Wortley to Farnley article (Beer Leeds, Autumn 2023, issue 8) the same applied to Hanover Arms. Regarding the Craft Union brand, the Stonegate Pub Partners website reveals the company "partner[s] with over 500 self-employed pub operators, supporting them as they run brilliant wet-led





community locals” and the pubs have “an emphasis on sport, entertainment and community work.”



I agree with the intent of the latter quote given many regulars said hello and/or a had a quick conversation with familiar faces (and smoothed their dogs), including some who had just finished manual work, as they passed enroute to the toilet or outside to smoke. It was busy on my visit at 6pm and there was lots of chatting.

The L-shaped bar is ahead as you enter with a few tables either side of the entrance with some more to the left side though it's not a large venue. The outside area to the rear is large with some being covered.

The décor, though quite neutral in colour and design, is well appointed, which combined with a warm temperature added to a nice atmosphere.

## Amalfi Bar

(Opposite Commercial)



Prior to my visit, the name of this premises on WhatPub indicated it was a restaurant and wine bar so I hadn't anticipated visiting. However, signs have been replaced and it now has similarities with a micropub though without cask beer. It was warm and there are neutral-coloured painted walls and a dark flagged tiled floor.

I couldn't put my finger on it, whether it was the shape, size, design or décor, but it didn't feel as cosy or conducive to chatting as you'd expect given half a dozen tables are positioned against the walls with adjacent inward facing chairs to stimulate conversation. An excellent 1960s music channel was playing on the TV at a pleasant background volume. Although my heart lies with hard dance music and I still rave until dawn at club nights every few months(!), I really like the simple beats and clear lyrics of '60s music.

The music fitted well with the slightly older, well-spoken, friendly barman who apologised that Sam Smith's XXXX Best had run out earlier in the day. Instead, I plumped for the brewery's Sovereign Bitter. The large blackboard showed prices for generic keg beers and lagers that were akin to the very competitive ones across the road with the aforementioned Sam's beers being £2.30 and £2.60 pint, respectively.

## Star

(Tong Road. First 4/4F, 1 min walk. 7 min walk from Commercial/Amalfi Bar)



On first viewing it reminded me of Engine, Gardeners Arms and Prospect in Hunslet where you enter the building on the side under the gable end of the roof. When looking at the whole building, it is much larger than expected despite the pub area being a reasonable size.



## ALE AROUND ARMLEY

The single room is warm and pleasantly furnished with strong grey colouration throughout of various shades. Around the edge is fixed seating together with wooden tables and stools.

The area to the right rear has wooden strip flooring and I'd assume normally contains a pool table. Cues, together with a dart board, were on a shelf with locals commenting on this so I'd say it was a temporary arrangement.

Given it was 7.30pm it was quiet with only a dozen people present. A disco was taking place, though for better or worse it wasn't at more than a loud background level.

As per Golden Fleece (the next pub), a slightly older woman served me who I assumed was the landlady. If my assumption is correct, I wonder whether the pubs will close when they retire as I don't foresee the businesses being particularly profitable now and with little potential to substantially change this.

### Golden Fleece

(Upper Wortley Road. First 4/4F, 5 min walk. 4 min walk from Star)



Striking yellow is the colour of exterior signs as per the illustration of a weighed sheep.

Of the two rooms, only the one on the right is used, which is large and primarily open plan. The rear section is generally unused with an unlit dance floor area. Given the size there are surprisingly few tables though this wasn't an issue given it was quiet on my visit around 7pm with regulars congregating around the small seating area opposite the small bar. Quite a few well-behaved children were present with their parents and/or grandparents.

Upon approaching the bar that is without cask beer, I was informed payment was by cash only. Although this is now unusual, I always carry cash and cards as I understand it's not always practical or financially viable to accept both. Irrespective, the business has to absorb fees for processing card payments or depositing money.

That said, let's not forget many more modern establishments in Leeds city centre are card only despite purporting to be places of diversity and inclusion. There is a strong relationship between usage of cash and socio-economic status, with the poorest in society favouring cash and the more affluent preferring card. Whether as an individual or business, I often find diversity and inclusion measures are followed only if they fit the desired agenda rather than being truly and holistically implemented.

Conscious I'm starting on a rant, let's get back to the pub.

As per Star, there is a strong grey colour scheme to the interior. Of interest is the grey painted fireplace that extends almost to the ceiling despite the area for the fire itself being small (and now not in use).

In the corner where I sat were photos of Gemini Scooter Club's previous outings and a list of upcoming monthly runs.

There is a very large, unused carpark that sadly makes the pub even more susceptible to demolition and being replaced with low-rise flats.

### White Horse

(Town Street. First 15/16/16A/86, 1 min walk. 6 min walk from Star/10 min walk from Golden Fleece)

Heading now to the heart of Armley and a second Craft Union pub without distinctive black signs is encountered.

Now, this was a first for me in a pub, a full frisk by bouncers with a metal detector scanned over my whole body.

Initially, I was taken aback but upon reflection if there are endemic problems – and a number of schools across the country now enforce similar measures to prevent incidents – it makes sense to ensure evenings are trouble free.



Everyone, consisting of a broad age range, was in good spirits at 8pm enjoying the disco and karaoke with engaging DJ in the left area/room. It seemed that at some point nearly all the clientele nipped outside for a smoke.

I assume that originally there was a room either side of a central corridor, all of which have been opened up. The area/room to the right has a neutral, light brown colour scheme, fixed seating against all four walls and quiet TVs showing sporting events. A couple of solo older chaps, non-plussed by the entertainment, were settled here.

The bar is in the left area/room and there were a couple of handpulls on show, one of which was sporting a Timothy Taylor Landlord pumpclip at 90 degrees. Upon asking its availability, the friendly barman said it had been trialled but too much had to be thrown away.

Landlord is one of the most expensive 'standard' cask beers with the brewery apparently unwilling to compromise on the highest quality ingredients, which makes it a surprising offering in many Craft Union pubs given their bargain basement pricing policy.

Said beer and brewery are held in very high regard amongst many cask beer drinkers but I wonder whether the reputation of both is being diminished by being stocked in pubs where cask beer isn't the primary focus. The reputation of Leeds Brewery suffered a decade ago when Leeds Pale was available in many pubs where the required care and attention was not applied.

Food – or should that be beer – for thought!

## Malt Shovel

(Crab Lane/Stocks Hill junction.

First 15/16/16A/86, 2 min walk.

5 min walk from White Horse)



The large single room Greene King pub has many distinct areas with pillars and semi-walls present, I'm assuming inherited from when it had separate rooms. The handpull-free bar is directly ahead from the entrance.

At 8.30pm it was busy and lively with a mixed age range comprised of solos to small groups though without 'riff raff' and a couple of families were still present.

I sat in a small, raised area to the right of the entrance that had some modern black and white photos of landmarks in Leeds. As per most of the pub, this area was carpeted. Here, it had a checked blurry design that would not have been conducive if you'd had too many beers given it induced feelings of drunkenness and a spinning room when sober!

Most of the areas are to the left of the entrance and contain a TV showing sports with one area hosting a pool table that is free on Mondays. Pub-grub that is similarly priced to Travellers Rest can be enjoyed throughout though the kitchen closes earlier.

## Summary

These pubs aren't the classiest and cask beer is a rarity but they're very important to local communities. Should these pubs close, the effect will be widely felt with detrimental impact on the social interaction and mental wellbeing of numerous residents combined with lessening of community spirit.

## APPOINTMENT WITH B.E.E.R!

### APRIL

Tuesday 9th 7:30pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting at the Midnight Bell, Leeds.

### MAY

Tuesday 7th May 7:30pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting at the Fox & Newt, Burley.

### JUNE

Saturday 1st

City centre Social, meet 2pm, details TBC.

Tuesday 4th 7:30pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting at the Doghouse Bar & bagel shop.

Times, dates and venues are subject to change. Check the website and social media for confirmation of events.

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# — The Best Festivals — —— for Dark Beer ——

**Warren Yabsley, a big fan of dark beers, provides information on his two top events, both of which are in Halifax.**

## 'Are you a CAMRA member?'

This is the question I've been posed more than once when ordering a beer in a pub and, having been taken aback, replied 'have I got that stereotypical look?'

I ran through the tick list in my mind. Beard, yes. Age, no (I'm 40). Belly, no. Socks and sandals, no (however, at weekends I'm always in hiking gear so with regards to being unfashionable, yes).

To my relief, I've been informed 'no, the giveaway was ordering a half of dark beer.'

Mild, porter, stout and – especially – imperial/very strong stout is what I like so two beer festivals in Halifax are the highlight of my beer calendar.

These are the Halifax & Calderdale CAMRA Beer Festival held at Dean Clough Mill and 'Back in Black' at Victorian Craft Beer Café.



# Halifax & Calderdale CAMRA Beer Festival

This superb event has approximately 50 beers so it's not a large event by CAMRA standards but with 20 of these being dark it has more available than many festivals that are two, three or even four times the size.

And these 20 aren't 'standard'. The majority are wooden barrel aged and normally one of only a handful that have received this special maturation meaning it's unlikely you'll have opportunity to sample the beer anywhere else.

Then there are some beers specially commissioned by the festival, with the same implication.

The alcohol by volume (ABV) ranges from low to high so whether you're a supper of session strength or a sipper of super strength, there's something for you.

Much credit for the range must go to John Hartley who orders the beer. All are sourced direct from the brewery meaning no wholesalers are used and he has a knack of convincing breweries to brew something different for the festival. This all takes a lot of extra time and effort, which shouldn't be underestimated (as per all aspects of organising a beer festival).



## The Best Festivals for Dark Beer

### 'Back in Black' at Victorian Craft Beer Café



2023 saw the seventh annual 'Back in Black' four-day festival, which advertises 16 cask and 18 keg beers. A pop-up bar in the corner dispenses six cask beers whilst a further nine are available from handpulls on the bar.

The tenth handpull continues to serve a fruit-flavoured cider from Lilley's – the only non-dark draught product available – with the printed beer menu description being 'sadly, not a dark beer'.

You may have noticed  $9 + 6 = 15$  rather than 16. But don't despair, this is the number available at any one time. I visited on each of the four evenings and noticed 31 cask beers were available in total.

Most ran out after 24-48 hours so you need to be quick if there are any you really want to try. The standard strength ones on the main bar go quickest. If a barrel is emptied a replacement is provided seemingly within minutes.

The keg beers don't hang around for long either with over 25 being available across the event and single figures left on Sunday evening. I tried five from six of the 12.2-15.0% barrel-aged or flavoured stouts from Norway's Lervig.

The large blackboard beside the bar provides details of all the beers currently available with a printed list updated daily, copies of which are normally positioned at the end of the bar. You need to be in the pub to discover what's on as no list is published online in advance or during the event.

Although the price for a third is shown only for the most expensive brews, this measure is available for all cask and keg beers.

### But how did it start?

In jest, apparently. The concept of a pub only serving dark beer on draught was mentioned flippantly because it wouldn't be sensible or financially viable.

However, the idea stuck though I doubt there are many, if any, other pubs that would have taken such a gamble.

I was informed by a member of bar staff that the Saturday of the 2023 festival had the highest daily takings since the pub opened, and to clarify this wasn't just a festival day but of any day.

As previously alluded, there is very little information online about the event – nothing on the website and only a couple of generic posts on social media so finding out about it is mainly through noticing the pub's advert in The Pub Paper (a free, weekly publication for Calderdale), seeing flyers in the pub/aforementioned CAMRA Beer Festival or word of mouth.

I've certainly promoted it to fellow dark beer fans and in a previous year one of my friends in the Long Distance Walkers Association purposely arranged a group walk to start and finish at the pub.

Bar staff members said they were surprised that a customer came especially from Scotland for the event and stayed overnight. But should they be surprised?

Beer tourism is a big thing, albeit much undervalued. People travel great distances for a day or weekend to tour pubs in a town or city that has a great beer selection and/or visit a CAMRA Beer Festival.

If people love dark beer, 'Back in Black' is their heaven and they will make a special effort to attend.

If that's you, pop details in your diary or calendar now for 2024: Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December.

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