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SUMMER 2026

ISSUE 19

FREE



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BEER LEEDS

SUMMER 2026

ISSUE 19

Hello and welcome to this Summer issue of Beer Leeds.

Over the last few months our Branch members have been joining regulars in the pubs to celebrate those awarded Pub of the Year and Pub of the Season, we got a photo of the presentations.

Nationally, the Champion Beer of Britain was announced at Cambridge Beer Festival.

The National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) has been updated, instead of a numerical scale the words "Undrinkable", "Poor", "Acceptable", "Good", "Very Good" and "Excellent" will appear along with new descriptions, details in the magazine.

Articles include a winter visit to Leeds, the latest on Samuel Smiths pubs, a visit to the Isle of Man and a day trip to London. My thanks to all those who provide content for this magazine.

As always keep supporting your local pubs and clubs, scoring beers and enjoy the summer, hopefully the country will get good weather.

Cheers

Nigel Halton
Editor



Previous editions
available online



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PUB & BREWERY NEWS

PUB NEWS

Pub openings to report since April are the **City Taproom** and the **Smithfield** in the city centre.

The **City Taproom** on Sovereign St is run by Kirkstall brewery and has 2 cask ales dispensed from taps on the wall along with more of their products on keg. Food by Little Bao Boy.

The **Smithfield** (was the Reliance) is a partnership of Crooked Brewing and chef James Donovan. They continue the theme of a relaxed dining and drinking experience, 2 cask ales, Smithfield Pale from Crooked Brewing and a local guest ale along with a constantly changing menu.



The **Bay Horse** in Otley has re-opened under new ownership, it now sells several Craven Brewery beers as well as a guest ale.



The **Arch Bar** in Stanningley is another new opening, 2 cask ales on the bar

Further pubs reported as re-opened are the **Owl** at Rodley and the **West End House** at Kirkstall although the latter has closed again which may be temporary.

Pubs that have closed are the **Fleece** in Otley citing increased costs and **Editors Draught** in Leeds (this being the place where Leeds CAMRA was formed).

BREWERY NEWS

TARTARUS BEERS

Their taproom is closed permanently as they are using the space for increased production.

Cask Pantheon - This is a new range of cask only beers which focuses on traditional British styles. They can be described as a 'no frills' range with a simple name/design and brewed with simple ingredients (malt, hops & yeast) with no adjuncts involved.

They launched the pantheon range with 001 - 4.5% Oatmeal Stout, 002 - 4% Citra Pale and 003 - 3.4% Classic Bitter at the beginning of May.

They were overwhelmed with the response and sold out almost immediately so plan on releasing a new cask as part of the Pantheon range every month.



PICLOVE BREWING

They have also released their first cask ale called Kaan, a 4.4% hazy pale ale.

BOSUN'S BREWERY

They are moving out of the site at Wetherby and into a new premises in Wetherby. They are actively searching for somewhere to open a craft tap/bar.

On the brewery front they are delighted to announce the arrival of Bryn Kitchen as their head brewer. Bryn has industry experience with a number of breweries. His first brew is their world cup celebration beer, Stateside Kane which is a session pale ale.

SUNBEAM ALES

Nigel's 4.8% Chocolate Mild was voted best Mild at Bradford Camra beer festival. He has brewed a new strong Blonde ale at 6% with Saaz hops and Belgian yeast to be called Tyke Blonde.

NORTHERN MONK

We are seeing more of their cask ales in pubs with Faith and also SUP regularly on some bars.

HORSFORTH BREWERY

"Gathering wood" an export stout won best stout at the Kirkstall exhibition festival, look out for that as well as "Range of light" a 5% American Pale brewed using whole cone UK hops.

Their "Brewed in Leeds" festival will be held over the August Bank Holiday weekend and highlights most local breweries, a good opportunity to try beers not always seen around the city.

ANTHOLOGY BREWING

Liam has brewed his 600th beer, a 6% West Coast IPA and has an 8th anniversary beer lined up.

TRUTH HURTS BREWERY

We have a couple of new beers out

Truth On The Chin 4.5%

We invited David over from Chin Chin for our 3rd collaboration. This classic American Pale ale is brewed using pale, extra pale, Vienna and oat malt, then hopped with the fantastic El Dorado, Comet and Citra hops.



Bee True 4.1%

Smooth and easy drinking blonde, brewed using American and Slovenian hops to impart a citrus hop character, then infused with honey to give a nice sweet aroma and finish.



They have a brand new Kolsch 4.5% in the fermentation vessel, limited amount of cask will be available as well as keg.

Since taking over they have had a rebrand, renovation of the brewery and tap, and made upgrades to the brewery.

They are planning on having a trade day in September, date to be confirmed, but we will be inviting pubs over to come and try out beer,

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Pub of the Year



Old Cock, Otley

The Old Cock has won this award several times having first achieved success in 2010 and then winning it 4 times since then. In a market town with many good pubs this is one to go to whenever visiting. The choice of 9 cask ales always offer something varied along with a real cider. The Easter and October beer festivals have beers from areas of the UK and are well attended. Here's Lisa holding the award with some of the team alongside our Branch members.

APPOINTMENT WITH B.E.E.R!

JULY

Thursday 2nd: 7:30pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting at the
Gaping Goose, Garforth.

AUGUST

Tuesday 4th: 7:30pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting at
Against the Grain, Stanningley.

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday 1st: 7:30pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting at
Victoria F & C Hotel, Leeds.

OCTOBER

Tuesday 6th: 7:30pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting at
Three Swords in Guiseley.

<https://leeds.camra.org.uk/diary>
<https://www.facebook.com/leedsrealale>
<https://twitter.com/leedscamra>

Spring Pub of the Season



Abbey Inn, Newlay

The Abbey Inn at Newlay won the voting for Spring Pub of the Season. It is a former stone built farm house near the River Aire and has a selection of local ales to offer. It has a good rapport with the local community holding regular events including the well established annual beer and music festival in July. Helen and her team made everyone welcome at the award ceremony.

AND THEN THERE WERE *EIGHT*

(first of a two part article on Sam Smith's pubs in our area)

A few weeks ago (from writing this in May), I learned that the Valley Inn in Drighlington had been closed by Sam Smith's Brewery. It was not a pub I had been in too many times as it was on the opposite side of Leeds to me. However I recalled that it served hand pulled Old Brewery Bitter from the wood, and had details of a nearby Civil War battle on the walls.

I decided to visit the premises, and sure enough it was boarded up with boulders across the car park. That got me thinking as to just how many Sam Smiths pubs in our area had been closed in recent years due to the strict rulings of its owners. After a bit of research I came up with 24 Smith's pubs in the Leeds CAMRA area of which 16 or two thirds were now shut.

The eight that have (so far) survived are as follows:-

ANGEL

A city centre alleyway pub just off Briggate that was a pub back in the 1890's, and probably before. It closed in 1908 before Sam Smith's bought it, and restored it to its original design in 2000. The pub has an old feel to it with traditional small rooms, and a small bar to the right of the entrance. It serves hand pulled Old Brewery Bitter along with a keg selection which includes a mild.



Brown Hare

BROWN HARE

On Harehills Lane, and the most modern of the pubs here (see photo). I am indebted to the regulars there who tell me the pub was built in 1978 following the demolition of a row of three cottages. On entry to the pub there is a large L shaped room with a bar containing a large selection of keg products from which I had the dark mild (£2.80 a pint). A connecting corridor leads to a similar back room with an empty bar, and a dart board.

EMMOTT ARMS

Town Street, Rawdon. This was a pub I had not visited before, and had originally missed off the list. It is a stone built inn dating from around 1780, and acquired by Smith's in 1933 (see photo). It has two entrances side by side with the right hand one leading into a stone flagged tap room with an old oven range, and a dartboard. The bar is back to back with the other side, and a narrow winding corridor leads through to the left hand side. This is a carpeted lounge with a more modern fireplace, and two large bay windows. I was pleased to find it served hand pulled OBB from the wood at £3.60 per pint.



Emmott Arms, Rawdon

AND THEN THERE WERE *EIGHT*.....

FOUNTAIN

Queen Street in Morley. This was a former Duttons (Blackburn) pub until Smith's acquired it in 1949. Again this is an unrestored pub with a maze of interconnecting rooms off a central bar. A vast array of trophies fill the shelves together with framed autographed Leeds Rhinos shirts. The beers are all keg, but again include a mild.

FOX & HOUNDS

Situate on the main street in Boston Spa this grade II listed pub was formed when three Georgian cottages were knocked together. I don't know the date, but a trout in a glass case from 1905 hangs above the fireplace. The pub also serves hand pulled Old Brewery Bitter from the wood, and a keg selection of other beers including a mild.

GENERAL ELLIOTT

Another Grade II listed building on Vicar Lane opposite Kirkgate Market (see photograph). It was named after a distinguished general of the late 1700's, and probably was built not long after. It was certainly listed as a pub in 1817, and is another example of a pretty unchanged pub. It was owned by McQuats brewery (Meadow Lane, Leeds) as were a few of the Sam Smith's pubs which they took over along with the brewery in 1947. There is a single room downstairs with a bar, and an upstairs room with a bar which may or may not be in use. The pub serves an array of keg beers including mild and bitter.



General Elliott

HAREWOOD ARMS

Situated in Harewood on the main road to Harrogate from Leeds, and a stone's throw from Harewood House. It was an old coaching inn dating from 1810, and there is a stable block behind the hotel which has now been converted into hotel rooms. The place has an old fashioned feel about it with leather settees, and old photos on the walls. The offerings are all on keg.

STATION HOTEL

Hillidge Road, Hunslet. This was another pub I had never been to before, and took a bit of finding. It has been a pub since at least 1918, and named after an old railway station now gone. The bar is situated in a right hand room off the corridor which leads to a back room including a pool table. The walls are adorned with old black and white photos of the area and past rugby league players. The beers are all on keg.

In the second article in the next edition I will go through the 16 pubs currently shut, and also comment on the brewery's strategy, and its merits.

Fun fact – Samuel Smiths proclaim they are Yorkshire's oldest brewery since 1758, but what's in a word? Sam Smiths actually started brewing in 1886 when the empty premises were left to them by a relative in charge of John Smiths brewery. John Smiths had moved to larger premises nearby having themselves acquired the previous building from Backhouse & Hartley who had been brewing there since 1758. Thus the premises are the oldest brewery in Yorkshire, but both John Smiths and even Timothy Taylors (1858) having been brewing for longer.

Keith Sunderland



A Stormy Weekend in Leeds

By Fiona Monteith Preston

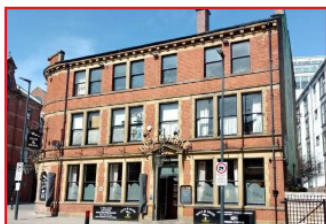
In the depths of January, on the tail of Storm Goretti, with snow and rain forecast, trying to get back to normal after the excesses of Christmas, the obvious thing to do would be a weekend trip to Leeds, right? Right??. Newcastle Central Station at 7am on a Saturday morning is a pretty cold and bleak place, but with a Greggs bacon butty and a cuppa inside, things didn't look quite so bad. The train departed on time and we shared the space with several Sunderland fans off to their FA Cup tie in Liverpool (and who started on the tinnies of beer as soon as the train started moving – and it wasn't Real Ale in a Bottle, or anything even vaguely like it) – it all seemed like a pretty great idea.

To be honest, it was a decade or so ago since I tried any of the pubs in Leeds and my memories of them were pretty mixed, but we had put the CAMRA app to good use and chosen a couple of days' worth of pubs that were either in the Good Beer Guide (GBG), had scored well on beer scores or had historic interiors (or a mixture of all three).

Staying pretty central – what we felt we could comfortably fit in at a leisurely pace in the two days – we put together two loops – one VERY central, near the station and the other slightly more circuitous. At the last minute, we decided to swap these around due to the rain that was forecast on the Sunday (we thought shorter walks between pubs might be the better option

in the rain and it turned out to be correct given Sunday's downpour).

The train arrived on time and we made our way to the first port of call the curiously named **Wapentake** (rhymes with "bake" and is apparently an old Yorkshire word). A café/ bar type place, which had a really lovely vibe and had three beers on tap. My East London Five Points and my other half's (OH's) Theakston's Thirst Quencher were both in excellent condition and set a high bar for the beer quality for the weekend.



Duck and Drake

Next was the excellent **Duck and Drake** less than a minute away. This has the largest selection of cask ale on tap in Leeds- I counted 15 available and the ones we had were in very good condition. Bradfield's Farmer's Blonde and Wilde Child Cape Flattery for me and Vocation Victoria Porter and Wilde Child Coffee Porter for him indoors.

A quick coffee stop before arriving at the **Templar** - a Greene King, GBG, Grade 2 listed, traditional pub which had 6 hand pulls on (I made the mistake of not spotting all of them before ordering a Greene King IPA – it was in good condition

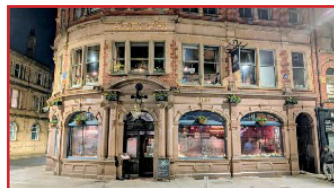
but fairly bland compared to some of the other beers available). OH had an Acorn Barnsley Bitter, which hit the spot.



Templar

Next was the polar opposite **North Bar** – one of the first micro bars in the North, opening in 1997. This has a much more modern interior, with an excellent selection of beers nonetheless- our choices here were Thornbridge Made North and Ilkley Great Minds.

We had planned to go to the famous **Whitelocks Ale House** next, but on opening the door, there was not even room for a small one- so tightly were people shoehorned in- one for the next day. Instead, we checked in to our hotel and took the short walk across the River Aire to our final pub of the day - the spectacular **Adelphi**.



Adelphi

On CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic pubs, and rightly so, this Victorian pub was absolutely

A Stormy Weekend in Leeds

gorgeous and a fitting end to the day, where we both opted for Leeds Pale Ale from the interesting corridor bar.

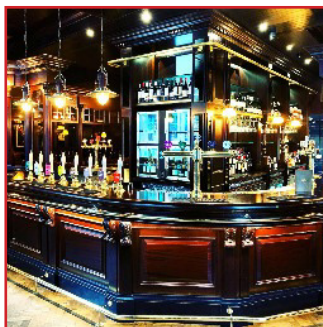
Sunday dawned – as forecast – very wet and we were grateful to only have short distances between pubs today. First up- we tried **Whitelocks Ale House** again, shortly after opening time and not only could we get in, but we scored for a seat. Amazing looking place, with mirrors everywhere and a bar set up that gave the impression that all the bar staff were seven feet tall. A Kirkstall Pale Ale for me and a Theakston's Old Peculiar for the OH set the day up well before heading back out into the rain.



Whitelocks Ale House

The **Bankers Cat** was next - A Thornbridge brewery tap, another GBG entry and with an unusual pub to bank then back to pub history. It is a CAMRA Outstanding Conversion and Restoration pub (OCR). Eight beers on handpull here, mostly from Thornbridge and the Crackendale was my beer of the trip. I also had a Kelham Island Easy Rider- a blast from the past that I haven't had in many years. Him Indoors was delighted to try their Thornbridge 1838 (brewed on their Burton Union brewing system) and a little seen Thornbridge Panela. The interior of the pub was impressive and worth a trip

downstairs to see their bank vault, which now houses a very private table and seating.



The Bankers Cat

Next up, was **Tapped Leeds**, across the road - a big industrial styled brewpub, serving several of their beers that had been brewed on the premises. I tried their Salad Days and my OH went for their Chocolate Porter. Both were excellent. Back across the road and round the corner found us at **The Head of Steam**, which although practically empty, had a great selection of beers available and looked like they had a wide selection of Belgian beers (complete with the correct glasses). However we stayed on the real ales and went for the Head of Steam Gold and the Northern Monk Sup.



Scarborough Hotel

Further round the corner saw us at our final pub of the trip- the Grade 2 listed **Scarborough Hotel**, part of the Mitchell and Butler chain. I went for the Nicholson's Pale Ale

(brewed by St Austell Brewery) and my OH finished up with one of his favourites - Titanic Plum Porter.

Overall, a very worthwhile trip and one that I would happily repeat. All pubs were worth a visit my rule of thumb is to ask myself "Would I like this pub as my local?" and it was a resounding "Yes" in every case.

The best beer selection (in very good condition) - **The Duck and Drake**.

The best overall beer for condition – Thornbridge Crackendale at **The Bankers Cat**. Best interior – **The Adelphi**, closely followed by **Whitelocks Ale House** and **The Bankers Cat**.

Given that Leeds is only a slightly further journey than that to York, it is well worth considering for a visit. As Arnie says..." I'll be back".

With thanks to Leeds CAMRA for the use of their images on the CAMRA Website:

<https://leeds.camra.org.uk/>
(The Whitelocks photo was taken by the late Geoff Brandwood, formerly of the CAMRA Pub Heritage Group).

This link gives details of the pubs in this article with relevant links to the CAMRA Pub Heritage and OCR websites.
<https://camra.org.uk/locations/branches/leeds-lee-204/>

ISLE OF MAN

An eventful start to my visit to Isle of Man saw my afternoon ferry from Heysham cancelled, transferral to Liverpool for an evening departure and eventual arrival at my hotel in Douglas about midnight. So that wiped out Saturday evening. Torrential rain up to Sunday lunchtime further curtailed my pub searches. Also, as this visit was prior to Easter a goodly number of pubs were shut on Monday and Tuesday, added to this there was a bus strike. Early afternoon I struck out into the gloomy, grey, windy and puddle filled streets of the capital.

The first pub I came across, tucked away down a narrow back street behind the town hall, was the **ROVERS RETURN**. A three room traditional, rustic style inn serving three Bushy beers and a cider. Walls wood and bare bricked with old wood flooring. Furniture is ancient setts and buffets, with iron and wood tables. The two main rooms are supplemented by a pool room. In the main room burns a blazing fire, adjacent to which is situated a dartboard. The walls display framed pictures of fire engines and appliances, old Douglas buildings and ancient pubs. The wood latticed bar, with unusual hand pumps made from the metal ends of fire hoses, serve three beers from the Bushys range. My choice was Duggane.

On the North Quay, overlooking the Douglas river and yachting marina, stands the **BRITISH HOTEL**. This is a

spacious, residential hotel, described as being of the 'Arts and Crafts style.' There is one large divided room, dining dominant, though with a small drinking section. There is a substantial, copper topped bar, behind which is an ornamental drinks cabinet, surrounded by bar stools. The walls are decorated by a number of avante-garde posters. Floors are of dark wood and walls a pale pastel shade and the furniture a modern wood selection. The two beers on sale are Okells MPA and bitter. One unusual feature is the absence of any signage on the outside of the building.



Turning left and then 1st right onto Chapel Street brings you to two adjacent pubs, the first is the **OLD MARKET INN**, This two room



establishment is supposedly the smallest pub on the island and I can believe it. I entered the front bar, there were about ten people in, and it was packed.

(It is alleged that it is so tiny to encourage conversation.) Trying the

rear bar I found a little more space, (bigger, but not much.) It is a shrine to the TT races, with framed photos, posters, stickers and a TT clock! The walls are wood clad and the furniture is red leather, heating is provided by a log burning stove. Two beers: Bushys Away with the Fairies I.P.A. and Manx Bitter. No frills or fancies.

Next door you find the **ALBERT**, traditional and unspoilt, again with two rooms, a large comfortable lounge with a pool table, the second, a narrow tap room with wood clad and pale painted walls. A central bar serves both

rooms. There are a goodly number of TV's as sport is popular. Seating is red leather benches and buffets. In the



tap room is a large picture gallery of Isle of Man steam packet ferries, merchantmen and warships. This is the nearest pub to the sea terminal and the cellars are some of oldest structures in Douglas. There is an extensive range of beers: Bushys Castletown Bitter, Okells Bitter and Odin Laksaa Pale, Dark Mild and Cascade, a brewery I had not previously sampled.

I walked past the Victoria clock and onto Loch Promenade and shortly a left turn took me onto Regent Street brought me to the **CONISTER**



ARMS, the only Wetherspoons on the island. A two floor venue, with one huge, multi-sectioned downstairs area which opened in May 2025 and was re-fitted in March 2026. Typical modern interior with varying styles of wood furniture, with occasional settees. Prices not like the mainland; ranging from £3.59 for Ruddles, up to £3.99 to the local Manx brews. The full range served: Ruddles Bitter; Greene King Abbott Ale; Sharps Doom Bar; Titanic Plum Porter; Thornbridge Jaipur I.P.A. plus Odin Laksaa Pale and Rhumsaa Bitter.

Continuing up the Loch Promenade for about 200 yards brings me to JAKS, a bright, open and very trendy pub, not usually my taste. It is a music venue, restaurant and night spot, very much a young persons venue. Furniture is ultra modern, a mix of tall and standard chairs, with tables made of industrial pipework topped with solid wood. It is also a sporting venue, with an abundance of TV's and big screen. A choice of three beers: Okells MPA and Bitter and Odin Laksaa. A bit pricey.

Touring the island took me first to Laxey, a small town which was a former mining town, with the island's only working woollen mill, the world's largest working waterwheel and Snaefell Mountain railway. As this was a.m., a bit early for a drink. (Suggested pubs: Bridge Inn - Odin x 2 + guest; Mines Tavern Okells x 3.)

The town of Ramsey is the second largest on the island and sits on the Sulby river, has an historic shipyard which built the Star of India and the world's first two ships designed as oil tankers. It is also the northern terminus of the Manx Electric Railway.



My only pub visit in Ramsey was to the TRAFALGAR, which is sited on the West Quay, overlooking the docks and fishing quay. This is a well furnished, two-room inn and carpeted throughout, with a combination of benches, buffets and chairs and wrought iron tables. The bar is painted a striking grass green and shelving features a huge collection of Toby jugs. There are a large number of Tiffany style wall lamps. The Trafalgar was a semi-finalist in the 2023 CAMRA National Pub of the Year Award. It is also has connections with the local Odin brewery and this shows with the beer selection of Odin Rhumsaa Bitter, Laksaa Pale, Dark Mild and Cascade, plus two from Bank Top brewery from Lancashire and Taylors Landlord. They have occasional beers from Kaneen, a Manx brewery I failed to find.

The following morning headed south from Douglas I headed for Castletown, another morning visit and again to early for a pint. The prettiest town, in my view, the centrepiece of which is the undamaged Rushen Castle, the Old House of Keys and picturesque

harbour. (Suggested pubs: Garrison, George, Sidings and Castle – a range of all Manx beers and guests.)



Leaving Castletown I skirted the seaside village of Port St Mary and headed for the most southerly point of the island and the seals of rocky outcrops by the craggy island - the Calf of Man. From here it was to the busy little seaside town of Port Erin.



At the end of Station Road, prominent in its position above the beach is the FALCONS NEST. This is a large residential hotel, with a recently refurbished Port Bar, along with added tearoom. This is beautifully



decorated with large mirrored panels depicting the town, stained glass plaques and ornate ceiling and wall lights and parquet flooring. There is modern seating and tables and the

contemporary bar is painted grey. Just two beers: Bushys Manx Bitter

and, perhaps surprisingly, Brass Castle Bright.

Sited opposite the railway station, the southern terminus of the Isle of Man Steam Railway is the STATION HOTEL. This is another very large residential hotel, a former coaching inn, with multiple rooms. A very stylish, traditional hotel with floors and bar dark oak stained and benches, chairs and buffets leather padded. Adjoining the multi-level main lounge is a large separate dining room. The pale grey walls are decorated with pictures of the town and the railway. A range of three Okells beers: Okells Bitter, MPA and a very nice Smoked Porter.

The road from Port Erin to Peel is mountainous, narrow, undulating

and serpentine and on my journey shrouded in fog and happily 40 minutes later arrived in Peel with its ruined castle and cathedral on St Patrick's island and a second cathedral in the town centre and streets of colourful cottages.



Sitting on Marine Parade, with views of Peel Bay and the castle, is the MARINE HOTEL. This is a four room sea front hotel, with a lounge to the left and a narrow corridor bar on the

right, (there is also a separate large restaurant and pool room.) Both bars are carpeted throughout, with the corridor bar a combination of benches, window seats and buffets. Real fires are to be found in both bars. The bar is a solid, light wood structure and there is a dartboard in the far end. Three beers Odin Laksaa Pale and Rhumsaa Bitter and Bushys Castletown Bitter.

A brief holiday where I managed far fewer pub than I would like, but all-in-all the quality and range of Manx beers were very good. Though I would advise to leave any visit until the Easter holiday.

R.I.P.

How's your cask beer?

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

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London Walkable City

As Christmas gives way to the new year, January brings with it sore livers, dark nights and cheap train tickets to London. LNER tend to start the year with the offer of £30 returns to London from Leeds, to fill the trains during the post-festive slump. With trains taking a little over two hours, a day trip to London offers a chance of scene and to get up to date with the capitals ever changing pub scene.

Visiting London, people often overlook how walkable it is; while the temptation to jump on the tube and visit far flung corners is real, this trip we opted for a walking focused day instead, which also suited the two dogs in our party.



Palm Tree closed

On a previous trip to London to visit all the Ye Oldes of the city, I'd picked up the recommendation to get out to The Palm Tree in Mile End Park, and as it was a simple walk along the Regent's Canal from King's Cross, it seemed a good starting point.

The 90 minute walk along the canal was a good way to stretch the legs

after the train, and an opportunity to observe the abundant water birds and the more exotic ring-necked parakeets and take a look at the public art.



Regents Canal

This plan had been in place a few weeks and then the day before, The Guardian had an article about "content creators" in search of "proper boozers", that featured The Palm Tree front and centre. I had a concern about getting there to find the place swarming with hipsters in yellow beanies and skinny black trousers, a niche I wanted to fill myself, but my first impression on getting there was that it looked very quiet. There were no lights on, no benches out and that the doors were firmly locked, and it seems we'd made a 300km trip to a pub without checking the opening hours. We only got to marvel at its Georgian facade at this end terrace oasis in a park before pressing on though Victoria Park and back onto the canal to take us to Hackney Wick, to try some craft breweries, starting with the day's first pint at Crate Bar on the River Lee Navigation.



Mo at the Crate

By now I was gasping for a pint, I'd have happily paid the £6.50 for Fosters at The Palm Tree had it been open. Instead I paid £6.95 for Stout (5%), a super smooth nitro stout and Guinness stand-in that became my first outside drink of the year. For an island nation, I'm surprised how few truly waterside drinking experiences we have available, but here I couldn't have drunk much closer to the water without ending up in the drink.

Just behind Crate is Howling Hops Brewery, an industrial space with a bar backed by ten tanks brewing beer, as close to the point of serving as possible. I had a Life Coach London Stout (4.4%), a maltier pint than the previous one, but something that lacked the sparkle of a satisfying Real Ale.

Happily from here on in, it's Real Ale pubs all the way, and after a quick trip on the DLR to give one of the canine companions little legs a break,

we were in Hackney for a stop at The Cock Tavern.



Cock Tavern

The place impresses from the moment you walk in the door and with the L shaped bar offering a pleasing array of hand pulls. The well worn wooden floors, stylishly panelled bar and dark ceiling are true to the buildings 1930's design and from the moment we walked in I knew the "one and gone" plan was out of the large windows that fill the pub's single room with light.

My first Real Ale of the day was Coley's Stout (4.5%, Coley's Brewery), a roasty stout worth celebrating and even served with some head, a rare treat in these parts. I couldn't see a Titanic Brewery beer on offer and not take it, so the second pint was their Classic Mild (3.5%) which was sweet to the point of reminding me of their much loved Plum Porter.

As if having such excellent décor and beer wasn't enough, the bar snacks were also next level. When I walked in, I thought I spotted the snack I've wanted to see have its moment for years, Iranian Tea Eggs. These are eggs slow boiled for hours with teabags

until they're brown all the way though, but it turned out they were pickled eggs, but not just any pickled eggs.



Iranian eggs

Any beer left out long enough can turn into vinegar, a chemical reaction many of us have unexpectedly found ourselves on the receiving end of in the past. Here, however, it's planned and I had an egg pickled in a former imperial sour cherry porter (An Iranian flavour in itself) and porter pickled eggs were enjoyed as well.

The Cock Tavern feels a hard pub to top, but the next port of call, The Pocket in Islington, was a new pub for me and an instant favourite. The Pocket is the sister pub to the much loved Southampton Arms in Kentish Town, and as you enter through the towering glazed frontage you see that the same quality offer of craft beer, Real Ale and cider has been transplanted here as well.

It was another Howling Hops beer for me, the Stand & Deliver Dark Mild (4.5%) and it sparkled, a very enjoyable malty pint of Real Ale whose dark colour stood out, in the dimpled Britannia tankard it was served in.

We were riding high, almost giddy, with the joy of two splendid pubs in a row, but the train back to Leeds was calling, but not before one more pub. I believe in arranging a pub crawl to finish strong and happily our walk back to King's Cross took us to King Charles I for a final pint. This community run treasure, doesn't always deliver on my pint preference for dark beer with a foaming head, but it more than makes up for that, with its character and the joy that fills the room. After all, it takes it takes more that pints to make a pub. My final pint was Routemaster Red (4.2%, Southwark Brewing), the darkest thing on offer, with hops that offer tropical, fruity notes.



King Charles

Travelling back to Leeds and reflecting the day out I thought about how broad my horizons would be if trains were always this affordable. But how can I grumble when longer days are around the corner and West Yorkshire is on my doorstep? Walking across London lifted my spirits in the depths of winter, when I needed it most, but its the coming walks in The Dales and Real Ale dispensed with a sparkler that will really sustain me as the seasons change. Nothing like a trip away to help you appreciate what's on your doorstep.

Dean Ellison

1974

TONG ROAD & SILVEROYD HILL

In 1974 a walk through Armley, Wortley along Tong Road and Silveroyd Hill would have kept most pub goers happy, provided they had no aversion to Tetley's bitter and mild. Nine pubs were open in 1974, all but one of which were tied to Tetley's. Two pubs only remain – The Beech, 8 Tong Road and The Brick, 376 Tong Road. We begin our visit to the lost pubs at the Crown, located virtually next door to the Beech.

THE CROWN

8 Tong Road Tetley

Prior to 1920 the Crown was owned by James Ellam, Burley Road Brewery. Melbourne acquired the pub in 1920 and carried out a major rebuild programme. I first went there in July 1974 recording that it was "not a bad place. Fairly decent although a little basic. Tap room as always. Three smaller rooms. Juke box" The Tetley's was dispensed from hand pumps at the time. Whilst the Crown was never a regular haunt I did call there occasionally over the following years. Last orders were called in C2005 with the premises remaining vacant. In 2012 the building was advertised "To Let" with a second notice suggesting "hot food restaurant, retail opportunity" The premises were subsequently re-occupied but by November 2022 were once again deserted and boarded up.

WHITE ROSE

67 Tong Road Tetley

My first visit to the White Rose was a Saturday evening 26 December 1972. I described it as "A new Tetley pub which isn't bad". I am sure that at the time it had been open for a few weeks only. I called again probably on two or three occasions, remaining for a single drink each time. The White Rose was a decent pub - just not for me. It closed in late 2007 and the building sold to a property developer. The premises re-opened as the White Rose Banqueting Suite.

STAR

205 Tong Road Tetley

The Star served its final pint on 12 January 2025, closure appears permanent, although all hope is not lost. The building originates from between 1870 and 1890 and in September 1996 was granted Grade II listed status being "a rare survivor of a roadside inn at an important road junction" In March 2026 the Council approved funding to complete essential maintenance to the building. The Star

had been acquired by Tetleys in 1925 and it was their beer I sampled when I paid my first visit late on a Monday evening in June 1972. I described the Star as "The worst pub I've ever been in" The reasons for such a condemnation are not recorded, but I strongly suspect that a down-to-earth, old fashioned boozier, such as the Star had no appeal to two nineteen year olds. I was happier 4 years later when I enjoyed the Tetley's dispensed from hand pumps. I doubt that the Star changed significantly over the following 50 years. I have the impression that it remained a typical inner-city boozier, patronised predominantly by a local clientele and seen by many as "a proper pub", with its closure a sad loss.

WHITE LION

240 Tong Road Tetley

I have records of visiting the White Lion on three separate occasions in the early 1970's. It was located virtually opposite The Star and was also a typical inner-city local owned by Tetley's. I remember a lounge and playing darts in a large tap room, whilst enjoying cask, dispensed from hand pumps. Originally a farmhouse, the building was purchased by Strettons Derby Brewery, founded in 1868. Strettons was acquired by Allsopp and Sons in 1927 with the Brewery closing two years later. Allsopps merged with Ind Coope in June 1934 and with Tetley in 1964. By March 2009 the White Lion had closed and the premises, boarded up. The Building is now a private dwelling house

NEW INN

336 Tong Road Tetley

The 1906 map of Wortley shows many rows of back to back houses joining Tong Road from the north between Whingate junction and Blue Hill Lane. Included amongst these streets is New Inn Street and between this and Carlton Street an "Inn" is marked. This is the New Inn 336 Tong Road. By 1955 clearance of the streets had commenced, although The New Inn escaped demolition,

1974

TONG ROAD & SILVERROYD HILL

several of the enamel street names were salvaged and in the 1970's/1980's were on display inside the pub. The New Inn was very much a traditional pub with four separate rooms, all served by a central bar. The impression is of a popular and busy pub, with a thriving darts and domino community. Attracting primarily a local trade, it was in many ways a typical Tetley pub, described in the Leeds Beer Drinkers Companion (2002) as "uncompromising" I visited on two occasions in the 1970's. By 1978 nearby housing had been cleared and inevitably custom declined. The New Inn remained open until C2009. Following closure the building was renovated and converted to apartments.

ROYAL OAL HOTEL

40 Silver Royd Hill Webster

In 1974 Samuel Webster and Sons owned four pubs only in LS1 to LS18. The Brown Cow, Stanningley Road. LS13. The Peel Hotel, Boar Lane LS1. The Stanhope Hotel, Calverley Lane. LS18 and the Royal Oak Hotel. None of them offered cask in 1974 and as such had little appeal to me. The Royal Oak was located on Silver Royd Hill and I have no recollection of having gone there. The pub opened in C1956 and replaced a much older one. The original Royal Oak was acquired by J Hey and Co of Bradford in 1899 and remained in their ownership until the company was taken over by Websters in 1967, together with something like 75 houses. The old pub was demolished in 1954/55 together with neighbouring streets, following condemnation of the back-to-back houses. The replacement Royal Oak was located on the same site although the building was set back a short distance from Silver Royd Hill and adjacent to the junction with Silver Royd Road. The attractive building featured a porch at the main entrance with windows to either side. I have no details of the interior. A photograph from 2009 reveals that the premises were vacant with all means of access secured. An external sign proclaims "Pub Business to Let" and I am assuming that the Royal Oak had only recently closed. The building was subsequently demolished and replaced by housing.

STONE BRIDGE

50 Silver Royd Hill Tetley

A short distance from the Royal Oak was the Stonebridge. Located opposite the terrace of Silver Royd Place was Scott Square, bordered on three sides by terraced housing.

At no 1 Scott Square was the Stonebridge. By 1968 these properties had been demolished although the pub itself remained for a few more years. The Stonebridge was an old place consisting of several small rooms, with the main entrance facing Silver Royd Hill. The Brewery History Society website reveals that the pub was acquired by Armley Brewery in February 1920. Thomas Ramsden and Son took possession of Armley Brewery pubs, with ownership of the Stonebridge then passing to Tetley's in 1964. I visited the Stonebridge on a few occasions in the very early seventies, when it was very much a popular local, dispensing the Tetley's from hand pumps. My final visit was in January 1976 and I have memories of an excellent old fashioned pub serving beer at its best. The Stonebridge closed soon afterwards and today seems almost forgotten.

David Jameson

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CAMRA names the Champion Beer of Britain 2026

and it's fiercely independent

Independence (ABV 4.6%), a premium pale ale by Bristol Beer Factory has been crowned CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain 2026 at the Cambridge Beer Festival.

Fending off competitors from across the UK, the country's best beers have been whittled down from 12 fantastic finalists to one supreme champion by an expert judging panel.

Sam Burrows, Managing Director of Bristol Beer Factory, said: "The lineage of the Champion Beer of Britain is impeccable. It features some of the best beers of all time: Landlord, Bluebird, Cwtch, JHB, Rudgate Ruby Mild, and now Independence.

"We could not be more chuffed. In an era when the majority of our successful contemporaries have prioritised keg, we have remained steadfastly committed to the brilliance of cask. We brew around 60 different cask beers per year, but only four beers all year. And the one that made our name, the one that blends the tradition of cask with the punch of modern American hop legends is Independence. It's been a staple of South West cask pumps for 15 years - what took you so long!

"We love cask. Raise a glass to independent drinkers, to indie venues, and to our bold, citrusy 4.6% IPA Independence, or as we call it 'Indy'. Cheers and thank you from all of us at Bristol Beer Factory."

Christine Cryne, Champion Beer of Britain Judging Coordinator described Independence as: "A pale strong beer. Strong enticing citrus nose, with piney hops. Caramelised citrus, tangerines, grapefruit and digestive biscuits lead to dry peppery bittersweet finish, which lingers. Refreshing full flavoured, fruity and smooth."



The silver and bronze winners were:

Silver:

WILDCAT (ABV 5.1%)

A premium bitter by Cairngorm, was described by the judges as: "Toffee, malt hops and a little orange on the nose, flavour is dark orange marmalade with honey. The spicy hops develop and then linger in a dry bitter finish, which is balanced by some toffee notes. Well balanced and satisfying."

Bronze:

ALFIE'S REVENGE (6.5%)

A strong ale by Driftwood Spars was described by the judges as: "Fruity aroma with toffee and some pear notes. Flavour estery overlaid with toffee and caramelised fruit. Finish remains sweet, with a bitterness which grows, alongside a little dryness. Full flavoured and rich."

MEANDERING AROUND MORLEY

Covid was used as an easy excuse for all manner of things across society for a couple of years but surely Warren Yabsley, despite always being extremely busy, has taken this to the extreme. Six years after his unpublished article on Morley, a new version will finally be printed (though he has covered approaching 150 pubs across the Leeds branch area in the subsequent 18 editions).

I first wrote an article on pubs in the wider Morley area, so away from the main street and Morley Bottoms area, in early 2020 and had sent it to the Editor ready for the spring edition when the C-word happened. Although that edition went to press as an online only version, I specifically asked for my article not to be published.

Why? I write these missives to encourage people to visit pubs they wouldn't normally go to and was (very sadly) confident pubs would be closed for an inordinate amount of time so this would not be possible.

It has taken quite a while, to put it mildly, to revisit these pubs though I've covered those close to the main street (edition 15, Summer 2025, 'Meandering In Morley')

and at Morley Bottoms (edition 16, Autumn 2025, 'Top Bottoms') in the meantime. Links to all previous editions of Beer Leeds can be found at <https://leeds.camra.org.uk/magazine>.

I don't often mention prices but when £6 for a pint of cask beer is becoming common, not just in Leeds city centre but some other places within the Metropolitan District, I feel it is worth highlighting where great value can still be found. And for cask beer great value is as much about the quality as it is the price.

Although I didn't encounter any 'interesting' beers – though I always say stock what the regulars drink rather than what appeals to the niche CAMRA clientele – all that I sampled were in good, very good or excellent condition.

This was even more impressive given my visit coincided with sustained, extremely hot conditions in May when the beer quality in many Good Beer Guide pubs had substantially reduced due to the heat.

Based on beer quality, friendliness of staff and ambience amongst other factors, I've nominated a

couple pubs for the current Leeds branch Pub of the Season award and will do the same for the upcoming one too.

With the pre-ambles finally finished, let's explore the pubs. I'll start at Nelson Arms and work clockwise.

NELSON ARMS

(84 Victoria Road. First 51 and 52, bus stop outside)



After passing between a couple of nice flower planters and some benches, a sign above the door states 'The Nelly' whilst either side brightly painted geometric shapes cover the wall mounted blackboards. These are some of the small measures taken to reinvigorate the pub after I felt it had become 'tired'.

Once inside it's a traditionally furnished, single-roomed pub that I expect was once multi-roomed given the central pillars. The floor has brown tiling at the front and red patterned carpet at the rear. Some

MEANDERING AROUND MORLEY

areas have banquet seating with others containing leather chairs and settees.

The dark brown bar has two pairs of handpulls with the set nearest the door in operation. White Rat is permanent (£2.25 half and only £3 pint on Mondays) alongside a weekly guest, which was Asahi Fuller's ESB on my visit. For a while, the pub was bereft of cask beer so it's great to see it available again especially as it was in good condition.

MINERS ARMS

(107 Elsb Road. 14 minute walk from Nelson Arms. Arriva 201, 3 minute walk. 6 minute walk up a steep, stepped path from the rail station)



Have you ever wondered about the pub's name? Even if you haven't, a very brief history lesson ensues. Morley Main colliery (1855-1909) was situated on Albert Road, very close to the pub. There's an information board near the top of the aforementioned path about the pit disaster in 1872 where 34 miners lost their lives. Now you know about the name, what about the pub itself? It was clearly a multi-roomed pub that has been opened into a single room. Indeed, there are still two front entrances with the small area by the right-hand entrance distinct

from the rest of the pub. Although I like background music it was much louder than I'd have preferred, especially for a weekday teatime, and wasn't reduced in volume here. The rear area contains a pool table and dart board.

The bar, which has a modern panelled upright and situated against the rear wall, has three handpulls serving Cask Marque accredited beer. One pumpclip was turned around with Timothy Taylor Landlord and Asahi Dark Star Hophead (£1.75 half) available. I opted for the latter, which was in very good form but later wondered whether I should have plumped for the former.

As a small aside, Dark Star was established in Sussex in 1994 and bought by Fuller's in 2018, which in turn was bought by Asahi by 2019. The Sussex brewery was announced to close in 2022 with production moving to Meantime Brewery (London), which subsequently closed in 2024. Dark Star beers are currently brewed at Fuller's (London). The joys of multinational breweries, eh? Maybe we should be thankful that cask beer is still currently brewed?

Anyway, back to the pub. Grey is the predominant colour of the décor and competitively priced pub grub is served daily. Two meals are on offer for £18 between 3 and 6pm Monday to Friday though, at the time of my visit, a single blackboard indicated this was extended to the whole food service time with a further reduction to £15.

GARDENERS ARMS

(Wide Lane. 14 minute walk from Miners Arms. First 65, Arriva 200 and 201, 3 minute walk)



The second pub with grey as the predominant décor colour including carpet, seating and lower walls. Two rooms have been retained – a smaller 'Bar' on the right and larger 'Lounge' on the left with a connecting corridor behind the bar, which serves both rooms. Both beers were from Greene King – IPA and Morland Old Speckled Hen. The latter was £1.80 half and in very good condition with some pulled through beforehand by the friendly landlord. The pub promotes its weekly events – quiz on Wednesday and play your cards right on Sunday – and large 'shed' for hire at the rear that backs onto the large beer garden and car park. To note, around the time of my visit Greene King sold all its Old Speckled Hen brands to Damm, a family controlled Spanish brewery that produces Estrella lager.

CARRIERS ARMS

(Glen Road. 23 minute walk from Gardeners Arms. First 47, outside; Arriva 200, 2 minute walk)

Situated on a post-war housing estate, this pub is much cosier than most from that period. The large

MEANDERING AROUND MORLEY

lobby inside the front entrance provides access to a room either side. The more modern decorated one on the right has wood strip flooring, sports TV, pool table, dart board and, importantly, the operational handpull, which was serving Bradfield Farmers Blonde (£2.15 half and in very good condition with some being pulled through beforehand).



I settled into the room to the left of the entrance, which is very traditionally decorated. Here you will find green floral carpet, a couple framed photos of Morley from times past on the walls, dark wooden tables and a wood burner with red brick fireplace stretching to the ceiling complete with a couple high-backed chairs in front. There's a larger area diagonally beyond that has different décor and which I assume is used at more popular times including to cater for diners of Sunday roasts. Also, there's a large beer garden and children's play area.

I mentioned previously about the volume of music. Here it was at a pleasant background level and I was surprised, in an extremely good way, to find it consisted mainly of 'well-known' dance classics from Daft Punk, Faithless, Prodigy and Robert Miles. I'd have happily stayed for much longer but

the pub surveying requirements for this article of Beer Leeds had to take precedence!

MORLEY DASHERS

(66 High Street. 8 minute walk from Carriers Arms. Arriva 200, outside)



I wonder whether the pub - the first in this article not to have Arms in the name! - originally had multiple rooms given there are wooden pillars in the centre of the single room, now surrounded by tables and chairs. The two-sided bar, which has a modern mirrored back, in the right corner was serving Bradfield Farmers Blonde (£1.65 half). It was in very good condition with some being pulled through beforehand though the lass serving seemed new and asked, who I assumed to be, the landlady about what to do.

Either side of the entrance is banquette seating together with stools and traditional wooden tables and herringbone wood flooring. Midway along the left wall is a wood burner with soft chairs in front and a projector screen for sport above. Beyond is another area that has red brick walls and contains tables and chairs alongside a pool table. Depending on which board you read, pool is free either Monday-Wednesday or Tuesday-Wednesday with what

could be the home practising on my visit.

STUMP CROSS

(Britannia Road. 5 minute walk from Morley Dashers. First 52 (if arriving from Leeds/Morley as it has a one-way route), Arriva 201, Go Ahead 213, 2 minute walk)



I've only popped in on the odd occasion in the last few years but have always been extremely impressed by the cask beer quality. And there was no exception this time.

The four cask beers available on my visit were Carlsberg Wainwright Gold, Great British Drinks Company Black Sheep Bitter, Kirkstall Leeds Pale and Osssett White Rat. All were £2 half/£3.90 pint with the White Rat in excellent form.

This is the third pleasantly furnished pub where grey is the dominant décor colour albeit with various shades and patterns for the carpet, wallpaper and seating. The bar is opposite the entrance with a seating area either side plus a small one behind the bar.

Sport is shown on TVs, pub grub served all day (typically £6-8) and children welcome until 7.30pm.

It was the busiest pub on my

MEANDERING AROUND MORLEY

journey consisting mainly of middle aged and older locals. Nearly all were solos or couples sitting with groups of friends complete with much laughter and some singing when the background music featured a couple of particularly well-liked songs.

Yet another aside, Great British Drinks Company (GBDC) is the new name for the brewing side of Paramount Retail Group (PRG), which has owned Saltaire since 2024 and bought Keystone Brewing Group (KBG) less than a year ago when it entered administration. KBG itself bought many breweries when they entered administration including Black Sheep, Brew By Numbers, Brick, Fourpure, Magic Rock, North and Purity, subsequently closing many of the breweries. PRG has annual revenues of £230 million and owns a number of food and pet businesses. The following article was my source and provides extremely interesting insights into the strategy of GBDC and future of the breweries – or should I say ‘brands’:

<https://www.thegrocer.co.uk/news/new-black-sheep-brewery-owner-not-that-far-away-from-break-even/719811.article>

HALFWAY HOUSE

(Bruntcliffe Road. 8 minute walk from Stump Cross. First 52 (if arriving from Leeds/Morley as it has a one-way route), 2 minute walk; Arriva 201, 4 minute walk; Go Ahead 213, 1 minute walk)

If entering from the street corner entrance the bar is in the centre of the facing wall and is three-sided so there's plenty of room

to get served whilst providing sufficient seating for locals, who were regularly laughing throughout my visit. When I popped in the four cask beers were Bradfield Farmers Blonde, Ossett White Rat, Theakston Best Bitter and Timothy Taylor Landlord. The White Rat (£2.10) was in excellent condition.



The main seating area in the large, single room is to the left with plenty of space between the tables. Throughout, it's pleasantly decorated with a slightly more modern and upmarket design than the other pubs featured. The walls are painted off-white with dark blue wood panelling below. An eclectic range of photos from black and white of the local area through to abstract and modern are contained in a variety of frames, as are pumpclips. The wood burner at the end has wood decoratively stacked in the cubby hole either side.

To the right of the entrance is an area containing a dart board and pool table with a league match in play, perhaps the opposition were those I saw practising in Morley Dashers earlier in the evening.

I saw a sign advertising bed and breakfast and on leaving via the back door noted the unusual metal terrace overhead with benches.

TOBY CARVERY

(Bruntcliffe Road, Bruntcliffe. 15 minute walk from Halfway House.

Arriva 200, 5 minute walk;

Go Ahead 213, 2 minute walk)



Molson Coors Sharp's Doom Bar was available for a period at many Mitchell's & Butler's owned Toby Carvery venues but insufficient cask beer trade has reduced the number of outlets where a handpull is still on the bar. Here is no exception.

As expected, the venue is large and has pleasant and well-appointed decor, if somewhat generic. Off-beige is a popular colour from floor through to ceiling though dark green intersperses some areas. The long corner bar has a traditional styled, dark wooden bar-back. I plumped for a half of a mass produced cider (£2.75).

Beyond the bar is firstly the accessible toilet (there's level access into the pub too) followed by the carvery area and a large seating area.

And that concludes my Meandering Around Morley.

BUS INFORMATION

Please consult the fantastic and free bustimes.org website for timetables, bus stops, route maps and live tracking for all buses, not just those listed in this article but throughout the country.



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