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UK EDITION

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Written and edited by Eddie Gershon, along with welcome contributions from Wetherspoon staff.

Using paper from sustainable resources, this is printed in the UK.

Pricing, participation and opening/food-service times may vary per pub.

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# The democratic philosophers

## Four respected writers wrestle with challenges facing the free world

**You and I might think it obvious that democracy, despite inevitable faults, is the best system of governance, yet surprisingly few people speak up for it in the modern world.**

Perhaps democracy has become somewhat unfashionable among the chattering classes.

As the recent general election approached, four respected journalists, writing in national newspapers (please see below), bucked this trend by appearing above the parapet and wrestling with some of these vexed issues.

In this context, perhaps the best evidence for democracy's benefits is the fact that so many people risk everything, including their lives, to abandon their country to join the free world.

Whereas we westerners complain about political chaos in our own countries, to others, albeit hard to imagine, we must appear to be living in a relative oasis of calm and prosperity.

It may not seem like it in the UK, having recently emerged from the trauma and soul-searching of a fraught general election – in which, to state the obvious, not everyone got the result they wanted.

### Privilege

However, it's vitally important to be thankful that we, the public, have had the right, and opportunity, to choose our leaders, since many hundreds of millions throughout the world have not had that privilege.

Indeed, the world's tectonic plates are shifting – and anxiety has been expressed by many commentators about the possibility of democracies being subverted by tyrants or overrun in military conflict.

A further danger to democracy is that it can also, of course, be subverted by voters themselves, if they no longer believe in it.

Veteran journalist Martin Wolf, writing in the Financial Times (see opposite page), deals with these issues at length.

He was surprised to be asked by a member of the 'educated elite', in a public debate, whether democracy was not just "a western idea foisted upon the rest of the world".

### Developing

Wolf says that "many people are asking that question, and not just in developing countries" and makes a strong case for democracy, arguing that, despite problems, it has a far superior record in economic growth and human rights than does any other system.

Wolf is surely correct to conclude that "democracy prevents ... dire outcomes because it has inbuilt methods of correction" – elections, in other words.

As he says: "The great argument for democracy is not that it will produce good rule, but that it will prevent terrible rule."

Trevor Phillips, writing in The Times (page 55), a keen observer of human nature, has another angle.

### Reflects

He reflects on the effects of "metro mayors" on the UK political system. They add, says Phillips, in terms, a counterbalance to parliamentary and government power – no bad thing, perhaps, in our centralised system – through "diversity of leadership" which creates "the most dynamic layer of our political life".



**Many millions would love to have our first-world problems to deal with**



Janan Ganesh, also writing in the Financial Times (page 53), reflects on "political Bedlam" in the United States, amid "presidential impeachments", "forever wars", "culture wars" and "civic rot".

Yet, as Ganesh points out, the American economy has "roared ahead", as indeed, he also points out, did the economies of France and Poland during times of similar political disharmony.

Ganesh is perplexed by "this coexistence of economic success and political failure".

However, some of us might query whether the pitched arguments and political strife in America, France and Poland, referred to by Ganesh, are really "political failure".

A lack of harmony may just be a positive feature of democratic life, whereby angst is converted into a positive economic and social force.

Anger is energy, as Bob Geldof demonstrated, for example, in his support for Live Aid.

Perhaps the US political system is performing as the fathers of the US constitution envisaged – plenty of arguments, but, as the saying goes, 'the dogs bark, but the caravan moves on'.

The final member of our philosophical quartet is a former MP, Matthew Parris, writing in The Times (page 54).

Parris does not comment directly on democracy, yet refers to the "addiction to advertising one's anger with others, not through what they meant to say, but for how they said it".

This 'addiction', mainly through social media, but also, on occasion, through mainstream media, endangers democracy in two ways.

First, it tends to curtail debate. People are afraid to speak out – lest, through a slip of the tongue or thoughtless comment, they become subjected to a merciless online 'pile-on'.

Yet, experience demonstrates that debate is vital in distilling the truth – and truth is a vital ingredient for good outcomes.

### Candidates

Second, politicians are often subjected, themselves, to online pile-ons – and this factor, let's be honest, puts off many good candidates from applying for, or staying in, a political job.

However, if we believe in democracy, we need politicians, so we have to make it an attractive proposition.

Perhaps, despite our frustrations, we should, in general, be kinder to politicians.

Therefore, although anger is, indeed, energy, it is important, even so, for it to be channelled correctly, so that fear of abuse does not inhibit the brightest and best from seeking office.

In summary, however difficult it might seem, we should not be too depressed by the political problems of today.

Politics can be fraught, but many millions would love to have our first-world problems to deal with.

Even if we don't agree with every word our guest philosophers say, it's important that we, the public, reflect on the vital points which they raise.

**Tim Martin**  
Chairman

*Tim says:* “Democracy has produced many economic miracles. One example is Japan becoming the second-biggest economy in the world within a few decades of becoming democratic.

Democratic North America has also been an economic powerhouse, whereas South America, plagued by autocracy, has struggled in comparison.

However, as Martin Wolf argues below, for reasons which remain obscure, ‘Tyranny’s appeal is growing’ among the educated elites...”

# FOR ALL ITS FAULTS, DEMOCRACY IS STILL BETTER THAN AUTOCRACY

**All the evidence shows that despotism cannot consistently deliver the economic goods for developing countries**

**Last week, I discussed the poor state of democracy in a webinar organised by an Indian media organisation. After my presentation, a member of the audience asked why Indians should be interested in democracy at all. Was it not a western idea foisted upon the rest of the world? Would developing countries not be better off with traditional autocracies?**

I was both disturbed and pleased by this question — disturbed because it says something when a member of India’s educated elite asks it in a public forum, but pleased because I know that many are now asking the question, and not just in developing countries. Tyranny’s appeal is growing.

Freedom in the World 2024, a report from the independent think-tank Freedom House, asserts that “global freedom declined for the 18th consecutive year in 2023”. Over the past decade, big declines in political and civil rights have occurred in many developing countries. Under Narendra Modi, India is, alas, one of those countries.

Are such declines perhaps a price worth paying for faster economic development? At the broadest level, this seems quite implausible. If one puts to one side a few resource-rich countries and Hong Kong and Singapore, the world’s richest countries are all liberal democracies. Is this really an accident?

Yet sceptics might still argue that democracy is not the best way for poor countries to become richer. They can point, for example, to China’s amazing growth record over the past 40 years. Yet the evidence does not support this view. A 2019 paper, *Democracy Does Cause Growth*, by Daron Acemoglu and others, argues that “there is an economically and statistically significant positive effect of democracy on future GDP per capita”. Thus, “long-run GDP increases by about 20-25 percent in the 25 years following a democratisation”. Crucially, this also applies to countries at the early stages of development.

Arguably far more important, as Carl Henrik Knutsen notes in a 2019 briefing note for the V-Dem Institute, the outcomes of autocracy show much higher variance. Thus, when autocrats are good they might indeed be very good, but when they are bad they are horrid. Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pot and Mao Zedong killed people by the millions. That might have been because they wanted to or it might have been because they did not care. The point is that autocracy is unaccountable government. Unaccountable governments can do anything.

In a brilliant recent piece, the historian Timothy Snyder argues that “strongman rule is a fantasy. Essential to it is the idea that a strongman will be *your* strongman. He won’t. In a democracy, elected representatives listen to constituents. We take this for granted, and imagine that a dictator would owe us something. But the vote you cast for him affirms your irrelevance. The whole point is that the strongman owes us nothing. We get abused and we get used to it.”

It is even worse than this. The would-be tyrant is not a normal human being. He is almost always consumed by the desire for power.

Once he has gained what he seeks, how can one get rid of him if he proves mad? How can one preserve the integrity of core institutions against him? How can one manage the succession? We know that a constitutional monarchy can work. We know that an autocrat can do well in a small country, such as Singapore, if he recognises that it requires the rule of law and secure property rights. We know that in South Korea and Taiwan, autocrats oversaw the start of rapid development. We know, too, that China had, in Deng Xiaoping, a leader who was not drunk on personal power. So, as the Chinese say, one might have a “good emperor”. But what is to be done if, as so often, one has a bad one, instead?

Democracy prevents such dire outcomes because it has built-in methods of correction. Even if a democracy has inadequate civil, political and legal rights, as too many do, elections might still make a difference. This turned out to be true in Poland last year and, just now, in Turkey. The fact of elections is a constraint in India, too. In parliamentary systems, members of parliament can also revolt, as they did in the UK against Boris Johnson and Liz Truss.

The great argument for democracy is not that it will produce good rule, but that it will prevent terrible rule, which is the worst thing societies can have, except for the absence of rule — in other words, anarchy. The more complete the set of rights, the more potent will be the constraints: there will then also be open debate, freedom to protest, free media and independent institutions.

Democracy is always fragile. It is fragile because some people want to be tyrants and too many people want to trust them. This is also more likely if democracies fail to deliver the goods that people desire — a sense of belonging, of security, of being valued. As Yascha Mounk argues in *The Identity Trap*, democracies are more fragile in more unequal and more diverse societies, not least because would-be tyrants will play on such divisions. Indeed, it is hard to create liberal democracies in such societies in the first place, as Warwick’s Sharun Mukand and Harvard’s Dani Rodrik argue in *The Political Economy of Liberal Democracy*.

My interlocutor was right: democracy is a recent innovation. But he was also wrong: that democracy is recent, does not mean it is not valuable. This is true even if democracies are imperfect and autocracies sometimes work for a while. Democracy delivers accountability for governments and voice for citizens. That is far better for us than serving the whims of despots.

**By Martin Wolf**

Financial Times / 2 April 2024

Print credit: By Martin Wolf, Financial Times, 2 April 2024

**Note from the editor:**

As well as the article by Martin Wolf (on this page), the other articles Tim refers to here can be found on pages 52–55.

# YOUR SAY

**Write:** The Editor, Wetherspoon News, J D Wetherspoon plc  
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Thank you

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## EVERYONE SHOULD FOLLOW YOUR DOG LEAD

**Dear Tim**

Once again, you've got it right.

I know that a lot of people have well-behaved dogs, but, sadly, not all owners are very sensible.

I've lost count of the number of dogs sprawled across doorways and busy routes in pubs.

Woe betide any non-dog-owner who mentions it or tries to pass.

I'm sure that you'll get more complaints than support on this issue – another area where the silent majority would be ignored, if it weren't for your common sense, so I thought I'd add my support and hope that others do as well.

Keep up the good work.

**Steve S (via e-mail)**

**Tim replies:** Many thanks for your views on this thorny and emotional subject.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of allowing dogs in pubs generally, I don't think it would work in Wetherspoon pubs, given the large size of pubs and the high number of customers, including children. So, this is an area, to paraphrase Abraham Lincoln again, where you can't please all of the people all of the time.

## COMPLAINTS? I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN

**Dear Sir or Madam**

Could you put signs on your bars to tell people where to start queuing from?

**Yours faithfully**

**Mr R Hewitt, Wickford, Essex**

**Tim replies:** Before the pandemic, pub customers traditionally spread out along the bar using a variety of signals (waving a fiver/card, looking thirsty etc) to attract the bar staff's attention.

The pandemic resulted in formal queuing and, now, anarchy reigns – with customers divided on the best approach. I refuse to make a rule on the issue (I used to be decisive, but, now, I'm not so sure...). I'm reminded of GK Chesterton's reflection on British roads:

"Before the Romans came to Rye, or out to Severn strode,

"The rolling English drunkard built the rolling English road..."

## LACK OF TV IS A TURN-OFF

**Dear Tim**

Ref: 'No TVs'

On a recent visit, I was disappointed to note that the TVs were switched off.

I raised this with the duty manager and was advised that, unless a major sporting event is being televised, TVs are switched off after breakfast (ie noon) and that this policy has been implemented since COVID-19, on the direct instructions of Tim Martin.

May I respectfully point out that not all customers are in friendly or family groups. Some of us would like to watch the news (with subtitles) on one of the rolling news channels, to keep up with world events while having some refreshment.

May I also point out that many other licensed premises (Greene King, Marston's and local social clubs) have their TVs switched on throughout the day and evening, showing sport of some kind, music videos and/or rolling news programmes.

Please, please, can the tellies be switched on during opening hours for us single people to watch while enjoying your hospitality. Thank you.

**Timothy Beavis (via e-mail)**

**Tim replies:** Another tricky area. Unlike most pubs and restaurants, Wetherspoon has taken the path of minimal entertainment – for the most part no music, pool tables or TVs with sound on.

TV screens can be distracting and, indeed, the news can be disturbing.

On balance, I reckon that turning TVs off at noon, once we've had our daily fix, is about right.

As the politically incorrect Gerry Rafferty sang in Baker Street: "...another crazy day ... drink the night away, and forget about everything..." I'll get into trouble for that quotation, I know...



Gerry Rafferty

PHOTO CREDIT: GIE KNAEFS/BETTY IMAGES

## MENU CHANGES – BY ROYALE REQUEST

**Dear Tim**

Please can you bring back salmon to your food menu.

Then, could we have the return of the eggs royale dish to your breakfast menu?

It is sadly missed.

**Yours sincerely**

**Stephen White, North Ascot, Berkshire**

**Tim replies:** This is a popular dish among pescatarians.

I may be swimming upstream, but will refer your request to our catering team – that will get me off the hook for now.

Seriously, though, I will ask.

## KEEN STUDENT OF COD PSYCHOLOGY

**Dear Tim**

I am writing to enquire about the fish which you sell at The Briggate, in Garforth, Leeds. The fish sold is cod, never haddock!

I understand that haddock is available at Wetherspoon's pubs in Scotland, so why isn't it more widely available in England?

Many times, I have quite fancied fish from the menu at Garforth, but have had to decline because it is available only as cod. If you could shed some light on this, I would be very grateful.

I feel that there may be other people who also have the same problem.

I look forward to your reply.

Thank you for your time regarding this matter.

**Yours sincerely**

**L Robinson, Whitkirk, Leeds**

**Tim replies:** When it comes to customs, there are certain important differences (which others may have noticed) between north and south of the border, which neither of us will ever be able to change.

In Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, the main protagonist was known as Jack in the countryside, yet Ernest in London.

Even though it's not true, adapting Oscar's Jack-versus-Ernest example, you may have to imagine that the cod in Garforth is the same as the haddock in Rutherglen.

WAKEFIELD

# SCHEME TO DOUBLE SIZE OF THE SIX CHIMNEYS WINS HIGH PRAISE



Wetherspoon has won a design award for The Six Chimneys, its pub in Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

The pub was awarded in the refurbishment category of Wakefield Civic Society's annual design awards.

The awards have been running since 1966 and focus on design and implementation – the quality and aesthetics of the design.

They also take into account, where appropriate, how the project fits within the overall street scene and the impact which it has on neighbouring properties.

The Six Chimneys reopened in February, following an extensive refurbishment and expansion project costing £3 million.

The redevelopment work included expansion into an adjoining property, with a new extension and beer garden added.

The pub, which first opened in November 1999, more than doubled in size, with an additional 4,000 square feet of customer space added.

The award stated: 'Wetherspoon was given the award for its project to extend The Six Chimneys pub into the former New Dolphin Inn (later known as the Wakefield Pride and the Wakey Tavern).

'Under a project which had seen The Six Chimneys being closed for five months, the two buildings had been brought together into one enlarged pub, unified by a decorative scheme which runs across the properties both inside and out.

'In addition, a large beer garden has been created in the yard at the rear.

'The judges were impressed with the quality of the execution and also the focus on local history, with many illustrations featuring stories of Wakefield's history on display inside, while architectural detailing on the exterior of the New Dolphin Inn building, which was previously hidden by signage, had been revealed.'

Pub manager Laura Mason (pictured left, with team leader Molly Micklethwaite), who was presented with the award by Wakefield's mayor, Cllr Josie Pritchard, said: "We are honoured to win the award.

"It is wonderful that The Six Chimneys has been recognised for the quality of its design."

# NO NEED TO LEAVE THAT 'SPOON – JUST BOOK A ROOM

**Website makes it easy to reserve a room at any of Wetherspoon's 55 hotels in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales**



**I**f you are looking to stay at a Wetherspoon hotel this summer, or at any time, book directly – at [jdwwetherspoon.com](http://jdwwetherspoon.com), on the app or by phone.

Simple to navigate and easy to use, the website ([hotels.jdwwetherspoon.com](http://hotels.jdwwetherspoon.com)) allows for quicker and easier booking options and provides information on all 55 Wetherspoon hotels, in the UK and Ireland.

Each of the hotels, situated above or near a Wetherspoon pub serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, has its own unique character, with many in restored historic buildings.

Whether it's a convenient one-night stay or a much-needed short break, Wetherspoon has a collection of hotels in city, coastal and countryside locations, offering the perfect accommodation.

Each hotel room features an en suite bathroom, complimentary tea- and coffee-making facilities, hair dryer, flat-screen television with Freeview TV (Saorview Freesat TV in Ireland) and unlimited free Wi-Fi.

The rooms can accommodate a mixture of double, twin and family occupancy, many being interconnecting. There are also accessible bedrooms, with wet-room facilities, suitable for guests needing accessible facilities.

## The John Francis Basset (Camborne)

Commercial Street, Camborne, Cornwall  
England, TR14 8JZ

If a visit to Cornwall is on the cards, this hotel offers 37 en suite rooms, as well as a warm and inviting pub, five minutes off the A30 and central to Falmouth, Newquay and St Ives.

Local visitor attractions include The Eden Project (a rainforest biome and botanical gardens near St Austell), Cornish heritage site Poldark Tin Mine (in the picturesque Wendron Valley) and Paradise Park wildlife sanctuary.



## The Greyhound (Bridport)

2 East Street, Bridport  
Dorset, England, DT6 3LF

This 15-bedroom hotel is in Bridport, a picturesque market town with an historic harbour and picturesque beaches, considered the gateway to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, with 95 miles of coastline to explore.

The town is ideally situated for the South West Coast Path, has great transport links to Dorchester and the seaside resort of Weymouth and is five minutes' drive from West Bay.

It's the perfect location for families and seasonal visitors to the coast.



## The Golden Acorn (Glenrothes)

1 North Street, Glenrothes  
Fife, Scotland, KY7 5NA

Visitors are offered a warm welcome at this 26-bedroom hotel.

Located in central Fife, Glenrothes has excellent recreational facilities, including parkland, various sports venues and two golf courses.

The world-famous St Andrews is just a 20-mile drive from here.

One of the best ways to discover Glenrothes is to explore the Town Art Trail – 172 public artworks, including a family of hippos, a ring of dancing children, giant mushrooms and carved concrete arranged in a circle of standing stones.



## The George Hotel (Brecon)

George Street, Brecon  
Powys, Wales, LD3 7LD

This 16th-century coaching inn offers four en suite bedrooms.

It's the perfect base from which to explore the beautiful surroundings of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

A thriving market town in the Usk Valley, Brecon was established as a town in Norman times.

Narrow compact streets, Georgian façades and the restored canal basin all tell tales of times gone by.

For culture, seek the 12th-century cathedral, The Royal Welsh Museum and Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery.



## Keavan's Port Hotel (Dublin)

1 Camden Street Upper  
County Dublin, Ireland, K67 E6W7

Keavan's Port Hotel is set in Dublin's 'village quarter'.

This hotel has 89 en suite rooms, including accessible rooms, complete with full DDA-compliant bathroom facilities.

The hotel is located on regenerated Camden Street Upper, 1km from the city centre and Grafton Street.

It is located within a short distance of many of Dublin's attractions.



# NEW HOTEL

– opens November 2024

(subject to change)

## The Mile Castle (Newcastle)

19–25 Grainger Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE15JE

Wetherspoon will be opening a 26-bedroom hotel alongside its pub The Mile Castle, in Newcastle.

All rooms will be en suite, with two designed specifically for guests needing accessible facilities.

The hotel is set to open in November 2024.

## A BRUCE-Y BONUS AT THE SPIRIT MERCHANT

The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards), after its weekly quiz, hosts a Play Your Cards Right game.

Shift manager Thomas Crockett (pictured) compères the evening and devises the quiz questions himself.

The game, based on the TV show which was hosted by Bruce Forsyth, takes place every Wednesday evening.

Thomas said: "The quiz and Play Your Cards Right game attract around 60 people each week.

"Recently the £350 jackpot prize was the biggest ever and was boosted by several rollovers, with no winners in the previous five weeks."



## WRITER THANKS CLERK FOR HELPING TO GET TRAIN WRECKER PLAY ON TRACK



Northumberland-born playwright Ed Waugh is pictured outside John The Clerk of Cramlington (Cramlington) promoting his latest show – The Cramlington Train Wreckers.

Wetherspoon's pubs across northeast England have previously supported several of Ed's popular theatre plays, which retell tales about forgotten heroes from across the region.

Ed's latest play, supported by Arts Council England, set almost a century ago, is the story of the Cramlington train wreckers.

Ed explained: "The general strike of 1926 was the biggest rupture in society since the English Civil War (1662).

"A million miners were told, by a small number of pit owners, to take a 40 per cent wage cut to 'improve productivity'. Huge wage cuts were also imposed on other sections of the workforce.

"The workers said 'no', so Britain's only ever general strike followed, lasting a mere nine days."

Ed continued: "On 10 May 1926 (day seven), miners in the Cramlington and Dudley area of Northumberland were told by miners' union official Bill Golightly to 'stop everything on wheels'."

Intending to derail a coal truck which was undermining efforts to save their community, they mistakenly derailed the Flying Scotsman. Despite having 281 people on board, no one was injured.

In the aftermath of the general strike, eight Northumberland pitmen were imprisoned for a total of 48 years – and this is their story.

Ed concluded: "We'd particularly like to thank the management and staff of John The Clerk of Cramlington for their tremendous support in promoting the show with posters and leaflets.

"This is an almost-forgotten story which affected so many families in the town, almost 100 years ago."

● **The play tours the northeast in November 2024, premiering at Cramlington Learning Village on Thursday, 7 November. For tour and ticket details, visit: [www.cramlingtontrainwreckers.co.uk](http://www.cramlingtontrainwreckers.co.uk)**

## GREENWICH

**THE STARGAZER SHINES BRIGHTLY AT O2 AWARDS**

**Pictured (left to right) are shift leader Zelifa Dramani, pub manager Arber Hasani and bar associate Melisa Innes Hasani**

Wetherspoon's pub at The O2, in Greenwich, London, has been recognised with an award, less than a year since first opening.

The Stargazer was named as winner of the 'Entertainment District newcomer award', in the second annual 'brand awards', hosted by The O2.

The O2 'brand awards' event recognises the star performers and brands, across outlet shopping at The O2 and The Entertainment District.

Pub manager Arber Hasani said: "Despite being a relatively 'new kid on the block', we are delighted to receive the award."

"Since opening in March 2023, The Stargazer has proven a successful addition to The O2's social scene – and long may that continue."

The company spent £2.9 million developing the outlet at The O2 music, leisure and entertainment venue.

The pub's name, as well as its design, drew inspiration from its location and the important role which Greenwich plays in the history of astronomy and navigation.

Renowned astronomer Sir Edmund Halley, appointed Astronomer Royal at Greenwich Observatory, established his reputation studying stars.

His star catalogue, published in 1678, was the world's first such work and determined hundreds of southern stars' locations.

## GLASGOW

**PALACE TAKES CROWN AFTER BEING NAMED BEST IN ALL OF SCOTLAND**

A Wetherspoon pub in Glasgow has been named 'best pub/bar' in Scotland at a national awards scheme ceremony.

Best Bar None Scotland National Awards 2023–24 voted The Crystal Palace (Glasgow) to be the winner of its 'best pub/bar' title at the annual awards event held in Stirling.

Pub manager Graeme Goodwin said: "We are absolutely thrilled to be recognised at these awards."

"The much-coveted accolade is testament to the hard work and dedication which the team puts in, day in and day out, to ensure that The Crystal Palace is a safe and welcoming pub."

The annual awards celebrate the hard-earned success in making Scotland's licensed venues stand out as examples of safety, care and leaders in good practice.

The Crystal Palace demonstrated through the assessment process that it is the best pub/bar in Scotland.

Best Bar None Scotland's chairman, Jack Gemmill, said: "The quality of entries for this year's awards shows that, despite the economic headwinds which the sector is experiencing, there is still a real passion for providing a safe, fun and welcoming place to socialise."

"It's testament to the winners that they have gone above and beyond to promote responsible consumption and look after their customers and communities."



**Pictured (left to right) are shift managers Jack Burrows and Tia Siu, with pub manager Graeme Goodwin**

# SCORES ON THE DOORS SHOW CONSISTENTLY MIGHTY MARKS

**Wetherspoon's pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales clock up average food hygiene rating of 4.99 out of 5**

**A**mong the biggest pub chains, Wetherspoon's pubs are consistently high in the charts in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

The company's pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales have an average food hygiene rating of 4.99 across 735 rated pubs, with 731 of those achieving the maximum-possible score of five.

**Combined**

The top five companies (see table opposite) have a rating of 5.00 each, but with a combined number of only 204 premises, compared with Wetherspoon's total of 735 rated pubs.

The FHRS – the only independent government scheme assessing the level of hygiene standards in pubs, restaurants, take-aways, clubs and cafés – is run by local authorities.

It scores outlets 0–5, with the highest-possible rating of five meaning 'very good' hygiene practices and safety systems in place, fully complying with the law.

Outlets with a rating of four are deemed to have 'good' hygiene standards, while three is 'generally satisfactory', two needs 'some improvement', a rating of one requires 'major improvement' and zero requires 'urgent improvement'.

**Higher**

Wetherspoon was ahead of pub companies Nicholson's, Sizzling Pub Co and Young's and was also rated higher than restaurant and sandwich chains, including Greggs, McDonald's, Nando's, Prezzo and Wagamama – although all of these companies also scored highly.

Of our pubs, 735 currently have an FHRS rating, with 99.32 per cent of those achieving the highest-possible rating of five.

FHRS ratings follow an independent assessment of food hygiene at the various premises, determined by local authority environmental health officers visiting venues to assess hygiene levels.

Environmental health officers assess three areas: food hygiene and safety procedures; structural compliance; confidence in management.

**Ratings**

The ratings (as well as the date of inspection) can be found online and on stickers displayed at businesses' premises.

Wetherspoon's personnel and audit director, James Ullman, said: "We are proud of our pubs' hygiene ratings.

"However, we also take it extremely seriously when a pub does not achieve the maximum rating.

"Where a maximum score is not achieved, we work hard with each pub's team and local authority to ensure, as quickly as possible, that standards are returned to expected levels."

To achieve the highest-possible rating of five, our pubs' management and staff must achieve and maintain the highest standards of cleanliness and hygiene, including:

**Hygienic food-handling**

This is how food is prepared, cooked, cooled, reheated and stored:

- checking fridge temperatures
- hand-washing facilities and practices
- equipment used for raw and cooked foods being kept separately
- staff members' understanding of food hygiene

**Physical condition of the premises and facilities**

This is the assessment of the standard of cleanliness and upkeep, including whether:

- the condition of general decoration, layout and lighting is of a good standard
- it is clean and cleaning materials meet requirements
- there is suitable ventilation and pest control
- rubbish and waste are disposed of correctly

**Food safety management**

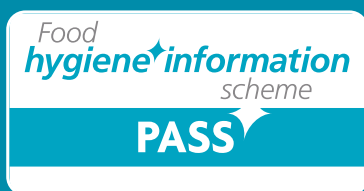
This ensures that suitable precautions are taken to keep food safe, including:

- staff training records
- logs of relevant checks, such as fridges' temperatures and cleaning
- safety procedure record

**Did you know?**

As well as the independent assessments by the FHRS across England, Northern Ireland and Wales (in Scotland, it's the Food Hygiene Information Scheme), Wetherspoon monitors its own pub hygiene standards.

Monthly, each pub receives at least five quality-assurance visits from a combination of its area manager, Wetherspoon's own audit department, an external 'mystery shopper' company and other head-office managers.



The Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) for Wetherspoon's pubs across Scotland issues either a 'pass' or an 'improvement required' rating, albeit the achievement being excellent nonetheless.

There are 56 Wetherspoon pubs in Scotland, all of which have been FHIS rated as 'pass'.

# The only independent government scheme assessing food hygiene standards

## FOOD HYGIENE RATING



VERY GOOD

	Total premises scored	Average premises score out of 5
Giggling Squid	50	5.00
Slug & Lettuce	74	5.00
The Ivy Collection	40	5.00
Walkabout	19	5.00
Yates	21	5.00
<b>Wetherspoon</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>4.99</b>
Turtle Bay	52	4.98
Wagamama	161	4.98
Greggs	2143	4.97
Nicholson's	66	4.97
Carluccio's	29	4.96
McDonald's	1329	4.96
Miller & Carter	113	4.96
Nando's	435	4.96
GBK	39	4.95
O'Neill's	41	4.95
Be at One	38	4.94
Prezzo	104	4.93
Starbucks	1184	4.93
Zizzi	129	4.92
Giraffe	11	4.91
Sizzling Pub Co	204	4.91
Pret	446	4.90
Toby Carvery	138	4.90
Costa Coffee	2450	4.88
Cosy Club	34	4.88
Geronimo	33	4.88
Innkeeper's Collection	41	4.88
Young's	225	4.88
Coffee#1	117	4.87
Craft Union	542	4.87
KFC	845	4.87
PizzaExpress	338	4.87
TGI Fridays	71	4.87
All Bar One	43	4.86
Harvester	143	4.85
High Street	49	4.85
Papa Johns	418	4.85
Browns	25	4.84
Burger King	495	4.84
Côte	80	4.84
Ember Inns	146	4.84
Loungers	213	4.84
Premium Country Pubs	45	4.84
German Doner Kebab	130	4.83
YO! To Go	265	4.83
Pitcher & Piano	11	4.82
YO! Sushi	55	4.82
Table Table	54	4.81
Vintage Inns	171	4.81
Bill's	45	4.80
Fuller's	173	4.80
The Breakfast Club	16	4.80
Subway	1903	4.79
BrewDog	47	4.74
Oakman	34	4.74
Bella Italia	75	4.73
Brewers Fayre	124	4.73
Shepherd Neame	242	4.72
Las Iguanas	47	4.68
Caffè Nero	576	4.59
Café Rouge	19	4.53
Wadworth	139	4.48

Information in this table was sourced in July 2024 from [www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk](http://www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk), listing 735 Wetherspoon pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales with an average food hygiene rating of 4.99. Please note that, where councils are yet to assess or submit their pub inspection, there may be a slight gap in the number of pubs, compared with that in our records. Businesses are rated from 0 to 5 which is displayed at their premises and online. The top score is 5.

# HENRY HOOVERS UP ANOTHER TOP SCORE



Kitchen manager Dan Petrie, pictured at The Sir Henry Segrave (Southport)

**A**cross six, seven, eight and even nine successive annual inspections, many of our pubs (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) have achieved the highest-possible rating of five.

To gain a maximum score is difficult enough; however, to then maintain that highly coveted rating of five requires consistently high standards.

Among our pubs achieving a continuous maximum rating of five for the last seven consecutive inspections is The Sir Henry Segrave (Southport).

Daniel Mercer has been pub manager there since April 2024, although has worked for the company for 15 years (12 years as a pub manager) and was previously in charge at The Moon Under Water (Wigan) and The Willow Grove (Southport) (now closed).

Dan Petrie (pictured) has also worked for Wetherspoon for 12 years, the last 10 as kitchen manager at The Sir Henry Segrave.

He said: "I started as a bar associate at The Willow Grove, progressing to shift leader, before being asked to cover in the kitchen for a fortnight... and I never came out!"

"It's great working with Daniel again. He brings a wealth of experience to the pub and, since The Willow Grove closed, we have also inherited a lot of very experienced kitchen staff."

Most of Dan's 20-strong kitchen team has more than four years' experience, although two new young recruits have also been added recently.

Dan said: "The knowledge of our longer-serving kitchen members is completely invaluable to the success of the team, as it is all about having confidence in the team.

"For the newly recruited members, it is all about the training, as well as showing them the basics, so they fully understand what is expected.

"The processes and procedures eventually become second nature."

Talking about achieving and maintaining their five-star rating, Dan continued: "There is no secret to that success.

"As long as you follow everything to the letter, make sure all checks are in place and clean as you go, you can't go wrong.

"Everyone has to be confident, know what they are doing and just put everything in practice that is asked of them."

Dan also believes that customers trust Wetherspoon's pubs to deliver the highest standards possible.

He added: "Not only does the company expect the highest five-star rating, but the customers do as well – so it's up to us to deliver."

With plans in the pipeline for a hotel at The Sir Henry Segrave, Dan's kitchen staff numbers are expected to increase.

He concluded: "Once the hotel is up and running, particularly during the busier summer months, the kitchen team will grow significantly, with everyone expected to achieve the five-star standards."

# TRIBUTE TO HEROIC ORIENT PLAYER



Proud Leyton Orient supporters Davis Watson (left) and Steve Jenkins are pictured alongside a history panel dedicated to former Clapton Orient footballer George Scott.

George was one of 41 players and staff from Clapton Orient (as Leyton Orient was then known) who enlisted to serve king and country in World War I.

He joined the 17th Bn Middlesex Regiment – ‘The Footballers’ Battalion’ and during the Battle of the Somme, was wounded, taken prisoner and died at a German military hospital on 16 August 1916.

As a Clapton Orient player, George scored 34 goals in 213 games. The panel had been housed in The George (Wanstead), but has now been moved to The Walnut Tree (Leytonstone), even closer to the Leyton Orient stadium.

Davis, who works as a planning administration apprentice, is also the Leyton Orient club historian, while Steve is chairman of the O’s Somme Memorial Fund and deputy chairman of the club’s supporters’ club.

Steve has dedicated his time to highlighting the actions of the Clapton Orient players who enlisted, including arranging numerous trips to France for Leyton Orient supporters and friends of the club, to visit the graves of George Scott, together with two other Clapton Orient footballers, William Jonas and Richard McFadden, who were also killed in action.

The original panel in The George was the idea of Davis, when he was 13 years old.

He wrote to Wetherspoon’s chief executive, John Hutson, suggesting that The George would be the perfect location for the history panel, since Wanstead was an area with a loyal Leyton Orient following.

Davis said: “I was delighted that Wetherspoon was happy to put the panel in The George and pleased that it now has a new home at The Walnut Tree, even closer to Brisbane Road, home of Leyton Orient.”

Steve added: “Leyton Orient supporters are rightly proud of the Clapton Orient players and staff who served in World War I – and it is great that they have been recognised at The Walnut Tree.”

## PETAL POWER BRINGS PHALANX OF FLOWER FANCIERS TO IVY WALL

Pub manager Brendan Epton and his team at The Ivy Wall (Spalding) had one of the busiest weekends at their pub, thanks to a reinstated town event.

The Spalding Flower Parade 2024 attracted visitors in their coachloads from all over the UK for the annual spectacular, with almost 60 floats and vehicles parading along a three-mile route in the Lincolnshire town.

Brendan said: “This was the first time the event had been held across two days, instead of just one, and it was a great occasion for the whole town.”

The market town of Spalding was once famous for its annual tulip events, which can be traced back to the 1920s, with the parade taking place each year from 1959 until 2013.

It was a celebration of the area’s tulip industry, with an elected ‘flower queen’ leading the parade through the town, followed by huge floats, decorated with tulip heads.

When the industry fell into decline, so did the parade, until it was reinstated in 2023.

# HOW PUBS' RECYCLABLE WASTE FLOWS DOWN EIGHT STREAMS

**W**etherspoon takes its business and social responsibility very seriously, promoting ways to protect the environment with strict company policies and procedure regarding recycling and sustainability.

Our planet is precious, and Wetherspoon is doing everything possible, as a responsible retailer, to protect it.

Wetherspoon's efficient waste-management process, to stop unnecessary waste from being sent to landfill, sees all pub waste segregated into a minimum of eight 'streams': food, glass, metal tins/cans, cooking oil, paper/cardboard, plastic, waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) and general waste.

Any remaining non-recyclable waste is sent to waste-to-energy power plants, which reduce CO<sub>2</sub> and the use of fossil fuels.

Cooking oil is converted to biodiesel for agricultural use, with no waste sent to landfill.

Wetherspoon's national distribution centre, at Daventry, also includes an in-house 24-hour recycling centre, accounting for approximately 20 per cent of the site, with a large, dedicated workforce and specialist equipment.

When making deliveries to the pubs, Wetherspoon's lorries collect mixed recycling and used cooking oil, for return to the recycling centre.

Glass, food waste and general waste are collected directly by Veolia.

Wetherspoon's senior facilities manager, Mark Miller, said: "As a business, Wetherspoon aims to minimise waste and maximise recycling.

"The company target is to recycle 95 per cent of recyclable waste.

"Much of this is achieved in house, via our own vehicle fleet from pubs across the UK, and those working at Wetherspoon's national distribution centre are a dedicated and hard-working group."

## What has been recycled by Wetherspoon during the past year?

May 2023 – April 2024



**3,669 tonnes**

of cardboard and paper, including packaging and boxes



**471 tonnes**

of metal, including drinks cans and baked bean tins



**362 tonnes**

of plastic, including milk bottles and packaging



**1,553 tonnes**

of cooking oil, collected in the original reused containers and converted to biodiesel for agricultural use



**36 tonnes**

of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE)





## TRUSTEE REVEALS SECRETS OF THE LORD HIGH CONSTABLE OF ENGLAND

Wetherspoon puts great effort and pride into selecting its pubs' names, often reflecting and celebrating the local area, sometimes the building's former life and sometimes the local characters and historical events.

Customers at The Lord High Constable of England (Gloucester), which first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in June 2015, will now be able to find out more about its unusual name.

Former Gloucester city council leader Paul James, who is a trustee of Llanthony Secunda Priory and an occasional customer at the pub, took it on himself to put together the information.

Thanks to a suggestion made by members of a Facebook group about Gloucester's history, an explanation of the name has been added to the pub's interior.

Pub manager Liam Stack is pictured (right) with Paul James and the three artwork pieces now on display at the pub.

Liam said: "We are delighted to display this information. The heritage of a venue is important to Wetherspoon, and we are grateful to Paul for putting it together."

The pub's name refers to Miles of Gloucester, who founded the nearby Llanthony Secunda Priory in 1136 and was the first Lord High Constable of England.

The Lord High Constable of England is one of the Great Officers of State and, at one point, commanded the royal armies.

These days, it is only called out of abeyance for coronations. The Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral Sir Antony David Radakin, performed the role in May last year at the coronation of King Charles III.

Paul James asked Sir Antony to sign a copy of a tweet which he'd issued about the role on the day of the coronation, which is also on display at the pub.

A third picture, showing a Churchman's cigarette card, featuring the Lord High Constable from George VI's coronation, has also been added to the collection.



Llanthony Secunda Priory was a large and important Augustinian priory which became derelict, until it was restored in recent years, reopening in 2018, thanks to the work of a dedicated charitable trust and funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other sources.

Paul said: "I'm interested in local history. So, when I saw the suggestion on Facebook, I thought that I should try to make it happen – particularly as a trustee of Llanthony.

"I'm pleased that it's now in place in the pub and hope that it helps more people to understand the connection and also raises awareness of Llanthony and what it is used for today."

## AUTHOR'S BOOK GIFT TO CHAIRMAN ENCOURAGES READING IN READING

Regular customer and author Derek Walsh (pictured) gifted a copy of his novel to Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, on a recent chance meeting at The Hope Tap (Reading).

Tim was visiting as part of his regular Wetherspoon pub visits, and local resident Derek happened to be in his local at the time.

Before presenting a copy of his book, Oxford Road, to Tim, Derek wrote: Dear Tim, Presenting my novel! Any help in 'getting it out there' would be greatly appreciated.

Also a regular customer at The Back of Beyond (Reading), Derek has set his novel in Reading, a town which he describes as a 'rich larder of inspiration' for his writing.

Derek said: "The human condition and all of its complexities fascinate me and fuel my passion for storytelling.

"It is these components which form the basis of the odyssey which makes up my novel, Oxford Road – a moving human story with universal characters and themes of hope and humour, after hitting rock bottom."

● **Oxford Road, published by Nielsen, is available in paperback and e-book via Amazon.**



THE PLAZA • RUGELEY

# SIAN'S QUARTER CENTURY VALUED HUGELY IN RUGELEY



Pub manager Sian Siddall is pictured front and centre with a celebration cake, marking her 25 years' service with Wetherspoon.

Also pictured (left to right) are regional audit manager Tim Short, area manager Kat Prince and regional manager Debbie Whittingham, presenting flowers and a certificate at Sian's pub The Plaza (Rugeley).

Sian started her Wetherspoon career in 1999 as a shift manager at The Picture House (Stafford), where she spent 18 months before taking on her first role as pub manager at The Acorn Inn (Lichfield).

A five-year stint there, followed by a two-year spell at The Last Plantagenet (Leicester) (now closed) was followed by a year based at Wetherspoon's head office.

Sian recalled: "A job opportunity came up as a regional catering manager for the company, so I moved south to Watford.

"I spent six months covering northwest London, the M3 corridor and the south coast, which included the adventure of hopping across to the Isle of Wight.

"For the second six months, I covered pubs in northeast and northwest London, which is where I first met Debbie Whittingham, then the area manager for north London."

Sian continued: "I enjoyed the experience of the role, and was glad that I tried it, but I missed having a team around me and the day-to-day hands-on management of a pub."

Sian returned to pub management at The George (Wanstead), for an 18-month tenure, before returning to her native Staffordshire to be closer to her family, when her mum became unwell.

Sian remembered: "I went back to The Acorn Inn – and it was so weird, like I had never been away.

"Many regular customers were the same, enjoying the same drinks and sitting at their favourite same tables."

Living in Rugeley and juggling her career with bringing up a young family, Sian moved to The Plaza when the opportunity came up.

She has now been pub manager there for 11 years.

She added: "I joined the company almost at the same time as The Plaza opened, so we have both now marked 25 years."

Sian continued: "I have had a brilliant career, so far, and am still in touch with a lot of people I originally worked with at Stafford.

"In fact, my area manager, Kat Prince, was a shift manager at The Acorn Inn when I was pub manager there."

Sian concluded: "I'm very happy in my role and love the interaction with customers and staff.

"It's like a big, extended family – with every day different.

"I absolutely love my job as much now as when I first joined the company."

# TRY A TASTE OF TAX EQUALITY

## – YOUR WALLET WILL BE FATTER

Shift manager Jack Withey at The J. P. Joule (Sale)



**THU 12 SEPT**  
**TAX EQUALITY DAY**  
**ALL PRICES REDUCED BY 7.5%**  
 Promoting the benefit of a permanent VAT reduction in the hospitality industry.  
**ONE DAY ONLY**

Wetherspoon's chairman, Tim Martin, said:  
 "The biggest threat to the hospitality industry is the vast disparity in tax treatment among pubs, restaurants and supermarkets."  
 "Supermarkets pay zero VAT in respect of food sales, whereas pubs, bars and restaurants pay 20 per cent."  
 "This tax benefit allows supermarkets to subsidise the selling price of beer."

**BE FAIR TO PUBS**  
 Equal tax for pubs and supermarkets

wetherspoon

**O**n Thursday 12 September, Wetherspoon's pubs are to cut the price of all food and drinks by 7.5 per cent – to highlight the benefit of a permanent VAT reduction in the hospitality industry.

Prices at the pubs will be reduced for one day only to mark Tax Equality Day (in Scotland, in line with Scottish licensing laws, prices will be reduced on food and non-alcoholic drinks only).

For example, a customer spending £10 on food and drinks will pay only £9.25 on Tax Equality Day.

All food and drinks in pubs are subject to 20 per cent VAT.

In comparison, supermarkets pay zero VAT on food and are able to use that saving to sell alcohol to customers at a discounted price.

Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, said:

"The biggest threat to the hospitality industry is the vast disparity in tax treatment among pubs, restaurants and supermarkets.

"Supermarkets pay zero VAT in respect of food sales, whereas pubs, bars and restaurants pay 20 per cent.

"This tax benefit allows supermarkets to subsidise the selling price of beer.

"Pubs have been under fantastic pressure for decades, because of the tax disadvantages which they have with supermarkets.

"It doesn't make sense for the hospitality industry to subsidise supermarkets.

"A VAT cut to 12.5 per cent is needed to ensure that pubs, bars and restaurants do not continue to close, but instead thrive, invest and create new jobs.

"Customers coming to Wetherspoon's pubs on Thursday 12 September will find the price of their food and drinks to be lower than normal.

"We call on the chancellor to create tax equality between the hospitality industry and supermarkets."

SHEFFIELD

# THREE TO WATCH - PUBWATCH CHAIRS GIVEN NATIONAL KUDOS



Three Wetherspoon pub managers have been recognised at the National Pubwatch awards, all three being chairs of their local pubwatch schemes, operating in and around Sheffield.

The awards recognise the people and venues which maintain best practices in the pub and club industry.

Pictured (left to right) with their National Pubwatch Star Awards are Ricky Brown (The Woodseats Palace, Woodseats), Josh Bell (The Rawson Spring, Hillsborough) and Peter Bryan (The Wagon & Horses, Chapeltown).

The presentation was made by National Pubwatch chair Steve Baker OBE, at the National Pubwatch preconference reception in Sheffield.

National Pubwatch made the awards to recognise the outstanding partnership work taking place in Sheffield – and the pubwatch schemes' efforts to reduce crime and disorder.

Steve Baker said: "It's a great pleasure to be able to recognise the important work taking place across the city.

"Those socialising in the city should be very grateful for the efforts of local businesses which work together to keep staff and customers safe and to create a vibrant night-time economy".

Wetherspoon's area manager and worker director Hudson Simmons said: "Ricky, Josh and Peter were all recognised for their hard work and commitment to running safe workplaces for their teams, as well as pleasant environments for customers.

"Congratulations to all three of them, all of whom recognise the importance of the initiative and are chair of the pubwatch scheme in their area."

Pubwatch schemes make a real contribution to the safety of people working and socialising in the night-time economy.

The National Pubwatch awards provide an opportunity to be recognised as a good-practice scheme and to help to publicise and promote the pubwatch movement, in its efforts to provide safe drinking environments for customers and staff.

# YOUNG LIVES TRANSFORMED BY AMAZING £23M YOU GAVE



**W**etherspoon's staff and customers have reached a new milestone in fundraising for their chosen charity – Young Lives vs Cancer.

They have now raised an incredible £23 million.

For more than two decades, staff and customers have raised money for the charity which supports young people (0–25) with cancer and their families.

As well as national events (including the KICK football tournament and darts tournament), dedicated staff and customers have participated in numerous fundraisers, including quizzes, bake sales, hikes, raffles and parachute jumps.

Young Lives vs Cancer helps young people with cancer, and their families, from the moment of diagnosis.

The charity's specialist social workers are there to provide the support they need, when they need it, such as liaising with a child's school or a parent's employer or helping to navigate the costs of cancer.

Young Lives vs Cancer also provides financial grants to help families with the associated costs of cancer, such as travel to hospital, food and extra clothing.

The charity's 10 Homes from Home offer families free, homely accommodation close to the hospital where they are being treated, enabling the family to be together during the toughest of times.

Young Lives vs Cancer's strategic partnerships lead, Alex O'Connell, said: "Thank you so much to every employee and all customers at Wetherspoon who helped to raise this amazing amount of money to help young people with cancer.

"The money raised by the Wetherspoon team will make such a difference to the lives of children and young people with cancer and their families.

"From all of us at Young Lives vs Cancer – a very big thank you."

Wetherspoon's people director, Tom Ball, added: "We are immensely proud to be associated with Young Lives vs Cancer.

"We are delighted that we have reached the £23-million milestone and look forward to raising even more money in the months and years ahead."

Young Lives vs Cancer's partnership fundraiser Sam Hughes-Smith (far left) and Young Lives vs Cancer's strategic partnerships lead Alex O'Connell (third left) are pictured with Wetherspoon's founder and chairman Tim Martin and head-office staff.

# AUTHOR BRIAN PENS ODES TO BARNET IN RAILWAY BELL

Author Brian Carroll can sometimes be spotted at The Railway Bell (Barnet) researching his latest book.

Brian has written several books about the area and its history, including *In Search of the Battlefield: Barnet 1471* – covering the town's role in the Wars of the Roses.

Brian is a regular at the pub and finds the pub conducive for research.

He has even name-checked the pub in some of his books, which are available to buy online via Amazon.

Brian said: "I thoroughly enjoy working in the pub and have got to know Stephanie, the manager, very well, as well as her excellent staff.

"When I am working, I sit on my own, but I also come to the pub on other occasions with a group of friends."

Brian has also written about his time as a recording engineer at IBC Studios, where he worked with music legends including The Who, The Bee Gees and Jimi Hendrix.

He even has a letter from The Who's Pete Townshend, congratulating him on the book titled *IBC Studios & Beyond!*

Pub manager Stephanie Milne (pictured with Brian) said: "Brian is a lovely fella and really nice to talk to.

"A lot of the staff enjoy chatting to him about his days in the music industry and also his research into Barnet's history."



# QUAY FOLK MARK 20 YEARS BY SELLING HOMEMADE CAKES

Staff baked cakes to raise funds for Young Lives vs Cancer as The Quay (Poole) marked its 20th birthday.

A stall decked out with birthday bunting raised £205 for the pub's chosen charity.

Two of the pub's staff have worked there for more than 10 years – kitchen associate Barbara Dufeu joined in November 2010, while kitchen manager Emma Cox started in February 2013. Her mother Jane Tuvey came along to support the event.

Pub manager Charlee Blanchard said: "We thought that it would be a good chance to raise some money for the charity and also important for us to mark the 20 years since the pub first opened its doors in April 2004."

Pictured (left to right) are shift leader Sophie Slade, mother-and-daughter Jane Tuvey and kitchen manager Emma Cox, with pub manager Charlee Blanchard.



# BEER, CIDER AND STOUT – WITH ALCOHOL TAKEN OUT

**Low-alcohol and alcohol-free range just got even more interesting, with NEW additions**

**A** night out at your local Wetherspoon pub while cutting out or down on your alcohol intake doesn't mean an evening of soft drinks (although there is a great choice of those too).

Wetherspoon's low-alcohol and alcohol-free selection of drinks just got even more interesting.

For those opting to stay away from alcohol, the drinks menu now has NEW additions to the ever-expanding range on offer. Whatever the reason for staying off the drink, don't let it make you stay indoors.

## Corona Cero

An alcohol-free beer from Corona, brewed with 100 per cent natural ingredients, Corona Cero (0.0% ABV) has a crisp, refreshing taste, with subtle citrus notes, and is only 56 kcal per bottle (330ml).

This 100 per cent natural and 0.0% ABV beer joins the other choices in the range: Beck's Blue (0.05% ABV), BrewDog Punk AF (0.5% ABV), Stella Artois alcohol free (0.0% ABV), Heineken 0.0 (0.05% ABV) and Erdinger Alkoholfrei (0.5% ABV).

## Thatchers Zero %

This is a unique twist on a classic apple cider, great for laid-back, sociable occasions, when you want something alcohol-free, yet don't want to compromise on taste.

Made by the family cider-maker Thatchers, this crisp and refreshing alcohol-free Somerset cider (0.05% ABV) is just 130 kcal per bottle (500ml).

Thatchers Zero % joins premium cider Kopparberg alcohol-free (0.05% ABV), strawberry and lime flavour, at 205 kcal per 500ml bottle, in the low-alcohol and alcohol-free cider choices.

## Guinness 0.0

Guinness 0.0 (0.05% ABV) has the same smooth taste, perfectly balanced flavour and unique dark colour of Guinness... just without the alcohol.

To create Guinness 0.0, the St James' Gate brewers start by brewing Guinness exactly as they always have, using the same natural ingredients (water, barley, hops and yeast) before gently removing the alcohol through a cold filtration method.

The resulting product is a stout which is unmistakably Guinness, just without the alcohol, featuring the same dark, ruby-red liquid and creamy head, with hints of chocolate and coffee, smoothly balanced with bitter, sweet and roasted notes.

## Adnams Ghost Ship

A low-alcohol version of the Southwold brewery's citrus pale ale – this 0.5% ABV drink offers aromatic elderflower, with bold citrus and gooseberry flavours, plus hints of warming rye spice.



If beer and cider are not your thing, check out the 0% cocktails, including the NEW Passion Fruit Cooler.

A fruity blend of mango, passion fruit, orange juice and a sparkle of lemonade, served with orange, this 'weighs in' at just 128 kcal.

Try the Raspberry Refresher (85 kcal) – a blend of R White's raspberry lemonade, orange juice, lime juice, served with orange. It is a refreshingly perfect summer serve.



## HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL FOR LOONY LEADER

Wetherspoon superfan and Official Monster Raving Loony Party leader Howling Laud Hope was the candidate for the by-election for Blackpool South.

It was the 34th time that Alan Hope has stood for a parliamentary election.

On the same day, he also contested The Hart District Council in his hometown of Fleet, Hampshire.

Alan reported: "They were a bit put out when I told them that I won't be at that count, as I would be in Blackpool. 'It won't be the same without you,' was the cry.

"I didn't get in, but I still retain my Fleet Council seat."

Alan spent two weeks in Blackpool and, following tradition, set up base in a Wetherspoon pub.

He continued: "The Loony supporters had a great time in The Velvet Coaster and a long, yet rewarding, night at the election count.

"It was almost 5.30am when the count was declared. I polled 121 votes and didn't come last!

"There is always an air of expectation when you travel to Blackpool, especially for a by-election.

"What more can you ask than to have The Velvet Coaster pub as constituency HQ, with the kind permission of Sir Tim Martin.

"Manager Sam Slack and his gang looked after us well – and we entertained lots of visitors.

"I visited The Layton Rakes and The Albert and The Lion and was also invited by the Cleveleys pub to meet up in The Jolly Tars.

"I can't add these Spoons to my count of 725, as they were revisits, but all were very welcoming."

Alan added: "I was reminded of the Loony Party's campaign for all-day drinking and that we were the first party to propose plastic bank notes, to float the pound.

"They listen to us; we are the government 'think tank.'"

Alan is pictured (front centre) with (back, left to right) Lawd Lawson, Lady Guilderoy, OB Joyful, Red Rocket Ron and Lord Guilderoy.



## KIDS' CORNER HELPS PARENTS TO RELAX AS THEY VISIT THE ROEBUCK

The Roebuck (Rayleigh) now has a new kids' corner featuring a toy cooker, tea set and a variety of puzzles and activities.

The area was unveiled as Wetherspoon launched its new children's menu in May.

Pub manager Laura Shaw said: "It was a happy coincidence – we wanted to have a children's area, as the pub attracts a lot of parents with children.

"The launch of the new children's menu was the perfect time to unveil the new kids' corner.

"It features a whiteboard and a blackboard, colouring kits and building blocks.

"There are little tables and chairs for the kids and bigger ones, too, so that grown-ups can supervise."

Pictured (left to right) are shift leaders Jen Stafford and Jade Proctor, shift manager Danielle Hooper, pub manager Laura Shaw, team leader Hayden Rich, bar associate Freddie Eldridge, shift manager Jess Sawyer [hidden, in the back] and team leader Laila Jarvis, with some of the participating children.



# PUBWATCH SURE WORKS WELL IN WISHAW, SAYS MANAGER GARETH

**Local schemes in towns and cities throughout UK tackle antisocial behaviour and promote safe environments for pub customers and staff**

**N**ational Pubwatch, the licensed trade's equivalent of neighbourhood watch, has been in existence for more than 30 years, throughout the UK.

The local schemes range in size from more than 200 premises in cities to small rural schemes with just a handful of premises involved.

As at August 2024, Wetherspoon's pubs were confirmed to be participating in 540 local pubwatch schemes, across the UK.

Many of these local initiatives are chaired by Wetherspoon's pub managers.

Pubwatch schemes are local, independent groups, comprising those working in licensed premises.

They often take part in safety and alcohol-awareness campaigns.

The groups' objectives are to tackle and prevent antisocial behaviour and criminal activity, to promote safe drinking environments for customers and secure working environments for staff and to improve communication and information-sharing among licensees.

The basic principle involved in a pubwatch is that the licensees of the premises involved agree on several policies of action aimed at those who cause or threaten damage, disorder or violence and/or use or deal in drugs on their premises.

Normally, this action means refusing to serve those causing, or known to have previously caused, these types of problem.

Having agreed on these policies, the premises then publicise them and stick to them.

The publicity alone can have a very notable effect on such problems, yet refusing admission and service to those who cause trouble has proven to have a significant impact on antisocial behaviour.

To operate most effectively, any pubwatch scheme must work closely with the police, local authorities and other agencies.

By working together and keeping problems outside of their premises, licensees will make it easier for the police to identify troublemakers and deal with them.

Among Wetherspoon's pubwatch successes are Wembley pubwatch, where pub manager Lily Capillo (J.J. Moon's, Wembley) has created what we believe to be one of the country's largest pubwatch schemes.

Here, we highlight one pub and its involvement in a successful pubwatch scheme in Scotland.



**Pictured (back row, left to right) are Police Scotland's licensing officer PC Doria and The Wishaw Malt's pub manager Gareth Fuller; front (left to right) other local Wishaw pubwatch members pub managers Helen McKenzie, Gordon Yates and Louise Wilson**

## The Wishaw Malt (Wishaw)

Pub manager Gareth Fuller has been running The Wishaw Malt since September 2022, his first pub as manager, having now worked for Wetherspoon for 13 years.

With just 12 licensed premises in the Scottish town of Wishaw, North Lanarkshire, nine of which (including The Wishaw Malt) are part of the town's pubwatch scheme, community networking is key to continued success.

Gareth reported: "The pubwatch chairman has quite a casual style, but the efficiency of the scheme is evident.

"Pubwatch is an extremely valuable tool for us all, with huge credit to the local police force – an integral part of its success.

"The police has a very good presence in the town, with uniformed officers visiting the pub frequently.

"This is brilliantly helpful and in no way ever feels intrusive.

"They also send a representative to all of the pubwatch meetings."

The meetings are held once a month, offering the chance for members to share information, concerns and ideas.

The members also use a WhatsApp group chat to stay in regular touch, making it easy to co-ordinate and share urgent messages, issues and images.

The encrypted messaging service allows images to be shared without data protection laws being compromised.

Gareth added: "The other real benefit of the pubwatch scheme is the ability for me, as a pub manager, to be a recognised face in the local community.

"It is too easy for a pub company like Wetherspoon to be seen as a faceless corporation, but, at a local level, we all want to contribute to our communities, get involved and help out.

"Pubwatch is a great way for me to meet key local people and foster good community relations."

He concluded: "I'm an outsider here in Wishaw and do my best to keep up to date with everything.

"However, most of my management team members are local people, already integrated into the community, so that is a huge bonus."

Originally from Lisburn, Northern Ireland, Gareth moved to Newcastle for university at the age of 18, starting with the company as a bar associate at The Job Bulman (Gosforth).

He progressed through the ranks, working at The Electrical Wizard (Morpeith), John the Clerk of Cramlington (Cramlington) and The Esquire House (Annie'sland, Glasgow), before taking on his first pub manager role at The Wishaw Malt.

# LINDSAY TAKES THE LEAD AT HARTLEPOOL PUBWATCH

Pub manager Lindsay Carney is using her wealth of experience to help set up a new pubwatch scheme, in Hartlepool.

Lindsay, who has run The Ward Jackson, in the town, for the past 12 years, has worked for Wetherspoon for 25 years.

Lindsay explained: "Traditionally, there hasn't been a pubwatch scheme in the town, although we do have crime prevention meetings, so it was suggested by our licensing officer that we launch one."

"There are around 26 venues in the town-centre area, covering Church Street and surrounding roads.

"I have offered to help to start the scheme and, as no one else volunteered, to chair it at the beginning."

The Ward Jackson is at the hub of Hartlepool's night-time economy district, with Lindsay hopeful that fellow licensees and venue owners will join the initiative.

She said: "Only five turned up to the first meeting, so I think it will be a long slog, but others will hopefully understand the benefits of working together and come on board."

With the experienced backing of Wetherspoon, enthusiastic advocates for pubwatch, as well as 'amazing help' from her local licensing officer, Lindsay is confident that the initiative will have a positive impact in helping to rejuvenate the area and aid the management of incidents.

Lindsay added: "We need something constructive, like pubwatch, to help with relevant issues and what's needed for the venues."

"Shift manager Jo Heward (pictured left with Clare Lawton, Cleveland Police's licensing support team) is also keen to help me and attend meetings, which is great."

Lindsay concluded: "If we all work together and do things properly, pubwatch will be such a benefit to everyone."



# CAKE DISGUISED AS 'SPOONS BREAKFAST TAKES THE BISCUIT

Pub customer Dave Wood surprised wife Deborah with a birthday cake to celebrate her 60th... made to look like a Wetherspoon traditional breakfast.

They regularly visit The Rawson Spring (Sheffield) for breakfast and have visited 100 Wetherspoon pubs, including all of those in Yorkshire.

Dave said: "Deborah absolutely loved the cake.

"She didn't want to eat it - she wanted to glaze it, so that she could keep it permanently on display.

"In the end, she chose to share the cake with staff at The Rawson Spring, while keeping the cake topping for posterity."

The cake, made by a relative at Dave's request, may not be a perfect representation of the Wetherspoon offer - the cake has mushrooms, instead of hash browns, and Dave admits that the sausages look 'a bit burnt' - but no one's questioning its excellence as a work of artistic bakery.



# TOP OF THE MORNING TO YOU – EVERY DAY

**Unbeatable breakfasts feature quality ingredients which are cooked fresh to order in the pubs' kitchens**

**I**f you think that Wetherspoon's menu is all about readymade pub food, it is time to think again.

Behind the scenes, from the food-development team at head office to the pubs' kitchen teams, who prepare and cook your food, Wetherspoon is proud to offer great-quality dishes using responsibly sourced products and many fresh, raw ingredients cooked in the pubs' kitchens.

With numerous long-standing suppliers providing the fresh, often British or Irish, certified and sustainable ingredients, Wetherspoon's dishes are cooked to order using quality produce.

Wetherspoon's breakfast menu offers a huge range of options made from fresh ingredients, from the traditional cooked full breakfast dish to fresh fruit and yoghurt options.

Take a fresh look at Wetherspoon's trusted suppliers and the ingredients which go in your favourite breakfast dishes, with items cooked from fresh, including mushrooms and tomatoes.

Small breakfast



Fresh fruit



Eggs Benedict



## Loughnane's sausages

A family-owned business, Loughnane's of Galway supplies the pork sausages, cooked fresh in the pubs' kitchens, for every Wetherspoon traditional breakfast and all-day brunch.

Made with Irish pork, only ever fresh and from Bord Bia quality-assured farms, the quality sausages from Loughnane's of Galway are made with only natural ingredients and using traditional recipes.

The company began with a butcher's shop, in 1970s Galway, and graduated into manufacturing during the 1990s.

Founded by Seán Loughnane, originally from Loughrea, and now owned and run by Daire Loughnane, along with his brother Eoin, Loughnane has been making quality sausages spanning four generations of butchers.

## Free-range eggs

All of the fresh free-range shell eggs served at Wetherspoon's pubs are certified with the British Lion quality mark and are RSPCA assured.

All eggs are free range and fully traceable, with each one date-stamped, ensuring the best-quality eggs, produced by well-kept hens, living in high-quality conditions, with ample space to roam as freely as they like – ensuring the welfare of laying hens.

Wetherspoon also became the first pub company to gain recognition for sourcing eggs from those farms caring for their hens to higher welfare standards.

## Dew Valley bacon

Dew Valley Foods has been working with Wetherspoon since 2010, developing the breakfast bacon used in all pubs.

This is an independently owned family business, with its origin in the butchery trade.

It started as a craft butcher's in Thurles (County Tipperary), selling beef and pork products to the local community.

The business then focused its development specifically on pork and bacon and, in 1993, moved to the current site just outside of Thurles.

## Yeo Valley yoghurt

Yeo Valley is Wetherspoon's yoghurt supplier, providing the Greek-style honey yoghurt for breakfast dishes.

It has all of the thickness and creaminess of an organic Greek-style yoghurt you could wish for, with the added sweetness of real honey.

Yeo Valley's story began when founders Roger and Mary Mead started farming in the real Yeo Valley, in Somerset.

The Mead family can trace its farming ancestry back to the 15th century.

Today, Yeo Valley Organic is Britain's largest organic brand, producing yoghurt, cream, milk, butter, cheese, ice cream and compote – under the Yeo Valley Organic label, which is now more than 25 years old.

## Look out for some of Wetherspoon's NEW breakfast menu dishes:

- Fiesta brunch – poached egg, toast, guacamole, pico de gallo, grilled halloumi-style cheese, mushroom and salsa.
- American-style pancakes – pancakes, banana, strawberries, blueberries and maple-flavour syrup.
- Fresh fruit and yoghurt – apple, banana, blueberries, strawberries and Greek-style honey yoghurt.
- NEW vegan versions of current dishes are also now available, including a beans on toast option, served with vegan spread, along with a vegan sausage butty.



Fiesta brunch



American-style pancakes



Fresh fruit



Porridge

## EX-PUGILIST CONTEH THRILLS FOLK AT THE PENDEREL'S OAK

Boxing legend John Conteh MBE mingled with customers at Penderel's Oak (Holborn) as the venue is the regular meeting place for the London Ex-Boxers Association (LEBA).

Conteh, 72, held the WBC light-heavyweight title from 1974 to 1977, won gold at the 1970 Commonwealth Games and was awarded the MBE in 2017.

Widely regarded as one of the sport's true ambassadors, he regularly gives talks at boxing associations and is vice president of the LEBA.

Penderel's Oak was chosen as it has a private cellar bar which can cater for 150 people, with toilets on the same level and a sound system.

John Conteh (pictured) said: "It was great to meet Jan, who runs the pub with her husband Gerry, as well as some of the customers – we had a good chat.

"It's a really good venue – one of the few to have all the kinds of facilities which we need – and I look forward to going there again."

Jan said: "It was lovely to meet John, who enjoyed chatting to customers – one even wrote about it in a review on TripAdvisor afterwards.

"We have hosted a few meetings now and look forward to many more taking place here.

"Meetings take place on the first Sunday of every month."

Ray Caulfield, secretary of the LEBA, said: "We couldn't have chosen a better venue – it has everything we need – and the staff there are brilliant."



## SIENNA, FIVE, AND TWIN ARIA RAISE AWARENESS OF CEREBRAL PALSY



Five-year-old Sienna Thorley (pictured right) took charge at The Cross Keys (Beverley) to raise funds to fight cerebral palsy.

Sienna, daughter of the pub's shift manager Emma Thorley, has cerebral palsy and took part in a fundraising event as part of cerebral palsy awareness month.

Sienna and her twin sister Aria (pictured left) helped to sell cupcakes.

The pub also hosted craft sessions for children, with all funds raised on the day for the Hull & District Cerebral Palsy Society.

Emma said: "Sienna has a wonderful can-do attitude. She is an inspiration – and I am very proud of her and Aria."

## THE COURT LEET AND VETERAN STAFF MEMBER RICHARD CLOCK UP 10 YEARS



Shift manager Richard Ball holds aloft a certificate marking his 10 years' service on the 10th birthday of the pub where he works, The Court Leet (Ormskirk).

Richard has been working at the pub since it opened its doors in May 2014.

He and colleagues shared a cake made to represent the number 10.

Pub manager Lisa Newton (pictured centre with kitchen manager Jelena Aleksejenko) said: "We were delighted to celebrate our milestone birthday and also mark Richard's achievement."

# PIES FLY AS BRAVE ELISHA STEPS INTO THE LINE OF FIRE



Duty manager Elisha Johnson-Mardling bravely stepped up to be pied in the face multiple times – before having her head shaved for charity.

Elisha, who works at The Yarborough Hotel (Grimsby), was moved to act by the plight of customer Luke Goodwin, who suffers from a rare form of cancer and is at the centre of a major local fundraising campaign.

Elisha said: "I know Luke, read about his plight and wanted to do everything I could to help."

She hosted a fun-day at the pub which included games and dancing for children, a raffle and a tombola, with prizes including a television (bought by Elisha), hampers and other goodies.

The pub was decked out in purple balloons and banners as staff also donned purple clothing in support.

A total of £2,000 was raised on a single day, split between Luke's campaign and Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Jess Bradley, team leader Ben Soul, bar associate Clair Bradley, Elisha Johnson-Mardling, team leader Aime Drury and bar associates Maria Navarro and Ruby Snowden.

Also pictured is Elisha Johnson-Mardling with Luke Goodwin.

# WINDOW CLEANER DAVID STILL IN THE FRAME

David Meehan has been cleaning windows at The Sir Richard Owen (Lancaster) for more than 20 years.

He began cleaning windows at the pub shortly after it opened.

He said: "I just went in and asked the manager whether anyone was cleaning their windows and, fortunately, I got the work.

"Twenty years on... I am still cleaning the windows here."

David used the work as a springboard from which to launch LCD Support Services and has since gone on to clean windows at 50-60 pubs all over northwest England, including Wetherspoon's pub in Morecambe, The Eric Bartholomew.

The Sir Richard Owen's manager, Tom Rossall, said: "We believe in long-term relationships with trusted people and are very pleased to have had the same window-cleaner since day one.

"David is a nice bloke, very reliable and his time cleaning windows here speaks for itself."

David has never missed his weekly hour's stint, every Monday, at the pub and estimates there to be 40-50 windows on the premises.

He added: "This means that, over the years, I have cleaned the equivalent of up to 58,600 windows at this one pub alone."

David is well known to staff at the pub and always gets a cup of tea from them during his shift.

"They're a good bunch," he said.



## WETHERSPOON, ITS CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES HAVE PAID £6 BILLION OF TAX TO THE GOVERNMENT IN THE LAST 10 YEARS

**I**n Wetherspoon's 2023 financial year (12 months to July 2023), it generated £760.2 million in tax – about £1 in every £1,000 of ALL UK government taxes. The average tax generated per pub in 2023 was £920,000.

The table<sup>1</sup> below shows the tax generated by the company in its financial years 2014–2023.

During this period, taxes amounted to about 39 per cent of every pound which went 'over the bar', net of VAT – about 25 times the company's profit.

Wetherspoon's finance director, Ben Whitley, said: "Pub companies pay enormous amounts of tax, but that is not always well understood by the companies themselves or by commentators, since most taxes are hidden in a financial fog.

"Wetherspoon has provided a table which illustrates the exact amounts of tax which the company, its customers and employees have generated, highlighting the importance of the hospitality sector to the nation's finances."

Wetherspoon's chairman, Tim Martin, said: "The main long-term challenge to the pub industry is the tax disparity with supermarkets, which pay zero VAT in respect of food sales, whereas pubs pay 20 per cent.

"This disparity enables supermarkets to subsidise the selling price of beer, wine and spirits, to the detriment of pubs.

"Supermarkets also pay lower business rates per pint than pubs.

"A direct consequence is that pubs' share of beer sales, for example, has dropped from 90 per cent to less than 50 per cent, in recent decades.

"In fact, supermarkets are far more profitable than pubs – Tesco is probably more profitable than the entire pub industry.

"Even so, like Monty Python's Dennis Moore, successive governments have robbed the poor (pubs) and given to the rich (supermarkets).

"A core principle of taxation is that it should be fair and equitable.

"Yet most large pub companies in the UK have remained silent on this vital issue, as their most recent trading statements demonstrate.

"However, surveys by Wetherspoon in the past have demonstrated great fervour for tax equality among individual tenants and free traders.

"The lack of vocal support for equality is probably an example of board rooms being out of touch with those on the front line, always a bad sign for any industry.

"Until there is tax equality between different types of business on the High Street, pubs will always be fighting with one hand tied behind their back – and will provide less in the way of jobs or taxes than they otherwise might."

Wetherspoon's tax payments in financial years 2014–2023	2023 £m	2022 £m	2021 £m	2020 £m	2019 £m	2018 £m	2017 £m	2016 £m	2015 £m	2014 £m	2014–2023 £m
VAT	372.3	287.7	93.8	244.3	357.9	332.8	323.4	311.7	294.4	275.1	2,893.4
Alcohol duty	166.1	158.6	70.6	124.2	174.4	175.9	167.2	164.4	161.4	157	1,519.8
PAYE and NIC	124.0	141.9	101.5	106.6	121.4	109.2	96.2	95.1	84.8	78.4	1,059.1
Business rates	49.9	50.3	1.5	39.5	57.3	55.6	53.0	50.2	48.7	44.9	450.9
Corporation tax	12.2	1.5	–	21.5	19.9	26.1	20.7	19.9	15.3	18.4	155.5
Corporation tax credit (historic capital allowances)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-2.0	–	-2.0
Fruit/slot machine duty	15.7	12.8	4.3	9.0	11.6	10.5	10.5	11	11.2	11.3	107.9
Climate change levies	11.1	9.7	7.9	10.0	9.6	9.2	9.7	8.7	6.4	6.3	88.6
Stamp duty	0.9	2.7	1.8	4.9	3.7	1.2	5.1	2.6	1.8	2.1	26.8
Sugar tax	3.1	2.7	1.3	2.0	2.9	0.8	–	–	–	–	12.8
Fuel duty	1.9	1.9	1.1	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.9	2.1	20.1
Apprenticeship levy	2.5	2.2	1.9	1.2	1.3	1.7	0.6	–	–	–	11.4
Carbon tax	–	–	–	–	1.9	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.7	2.7	18.3
Premise licence and TV licences	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.6	0.7	8.0
Landfill tax	–	–	–	–	–	1.7	2.5	2.2	2.2	1.5	10.1
Furlough tax rebate	–	-4.4	-213.0	-124.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	-341.5
Eat Out to Help Out	–	–	-23.2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-23.2
Local government grants	–	-1.4	-11.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-12.5
<b>TOTAL TAX</b>	<b>760.2</b>	<b>666.7</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>441.9</b>	<b>764.9</b>	<b>730.5</b>	<b>695.2</b>	<b>672.3</b>	<b>632.4</b>	<b>600.5</b>	<b>6,003.5</b>
<b>TAX PER PUB (£m)</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>6.78</b>
<b>TAX AS % OF NET SALES</b>	<b>39.5%</b>	<b>38.3%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>35.0%</b>	<b>42.1%</b>	<b>43.1%</b>	<b>41.9%</b>	<b>42.1%</b>	<b>41.8%</b>	<b>42.6%</b>	<b>39.0%</b>
<b>PROFIT/(LOSS) AFTER TAX</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>-24.9</b>	<b>-146.5</b>	<b>-38.5</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>83.6</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>56.9</b>	<b>57.5</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>237.3</b>

<sup>1</sup>Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2014–2023



## FANS OF US ALE KEPT ON THE HOP BY HOPTROPOLIS

Customers at all of Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK enjoyed a special American Independence Day beer, brewed especially for 4 July.

Brewmaster Mitch Steele, from US-based New Realm Brewing, travelled to the UK to brew his Hoptropolis IPA (6.0% ABV) at Hook Norton Brewery, in Oxfordshire.

Mitch, pictured at The Crosse Keys (City of London), was one of the very first international brewers who arrived in 2008 to brew for Wetherspoon's real-ale festival.

Mitch has been at New Realm Brewing, in Georgia, since 2016, having brewed previously with Anheuser-Busch and Stone Brewing.

This was his seventh visit to the UK for Wetherspoon.

Hoptropolis IPA, a tropical, fruity, light bitter, was voted most popular ale at Wetherspoon's autumn 2023 real-ale festival, so Mitch 'crossed the pond' again to produce the 4 July brew.

Wetherspoon's real-ale festival organiser, Jen Swindells, said: "We had so much fantastic feedback from customers about Hoptropolis that we thought it would be great to invite Mitch back to brew it again here, as a special limited-edition guest ale."



## MOZART'S MAGIC PUT ON STAGE AT OPERA HOUSE



Opera House (Tunbridge Wells) has hosted its eagerly anticipated annual opera performance.

Two performances of *The Magic Flute*, by the touring Merry Opera Company, were enjoyed by a sold-out audience at the pub.

Opera House, Wetherspoon's pub in the Kent town, reverts to its original use at least once every year to stage an opera show.

The audience enjoyed either a matinée or a Sunday evening show, in seats from the dress circle (no dining) or from boxes or stall seats, with preshow dining included in the ticket price.

The new production told the story of a young man who finds himself in a strange and bizarre world peopled by bird-men, monsters, magic beings, mad scientists and even madder monarchs.

Armed with only the power of music, the hero sets out on a quest to save a beautiful princess from evil – before everything turns upside down all over again.

Merry Opera Company's production of the beloved opera by Mozart featured a multitalented virtuoso cast of only seven people taking on multiple roles.

Pub manager Greg Wilkins said: "As ever, the team was thrilled to welcome the Merry Opera Company back to Opera House, with its new production of *The Magic Flute*.

"Tickets for the annual opera performance, which sold out yet again this year, are always highly sought after.

"The show is always enjoyed and much loved by both staff and customers alike."

Past productions at Opera House have included *Cinderella '23*, *The Mikado*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *La bohème* and *Kiss Me, Figaro!*

The Opera House (the original theatre which opened in 1902) was built by the firm John Jarvis.

It later became a cinema and then bingo hall, opening as a Wetherspoon pub – called Opera House – in April 1997.



# PLANT PURVEYOR CHRIS THRIVING SINCE BEGINNING WITH BELLWETHER'S BASKETS

**W**hen the pub manager of The Bellwether (Wednesbury) enquired at a local plant shop about supplying hanging baskets for the pub, the shop owner could never have imagined to still be working with Wetherspoon – almost 25 years later.

Chris O'Gorman (pictured), from Wednesbury Garden Services, was that shop manager in 2000.

His family business, with a small team of just five, is now responsible for supplying and maintaining plants and gardens at 81 Wetherspoon pubs.

Chris, who hails from West Bromwich, said: "We went from supplying a few baskets for The Bellwether to looking after four or five Wetherspoon pubs, but now take care of 81 sites across the Midlands, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire."

## Team

He continued: "We are a small team, with my two sons helping out, when their own jobs allow, with two other staff members and my wife, Verity, responsible for all of the paperwork.

"I have always been passionate about my job and remember, as a youngster, always thinking how magical it was when things grew in my dad's garden.

"He was a great gardener."

Chris and his team supply and maintain baskets and planters, from four hanging baskets to up to 30 pieces at each pub, watering and weeding, as well as general maintenance and litter-picking, along with mowing lawns and keeping everything in tip-top condition.

Before the pandemic, winning 16 gold awards at Britain in Bloom 2019 was testament to that hard work.

## Rapport

Chris said: "Wetherspoon has been really good to me and my family – and we have a great rapport with the pub managers and area managers.

"We often receive great feedback from the company, including from Tim Martin, and like to keep everyone happy.

"Things are going well – and we have got to keep that going.

"If you get it right, it is priceless."

Wetherspoon regional manager Debbie Whittingham said: "We all appreciate what Chris does for Wetherspoon.

## Pride

"He takes enormous pride in the planting schemes at the pubs and it is great that we have had this partnership for so long.

"Nothing is ever too much trouble, and his knowledge and experience are invaluable.

"Thank you to Chris and his team for doing what you do, you are a real joy to work with."

DUNFERMLINE • GLENROTHES • KIRKCALDY

# FIFE TIMES THREE EQUALS TRIPLE GOLD



Three Wetherspoon pubs in Scotland have achieved a gold award at the Best Bar None Fife Awards 2023.

Pictured (left to right) are pub managers Jonny Stewart (The Golden Acorn, Glenrothes), Michele Park (The Guildhall & Linen Exchange, Dunfermline) and Craig Matheson (The Robert Nairn, Kirkcaldy).

The award ceremony, held at Glenrothes Police headquarters, recognised more than 25 licensed premises, including The Golden Acorn, The Guildhall & Linen Exchange and The Robert Nairn.

Chief Superintendent Derek McEwan, the divisional commander for Fife, presented the awards and thanked all of the licensed premises for the good standards and professional manner in which they run their licensed premises.

Jonny Stewart said: "We are all delighted to have achieved a gold award, which is given for those going 'above and beyond to help deliver a safer night-time economy'.

"We all place high priority on best practice and the safety and care of our staff and customers. It is great for that hard work to be recognised."

## HUDDERSFIELD

### CHERRY TREE IN FULL BLOOM AS IT'S NAMED 'PUB OF THE SEASON'

The Cherry Tree (Huddersfield) has been voted as 'pub of the season' by members of the local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) group.

The pub was named as winner of the 'pub of the season' competition, for spring 2024, by the Huddersfield & District CAMRA branch.

Branch chairman Paul Laxton is pictured presenting a certificate to shift leader Shannon Sudworth, as bar associate John Burgess looks on from behind the bar.

John, who has worked for Wetherspoon for 21 years and always at The Cherry Tree, is a CAMRA member and also the pub's liaison with local branch members.

Pub manager George Burley, who took over at The Cherry Tree in April 2023, said: "We're delighted to be voted 'pub of the season' and thank the CAMRA members for their support.

"There's a lot of competition in the local area – and it has been 10 years since we have won this award from the branch, so this is great recognition."

The Cherry Tree serves at least five guest ales at all times, including local beers from Acorn, Black Sheep, Bradfield and Goose Eye breweries.



MALTBY

## MALTBY MANAGER BETH WINS NATIONAL PUBWATCH AWARD



The manager of The Queens Hotel (Maltby) and chair of Maltby pubwatch, Beth Burns, has received a top award for her efforts to reduce crime and improve community cohesion in the South Yorkshire town.

She has been awarded a National Pubwatch Award of Merit, rewarding individuals who have contributed to the success of pubwatch schemes.

National Pubwatch is a voluntary organisation which supports more than 800 local pubwatch schemes across the UK and works to promote safe, secure and social drinking environments in all licensed premises throughout the UK.

Beth (pictured) was recognised for her work to improve the safety, security and well-being of staff and customers in her pub and in the wider pubwatch community, as well as for her positive efforts to engage with the police and the council.

She has spearheaded meetings with the local police team, also inviting ward councillors and the local council to discuss issues, share intelligence and propose ways to resolve challenges.

Through her efforts, violence in pubs and antisocial behaviour are on the decline, with an increase in footfall and families visiting venues.

The pubwatch has also been a catalyst for community engagement, with members now fully involved with local activities to bring the community together.

These have included distraction events for youths on bonfire night to target and discourage poor behaviour, community walks to tackle loneliness and litter-picking events to restore a feeling of pride in the area.

The scheme has also been instrumental in campaigning for improvements in the local infrastructure and public spaces, such as installing public CCTV and lighting.

Beth said: "It is great to be recognised with this National Pubwatch Award of Merit.

"Working with other stakeholders in the local area has really worked in bringing the community together."

National Pubwatch chair Steve Baker OBE said: "The range of initiatives Beth has been spearheading has made Maltby a safer place to go out – and her success in doing this is something to be praised."

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, added: "We are immensely proud of Beth. She is an outstanding licensee and richly deserves her award."

# THE SWAN IN LEIGHTON BUZZARD 'SOARS' INTO 'GREATEST HITS' BOOK

A Wetherspoon pub has been recognised by author Ian Hirst among a collection of 'greatest pubs'.

His newly published book – The 50 Greatest Pubs in Herts, Beds & Bucks – includes a two-page entry for The Swan Hotel (Leighton Buzzard).

Ian's book, which covers Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, celebrates at length the very finest of pubs which, over the years, have all been essential parts of their respective local communities.

There is detailed history and many interesting facts about each venue, including The Swan Hotel, illustrated with colour photographs.

About The Swan Hotel, Ian writes: "Prominently located on High Street, Ian writes: "Prominently located on High Street, previously a coaching inn on the main routes to London, close to the railway bridge where the Great Train Robbery occurred.

"This pub arose at the turn of the 17th century where a sketch depicted the two-storey thatched house with a drinking parlour, prominently located on High Street of the historic market town of Leighton Buzzard.

"This became a coaching inn in 1646 as this form of transport became established and a list of the licensees from Richard Osman in 1653 is displayed on a board inside.

"In 2011, J D Wetherspoon plc acquired the site and completed a further refurbishment in their style, where the outside was painted in cream and white, with bright red and black lettering."

● **Published by Michael Terence Publishing and available, priced £17.99, through Amazon online via the following universal link: [mybook.to/GPHBB](https://mybook.to/GPHBB)**



Ian Hirst (right) with pub manager Edmund Ball

# PICTURE HOUSE FOLK LOOK BACK THROUGH BESPOKE GLASS RACK

The Picture House (Stafford) has added an individually designed bespoke glass rack to honour not only the building's history, but also the existing decorative features throughout the pub.

The main inspiration for the gold patterns comes from the ornate gilt bands and elegant circles on the barrel-vault ceiling.

The glass rack also features the Stafford knot, now more commonly recognised as the Staffordshire knot.

This distinctive three-looped knot is a traditional symbol of the county of Staffordshire.

The pub opened in March 1997 and is managed by Jem Turner.

The original Picture House opened in February 1914, with its first showing being The House of Temperley.

Wetherspoon's regional property manager, Paul Turner MRICS, said: "The Picture House is a superb pub housed in a wonderful building.

"The bespoke glass rack is a great addition and links the pub to Staffordshire's county town."



## TOWN CRIER DENNIS, 91, HANGS UP HIS HANDBELL



Dennis Robinson, the first-ever customer at The George Inn (Sandbach) when it opened in December 2013, has announced his retirement from the role of town crier at the age of 91.

Dennis (pictured) celebrated his retirement at the pub with a traditional breakfast and a cup of coffee, surrounded by friends and well-wishers.

A very well-known face in Sandbach for decades, Dennis has served as a councillor and also been mayor of the town – as well as being town crier since 1983.

He said: “I was the first customer in the pub, when it opened, and have been coming here almost every day since.”

“I love the company, the traditional breakfast and, if I am in later on in the day, I enjoy fish and chips, sometimes with a pint of Wobbly Bob.”

Dennis was an award-winning town crier, picking up top prize at a national competition and representing Sandbach around the world. Locally, he performed at Christmas markets, churches and in the town square and was much loved by his audiences.

Pub manager Kate Shaw said: “Dennis is wonderful. I could sit and talk to him all day.

“He’s a big part of the pub – and we all wish him well in his retirement.”

## TALENT-SPOTTER NEIL PUTS YOUNG STAFF ON FAST TRACK

Pub manager Neil Clark has an eye for talent and has fast-tracked two of his staff at The James Watt (Greenock) with swift promotions.

James Ford was employed as a cleaner at the pub and, within a year, has taken on the role of shift leader.

Neil said: “James started as a cleaner, but we offered him the odd bar shift – which he was more than happy to do.

“He is a very hard worker and, almost immediately after taking on the new role, was organising colleagues.

“He thoroughly deserves his position as shift leader.”

Student Corinne McQuillan started at the pub as a floor associate – or ‘floor baby’, as she put it – when she was 15.

She later returned after a work placement as a part-time bar associate and found herself quickly promoted to shift leader.

Pub manager Neil Clark (pictured left, with James and Corinne) added: “Both James and Corinne thoroughly deserve their promotions and are very valued members of the pub team.”



# SHADOW BRIDGE BREWER BRINGS BEERS FROM THE SHIRE TO THE BLUE BELL INN



Beers from Shadow Bridge Brewery were available for sampling at a meet-the-brewer event at The Blue Bell Inn (Scunthorpe).

The featured beers were mild ale Dwarven Steel, red ale Elvish Fury, honeycomb-flavour pale ale The Orb of Destiny and a stout called Wizard's Ruin.

Shift manager Paula Buck organised the event, inviting Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) members and offering complimentary nibbles.

Shadow Bridge's operations director, Heather Dempsey, said: "It was a really good event with lots of positive feedback.

"Our thanks go to Paula for helping to make the event such a success."

Shadow Bridge is based in Barton-on-Humber, just 14 miles from The Blue Bell Inn, and Heather is a customer at the pub.

Paula said: "It went really well. People really enjoyed it."

As well as the tasting, customers were invited to take part in a beer raffle, raising £72 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pictured are Shadow Bridge's operations director Heather Dempsey and head brewer Leigh Spindley, with CAMRA member Steve Martin (centre).

# ALE-DRINKERS IMPRESSED BY DRYGATE'S MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Brewery rep David Benjamin (pictured) hosted a meet-the-brewer event at The James Watt (Greenock).

David, who works for Glasgow's Drygate Brewery, was invited to the pub by its manager Neil Clark.

The event saw customers ask questions and discuss beers, before seven were made available – with a pizza slice.

David said: "It went really well – in terms of atmosphere and customer involvement and feedback, it was the best I've seen."

Shift leader Amanda McLellan (pictured), who organised the event, said: "Our customers really enjoyed themselves.

"We are glad it went so well."

She added that there would be a series of similar events with different brewers at the pub, roughly once a month.

The seven beers sampled were Kelvin Pilsner Lager (4.0% ABV) (gluten free), Seven Peaks Session IPA (3.9% ABV), Disco Forklift Truck Mango (IPA 5.1% ABV), Gladeye Retro IPA (5.2% ABV), Bearface Lager (4.4% ABV), Crossing the Rubicon West Coast IPA (6.9% ABV) and Orinoco Mocha Milk Stout (6.0% ABV).



## THE NEW FAIRLOP OAK CREW CELEBRATES CRAIG'S 25 YEARS



Kitchen associate Craig Flindall celebrated 25 years' service with Wetherspoon, with balloons, a cake and a certificate presentation.

Craig, who has always worked at The New Fairlop Oak (Barkingside), is pictured (front) with (left to right) cleaner Lindsey Wood, shift leader Burhan Pazar, pub manager Karen Burdett and shift leader Elaine Grizzle.

Karen, who has run the pub for the past 18 years, said: "Congratulations to Craig on his amazing achievement of 25 years with the company and at our pub.

"He is a valued team member, who gets on well with everyone."

Craig, who has learning difficulties, works for one hour, five mornings per week, helping with kitchen deliveries and responsible for preparing all of the fruit garnishes for drinks.

Karen added: "Craig is very helpful, friendly and reliable and he likes his job."

Craig's mum, Chris, said: "Craig is very keen to go to work each day – and this is because of the atmosphere which pub manager Karen has created over the years.

"He is able to work at the pub only ever during the day and does very few hours, yet I am truly grateful for those few hours each week."

## PAINT YOUR WAGON (& HORSES): PRINT OF ARTIST'S WORK ON DISPLAY IN PUB

A print of The Wagon & Horses (Chapelton, Sheffield) drawn by a local artist now hangs on its wall – after a customer noticed it for sale in a shop.

After being alerted to the print, pub manager Peter Bryan went straight to the shop to buy it and hung it, framed, on the wall.

The original painting is by local artist Peter Smithies who, with wife Gwen, is coincidentally a customer at the pub.

Artist Peter said: "It's very nice to have one of my prints displayed in the pub. I painted it from a photo I took of the pub, with a train in the background, carrying my daughter off to university.

"It was my way of waving goodbye."

Pub manager Peter said: "When I was told the print was for sale in a local shop, I had to go and buy it and display it in the pub.

"It is a strange coincidence that Peter, the artist, is a customer at the pub."

The train crossing the bridge in the print (see picture) has just left Chapelton Railway Station – a stone's throw from The Wagon & Horses.



Pub manager Peter Bryan, pictured (left) with local artist Peter Smithies



# SET IN STONE: STAFF IN NO RUSH TO LEAVE POSTE PUB



**Pictured (left to right) are kitchen manager Odion Ogba (known as Paul), kitchen shift leader Laura Gibson, shift managers Jennie Minns and Andrew Best**

At every level in the company, Wetherspoon is naturally proud of the long-serving staff members among its employee ranks.

Wetherspoon's pub managers have been employed for an average of 14 years, although many have been with the company for 20, 25 or 30 plus years.

The Poste of Stone (Stone) has several long-serving staff members on the team, with kitchen manager Odion Ogba leading the way, marking 27 years' service for the company in July.

Known to everyone as Paul, he started work with Wetherspoon as a cleaner, at J.J. Moon's (North Harrow) (now closed), moving to The Tichenham Inn (Ickenham), where he worked for 11 years and progressed to kitchen manager.

Paul, who joined the team at The Poste of Stone nine years ago, said: "If I didn't love my job, I would not have been here for so many years. It has been a long journey, but I have never looked back."

Paul's kitchen team includes Laura Gibson, who started as a kitchen associate at the pub 17 years ago and is now a kitchen shift leader.

Laura, who has always worked at The Poste of Stone, although has helped out temporarily on occasion at other pubs in the area, said: "It's a good job and provides good job security. We have a great team. "Paul is good to work with and everyone gets on well."

In September, shift manager Andrew Best will mark 19 years' service with Wetherspoon.

He started in 2005 as a bar associate at The Poste of Stone, before several moves and career progressions – including at The Picture House (Stafford), The Old Swan (Uttoxeter), The Thomas Botfield (Telford), The Wheatsheaf (Cheadle) and The Acorn Inn (Lichfield).

Andrew returned to The Poste of Stone in 2015 as a shift manager, where he has worked since.

Andrew's fellow shift manager Jennie Minns also clocked up 11 years' service, earlier this year, having joined the company initially in March 2013 as a bar associate.

- There are 20 Wetherspoon employees who have worked for the company for more than 30 years.
- Working for the company for more than 20 years are 632 staff.
- There are 3,895 employees who have been with Wetherspoon for more than 10 years, with 11,066 staff having worked for the company for more than five years.



Pub manager Rachael Evans at The Thomas Burke (Leigh)

**Note from the editor:** The article below outlines Wetherspoon's bonus and free shares scheme. No company is perfect, but Wetherspoon believes that it pays a higher percentage of its profits in this way than most, or possibly any, large companies.

# £520 MILLION IN FREE SHARES AND BONUSES PAID TO EMPLOYEES SINCE 2006

83 per cent paid to pub staff

**S**ince the early 1980s, Wetherspoon has awarded bonuses, free shares and 'share options' to pub employees.

The current scheme of paying monthly bonuses to all pub employees, subject to certain criteria, started in 1998, with a government-approved free share scheme introduced in 2003.

Bonuses and share schemes provide an extra incentive for people to stay with the company: there are 20 employees who have worked for the company for more than 30 years, 632 for more than 20 years, 3,895 for more than 10 years and 11,066 for more than five years. Since 2006, the company has paid £520 million to its employees in respect of bonuses and free shares.

# BONUSES AND SHARES

Of the recipients, approximately 96 per cent went to employees below board level, with around 83 per cent paid to employees working in pubs.

Employees are eligible for bonuses from the commencement of their employment and are eligible for free shares after 18 months.

In the financial year ended July 2023, bonuses and free shares of £36 million were awarded (see table<sup>1</sup> below), with 88 per cent of employees receiving a bonus and/or shares in that period.

At the current time, 15,778 of our 42,000 employees have been awarded free shares in the company.

It's probably true to say that no one earns a vast fortune from these schemes.

However, as far as the company is aware, Wetherspoon consistently pays a bigger percentage of its profits to its employees, by way of bonuses and free shares, than any other large pub/restaurant company or retailer.

Since the share scheme was introduced, Wetherspoon has awarded 28.9 million shares to employees – approximately 23 per cent of all shares in existence today.

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, said: "People are vital to the success of the business.

"Our bonus and share schemes are a good way to share in the company's success."

**Wetherspoon: Bonuses and free shares vs profits, 2006–23**

Financial year	Bonuses and free shares	Profit after tax (loss/profit after tax) <sup>2</sup>	Bonus etc as % of profit
	£m	£m	
2023	36	28	129
2022	30	-25	-
2021	23	-147	-
2020	33	-39	-
2019	46	80	58
2018	43	84	51
2017	44	77	57
2016	33	57	58
2015	31	57	53
2014	29	59	50
2013	29	65	44
2012	24	57	42
2011	23	52	43
2010	23	51	44
2009	21	45	45
2008	16	36	45
2007	19	47	41
2006	17	40	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>52.5<sup>3</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2006–23

<sup>2</sup> IFRS 16 was implemented in the year ending 26 July 2020 (FY20).

From this period, all profit numbers in the above table are on a post-IFRS-16 basis. Before this date, all profit numbers are on a pre-IFRS-16 basis.

<sup>3</sup> Shares and bonus as a percentage of profit excludes 2020, 2021 and 2022.

THE WOULDHAVE • SOUTH SHIELDS

# LEANNE STILL LOVING THE KITCHEN AFTER 25 YEARS



Kitchen manager Leanne Davis is pictured (centre) receiving her 25 years' service certificate and flowers from area manager Amanda Dunn (right) and kitchen shift leader Leanne Urwin.

Leanne Davis joined the company as a part-time bar associate in April 1999, working at The William Jameson (Sunderland) in her home city.

Within a year, she had cross-trained to work in the kitchen also, having already stepped up to bar supervisor (now known as a bar shift leader role).

Leanne said: "I went into the kitchen to work and liked it, so never came back out."

Leanne took on her first kitchen manager position at The Lambton Worm (Sunderland) (now closed), where she spent three years, before moving, in December 2006, to the newly opened pub The Bishops' Mill (Durham).

She remembered: "I went back to The Lambton Worm after I had my first child. I adored that place, loved it there, but it was sold in 2017."

A brief four-month stint at The Cooper Rose (Sunderland) followed, before a move to The Water House (Durham) (now closed), where she spent six years, before that pub was also sold.

Leanne, who now has three children, Gracie (14), Izzy (12) and Archie (six), worked from March until November 2023 at Wetherspoons (Metrocentre, Gateshead), until taking on her current kitchen role at The Wouldhave (South Shields), managing a team of 20.

Leanne, 44, added: "Working full time and bringing up three children have their own challenges, but the company was supportive and flexible with shifts when they were younger.

"I love working for Wetherspoon and enjoy my job.

"There have been so many changes during the past 25 years, mostly positive and for the better, and I think it is quite an achievement to have managed 25 years with the same company."

Leanne concluded: "When I took on the part-time job at the age of almost 20, I had no idea what I wanted to do, yet didn't imagine for a second that it would be the start of a 25-year (so far) career.

"I thoroughly enjoy working at The Wouldhave and wish to stay here now, after all of the moving around."

MANCHESTER

# ALE CONNOISSEURS GO MAD FOR IT AT MANCHESTER'S FORD MADOX BROWN



Pub manager Olivia Sunderland and her team at The Ford Madox Brown (Manchester) have been recognised for their real ale by local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) members.

The Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA branch named the pub as 'pub of the month' for April 2024.

Olivia is pictured (centre) with bar associate and real-ale champion Kai Marshall (right), accepting the award from CAMRA branch treasurer Jim Flynn.

Jim said: "Congratulations to Olivia 'Liv' Sunderland, the pub manager, whose sterling efforts over the last two years since her arrival have undoubtedly led to this award."

He added: "What has earned The Ford Madox Brown this accolade is the improvement in choice and quality of its cask beers.

"It boasts the usual Wetherspoon attributes of value for money, a range of beers and confidence that you will not be short-changed on standard."

On the presentation evening, the pub also hosted a CAMRA young members' evening, where students from universities across the city were encouraged to learn more about CAMRA and its aims.

The event, which included a membership stand, allowed all current and prospective young CAMRA members to meet their peers and discuss activities with them and other active branch members.

Olivia concluded: "We were delighted to receive the April 2024 'pub of the month' award and thank the CAMRA branch members for their continued support.

"It was also great to host the special young members' event at the pub, which proved to be hugely popular."

WEMBLEY

## MP PAYS TRIBUTE TO LIFE-SAVER JEAN-LUC

Local MP Barry Gardiner visited J.J. Moon's (Wembley) to congratulate team leader Jean-Luc Julienne on his national bravery award.

Jean-Luc received the National Pubwatch bravery & meritorious award, after saving the life of a stab victim outside the pub (the incident was not related to the pub itself).

Struck by the unflinching actions of his constituent, Mr Gardiner headed to the pub to add his personal recognition and thanks.

Mr Gardiner said: "What Jean-Luc actually did is what we all like to think we would have done in a situation such as this."

Jean-Luc said: "Barry was lovely. He was really down to earth – and we had a great chat."

Speaking of the incident, he added: "The man had a bad injury to his neck, across the throat. I just did what I had to do to put pressure on the wound and calm people down around him."

Paramedics arrived within 20 minutes. The man survived the attack.

As well as administering emergency first aid, Jean-Luc instructed colleagues to call an ambulance, secure the doors of the pub and move customers to safety.

Medics and others confirmed afterwards that the victim would have died without Jean-Luc's unhesitating actions.

PC John Inglesant of the Metropolitan Police's Wembley town centre team, said: "In my opinion, Jean-Luc went above and beyond the call of duty, taking swift action to risk assess the situation and putting himself in a dangerous situation to prevent harm and save life.

"I firmly believe that his actions deserved to be praised and recognised at the highest level."

National Pubwatch chair Steve Baker OBE added: "Jean-Luc's bravery and selfless commitment undoubtedly saved the life of the victim."

Jean-Luc also works as a social worker, with youngsters in care.

He says his ability to respond as he did comes from his other job – sometimes dealing with violent offenders.

● **MP Barry Gardiner appears in a video of his meeting with Jean-Luc on YouTube: [tinyurl.com/2s4bzpfs](https://tinyurl.com/2s4bzpfs)**

LYTHAM ST ANNES

## BECKI AND RAILWAY TEAM PAY TRIBUTE TO RNLI HEROES

This year, 2024, marks the 200th anniversary of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).

Pub manager Becki White and her team at The Railway Hotel (Lytham St Annes) have marked the special anniversary by unveiling a photograph in the pub of the current RNLI crew based nearby at Lytham St Annes lifeboat station.

The station operates two lifeboats, a Shannon-class all-weather lifeboat and a D-class inshore boat. These are housed in separate boathouses 3.5 miles apart, one in Lytham and the other in St Annes.

Becki said: "Our pub is located less than half a mile from the Lytham lifeboat station, which plays such an important role in our coastal community town, so we wanted to mark the milestone 200 years of the RNLI."

"We now have a large canvas print of the current crew displayed in the pub."

Becki continued: "The pub also has a long-associated history with the Lytham lifeboat crew, as The Railway Hotel was used in 1886 as a rescue place, following a disaster at sea."

A book, titled *On Those Infernal Ribble Banks*, documenting the story of that incident and the bravery of the crews has been written by current Lytham St Annes crew member David Forshaw.

An extract from his book reports: 'On 9 December 1886, a vessel, the barque Mexico, was wrecked on a sandbank in the south of the Ribble estuary. It was on its way from Liverpool to South America.

'Three lifeboats were launched from Southport, St Annes and Lytham. Forty-four men put to sea in gale force winds to rescue the crew of 12.

'Of those, 27 were not to return. Only the crew of the Lytham lifeboat, Charles Biggs, returned to shore safely, and with it, the crew of the Mexico.

'After over six hours in horrendous conditions, they were all taken to The Railway Hotel, where the landlord, Thomas Rymer, had hot food and drinks ready for them.

'On the steps of The Railway, Captain Burmester (of the Mexico) stood and addressed the crowd: "I do thank you very much and everyone in your town for the gallant manner in which you have this night rescued me and my crew."

The RNLI is the charity which saves lives at sea. Powered primarily by kind donations, its search-and-rescue service has been saving lives for 200 years.

The vast majority of RNLI people are volunteers, ordinary people doing extraordinary things, supported by expert staff, all working together to help communities at home and abroad to save lives.

● To make a donation, visit: [rnli.org](https://www.rnli.org)



Pub manager Becki White is pictured with RNLI crew members David Forshaw, Pete Whalley, Digby Moulden and Paul Little (left to right)

# IT TAKES A VILLAGE (LOCATION) TO BRING YOU ARTISAN HAMS AND GAMMON

**Secret recipe plays big part in taste of meats delivered by Northamptonshire company**



**Eggs Benedict**

**W**etherspoon is committed and dedicated to providing its customers with the very best quality and value-for-money food and drinks.

The company is proud to have been working with numerous suppliers, some for many years, to source and deliver top-quality produce and fresh ingredients which go into making the Wetherspoon meals for customers to enjoy.

Among those associations is a partnership with Houghton Hams, which has been supplying Wiltshire ham and gammon since 2020.

**Anniversary**

The Northamptonshire-based family-run business has recently celebrated its 40-year anniversary.

Started by Nigel Wagstaff, supported by his wife Jo, the company benefited from Nigel's experience in both farming and butchery, and the acquisition of the secret-recipe 'Wagstaff complete cure'.

The family business, in a small village location, set out to produce artisan hams and gammon.

Today, still operating from Moulton, in a unit 10 times bigger than the original and under the management of the Wagstaff family, director/founder Nigel, director Jo and their four grown-up children (all directors) run a state-of-the-art facility on the village's outskirts, with around 60 employees.

**Smooth**

Nigel is still very much hands on in the business, meeting Wetherspoon's food-development team at least once a year, while director Paul Wagstaff attends regular meetings with the food-development team to ensure a smooth and successful partnership.

Paul's three sisters, Linda Adetola, Julie Blayney and Sarah Nicholson, complete the Wagstaff family directorship.

Paul said: "We have a good partnership with Wetherspoon – it is a fair company, and we are positive about the future of our business and what we can do together with Wetherspoon.

**Relish**

"The partnership often challenges our business technically, yet we relish that.

"Anything which challenges us is a good thing and, in turn, inspires our business to grow with that challenge."

"The ingredients used by Houghton Hams to produce the Wiltshire ham and gammon for Wetherspoon are fully traceable from farm to fork, ensuring the products' consistency."

Wetherspoon is the only pub company to which Houghton Hams delivers directly.

That partnership sees more than seven million slices of traditional Wiltshire ham arrive at Wetherspoon every year.

If you are at a Wetherspoon pub tucking in to Wiltshire ham, eggs and chips or eggs Benedict, you could be enjoying one of Houghton Hams' excellent products.

**Wiltshire cured ham**

Here's the science bit...

Wiltshire ham implies a specific curing method which originates from the 18th century. It was first developed by the Harris family, in Calne, Wiltshire.

Houghton Hams produces an authentic Wiltshire ham and has been accredited to do so under the British Meat Processors Association's charter standard.

Its Wiltshire ham is produced through a secret brine recipe, with no water-retainers.

The product is then immersed in a live brine, where only salt-tolerant organisms survive.

After that, the technical team goes to work to monitor and control this conversion.

A three- to 10-day maturation period helps to develop Wiltshire ham's distinctive colour and flavour profile.

During this period, the hams are turned by hand to ensure a consistent curing uptake.

The product is then slowly cooked, for around nine to 10 hours, to complete this crafted production process, culminating in a true depth of flavour.

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# PERPETU-ALE MOTION AT THE POTTERS WHEEL

**Exceptional Swansea pub wins official recognition for its belting beers for 16th straight year**

**W**etherspoon is proud of the quality of the real ales served in its pubs.

Its staff work hard to offer first-class beers at all times.

This is evident in the high number of Wetherspoon pubs listed, over many years, in the publication from the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) – The Good Beer Guide.

Wetherspoon continues to have more pubs listed, as a proportion of its estate, than any other pub company.

Local CAMRA branch members judge and score pubs for considered inclusion in the guide. In the 2024 edition, there are 236 Wetherspoon pubs listed.

**Excellent**

In this regular feature, we highlight those pubs and staff who serve an excellent range of real ales from brewers across the UK.

The Potters Wheel (Swansea), which opened as a Wetherspoon pub in March 1996, has now been listed in the guide for the past 16 consecutive years, including in the 2024 edition.

Pub manager Jamie Philpin (pictured) took over at The Potters Wheel in October 2022, having started with the company 11 years ago as a bar associate at The Bank Statement (Swansea).

He spent eight years there before, in 2021, taking on his first pub as manager at Yr Hen Dderwen (Carmarthen).

Jamie said: “The Potters Wheel has appeared in every Good Beer Guide for the past 16 successive years – an amazing achievement and one of which we are very proud.

**Important**

“It is also vitally important that customers know about this too. We have posters and notices displayed around the pub. It is definitely something to really shout about.”

Jamie and the team at The Potters Wheel have a great relationship with their local Swansea CAMRA branch, with 15–20 members regularly meeting up at the pub to socialise.

Around 30 members also enjoyed the pub’s Christmas 2023 meal and get-together, the ninth year for which The Potters Wheel has been chosen as the festive venue.

Jamie confirmed: “We have a good relationship with the branch, with members Martin and Des regularly coming to the pub on Thursdays and Sundays with a group to enjoy a few beers.

“We organise tours and meet-the-brewer nights and always ask them which ales they would like to see on the bar.”

**Guest**

As well as the three regular Wetherspoon real-ale choices of Sharp’s Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles, The Potters Wheel serves a minimum of five ever-changing guest ales, many from local Welsh breweries.

Jamie said: “Our real-ale-drinkers and the CAMRA guys prefer the stronger session ales.

“Among the favourites are Gower Gower Power (5.5% ABV), Glamorgan Jemima’s Pitchfork (4.5% ABV) and Rhymney Export (5.0% ABV).

“We offer such a selection that no one near us can offer the range of real ales which we do.”

With the pub located in the city centre, customers are also a very varied crowd from local real-ale regulars to students, as well as tourists and visitors to the city.

Jamie added: “We recently lost shift manager Simon Martin, unfortunately, after 20 years with the company. He was our main real-ale champion and CAMRA liaison. He reluctantly left us for a different career.

“However, shift manager Callum Devoy has now joined our brilliant team from The Bank Statement and has taken to all things real ale like a duck to water. The CAMRA guys have taken to Callum, too, which is great.”

*What The Good Beer Guide 2024 says:*

**THE POTTERS WHEEL**

City-centre Wetherspoon pub with a long, sprawling bar area which has various seating arrangements, attracting a wide mix of customers.

An interesting selection of guest beers is available, with a noticeable commitment to local breweries. Real cider is always available.

Photographs on the walls feature many local dignitaries associated with the area’s industrial past, particularly the ceramics and pottery industries.

Look for the CAMRA board and a beer suggestion box.

The Quadrant bus station is nearby.

● 85–86 The Kingsway, Swansea, SA1 5JE

**What CAMRA says:**

Swansea CAMRA branch long-standing member and volunteer Mike Aldron said: “The Potters Wheel is a busy city-centre pub which has been popular since it opened, with all sorts of customers right across the age range, including university students.

“It was originally a car showroom, and later offices, so it’s a long, narrowish building, with a long bar.

“The staff are generally friendly and helpful. The beer range (cask ale) is usually good and, more to the point, in good condition.

“It also has Wetherspoon’s usual wide range of food and drinks.

“There have been several managers since it opened, and the current manager is very pleasant and efficient, taking on board any feedback from regulars and visitors.

“Worth a visit.”



# LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS – AND PROVIDING A MENU YOU CAN HEAR

**Good Food Talks's technology helps visually impaired customers to browse food choices**

**I**t is five years since Wetherspoon first teamed up with Good Food Talks, making it easier for visually impaired customers to browse through the menu at Wetherspoon's pubs.

Wetherspoon's menu was already available in Braille format in every Wetherspoon pub.

However, in the UK, only one per cent of blind people read Braille, leaving almost two million who don't.

Good Food Talks ([goodfoodtalks.com](http://goodfoodtalks.com)) makes it easy for visually impaired diners to eat out at numerous restaurants, including Wetherspoon's pubs, by providing accessible menus on its website and on a mobile app.

## **Independence**

Blind and visually impaired, as well as dyslexic people or those with other reading difficulties, can regain their independence, when dining out, by browsing and listening to the menu through the fully accessible website or, on the move, via mobile app devices.

Good Food Talks's technology plugs into existing device features, allowing the user to access menus in large print, high contrast, dyslexic-friendly type and the spoken word, in a matter of seconds.

With new innovations during the past five years, including the rebuilding of the entire platform and website, Good Food Talks is now available cross-platform, enabling users to access via Apple (iOS) and Android phones, tablets and the web.

Founded in 2013, Good Food Talks is the brainchild of Matt Wadsworth, who is blind, and Kate Bennett Wadsworth.

## **Invented**

Although the business was recently acquired by foodservice tech provider Nutritics, Matt is still very much hands on with the app he invented.

Matt confirmed: "I'm still very much involved, in fact, even more so than before.

"However, teaming up with Nutritics will allow us to bring enormous choice to Good Food Talks's users, with access to many more brands – which has always been my ambition for the business."

Talking about the five-year partnership with Wetherspoon, Matt continued: "We were absolutely delighted when we first partnered with Wetherspoon, bringing our app solution to customers at its pubs across the UK.

"Together, we have made all of the company's pub menus accessible to millions of people in the UK who have print-reading difficulties."

## **Trust**

Matt said: "Having a huge household name like Wetherspoon putting its trust in us has meant that we have been able to attract other businesses, benefiting everybody.

"Without the trust of highly valued partners like Wetherspoon, Good Food Talks wouldn't exist, so a big thankyou to the company for sticking by us."

Matt knows a thing or two about sticking with something.

His innovation and belief in his idea haven't been an overnight success, but his never-give-up attitude is now benefiting so many.

Matt concluded: "Good Food Talks solves a major social problem very well, for so many people.

"It is also great for hospitality businesses, making them more inclusive, with no effort for them.

"We're very lucky to have the endorsement of Wetherspoon – a pub chain which everyone knows, up and down the land."

# DAUGHTERS SING THE PRAISES OF GEORGE'S MARVELLOUS MARATHON

Deborah Newsham and her sister Jeanette surprised their dad George in celebration of his 80th birthday – by getting him in the Wetherspoon News magazine

The sisters thought that their dad's amazing effort, in visiting more than 800 Wetherspoon pubs, deserved a mention among these pages – and we agreed.

The pair set about the surreptitious task of quizzing George about his visits, which had begun more than 25 years ago.

Deborah said: "If he suspected that he was being quizzed, he never let on. It was actually great fun listening to him describing his visits.

"He loves nothing more than talking about where he has been."

George has visited pubs from Robert the Bruce (Dumfries) to those in London and all points in between. On many of his trips, he has been accompanied by his wife Ann, known as Annie.

Indeed, George might know more than most about the 'points in between', as he's a keen railway traveller and was an avid trainspotter, before he moved on to bus-spotting a number of years ago.

Deborah added: "Dad likes to 'collect'.

"He collects train numbers, bus numbers, books, real-ale bottles and glasses, Wetherspoon pubs and real ales – in fact, the lists are endless as he is always adding to them.

"Dad likes Wetherspoon because each pub is different and his travelling means that he can discover regional ales in various parts of the country."

"He particularly enjoys the Wetherspoon beer festival."



Deborah, pictured (right) with her sister Jeanette and dad George at his local Wetherspoon pub, The Commercial Hotel (Accrington), concluded: "It's also a running family joke that dad's favourite Wetherspoon meal is gammon, eggs and chips (no peas)."

## ALL-DAY BAIZE BATTLE BRINGS CASH ROLLING IN



An all-day pool tournament organised by The Edwin Waugh (Heywood) raised £1,170 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The event saw 40 players from Wetherspoon pubs all over the northwest and Wales compete in doubles and singles matches.

Local venue The Savanna Pool and Snooker Hall, based in Whitefield, Manchester, hosted the event free of charge, with 12 tables in use by participants.

After winning the singles tournament, organiser Craig Dodgson, kitchen shift manager at The Edwin Waugh, said: "It was a great event and something which other areas are thinking of doing, as it's very popular and a great way to raise money for charity."

Staff from five Wetherspoon pubs in the region put up eight doubles pairs and 24 single entrants.

They competed for trophies, while a tombola offered prizes, including alcohol and confectionery.

Players came from The Regal Moon (Rochdale), The Edwin Waugh (Heywood), The Black Boy (Newtown), The Gold Cape (Mold) and The Wallace Hartley (Colne).

Pictured (front centre) is Young Lives vs Cancer's philanthropy and partnerships co-ordinator, Emilie Austin, and kitchen shift manager Craig Dodgson, with tournament players.

*Tim says:* "I argued in the last edition of Wetherspoon News that one of the lessons of the dismal UK economic performance of the 1970s, illustrated in a series of articles then by London Business School in The Sunday Times, was that all expanding businesses need planning permission.

Indeed, Wetherspoon has been able to create over 40,000 jobs, and many billions of tax for the treasury, by obtaining planning permission to convert shops and other buildings into pubs.

In this article, John Gapper of the Financial Times provides a most vivid illustration of the issue – planning permission refused for the conversion of a former quarry into film production facilities, which would have produced many jobs and billions in investment for the UK."

# HOLLYWOOD ON THAMES IS A PRIZE FOR THE UK ECONOMY

**The rejection of a film studio scheme near Marlow bodes ill for the future of creative industries**

**In a fictional world, it would make a charming film comedy. A profit-seeking corporation tries to move to a quaint English town and is repelled by a plucky band of local folk who charm the unwanted visitors into leaving them alone. Call it Hollywood on Thames, a long-awaited sequel to Local Hero, the whimsical 1983 film about a Scottish village and an energy company from Houston.**

In the real world, it is no joke. The rejection of a £750mn film studio scheme on the outskirts of Marlow, a Saxon town west of London, says something worrying about the UK's ambitions to expand its film and television industry. A studio lot on a former gravel quarry is not Local Hero's oil refinery by a pristine beach, and many other countries would grab the offer.

Marlow Film Studios was backed among others by James Cameron, the Titanic film director, who saw it as a potential European base for his Lightstorm 3D special effects company. It promised 2,000 direct jobs and £3.5bn in production investment over a decade, joining a cluster around Pinewood Shepperton and Warner Bros' studio in Leavesden, where Barbie was made.

But it collided with Save Marlow's Green Belt, a pressure group that was worried about traffic, and did not want a view of the Chiltern Hills from the Thames to be interrupted. Sam Kershaw, a retired technology executive who is among the group's organisers, told me this week that the studio would have been "very large, overbearing and out of character" for the town.

The character activists won, despite the scheme's promise to devote 36 hectares of land to biodiversity and a country park. Buckinghamshire Council blocked the plan after its officers ruled that it would "result in spatial and visual harm to the openness of the Green Belt" and cause "additional on-street parking". Goodbye Hollywood; carry on, patch of scrubland.

I do not wish to be rude to the good folk of Marlow, who live in a place known for its literary history and natural beauty, and have legitimate concerns, but this is ridiculous. If you cannot place infrastructure for one of the UK's most dynamic industries on reclaimed land by a dual carriageway linked to the nearby M40 motorway, it will be very difficult to revive flagging economic growth.

There was a prisoner-of-war camp before the quarry, in the days when force majeure led to quick decisions, but building takes longer now. This is not for want of trying: the government has supported the film and streaming television industry with tax breaks that it extended earlier this year. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak enthused about its potential on a visit to Pinewood before calling the election.

There is much for rivals to envy about an industry that has flourished in recent years, helped by investments from Netflix, Amazon Studios and other streaming services. Hollywood has made a second home in the UK, built on the country's creative history, actors and technicians, and special effects expertise. Pinewood's 007 stage for James Bond films is one of many assets.

Los Angeles has a creative cluster, extending to a "30-mile zone" within which productions are considered to be local. The counterpart that has grown up in London and the south-east comprises 70 per cent of the UK's film and television studio space. It has similar advantages in being able to assemble an array of talent fast and flexibly.

But many studios are located near the greenbelt around London, which is fiercely defended by residents and planners, even when it includes a former quarry. Joy Morrissey, the local Conservative MP before the election, argued against both the Marlow studios and Pinewood's expansion plans. When national priorities meet local sensitivities, the latter often triumph.

Changing this is one of Labour's priorities. Its manifesto this week promised to back creative industries and said the planning regime "acts as a major brake on economic growth". Labour would not be bedevilled by the same internal tensions as the Conservatives in towns such as Marlow, but pledging radical reform and effecting it are different things.

The absence of a new studio lot at Marlow is not an immediate crisis for UK film and television. Inward investment fell last year as streaming services retreated from "peak TV" and some stages built in expectation of short-term growth are empty. One studio in Berkshire went into administration in April after the writers' and actors' strikes.

But as James Cameron said in supporting the plan, seizing the long-term opportunity requires "boldness in thinking". There is not much point in providing tax incentives for new film and television production if you do not create the infrastructure to make it flourish. That not only involves studios but training more technicians and offering apprenticeships.

The UK has unusual advantages in enticing productions to leave Hollywood and cross the Atlantic. "It is not as if we can now pick and choose" among other inward investors, Robert Laycock, Marlow Film Studios' chief executive, observed to me. Residents of towns such as Marlow should reflect before spurning this prize.

**By John Gapper**

Financial Times / 14 June 2024

Print credit: By John Gapper, Financial Times, 14 June 2024

*Tim says:* "Writing in the Financial Times, Janan Ganesh agonises over the paradox of 'political Bedlam' in democratic countries which, at the same time, experience phenomenal economic success.

Maybe, as Janan infers, Bedlam doesn't matter, as long as the institutions of government, the law and personal freedoms remain intact."

# THE LESSON OF THE GREAT AMERICAN BOOM

**Maybe politics, which for decades has been dysfunctional in the US, doesn't matter that much**

**In Europe, the three signs of spring have arrived: the bright flora, the endless days and the ambient sound of American voices. All are welcome. But the last is also an annual reminder of the spending power of US tourists. That their economy has outperformed the continent's this past decade or two can be felt, not just measured.**

The material success of the US is discussed in all quarters. What isn't said enough is that it has happened amid political bedlam. America has roared ahead in the era of the Tea Party, Donald Trump, "forever wars" abroad and culture wars at home. There have been more presidential impeachments in the past generation than in the previous two centuries of the republic. At the turn of the millennium, 44 per cent of Americans trusted the federal government. Now 16 per cent do. The US failed to achieve even a peaceful transfer of power at its last election. (Unlike, say, Senegal.) The civic rot is so deep that well-adjusted citizens find themselves taking an interest in the health of Supreme Court justices, lest one die under a president of the opposing side.

So much political turmoil, so little economic consequence. Why?

It is tempting to credit some unique American ruggedness. But other economies have been able to buck their political troubles for decade after decade. Poland's enrichment since joining the EU in 2004 has taken place despite the partisan subversion of national institutions, which Donald Tusk is now going to controversial lengths to undo. France had 30 "glorious" years of economic performance after 1945, through a presidential assassination attempt, a hideous war in Algeria, two republics, student riots and a national atmosphere so raw that *The Sorrow and the Pity*, a film about Nazi collaboration, was banned. Such political strife should have suppressed the nation's animal spirits. Instead, France achieved a sort of affluent chaos.

And so we are left to conclude something not about America, but about politics itself. People like me, who find the subject intrinsically interesting, overrate its importance. As long as a few essential functions of state are never compromised — physical security, contract enforcement, tax collection — it matters less than we think whether public life is "divisive" or even foul. An economy can't withstand too much bad policy. It can't prosper against over-tight interest rates or underfunded education. But the health of the overall political system can go very wrong, for very long, without anything like the same effect on real-world livelihoods.

It is possible to suggest something further, in fact. There are active downsides to "good" politics. If there has been a photographic negative of the American experience, it is Germany, whose civic health is admirable (PhD plagiarism still constitutes a scandal in Berlin) but whose economy is a cautionary tale (no major country

performed worse in 2023). It might be that the first of these things has enabled the other: that in a consensus culture, no politician is incentivised to point out, say, the rashness of betting on Russian industrial inputs and Chinese consumer demand. Mature, gradualist, coalition-based politics dulls the edge of debate.

Perhaps what US politics lacks in manners, then, it makes up for in creative tension and churn of ideas. This is a country that has executed a world-changing switch from trade to protectionism at light speed.

Or it might be that the causal relationship between politics and economics goes in the opposite direction: that voters have felt liberated to dabble with the extremes because growth is so strong as to be taken for granted. Trump is affordable. Like woke-ism, he emerged during a long economic expansion.

Whatever the answer, it needs explaining, this coexistence of economic success and political failure. It isn't enough to say that a reckoning will come in time. US public life has been deteriorating since the end of the last century, when Newt Gingrich set fire to congressional norms and the death of the so-called Fairness Doctrine gave rise to brute partisanship in broadcast media. No doubt, economic damage is a lagging indicator of this kind of political damage, but 30 years is some lag.

In liberal thought, stable political institutions are held to be a precondition for affluence, which in turn increases public support for those institutions, until the circle of logic is closed. In America we are seeing, if not the first ever challenge to this notion, then perhaps the one on the largest historical scale. It is hard to know what to feel: relief at the resilience of America's wealth creators, or dread that its voters lack a material incentive to fix politics.

**By Janan Ganesh**

Financial Times / 21 May 2024

Print credit: By Janan Ganesh, Financial Times, 21 May 2024

*Tim says:* “Good solutions, a famous investor once said, depend on the truth. Yet, in order to find out what’s true, in complex areas, conflicting ideas need to be aired and debated. However, in the modern world, debate is often discouraged, through fear of offending what comedian Ricky Gervais calls ‘the outrage mob’. This was evident during the pandemic, for example, when anyone, even top scientists, questioning the government’s deeply flawed lockdown policies, was shut down by ferocious online ‘pile-ons’. Even the normally fearless Matthew Parris, as he indicates in the article below, has steered clear of the gender debate, in his widely read columns in The Times newspaper.”

## MIND YOUR OUTRAGE AT THIS USE OF LANGUAGE

**The fury unleashed by a clumsy phrase is essentially performative and ignores what is often justifiably being expressed**

**Something almost medieval is overtaking us and I’m struggling to understand. We’re developing an almost ritualistic fixation with the words used to convey meaning, rather than the meaning they’re intended to convey.**

There seems to be an addiction to advertising one’s anger with others, not for what they meant to say, but for how they phrased it: a kind of performative outrage about language.

As I noted in a diary column this week, “Where do you really come from?” is capable of being offensive, but can equally be friendly curiosity about someone’s ancestry: there is nothing inherently offensive about this form of words.

Or take reports this week that Baroness Casey of Blackstock thinks Metropolitan Police communications “absolutely horrific”. She’s referring to an incident when a police sergeant tried to restrain a young man in a kippah (the Jewish skullcap) from crossing a road where a pro-Palestinian march was taking place. The sergeant said: “You are quite openly Jewish, this is a pro-Palestinian march. I’m not accusing you of anything but I’m worried about the reaction to your presence.”

The man, Gideon Falter, chief executive of the Campaign Against Antisemitism, says he was just going for a walk with friends, some also wearing kippahs. They “came across” (in his words) the march “and we started to cross the road as the front of the march got to us”. He wants the Met commissioner to resign.

Falter may believe such marches should be banned — that’s another argument — but this march had not been banned, and the officer’s worries were clearly reasonable in the circumstances. Complaint, however, has centred on the expression “openly Jewish”.

“Openly” was an ill-chosen word. The sergeant will have been referring to the kippahs, which are widely identified with Jewishness. Words he might better have chosen were “evidently” or “plainly” because “openly” can indicate something arguably awkward. But this was in the heat of the moment, facing a risk of somebody getting hurt; and the police cannot carry thesauruses.

The question, the only important question, is what was the officer trying to say? What did he mean? And what he meant was clear if clumsily expressed. He did not want Falter and his friends to get caught in a scuffle. He wanted to protect them. Truly, the outrage was performative.

But why from the baroness? Louise Casey has been the victim of this, so it was sad to see her take the other side. A courageous figure in the social policy field, blunt words have often landed her in hot water: tactless language in the cause of common sense.

Tasked with reducing rough sleeping she has belittled “well-meaning” volunteers at soup kitchens and protested that, on the streets, “you can get a better sleeping bag on the Strand than you can buy in the camping shop Blacks”. Cue performative outrage — which she got in spades. But her point was that making rough-sleepers more comfortable misses the roots of the problem.

Toy — Casey didn’t quite but Suella Braverman did — with phrases like “lifestyle choice” and you’ll find social media passion, so hard to arouse for the complex plight of rough-sleepers themselves, piling in on your language. I do wonder whether rage about terminology might be a kind of displacement activity, a substitute for swapping the laptop for a pair of boots.

“Choice” is a trigger word for the outrage industry.

Could Greg Clarke, who resigned as FA chairman in 2020, possibly have imagined that anyone could think him homophobic when, asked about footballers who came out as gay, he said: “What I would want to do is to know that anybody who runs out on to the pitch and says, ‘I’m gay. I’m proud of it and I’m happy. It’s a life choice, and I’ve made it because my life is a better place’ — I’d like to believe ... they would have the support of their mates in the changing room.”

Clarke was pilloried for the word “choice” because it is an (unwittingly self-oppressing) nostrum among gay activists that gays never have a choice. The poor chap then sealed his fate when he later used the words “coloured footballers” — immediately apologising. Question: do we actually think Clarke is a racist? Or homophobic? Answer: no.

I too used to get confused between “coloured” and “of colour”. I’ve now learnt not to say “coloured”. It does offend and if, knowing that, we use it anyway, then our hearers are not wrong to take offence. But Clarke unquestionably meant no offence and I doubt, after his apology, any was taken. But performative outrage takes offence vicariously, in the name of others, unidentified. That is why I call it performative.

So, for example, I would never blame the parents of the students brutally killed in Nottingham last June for shock at the phraseology of police officers in a WhatsApp group describing the victims as “proper butchered”. But two points are worth making. First, those words were not intended to hurt the parents’ feelings, but written in the doubtless unwise belief that they would never reach a wider audience. Second, hardened professionals do use language among themselves that to outsiders might sound cold-blooded.

The truth is that those students were indeed butchered, and in English slang “proper” does not imply any kind of acceptability: it’s a reinforcing term, like “very”, “completely” or “really”. Outrage felt by those parents is understandable. Expressed in news and social media commentary, it is performative. I said “brutally killed”. The WhatsApped expression was “proper butchered”. The two mean exactly the same.

Context. Meaning within context. Intention. Unless signalling for signalling’s sake, these would be our operative questions. Saying “back in your day” (my Times informs me) “may be unlawful in the workplace”. “May be” is critical. The subtext could be friendly, jocular, matter-of-fact — or discriminatory by a boss towards an older employee.

On Thursday evening, speaking at a book launch for the travel guide writer Hilary Bradt, I was asked for travel tips. I replied: “Pakistan. Amazing. Beautiful. Friendly. And nobody goes there.” Cue outrage if I were a politician ignoring the likelihood that Pakistan is perhaps the world’s number one destination for visitors from Britain. Cue appreciation if I were a well-travelled journalist recommending holidays for adventurous middle-aged and mostly white tourists.

In this column I’ve steered clear of the trans wars. I confess that between “sex” and “gender” I’m forever forgetting which is which, or what function “biological” performs, or whether you can even say “identifies” without taking sides. Words can light fuses. But to me it’s simple. Don’t knowingly give offence; don’t take offence unless offence was intended; treat with suspicion offence taken vicariously; and, unfairly accused, learn to take no notice.

**By Matthew Parris**

The Times / 26 April 2024

Print credit: By Matthew Parris, The Times, 26 April 2024

*Tim says:* “Perhaps, in the UK, too much power is concentrated in Downing Street.

Broadcaster and journalist Trevor Phillips, writing in *The Times*, argues that ‘metro mayors’ will shake up the system, providing the dynamism and diversity which will disrupt the groupthink of our ‘sleepy, shabby public realm’. Interesting points, Trevor...”

## MAYORS ARE THE POLITICAL DISRUPTERS WE NEED

Even Labour-run fiefdoms will pose awkward questions for Starmer as power shifts from the centre to the regions

**He took it on the chin. Or more accurately, he took it like a John Lewis partner. Andy Street, the former boss of the department store chain, declined to blame the prime minister for his defeat after an agonisingly close contest for the mayoralty of the West Midlands. Just 20 minutes after the result was declared, still red-eyed, emotionally raw, and in his own word, “devastated”, he told my Sky News colleague Sophy Ridge: “It was my campaign totally... I am not going to try to push responsibility anywhere else.”**

It was not the traditional politician’s reply. There was no attempt to shift the blame for defeat from his own slight frame, no effort to disguise his bitter disappointment and nothing but grace towards the victorious Labour candidate. “There will be no sloping shoulders from me,” he said. This is politics at its most adult.

Part of this is just the character of the man. Having worked alongside Street at John Lewis for a short while, I would have expected nothing else. Loyalty is the Loch Ness monster of politics — a quality much spoken of but seldom spotted.

Morally, Street is the anti-Truss Tory. The former prime minister’s account of her short reign, which contributed so fulsomely to the wrecking of Tory fortunes, holds that her only faults were to be too trusting of others of lesser intellect and resolve. By contrast, Street volunteers to carry the sins of his tribe on his own shoulders.

Even now he refuses to acknowledge that what probably made defeat certain was the bungled curtailment of HS2 by a Conservative cabinet that didn’t even have the courtesy to warn him that he would be the target of the most calamitous blue-on-blue political attack of recent years.

Like his counterparts in Greater Manchester, Tees Valley and West Yorkshire, the former West Midlands mayor is not your average politician. Andy Burnham, Ben Houchen, Tracy Brabin and Street all turned their backs on Westminster to become the biggest fish in the pools where they grew up. But the difference lies not just in the nature of the men and women who are shaping the leadership of our city regions. It is the role itself that is starting to transform politics.

Power is draining away from the centre. That of course was always the intention. Full disclosure: as chair of the campaign to set up the first metro-mayorality in London, I had in mind that City Hall would eventually run almost everything that mattered in the capital, including health and education, and that London would become the test bed for a radically devolved democracy, ripping power out of the dead hand of Whitehall.

The then New Labour government, understandably nervous of putting power in Ken Livingstone’s hands, demurred and created a stunted beast just powerful enough to create problems — politicising police, snarling up the roads, adding cost to travel — yet lacking the resources to solve them.

But a quarter of a century later the metro mayors are morphing into the most dynamic layer of our political life. They are going to cause trouble, no matter who occupies No 10 after the next election. I’m delighted by the prospect. The more disruption and diversity of leadership in our sleepy, shabby public realm the better.

It may not matter to these leaders and their successors who sits in Downing Street. Burnham, who scored a crushing victory to win his third

term, was explicit that he would not be a Starmer satrap, warning any incoming Labour government not to expect a compliant placeman. In his acceptance speech he promised to be a “place first, party second” mayor. Houchen, who conveniently forgot to wear his blue rosette on election night and was mysteriously unable to borrow any of the dozens visible on TV on the chests of his activists, plainly couldn’t wait to see the back of the prime minister after an awkward photocall. And he did not misspeak when he told reporters that he was ready to work with whoever wins the general election. I don’t think he much cares who is in No 10 as long as they treat his people with due respect and attention. Not all mayors are of this stamp. We have yet to see what Street’s replacement in the West Midlands is made of while the capital’s boss, Sadiq Khan, a more partisan political character, tends to attribute every sparrow that falls in his domain to the spite or bigotry of Tory ministers. But over time, I think there will be more Burnhams, Houchens, Brabins and Streets, and fewer of the rest.

The energy in British politics is coming, not from widening the political choice horizontally into the extremes of left or the right but from the changing balance of power between the centre and the rest of the nation. These mayors have started to establish what on the face of it seems a contradiction in terms: democratic fiefdoms.

There is, of course, a danger. The politics of place can all too easily fall prey to tribalism and ethnic rivalry, putting power in the hands of extreme factions. In Tower Hamlets, east London, the sitting Labour mayor was unseated by a breakaway from Labour — an almost exclusively Bangladeshi faction placed a man convicted of vote-rigging back in the mayoral office.

Some Labour activists are fretting that the Israel/Gaza conflict has driven support for malign sectarian interests, such as George Galloway’s Workers Party. In the West Midlands such a candidate amassed some 70,000 votes.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Reform party is hunting quietly for a base from which to grow. It is not beyond the imagination that Nigel Farage might coax the embers of Ukip into a flame in the East of England or the North West.

There’s nothing wrong with that. Extreme points of view are often heard locally, but rarely find expression at Westminster. Nationally, they are never really challenged. Their appeal grows in silence.

Malign identity politics won’t be vanquished by the London elite snarking it out of existence. But a good mayor, known to be a local champion, can often be the bulwark against extreme views, as Tracy Brabin has shown in standing up against both far-right and Islamist influences in West Yorkshire. I’m willing to bet that once Brits know the people running the show get their lives and speak in their accents, they become less likely to be seduced by local blowhards who claim to be challenging the establishment.

**By Trevor Phillips**

The Times / 6 May 2024

# NEW LOOK

## Trowbridge

### THE ALBANY PALACE

The mayor of Trowbridge, Cllr Stephen Cooper, is pictured with pub manager Daryl Mapstone (alongside the mayor) and staff at the reopening of The Albany Palace (Trowbridge).

The pub has been completely refurbished and redecorated, as well as extended into an adjoining building, creating an additional 210 square feet of customer space.

A brand-new beer garden has also been created (753 square feet), with a new summer-opening shopfront added to the premises.

New roof coverings, on the flat roofs, have also been installed.

Behind the scenes, the kitchen area and equipment have been upgraded and new staff facilities added. The bar has also been relocated and upgraded.

Pub manager Daryl Mapstone said: "Wetherspoon has spent £2.2 million on this refurbishment and expansion project, highlighting the company's commitment to the pub, its staff and customers, as well as to Trowbridge itself.

"We're also delighted that we have been able to create 40 new jobs for local people.

"The new-look larger pub and garden are a great addition to the town."

1 Park Rd, Trowbridge, BA14 8AQ





# NO NEED FOR DIETERS TO DODGE PUB MEALS

**21%**  
of Wetherspoon's menus' dishes under  
**500**  
Calories

**Wetherspoon's breakfast, lunch and dinner menus feature numerous dishes low in calories and fat**

**A** meal at the pub doesn't necessarily mean fried or highly calorific food.

If you are cutting down on the calories or seeking healthier options, it may be a surprise to learn that 21 per cent of Wetherspoon's menu's dishes are under 500 Calories.

**Waistline**

So, you really don't have to miss out on a pub meal, even if you are watching the waistline.

With 19 per cent of dishes on the Wetherspoon menu under five per cent fat, there is plenty of choice across the entire menu, from breakfast, lunch and dinner options.

**Noodles**

The NEW ramen noodle bowl features noodles, bean sprouts, shiitake mushroom, spring onion, carrot, pak choi, bamboo shoots, red onion, sliced chillies and coriander, in a light broth.

The dish is vegan and low calorie (466 kcal) and includes a drink (soft or alcoholic). Customers can also add a poached egg or char-grilled chicken breast to the dish, for an additional charge.

**Salad**

Wetherspoon's salad range, under 500 Calories, includes Mediterranean salad, chicken & maple-cured bacon salad and grilled halloumi-style cheese & roasted vegetable salad.

A selection of jacket potato options also 'weighs in' at under 500 Calories, including baked beans, chilli bean non-carne and the roasted vegetable jacket.

There are 8-inch pizzas, skinny beef burgers, Deli Deals® wraps and small pub classics, small breakfast, steaks and grills, as well as simple curries, all with options under 500 Calories.

Ask at your local Wetherspoon for a menu dedicated to all of the dishes which are under 500 Calories and/or five per cent fat or less.



**NEW** Ramen noodle bowl (466 kcal)



Char-grilled chicken & maple-cured bacon salad (283 kcal)



Jacket potato, baked beans and salad (482 kcal)



Small breakfast (435 kcal)

# FLATBREADS PUT FOOD FANS IN WRAP-TURES

**Deli Deals® range of NEW 10-inch small wraps will tantalise your tastebuds**

**T**he wrap-versus-sandwich debate may continue to rumble on, but it doesn't mean that your stomach has to join in with the rumbling.

Ultimately, it is all a question of taste – and now, for your enjoyment, Wetherspoon's pubs are offering a range of NEW 10-inch small wraps.

At a lower price than the original 12-inch wrap (standard-size wrap), the new Deli Deals® range of 10-inch small wraps also offers a lower calorie intake.

**Drinks**

All wraps are freshly made to order, with the price including a drink, either soft or alcoholic, with a just-a-wrap (without a drink) option also available.

Four of the seven 10-inch small wrap choices 'weigh in' at under 500 Calories, with vegetarian and vegan options included in the range.

**Choices**

The 10-inch small wrap range choices are small brunch wrap (fried egg, bacon, Lincolnshire sausage and Cheddar cheese) small vegetarian brunch wrap (fried egg, two vegan sausages and Cheddar cheese) and small shawarma chicken (chicken thigh, Middle Eastern

spices, Naga chilli and garlic & herb sauces, tomato, onion, rocket and fresh mint).

There's also the small Quorn™ nuggets (salad leaves, tomato, cucumber and salsa), small southern-fried chicken (salad leaves and smoky chipotle mayo), small cold chicken breast (salad leaves and sweet chilli sauce) and small fried halloumi-style cheese (salad leaves, sweet chilli sauce, tomato and cucumber).

**Salad**

For a small additional cost, customers can add to the meal, with a small side salad or small portion of chips.

Enjoy just-a-wrap as a snack, as a small meal with a side or as a cheeky addition to your main meal. See main menu for all options.

The 12-inch wraps (standard-size wrap) are still available on the Deli Deals® range, with NEW shawarma chicken, Quorn™ nuggets, southern-fried chicken, cold chicken breast and fried halloumi-style cheese making up the five choices.

An ideal lunch or snack option, check out the NEW 10-inch small wrap range at Wetherspoon.



Small brunch



Under 500 kcal

Small southern-fried chicken



Under 500 kcal

Small cold chicken and sweet chilli sauce



Small vegetarian brunch



Under 500 kcal

Small Quorn™ nuggets and salsa



Under 500 kcal

Small fried halloumi-style cheese and sweet chilli sauce

# THE SILVER PENNY STRIKES GOLD AGAIN IN REAL-ALE RACE



Shift leader Leticia De Barros Serra

Pub manager Steph Gorlach and her team at The Silver Penny (Dublin) finished top of the Wetherspoon league for the number of pints sold during the spring real-ale festival 2024.

Overall, more than 1.38 million pints were sold, company wide, during the 12-day real-ale event, with The Silver Penny serving 7,617 pints of the various 30 festival ales.

This remarkable achievement for Steph and the team, to reclaim the number-one spot for the second festival in a row, is made even more exceptional by the fact that, traditionally, real ale in the Republic of Ireland isn't the usual drink of choice.

Steph said: "During the autumn 2023 festival, we managed to serve 708 pints of festival ale in one day, which we thought was amazing.

"This time, we sold more than 1,000 pints in one day, on the final day, which was also St Patrick's Day."

The Silver Penny smashed its own record to beat The Standing Order (Derby) into second place again, with The Five Swans (Newcastle) coming third in the company charts.

Steph said: "The festival was such a huge hit yet again because it offered so many new ales for customers to choose from.

"We also have a fully trained management team, ensuring that we have knowledgeable and capable staff on hand, at all times, which has been critical to our success.

"The hard work of everyone on the team has made this possible."

Wetherspoon's marketing manager, Jen Swindells, who organised the festival, said: "Congratulations and well done to Steph and the team at The Silver Penny on an incredible top-spot achievement again, breaking their previous festival record."

## FREE PIZZA ROLLED OUT FOR BATH ARMS' 10TH BIRTHDAY

Customers were treated to complimentary pizza-tasting at The Bath Arms (Warminster) to celebrate its 10th birthday.

Staff offered customers different types of pizza and enjoyed some themselves.

A bake sale was also held, raising £300 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Joining the celebration were shift leaders Lotti Waghorn and David Francis, along with kitchen shift leaders Levi Whiffen and Jamie Johnson, who have all either worked there since the pub opened its doors in April 2014 or joined a few months later.

Pub manager Tyler Baird said: "It was important to mark the occasion – and we all enjoyed it."

Pictured (left to right, back row) are kitchen manager Elizabeth Tunstall, pub manager Tyler Baird, shift leader Lotti Waghorn, team leader Freya Feltham, shift manager Nicola Hewitt, cleaner Sarah Aldridge and shift leader David Francis; (front row) kitchen shift leaders Levi Whiffen and Jamie Johnson.



# A WETHERSPOON WELCOME TO THE WONDERS OF WALES

The beauty of the valleys is complemented by the bountiful hospitality on offer in these fine pubs

If you are enjoying a 'staycation' in the UK or travelling to south Wales for business or pleasure, there is always a warm welcome at Wetherspoon's pubs in the south Wales valleys.

With big green spaces perfect for walking and mountain biking, these valleys are packed with things to see and do.

Discover top attractions to visit around Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly and Blaenavon or enjoy the beauty of the countryside.

Locals are proud of their heritage and delighted to receive visitors who come for history, adventures and a warm Welsh welcome.

Why not add one or more of the company's pubs in the south Wales valleys to the list of places to visit and enjoy a warm Welsh Wetherspoon welcome?

## The Sirhowy

61-63 High Street, Blackwood, Caerphilly, NP12 1BA

Pub manager Christopher Jenkins and his team welcome customers (accompanied children until 9pm) to this pub Sunday – Thursday, 8am – midnight; Friday/Saturday, 8am – 1am. Food is served until 11pm every day.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in November 1999, takes its name from its location in the Sirhowy Valley and the pioneering tramway which ran along the course of High Street.

The Sirhowy Valley runs from Tredegar to Newport.

The pub has a large paved garden, at the rear of the building, decorated with festoon lighting and planters.

There is bench-style seating, booth (undercover) tables and chairs to accommodate 85 customers.



*Blackwood*



## The Picture House

Market Street, Ebbw Vale  
Blaenau Gwent, NP23 6HP

*Ebbw Vale*

Pub manager Gareth Davies and his team welcome customers (accompanied children until 9pm) to the pub Sunday – Thursday, 8am – midnight; Friday/Saturday, 8am – 1am.

Food is served until 11pm every day.

First opened as a Wetherspoon pub in May 1998, these premises were purpose built in 1970 as a Tesco supermarket, standing on the site of the Astoria cinema built in 1940, hence the pub's name.

The town of Ebbw Vale owes its existence to the iron, steel and coal industries.

The pub has a pavement café-style outside area, at the front of the building, which can accommodate 20 seated customers.

There is a large town clock, opposite this outside space, which has been incorporated into the new pub carpet's design.

## Y Dic Penderyn

102-103 High Street  
Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8AP

*Merthyr Tydfil*

Pub manager Sarah Newton and her team welcome customers to the pub every day, with food served until 11pm and families with children welcome until 9pm.

Opening times are Monday – Thursday, 8am – midnight; Friday/Saturday, 8am – 1am; Sunday, 8am – 11.30pm.

A plaque on the library wall, facing this pub, describes Dic Penderyn as a martyr of the working class, having been publicly hanged for his support of the famous 1831 Merthyr Rising.

The name Merthyr Tydfil means the 'burial place' – from the Latin martyrrium – of the Welsh princess Tydfil or Tudful, said to have been killed by pagans in the fifth century.

Y Dic Penderyn first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in March 2000.

The pub has a pavement café-style outside area, with 48 seats, located on the left-hand side of the pub's entrance, on the square.

The square holds annual events, bringing many visitors to both the town and pub.



## The Olympia

Morgan Street, Tredegar  
Blaenau Gwent, NP22 3ND

*Tredegar*

Pub manager Rachel Stanley and her team welcome customers to the former Olympia cinema, now this Wetherspoon pub.

Opening times are Sunday – Thursday, 8am – midnight; Friday/Saturday, 8am – 1am (accompanied children until closing).

Food is served until 11pm every day.

In 1811, Squire Homfray provided for a market house or town hall to be built facing The Circle (then Market Square).

In 1890, a new market house was built on the adjoining site at the top of Morgan Street.

In 1913, the building became the 1,200-seat Olympia cinema, remaining in use until 1977.

Then owned by Top Rank, it was later converted into a bingo hall, becoming a Wetherspoon pub in July 2001.

The pub has a double-level beer garden, at the rear of the building, with space for just over 100 customers.



## The John Fielding

1 Caradoc Road, Cwmbran, Torfaen, NP44 1PP

*Cwmbran*

Pub manager Carol Cooper and her team welcome customers (accompanied children until 9pm) to the pub Sunday – Thursday, 8am – midnight; Friday/Saturday, 8am – 1am.

Food is served until 11pm every day.

First opened as a Wetherspoon in July 2004, this pub's name remembers Private John Fielding who died in 1932 in Cwmbran.

He is buried in St Michael's Churchyard, Llantarnam, where his headstone was erected by his former regiment.

It records that, as Private John Williams, he received the Victoria Cross for defending Rorke's Drift on 22–23 January 1879, during the Zulu War.

Private Fielding (Williams) helped to defend the hospital against heavy odds until his ammunition ran out.

He then held the enemy back at bayonet point, enabling two other soldiers to rescue eight patients.

This heroic episode was immortalised in the 1961 film, Zulu, starring Stanley Baker and Michael Caine.

The pub, listed in the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) Good Beer Guide 2024, has a large beer garden, covering two sides of the building, with 63 tables to seat more than 300 customers.



## The Pontlottyn

14 Somerset Street, Abertillery  
Blaenau Gwent, NP13 1DJ

*Abertillery*

Pub manager Siobhan Aherne and her team welcome customers (accompanied children until 9pm) to the pub, which is open Sunday – Thursday, 8am – midnight; Friday/Saturday, 8am – 1am.

Food is served until 11pm every day.

Number 14 Somerset Street is at a very narrow junction in the centre of this former mining town, in the south Wales valleys.

The Wetherspoon pub, which first opened in February 2010, is housed in the former Pontlottyn Shop.

The department store, established by David Morgan in 1875, was rebuilt in 1897.

Morgan's store (later Morgan & Francis) faced its main rival, Bon Marché, with both stores built to serve a fast-growing mining town.

The Pontlottyn store closed its doors for the last time in the late 1960s.

The pub has a small paved courtyard garden, at the rear of the building, decorated with festoon lighting and wall troughs.

The seven bench-style seats and tables can accommodate 42 customers.

# NEW LOOK

## Paignton

### THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Pub manager Mick Mackriell is pictured at the new-look pub, The Talk of the Town.

The Paignton pub has undergone an extensive refurbishment and expansion project, costing £2.3 million.

The pub closed for four months for the work to take place.

The redevelopment work has included expansion into an adjoining property, with a new ground-floor extension and extended beer gardens.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in May 2010, has undergone a complete refurbishment in the customer area, as well as upgrades for the new extended kitchen, fully refurbished toilets and new staff facilities.

It has increased in size from 3,675 to 5,420 square feet of customer space.

Both the front and rear beer gardens have also been enlarged.

The main entrance to the pub has been moved into the new extension and is now in front of the new bar (which has also moved position) to allow for easier access and customer flow.

The pub's manager, Mick Mackriell, said: "Customers and staff are delighted with pub's new look.

"I am pleased that we have also been able to create 20 new jobs in the town."

**46-52 Torbay Road, Paignton, Devon, TQ4 6AL**



# SHEFFIELD TEAM LEADERS HAVE TALENT TO SPARE

Two team leaders at The Scarsdale Hundred (Beighton, Sheffield) have spoken of their ambitions in the fields of music and sports photography.

Away from her day job, singer and guitarist Kelci Turton writes music and is in a band called Wushu Funkshun.

She's also a solo artist and recently headlined at popular music venue Sidney & Matilda, in Sheffield, where she played her evocative single Deny.

Kelci, 20, a student of music performance and production at Hillsborough College, said: "I was given a guitar when I was five, but never really used it – then, when I was 16, I picked it up and started to play.

"I want to get into writing and releasing more music, once I've finished college."

Meanwhile, budding sports photographer Alex Young goes to every Sheffield Wednesday home game to take action shots for the club's website and social media.

He has snapped the likes of forward Josh Windass and midfielder Barry Bannan, at Hillsborough, and hopes to work as a sports photographer after completing his studies at Sheffield Hallam University.

Wednesday supporter Alex, 20, started working for Wetherspoon in 2019, joining the team at The Scarsdale Hundred, when the pub opened in 2021.



He said: "I just contacted the media officer at Sheffield Wednesday and asked whether I could take some photos for the team and it went from there."

Pub manager Emma Walker said: "It's great that people can pursue other interests and careers while working at Wetherspoon – we all wish Kelci and Alex well."

● **To hear Kelci's song, Deny, and for more information:** [beacons.ai/kelcileighmusic](https://beacons.ai/kelcileighmusic)

# TREVOR SHOCKED TO FIND HIS MOTHER ON FULL MOON'S MENU

Customer Trevor Clift made an amazing discovery when he looked at the picture on the menu at The Full Moon (Dudley) – and recognised his mother.

Each Wetherspoon menu carries a picture of the respective pub or its local town or city.

The one at The Full Moon shows the historical High Street in all its glory, with Top Church (St Thomas and St Luke's) in the background.

Trevor had been coming to the pub for more than 20 years, before he recognised his mother Jean pictured on the menu, on the right-hand side of the street, carrying a child – believed to be Trevor or his brother.

Spotting his mother brought back a lot of memories for Trevor.

He said that his mother, Jean (née Langford) Clift, lived locally and was a factory forewoman during World War II, later working at Dudley Zoo.

In the photo, believed to have been taken in the early 1950s, she would have been in her mid/late 20s. She passed away aged 79.

Retired engineer Trevor said: "It's amazing that I didn't spot it before, but I just hadn't been looking, I suppose.

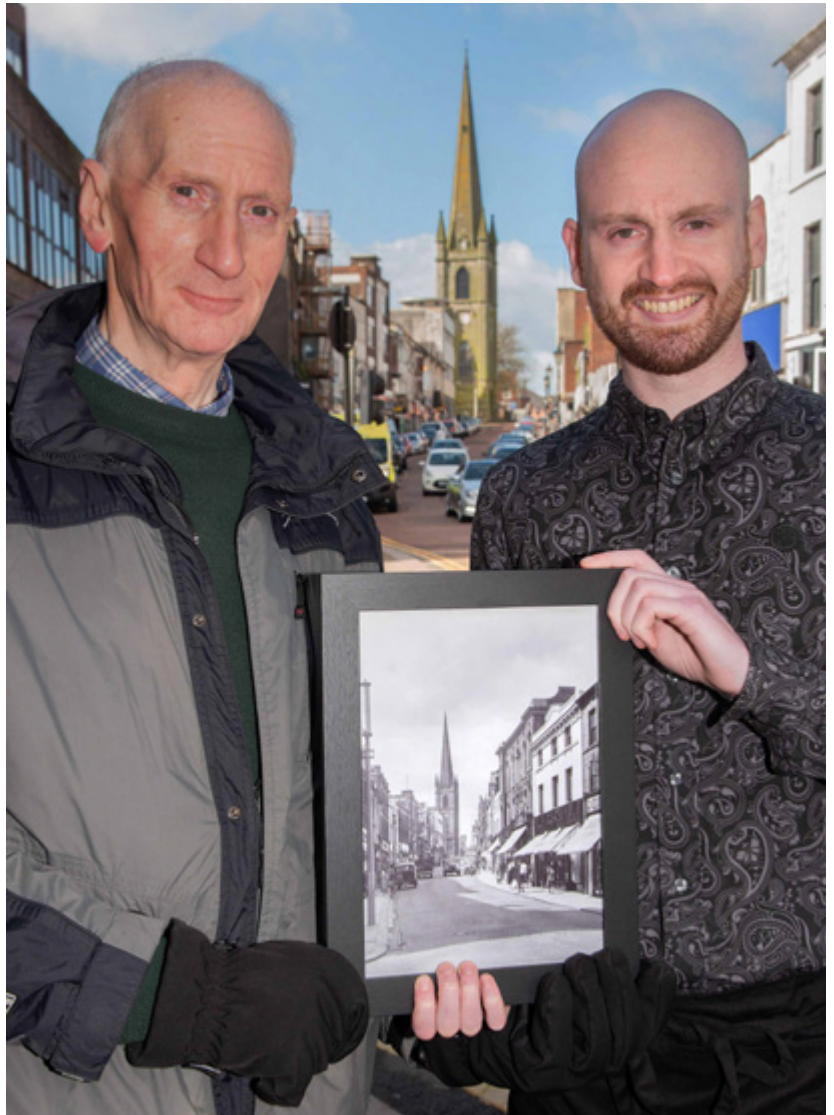
"When I saw her, I just knew.

"Then I wondered whether we still had the coat she was wearing – and I found it and brought it to show Adam, the pub manager."

Pub manager Adam Kelly said: "I guess there's a reason why all Wetherspoon pubs have a local picture on the menu.

"It has been great chatting to Trevor about this."

Trevor Clift is pictured (left) with pub manager Adam Kelly.



## SHEFFIELD

# BENJAMIN HUNTSMAN NAMED 'BEST IN SHEFFIELD' IN PUBLIC VOTE



The Benjamin Huntsman (Sheffield) has been named 'best pub', following a public vote.

Best Bar None Sheffield revealed, at its annual awards ceremony, its 2024 'people's choice pub winner' as the Wetherspoon pub.

The awards were held this year at Sheffield City Hall and presented by the Lord Mayor of Sheffield Cllr Colin Ross.

Pub manager Jordan Firth, pictured (front left), said:

"We are absolutely delighted to be named as best pub in this category, selected by the public casting votes.

"To be voted for by customers means a great deal to the team and me – and we thank everyone for their votes and support."

Jordan is pictured with team members (front, left to right) cleaner Shirley Gill, shift manager Keesha Gill and shift leader Cat Ellingham; back (left to right) shift manager Tom Ford, kitchen manager

Ben Sowray, shift managers Jacob Matthews and Marnie Coxon and kitchen shift leader Emily Ogden.

A Home Office-backed scheme promoting best practice, Sheffield business improvement district (BID) runs the Sheffield initiative, supported by Sheffield Council and South Yorkshire Police.

Sheffield's city centre has around 200 venues able to hold a premises licence, with 26 accredited for 2024 by Best Bar None.

Sheffield BID head of business operations, Diane Jarvis, said: "A thriving night-time economy requires a partnership approach to maintaining a safe, welcoming environment – and Best Bar None Sheffield is the jewel in the crown of that work.

"I'd like to congratulate all our award-winners."

## WESTON-SUPER-MARE

# FOLK IN WESTON-SUPER-MARE SHOW THEY LOVE HOTEL'S HUE

A special presentation at Cabot Court Hotel (Weston-super-Mare) saw the Wetherspoon pub and hotel receive a prestigious award.

Weston-super-Mare Civic Society presented Wetherspoon with a Civic Society Award 2023, 'recognising and rewarding excellence in Weston architecture'.

Cabot Court Hotel was rewarded for 'significant townscape improvement' and 'an appreciated upgrading of this important seafront building'.

Pictured (left to right) are Cabot Court Hotel's pub manager, Kazi Musfaque, Wetherspoon's area manager, Emma Simpson, Weston-super-Mare's mayor, Councillor John Crockford-Hawley, and Norman Sharples from Weston-super-Mare Civic Society.

Cabot Court Hotel, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in July 2011, underwent complete rendering and redecoration on the building's exterior, as well as extensive roof repairs and new signage, costing £750,000.

Emma reported: "The Civic Society particularly loved the colours chosen for the building's repainting and how the work has significantly improved the seafront image."





WORKSOP • RETFORD

# NONE BETTER IN NOTTS THAN OUR MR NOTT



Two Wetherspoon pubs in north Nottinghamshire have gained accreditation at the inaugural Best Bar None awards for the area.

The Liquorice Gardens (Worksop) and The Dominie Cross (Retford) were among 19 businesses to complete their assessments, to become North Notts Best Bar None accredited venues for 2023/24, organised by North Notts BID.

The Liquorice Gardens also scooped the 'best chain' title at the awards ceremony, while the pub's manager James Nott was voted winner of the 'outstanding contribution' award.

James (pictured right), who has managed The Liquorice Gardens for 10 years, said: "We knew we had achieved the accreditation, and I was hoping to win something on the night.

"The 'best chain' award is a great achievement, and we are well over the moon.

"However, when they announced the 'outstanding contribution' award for me personally, I was in shock. It is quite humbling."

This award was voted for by judges including Stella Bacon (Bassetlaw Council licensing), Hayley Crawford (police inspector for Bassetlaw), Sally Gillborn (North Notts BID), Elizabeth Murphy (Dragon Fly Place Management) and Michael Dennis (Premier Security).

The award recognises James' contribution to the local community, night-time economy and commitment to the safety and security of customers and staff in the area.

James said: "I have a good reputation and great rapport with the local police, council and North Notts BID.

"I am also vice-chair of the local pubwatch and regularly attend the late-night economy partnership meetings.

"We were involved with the relaunch of the 'Ask Angela' scheme, the brainchild of Hayley Crawford, and also support with training for the Women's Aid 'Stay by Her' (ending men's violence against women) initiative.

"The Liquorice Gardens is a designated 'safe venue' and we get involved with all the police safety initiatives, so we are a real hub for all of the local activities.

"I have also had a lot of input with BID, as well as helping to merge the Worksop and Retford pubwatch schemes into one larger and more efficient unit.

"Kyle Byrne (pub manager of The Dominie Cross (Retford)) and I work closely together, too.

"We are a very good team, and I guess my award is in recognition for all the time and effort I have put in to the Worksop community."

Kyle (left), who is a director of North Notts BID, added: "It's great to see James being recognised for his efforts in the community, regarding customer safety.

"Because James and I are so heavily involved with local initiatives, it shows that we are both committed to providing the safest of venues for customers and staff."

North Notts BID chief executive, Sally Gillborn, said:

"We had a fantastic turnout for our inaugural awards night, with more than 100 attending from across 18 of the district's hospitality businesses.

"The event showcased how committed our local venues are to delivering exceptional standards of management, including customer and staff well-being.

"The awards were an amazing opportunity to collectively celebrate our achievements – and congratulations to all award-winners."

Best Bar None assesses businesses which sell alcohol against the core themes of venue management, staff training and care, customer safety and welfare, as well as customer service and community support.



# SUMMER'S HERE – SO, LET THE COCKTAILS RAIN DOWN

**Even if the weather's poor, one of these 16 concoctions will help to lift the clouds**

**I**t's that glorious time of year, again... Wetherspoon's summer cocktail season.

There are now 16 cocktails available on the Wetherspoon menu, offering something for everyone to enjoy this summer season.

#### **Classic**

Classic cocktails are also now available as part of the 'includes a drink' deal, with selected meals. For details, see the food menu or ask at the bar.

Your local Wetherspoon pub is now serving cocktails of all styles and sizes, from cocktails by the glass, such as Strawberry Daiquiri, Espresso Martini and Tommy's Margarita, to those in pitchers – great for sharing.

#### **Different**

The cocktail pitcher selection offers more than a dozen options for you to enjoy with friends or to try something different. Each pitcher contains 100ml spirit, except Classic Pimm's (150ml).

The cocktail pitcher choices are Tropical Smash, Purple Rain, Bumbu Colada, Hawaiian Pipeline Punch, Zombie, Sex on the Beach, Candy Rosá, Blue Lagoon, Mango Monster Mash, Porn Star Martini, Woo Woo, The Godfather and Classic Pimm's.

#### **Favourite**

Check out the menu for all recipes and pick the perfect pitcher to share with your favourite people.

Why not set your summer clock to cocktail time at Wetherspoon?

# HYMN TO HER - ELAINE LAUDED AS SHE RETIRES FROM CHURCH HOUSE



Bar associate Elaine Hodgetts was treated to a surprise party, by colleagues, family and friends, to mark her retirement from the company.

Pictured (front) at The Church House (Wath-upon-Dearne), where she has worked for the past 15 years, Elaine had previously worked at The Rhinoceros (Rotherham) (now closed), clocking up a combined 27 years' service with Wetherspoon.

Bev Hayes (front row, far right), pub manager at The Church House, said: "We are all going to miss Elaine very much and wish her every happiness in her retirement."

Bev continued: "She is a lovely person, one in a billion, with a heart of gold. She is well known by everyone, popular with the customers and very well liked."

"She was also a model employee – you could set your watch by her, she is so reliable."

"Elaine knew her job inside out – and I don't ever remember her having any time off for illness."

Around 60 current and former colleagues, as well as regular customers and family members, enjoyed the celebrations, including decorations and cakes made by shift manager Claire Duggan.

Shift leader Helen Yeardley and team leader Michelle Guest-Pearce, who organised the buffet, also helped to make the secret party happen.

## MILES AND SMILES FOR RUNNERS OF RUGELEY

Four staff members from The Plaza (Rugeley) collectively raised more than £3,500 in support of three great charities.

Shift managers Holly Yates, Jonathan 'Joff' Titley and Sam Dickinson (pictured, left to right) and Sam's daughter, university student and bar associate Maisy Dickinson, completed the London Landmarks half marathon.

Holly and Joff amassed £1,150 for Young Lives vs Cancer, Sam raised £1,200 for The Brain Tumour Charity and Maisy collected £1,250 for Mental Health UK, causes all close to their hearts.

Pub manager Sian Siddall said: "I was like a proud mum on the day, keeping track of their progress via an app and letting everyone in the pub know how they were all getting on."

"Their achievement is absolutely amazing – and we are all so proud of them."

As well as donations and sponsorship, the charity funds were collected through fundraising activities at the pub, including raffles, bonus balls and football cards.

Sian added: "We hope to get a few more involved next year – and Joff has also entered the ballot for the full marathon in 2025, fingers crossed."





# THE BOOKING OFFICE – IT IS JUST THE TICKET

Grade I listed building in Edinburgh was built in 1800s by the North British Railway company, then converted to a Wetherspoon pub in 2016

**W**etherspoon spent approximately £1.9 million developing a pub, on Waverley Bridge, Edinburgh, which opened in June 2016.

On the site of former Jimmy Chung's Chinese buffet restaurant, The Booking Office is housed in a grade 1 listed building, originally the train station's booking office, situated on the prominent bridge junction between Edinburgh Waverley train station and the city centre.

Being in the Old Town Conservation Area and part of the Edinburgh UNESCO World Heritage Site, designated in 1995, this is at the very heart of Edinburgh.

In 1846, the North British Railway (NBR) company built North Bridge station at the east end of Nor' Loch. In quick succession, two rival companies each opened a station here.

In 1854, all three stations were combined and renamed 'Waverley', after the famous novel by Sir Walter Scott, published in 1814.

By 1865, the NBR had 'absorbed' its rivals and built a new station. It rebuilt Waverley, again, in the 1890s, and all that now remains of the original NBR station is the much-remodelled booking office.

The booking office later became the parcels office for many years, until around 1984.

## History

A plaque, documenting this history, on display at the pub, reads: 'This historic building looks west across Princes Street Gardens and is part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In 1846, the North British Railway company built a station at this end of the gardens.'

'All that now remains is the much-remodelled booking office. Originally, it had nine arches at the front.

'The wings on either side were slightly set back. Each wing was three arches wide and seven arches deep.

'The booking office later became the parcels office, until c1984.

'It was converted into licensed premises, prior to becoming a restaurant and then a Wetherspoon free house.'

The pub entrance's floor area has a mosaic detail – a replica of the one in Waverley station's original booking hall built during 1892–1902.

It depicts the NBR company's coat of arms. The floor and the timber-panelled booking office were removed in 1970.

A framed photograph, with its main focus being the former booking office's booking hall, is on display in the pub.

The varnished wooden central booking office was designed by James Bell, chief engineer for the NBR, in 1868–74.

The NBR was the largest of the Scottish railway companies and, in 1923, became 'a major constituent' of the new London and North Eastern Railway (LNER).

## Steam

As its chief mechanical engineer, the LNER appointed Nigel Gresley, who designed some of Britain's most famous steam locomotives – the Flying Scotsman (named after the London-to-Edinburgh rail service) and Mallard (the fastest steam locomotive of them all, with its record being 203 km/h).



Retro British Railways' framed travel posters decorate the pub's walls, advertising the Flying Scotsman's non-stop service, each week day, between London King's Cross and Edinburgh Waverley, offering 'air-conditioned stock, buffet lounge and ladies' retiring rooms'.

Located around the pub, railway-inspired design features include a replica Flying Scotsman locomotive name plate, railway signals and signage, as well as a framed collection of souvenir-style items (including train tickets and old coins) displayed on luggage tags, relating to Edinburgh Waverley station.

A framed artwork collage and text about the old parcel office are also displayed, reading: 'The former station parcels office is located at street level at Waverley Bridge and was erected in 1898–1900. It is a single-storey 3 by 7 bay flat-roofed classically detailed building, with round-headed opening between paired pilasters. Its interior was converted to restaurant use around 1988.'

A printed collection of book extracts about Edinburgh, illustrated to display an image of Sir Walter Scott, is also among the pub's artwork pieces.

During the premises' redevelopment work, a large roof light, offering natural light from above the length of the main customer area, was also reinstated, similar to the original seen in the building in some historic photographs.

#### Stylised

At one end of the customer area, booth seating with stylised metal overhead luggage racks, complete with display suitcases and luggage items, evokes a railway carriage and guards' van setting.

Brickwork, natural wood panelling (including at the front of the bar) and metal work features and finishes, together with period-style

## THE BOOKING OFFICE | EDINBURGH

light fittings, give the pub's design a hint of the bygone era, without being overly themed.

The rich gold, red and blue carpet design adds warmth and colour, along with a mixture of different textile-finished chairs, high stools and booth benches.

The pub is wheelchair accessible, with a level entrance and specially adapted Changing Places toilet facilities for customers with disabilities, as well as those unable to use standard accessible toilets.

Provided in addition to conventional wheelchair-accessible toilets, a Changing Places facility is (under British standards) 12 square metres and includes, alongside the usual accessible toilet equipment, an adult-sized height-adjustable changing bench and ceiling track hoist.

Outside, at the front of the pub on either side, there are two paved gardens offering views of Edinburgh Castle.

Enclosed from the street by wrought-iron railings, these gardens can be accessed from inside the pub – via summer doors.

The Waverley Bridge location looks west across Princes Street Gardens, set in the valley separating the medieval old town and the 18th-century new town.

In the 14th century, the marshy valley was dammed to create the Nor' Loch (North Lake) to bolster the defences of the castle on the rock above.

The Nor' Loch was later a place for trying witches and, by the 18th century, had become a dumping place and was drained to create private gardens – today's popular public parkland.

● 17 Waverley Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1BQ

## TONBRIDGE BREWER BRINGS ALE ANSWERS TO HUMPHREY BEAN

The Humphrey Bean (Tonbridge) teamed up with a local brewery for a special meet-the-brewer event.

Tonbridge Brewery's head brewer Paul Bournazian (pictured right with team leader Tyler Meredith) hosted a presentation and question-and-answer session at the pub.

Food-tasting also took place, with a selection of small-plate menu dishes to sample.

Customers paid £5.10, which included a pint of Tonbridge Ale on arrival, as well as guest ale tastings throughout the session from the selection served on the day.

The pub staged a charity raffle in aid of Young Lives vs Cancer, with prizes including a mini keg of Tonbridge Ale.

Event organiser, shift manager and ale champion Chandler Waller said: "We were delighted with the success of the event.

"Thanks to Paul and the team at Tonbridge Brewery for the part which they played.

"We were also thrilled to raise £100 for our charity."



## PUB-GOERS ENJOY THE TASTE AND FEEL OF HOPS AND MALT

Phoenix Brewery displayed its wares at The Queen's Picture House (Waterloo, Liverpool).

Customers took part in a Q&A session at the meet-the-brewer event as they sampled six Phoenix beers.

These included dry-hopped Arizona, strong ale Wobbly Bob, Heywood Pale, Porter, pale ale White Monk and its West Coast IPA.

Jars of hops and malt were made available, so that customers could familiarise themselves with the ingredients in the various ales.

Shift manager Matthew Griffiths said: "It was great to have the brewers here to answer customers' questions. We have been selling Phoenix's beers for years now.

"There was a really good atmosphere – and we plan to do similar events again."

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Matthew Griffiths, brewers Graham Rothery and Andrew Goodliffe and shift leader Andy Durston.



## MUM'S THE WORD AS DISTILLERS SUPPLY GIN

A range of gins was available to try as part of Mother's Day at The Paddle Steamer (Largs).

Three flavours from Grantown-on-Spey's Caorunn Distillery were sampled by mums and their families.

The flavours were blood orange, raspberry and Caorunn Original.

The distiller's business development manager, Rachel Murray, was on hand to answer questions.

Shift leader Victoria McIntosh said: "It went very well and people kept coming to the bar to order more, once they'd tried a sample."

Mums were welcomed in the pub with a decorative balloon arch, created by Perfectly Planned Events by Abby & Aimee.

Victoria is pictured (left) with Rachel Murray.



# FORMER ENGLAND FOOTBALLERS PITCH IN DURING EURO 2024



Football fans enjoyed a summer of live sport at Wetherspoon's pubs, particularly when the month-long UEFA European Championship 2024 kicked off.

Wetherspoon's pubs screened all of the tournament fixtures, throughout June and July, with a selection of international value-for-money drinks, many hailing from the same countries as those teams competing.

England footballing legend Sir Geoff Hurst, now aged 82, was at The Crosse Keys (City of London) to meet football fans and promote Budweiser's Bring it Home campaign.

The hat-trick hero and last remaining player from England's 1966 World Cup final starting line-up, Sir Geoff said: "Memories are the greatest and memories of winning a major international tournament simply last for ever."

He added: "Having a nice beer and a few laughs in the pub, while supporting your team, fans coming together, is also a fantastic thing."

During the tournament, from inside a Wetherspoon pub, former England footballer Peter Crouch hosted Euro-themed episodes of That Peter Crouch Podcast ([thatpetercrouchpodcast.com](http://thatpetercrouchpodcast.com)).

Crouchy, Sid and the boys, together with their invited special guests, recorded their podcasts at The Fox on the Hill (Camberwell), giving their views on the Euro 2024 championship action.

## GROWING BEAUTIFULLY: SCOTTISH BREWERY BUILT ON HEATHER

Original Fraoach heather ale still a huge seller for Wetherspoon's, but newer brews are proving even more popular

**Brewery's name:** Williams Bros Brewing Co, Alloa, Clackmannanshire



**T**his brewery has been supplying its award-winning ales to Wetherspoon's pubs across Scotland for 28 years.

That long association has seen plenty of changes and innovations to both businesses, during almost three decades, but the beer is still a firm favourite with customers.

The brewery delivers casks and kegs directly to pubs in the central belt of the country, from Dundee in the east to Kilmarnock in the west, taking in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Perth and Stirling, including as far afield as Aberdeen and Fort William.

### Family

Director Chris Williams, son of the brewery's co-founder Bruce (together with his brother Scott), has worked for the family business for 15 years.

Chris said: "Joker IPA (5.0% ABV) is our biggest-selling ale and the most popular ale which Wetherspoon's pubs buy from us, accounting for 40 per cent of production.

"It is pretty much a non-stop regular delivery of kegs, particularly for the pubs in Glasgow and Edinburgh."

### Selection

Chris continued: "Second is Birds & Bees (4.3% ABV), with a selection of three others as a third-choice option.

"Our original flagship heather ale Fraoach (5.0% ABV), Seven Giraffes (5.1% ABV) and March of the Penguins (4.9% ABV), particularly during the winter, are the others."

Wetherspoon's customers have also been enjoying Tin Man (5.5% ABV), a tropical IPA, as part of the regional can selection for Scotland.

### Grandfather

It was the heather ale Fraoach (the Gaelic word for heather), from an ancient 'Leanne Fraoach' recipe, which started the family brewing in 1988, at Chris's grandfather Roy Williams' homebrew shop in Glasgow – Glenbrew.

Chris's father (Roy's son) Bruce took that perfected recipe to a small five-barrel brewery in Taynult, in Argyll and Bute, to brew his first pilot batch of the ale.

Scott soon came on board, as demand of the popular heather ale increased.

The range diversified, with a move to a new purpose-built brewery and premises in Craigmill, Strathaven, where they stayed for six years (1998–2004).

In 2004, Williams Bros Brewing Co took over the Forth Brewery, at Kelliebank, Alloa (the old brew capital of Scotland), where it has expanded and evolved, creating more than 50 new recipes.



THE POMMELERS REST • TOWER BRIDGE, LONDON

# NOT MUCH REST FOR RECEP AFTER 14 YEARS IN CHARGE



In August, pub manager Recep Cinar celebrated 23 years' service with Wetherspoon.

He took over in 2010 as pub manager at The Pommeliers Rest (Tower Bridge, London) and has many long-serving staff members on his team.

Among Recep's staff are two fellow countrymen, whose connections go back further than their Wetherspoon careers together.

Recep revealed: "Shift manager Berkay Degirmenci has been working with me for almost eight years, while kitchen shift leader Kagan Kucukkaramuklu has worked with me for almost 13 years.

"Coincidentally, we all went to the same school, back home in Türkiye, although we weren't friends then. We had our first conversation in the UK."

Originally from the coastal resort of Fethiye, in Türkiye, Recep came to the UK in October 2000 for a six-month visit to study and improve his English.

He eventually studied English for two years, through to advanced level.

Recep said: "My English teacher was a Wetherspoon customer – and it was she who encouraged me to ask about working for the company.

"I had previous experience working in many hotels and bars in Türkiye and had studied tourism and hotel management at home, so I took her advice."

Recep started at Wetherspoons in Bromley (now called The Richmal Crompton), before moving to The Milan Bar (Croydon) (now closed), as well as working at three other Wetherspoon pubs in Croydon, before arriving at The Pommeliers Rest.

Recep's wife, shift manager Viktorija, is also among the long-serving team members at the pub, with 11 years' service.

Recep, 44, said: "Viktorija also studied tourism and hotel management in her home country of Lithuania, having previously worked for Tiger Tiger here in London, but I managed to persuade her to join Wetherspoon with me.

"We have now been working together for 11 years and make a good team at work and at home."

Among the other long-serving team members at The Pommeliers Rest are shift manager Darryl Skidmore (13 years), kitchen shift leader Vincenzo Bisogna, kitchen team leader Mohamed Rahman and kitchen associate Shahidur Begum (nine years each) and shift manager Heibe Osman (seven years).

Pictured (left to right) are kitchen shift leader Kagan Kucukkaramuklu, shift manager Viktorija Cinar, pub manager Recep Cinar and shift manager Berkay Degirmenci.



# THE ART OF BRINGING A PUB'S HISTORY ALIVE



The Six Chimneys (Wakefield)

**W**etherspoon has gained a reputation for rescuing and restoring many iconic local landmark buildings, which may often have otherwise been demolished and lost for ever.

The company also places great emphasis on the history of the building and local area, when considering the interior design, features and artwork on display.

Robert Renak is the man behind the history artwork displays at some of Wetherspoon's pubs, researching and commissioning art, as well as developing local history artwork for each site.

Robert recalled: "It all began, as I remember it, with The Moon on the Hill (Harrow on the Hill), when I did the first artwork, incorporating informative text pieces, covering some of the main topics of local history.

#### Positive

"That was in 1991 and I received very positive feedback from Tim Martin.

"Historian Ray Colvin and I began to do the research and write up the local history topics, for more and more Wetherspoon pubs from then on."

Tim Martin said: "Robert and Ray have provided a remarkable amount of historical information for Wetherspoon's pubs over the years."

Over the past three decades or more, the artwork displays have evolved and expanded to include commissioned art pieces, as well as collaborations with local people and groups, providing additional information and insight.

#### Initiatives

Robert explained: "Something which seems to be happening more often now is that artwork displays are being added to, in existing pubs, as a result of local initiatives.

"It is proving to be a constantly developing project.

"People contact Wetherspoon with suggestions and ideas for additional local history – and I liaise with them and head office to see the projects through.

"The recently reopened pub The Six Chimneys (Wakefield) included a lot of interaction with local groups, with the project being the result of a community effort.

"At The Iron Duke (Wellington), space was made to incorporate additional military history, especially the Czech and Polish fighter pilots at the local airfield during World War II, which was also a real stand-out project."

#### Great

Robert added: "The history-based artwork can also work in contemporary environments, with The Stargazer, at London's O2, being a great example of that.

"The pub is in such an iconic modern building, yet its history artwork still works and shows that Wetherspoon can make an impact in the most modern and prestigious of settings."

Whether it is information about the local area, historical characters or an explanation for the design and inspiration for the pub's carpet – called 'The art beneath your feet' – Robert is on hand to explain, inform and enlighten.



The Six Chimneys (Wakefield)



The Six Chimneys (Wakefield)



The Six Chimneys (Wakefield)



The Stargazer (The O2, Greenwich, London)



The Stargazer (The O2, Greenwich, London)

# NEW LOOK

## Aberdeen

### THE JUSTICE MILL

Pub manager Andrew Wallace is pictured at the new-look pub The Justice Mill (Aberdeen).

The pub underwent an extensive refurbishment project, costing £1.4 million.

The Justice Mill, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in April 2004, has undergone a refurbishment in its customer area, as well as upgrades in the bar and kitchen.

It has been redecorated throughout, including the installation of new light fittings and a new carpet, as well as a new heating system.

A full roof replacement and essential repairs have also been undertaken to the flat roof areas.

There have been repairs to the slate pitched roof, as well as external repairs to windows, with some new windows and new signage installed.

New staff facilities have also been added.

Andrew said: "I am thrilled with the refurbishment and pleased that we have also been able to create 17 new jobs in the city."

**423-425 Union Street, Aberdeen, AB11 6DA**



## Castleford

### THE GLASS BLOWER

Pub manager Sarah Heppinstall is pleased with the new-look customer toilets at her pub.

Wetherspoon has invested £200,000 at The Glass Blower (Castleford), installing completely brand-new ladies and gents' toilet facilities.

Sarah confirmed: "The old toilet facilities have been completely replaced, so everything is brand new.

"We're all delighted with the new-look facilities."

**15 Bank Street, Castleford, West Yorkshire, WF10 1J**



THE COMPANY ROW • CONSETT

## MARVELLOUS MARTINE STILL KEEN AFTER 20 GLORIOUS YEARS



Kitchen manager Martine Milburn celebrated 20 years with the company. Martine, who works at The Company Row (Consett), is pictured (centre) with (left to right) Wetherspoon's area manager Lauren Bell, kitchen shift leader Ross Chambers, bar shift leader Laura Richardson and The Company Row's pub manager Shelley Hobbs.

She is pictured at Wetherspoons (Metrocentre, Gateshead), where she worked for a short period while The Company Row was undergoing an extensive refurbishment.

Martine began her Wetherspoon career at the age of 19, working front of house at The Company Row, before moving into the kitchen.

Originally from Durham, Martine has worked at several Wetherspoon pubs during the past two decades, including The Elihu Yale (Wrexham) and The William Jameson (Sunderland), as well as other pubs across the northeast, helping with covering shifts.

She admitted: "Although I have moved around a few times, my heart was always at Consett, where I started – so it was good to return in 2009."

Looking ahead to the reopening of The Company Row in mid June when she spoke with Wetherspoon News, Martine said: "We are going to have a brand-new kitchen, which I am very excited about.

"I have one of the best kitchen teams I have worked with, and they keep me going.

"I'm certain that I wouldn't still be here without them; they're the reason I have stayed so long."

Martine also worked with her husband of 23 years, Martyn Milburn, at The Company Row.

Martyn spent 15 years with the company before changing career.

The couple have two children, George (aged 10) and six-year-old Lilly.

THE CHILDWALL FIVEWAYS HOTEL • LIVERPOOL

# RELATIVE SUCCESS AS SIBLINGS STEER THE SHIP IN LIVERPOOL



**Pictured (back, left to right) are Sarah and Sean Harwood, with Amelia and Harry Fowler; (front, left to right) Lottie and Jessica Roberts, pub manager Terry Clarke, Nina and Tabitha Grant**

Pub manager Terry Clarke has worked for Wetherspoon for 14 years, managing The Childwall Fiveways Hotel (Liverpool) for the past three years.

Terry manages a young team of 60 staff and could be forgiven for describing his team as a 'real family'.

Among the staff are six sets of siblings, one set of cousins and three couples who all met while working for the company.

Terry, who worked at The Thomas Frost (Liverpool) for 10 years before taking over at The Childwall Fiveways Hotel in August 2021, said: "Many pubs claim to be community pubs, but we really are, with so many family connections – and it works really well for us."

The sibling employees are bar team leader Milly Adshead (aged 21) and bar associate Noah Adshead (19); bar team leader Sarah Harwood (21) and floor associate Sean Harwood (16); the Wilson brothers, bar associate Ben (20) and floor associate Sam (17); bar associates Roberts sisters Lottie (21) and Jessica (20); the Grant sisters, both bar associates, Nina (20) and Tabitha (19); siblings Amelia (18), a bar associate, and Harry (16) Fowler, a floor associate; cousins shift leader Patryk Kuligowski (28) and bar associate Liv Olzack (24).

Terry added: "I'm only in my early 30s, yet am often the oldest on shift."

He continued: "Most of the siblings are still at school or studying at university, so work part time with us."

"We have really good relationships with all of the families, with many of the parents also regular customers."

"The siblings all started as associates, with several of the younger family members following their older siblings into their job, so it has worked out really well for everyone."

Milly Adshead met her now partner, bar shift leader Patrick Heffron, at the pub, while shift managers Danny Yilmaz and Fionn Mulhern also met at work.

Shift managers Joe and Emma O'Neill also met while working for the company and were married before joining Terry's team.

Terry concluded: "It really is a really close-knit family... a bit like The Waltons."



## KNOW ALL ABOUT VODKA? THE ANSWER MIGHT NOT BE AS CLEAR AS YOU THINK

**Menu now has a dozen vodka flavours, from as far afield as France and Sweden**

**I**f you think that you have tasted vodka, you might want to think again.

Wetherspoon's vodka menu now has a dozen vodka flavours to choose from, in almost every fruity combination, to suit all tastes.

### Popular

The range includes ever-popular vodkas, from the world's number one vodka, Smirnoff, to Absolut, made with Swedish water and winter wheat.

Added to the menu are NEW XIX Vodka tropical ice (37.5% ABV), joining XIX Vodka mixed berry in the line-up, and NEW Au Vodka strawberry burst (35.2% ABV), both available in a 25ml and 50ml measure (mixer† included), as are all of the vodka choices.

Also available in the Au Vodka collection are blue raspberry, pink lemonade and pineapple crush flavours.

### Determination

Grey Goose (40% ABV) is the result of an absolute determination to create a French vodka unlike any other – and available from the vodka menu.

This is made from the finest ingredients from France – soft winter wheat from in and around Picardie, plus pure spring water from Gensac, in the Cognac region, nurtured and captured from field to bottle in an exclusive process designed and controlled by the extraordinary skills and commitment of cellar master François Thibault.

Also on the menu are Smirnoff, Smirnoff Mango & Passionfruit and Smirnoff Raspberry Crush, together with Absolut and Absolut Vanilia.

### Different

Flävar (25% ABV), Swedish vodka with flavour, has three flavours to choose from on the vodka menu.

Now available as a spirit (mixer† included) and as a shot, you can select from strawberry & lime, blueberry & lemon and salted caramel.

# NEW LOOK

## Boston

### THE MOON UNDER WATER

The mayor of Boston, Cllr David Brown, and the leader of the council, Cllr Anne Dorrian, are pictured with pub manager Andrew Sands and regular customer Tony Sherwin at the reopening of The Moon Under Water (Boston).

The pub, which first opened in July 1998, has been redecorated both inside and out, including new carpets and flooring, the outside of the pub painted and new signage added, as well as the beer garden floor relaid.

Andrew said: "The Moon Under Water has been welcoming customers for many years and plays an important part in Boston's social scene.

"The improvement work highlights the company's commitment to the pub, the town and, most of all, its customers and staff."

**6 High Street, Boston, PE21 8SH**



## Goole

### THE CITY AND COUNTY

Pub manager Jannine Wallace is pictured at her pub, The City and County (Goole), with the mayor of Goole, Cllr Anthony Raspin, and Wetherspoon's area manager, Dan Nicholas

Wetherspoon invested £600,000 in the pub, redecorating generally and improving the kitchen.

An additional 10 staff members have been employed at the new-look pub.

Jannine said: "The City and County is an extremely popular pub in the town.

"I am delighted that we now have an even better pub for both customers and staff."

The building opened as a Wetherspoon pub in July 2001.

**Market Square, Goole  
East Riding of Yorkshire, DN14 5DR**





## Ipswich

### THE CRICKETERS

Behind-the-scenes refurbishment and upgrade work at The Cricketers (Ipswich) has transformed the working space for the pub's team.

A new back bar and bar floor has been installed, as well as new equipment.

New fridges, drinks-dispensing equipment, new pipework in the cellar and new coolers were also installed.

Pub manager Katy Ash (pictured) said: "Although customers can see the new back bar and display units only, the refurbishment work has provided a more practical and efficient workspace for the whole team – with which we are all delighted."

51 Crown Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 3JA



## Streatham

### THE HOLLAND TRINGHAM

Pub manager Reka Szigeti is pictured at the new-look pub The Holland Tringham (Streatham).

The pub, which first opened in December 1998, has undergone a complete refurbishment in the customer area, as well as upgrades to the bar.

Additionally, it has been redecorated throughout, including the installation of new light fittings and carpet, as well as new customer toilets.

The rear beer garden has also been enhanced and staff facilities upgraded.

Reka said: "The pub has been at the heart of the community for more than a quarter of a century and can now continue to serve local people and visitors in enhanced surroundings.

"I am also delighted that we have created 20 new jobs for local people."

107-109 Streatham High Road, Streatham, SW16 1HJ



# NEW LOOK

## Bath

### THE KING OF WESSEX

The King of Wessex (Bath), which first opened as a Wetherspoon in July 2004, has undergone a customer area refurbishment, as well as upgrades to the bar and kitchen.

The upgrade and refurbishment project at the pub, managed by Stacie Greenwood (pictured), cost £700,000.

The pub has been fully redecorated throughout, including the installation of new light fittings, new carpet and furniture, together with new artwork.

A completely new bar has been installed, with new drink-dispensing equipment and glass racks, as well as a new open kitchen gantry added.

Customers' toilets have been refurbished, and new furniture has also been added to the patio garden, at the front of the pub.

Stacie said: "The team and I, as well as regular customers, are very happy with the refurbishment.

"The pub looks great."

5-10 James Street West, Bath, Somerset, BA1 2BX



## Uttoxeter

### THE OLD SWAN

Wetherspoon's area manager, Kat Prince (left), and pub manager Nicola Pitcher are pictured with a celebration cake at the reopening of The Old Swan (Uttoxeter).

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in December 2006, has undergone a complete customer area refurbishment, as well as behind-the-scenes upgrades.

It has had full internal redecoration, including the installation of new carpet throughout.

Roof repairs have also been completed, including a new roof-covering, as well as new air-conditioning equipment installed.

Nicola said: "The colour scheme change and new carpet have given the pub a completely new feel, with overall feedback from returning regulars very positive."

7 Market Place, Uttoxeter Staffordshire, ST14 8HN



## Stoke-on-Trent

### THE WHEATSHEAF

Pub manager Tom Rudnicki is pictured at his new-look pub – The Wheatsheaf (Stoke-on-Trent).

The pub, which first opened in May 1999, underwent upgrades on its bar, as well as internal and external redecoration.

Tom said: “The Wheatsheaf is a landmark in the city – and Wetherspoon has ensured that it remains in first-class condition.

“We look forward to serving the community for many more years to come.”

**84–92 Church Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1BU**



## Consett

### THE COMPANY ROW

Long-serving manager Shelley Hobbs is pictured outside the new-look pub The Company Row.

Shelley has run the pub in Consett, County Durham, for more than 16 years.

The pub has undergone an extensive refurbishment, costing £1.8 million, to include the customer area, as well as upgrades to the bar and kitchen.

The Company Row, which first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in October 2002, has also had new light fittings installed, as well as a new bespoke carpet.

The customers’ toilets have also been completely refurbished.

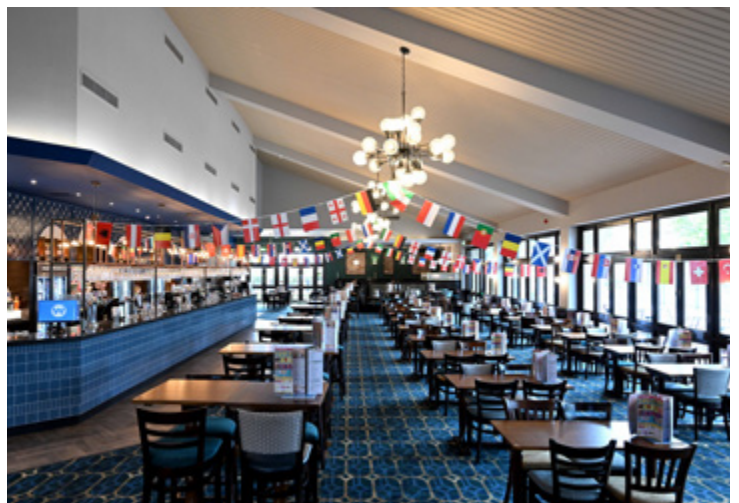
Remedial work, in relation to subsidence, has also taken place.

Shelley said: “The Company Row is a wonderful pub, and I am proud to have been its manager for so many years.

“Both customers and staff are delighted with the pub’s new look.

“I am also pleased that the pub has recruited an additional five staff members.”

**The Victoria Centre, Victoria Road, Consett, County Durham, DH8 5BQ**



# DECLARED BEST OF THE BUNCH BY OUT TO LUNCH

Reports from 'secret diner' families put Wetherspoon's children's menu in first place in Soil Association's league table

**W**etherspoon's award-winning children's menu has been recognised and rewarded for, among other things, its quality, value and provenance.

The company was awarded first place for 'best children's meals' in the Out to Lunch league table (the Soil Association), with the help of an army of 'secret diner' families.

#### Quality

The Out to Lunch league table judges the UK's biggest and most popular family restaurant chains on family friendliness, healthy options, food quality, value, sustainability and ingredients' provenance, with Wetherspoon topping the charts.

All of Wetherspoon's children's meals are served with a drink and fruit portion included in the price.

Each meal choice has at least two of your five-a-day portions of fruit or vegetables, although many meals contain more than this.

#### Vegetables

In addition to fruit or vegetables included in each dish, all meals are served with a portion of fruit (apple, banana or strawberry Bear Yoyo fruit snack), which also contains one of your five-a-day, plus a drink.

No children's drinks contain added sugars.

The drinks contain only naturally occurring sugars from the fruit.

To enable parents to make informed decisions about meal choices, displayed next to each meal is Calorie and salt content (also sugar content, where relevant) information.

Wetherspoon has reduced the salt content of children's meals by 17 per cent, since 2019, and offers dishes with low or no salt, including tomato cheesy pasta.

#### Allergen

Parents can also check the full nutritional information for all meals, including allergen and ingredient declarations, on each pub's customer information screen.

Appetites vary considerably, depending on a child's needs and age. That's why Wetherspoon offers two meal sizes: the first menu section, aimed at children aged two–six years, is for 'smaller appetites', while the 'larger appetites' section is aimed at those who are aged six and over.

Wetherspoon offers a range of meals suitable for vegans and vegetarians.





See children's menu for symbol explanations.

## Quality ingredients

### 100 per cent British beef

Wetherspoon's beef burgers are made with 100 per cent British beef – always fresh, never frozen.

The beef is traceable from farm to fork, coming from farms which operate under the Red Tractor quality-assurance scheme which promotes best farming practices.

### Free-range eggs

All shell eggs used in Wetherspoon's pubs are free-range eggs which are RSPCA assured, meaning that the hens laying the eggs are allowed ample space to roam as freely as they like, ensuring laying hens' welfare.

### Sustainable freshly battered fish

Wetherspoon's freshly battered fish is certified as Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) approved.

Fish and seafood labelled with this certification come from sustainable sources, helping to preserve the ocean's ecosystems for future generations.

### Chicken

Wetherspoon's chicken nuggets and chicken breast are always pieces of whole breast fillet, never formed or reformed. The chicken served in Wetherspoon's pubs is purchased from approved suppliers.

### Sausages

The sausages served in Wetherspoon's pubs come from farms with higher welfare standards. These are made in small-batch sizes by an independent and family-run business.

### Tomato cheesy pasta

This pasta contains 10 vegetable types and, in just the small bowl of pasta alone, accounts for two portions of a child's five-a-day.

### Ice cream dessert

Wetherspoon has worked closely with Beechdean and developed a small ice cream pot which contains 13.8g sugar.

This falls below the Public Health England standard for a child for a single 120g portion of ice cream, so makes it a suitable treat for a child to enjoy.

## Drinks

Wetherspoon offers Pip organic smoothie and Pip organic juice, both made using 100 per cent organically grown fruit and vegetables, with no added refined sugars and no added flavourings, colourings or sweeteners. Each carton provides one portion of a child's five-a-day.

All Wetherspoon pubs offer an unlimited supply of tap water for children and customers of all ages.



## Activities

To keep the little-ones entertained while you enjoy your meal, activity sheets are available, with puzzles, colouring activities and NEW easy origami.

Wetherspoon's activity sheets and menus feature four characters, each with its own personality, mission and superpower.

Next time you visit Wetherspoon, be sure to find the activity sheets.



THE HIGHLAND LADDIE • NORTON

# KITCHEN MANAGER EMMA GIVES ORDERS TO SON AND DAUGHTER



Kitchen manager Emma Marson started her Wetherspoon career as a bar associate, juggling a part-time job with raising her two young children.

That was 16 years ago in Emma's home town at The Resolution (Middlesbrough) (now closed).

She now runs the kitchen at The Highland Laddie (Norton), with her son Jack (18) and daughter Emily (16) now both working on the pub's kitchen team (all pictured).

Emma recalled: "My husband John Gillgallon (also pictured) also started as a bar associate at The Resolution 18 years ago, when I was pregnant with Jack, and was working at the pub when I joined in 2008.

"John progressed to become my pub manager there, briefly, before moving to another pub. He is now an auditor with the company, a job he has done for the past seven or eight years."

After The Resolution, Emma spent 10 years at The Thomas Sheraton (Stockton-on-Tees), where, after helping out in the kitchen, she progressed to kitchen shift leader.

She recalled: "We didn't have a kitchen manager at the time, so I was running the kitchen as shift leader.

"I then moved to Norton three years ago, stepping up to kitchen manager after about six months."

Both Jack and Emily are currently studying for their A levels and aim to go on to university.

Jack plans to study medicine to become a doctor while Emily wants to pursue a career as a primary school teacher.

Emma said: "They both wanted jobs, while still at school, to earn their own money. It was easier for them to apply to the pub, and both were accepted after interviews.

"Jack is now cross-trained to work both kitchen and bar roles, and works in the kitchen alternate Saturdays and Sundays, swapping with Emily, so they are rarely on the same shift."

Emma concluded: "When at home together, we try not to talk about work, yet it does naturally come up in conversation at times.

"Every day is different at work, which is what I like most about it."

# CUSTOMER CHRISTINE PRESENTS ARTWORK HONOURING WAR HEROES TO WILFRED WOOD

The Wilfred Wood (Stockport) has been presented with artwork honouring local soldiers who lost their lives in World War I.

The pub, named after a soldier who won the Victoria Cross in the same war, now displays the donated artwork in a prominent position.

The artwork is based on a map of nearby Hazel Grove, by John Eaton, adapted by Wetherspoon's customers Christine Hallworth and her brother Stephen, who assisted Christine with her research.

She has added pictures of local soldiers who died during the war, together with colour-coding to illustrate exactly where they lived.

Christine said: "I knew that Hallworth was a name with strong associations to Hazel Grove and started to look into it and got more and more involved."

"I'm glad that the pub has accepted this gift, as it is named after Wilfred Wood."

Pub manager Rhys Arnold said: "As a pub named after a World War I VC winner, it was a pleasant surprise when Christine and Stephen presented us with this work. It now has pride of place inside the pub."



# FOOTBALL HERO BETS HIS SHIRT ON THE FULL HOUSE AT BIG EVENT

Children were offered the chance to win a football shirt signed by Watford FC striker Mileta Rajović at a family fun-day held by The Full House (Hemel Hempstead).

Rajović donated the shirt to be auctioned at the event. It was the one he wore on his debut in September 2023, when he scored two goals in a 3-3 draw away to Coventry City.

Children were entertained with a range of activities, including face-painting.

Adults enjoyed themselves too – with the opportunity to try beers from local Tring Brewery.

Sales rep Jared Ward-Brickett handed out small samples, while answering questions about the brewery and its beers.

Shift manager Sophie Wesley and colleagues contributed to the bake sale with homemade cakes and other treats.

Sophie said: "We asked local businesses to take part in this community event and are grateful to them, especially to Mileta Rajović and Watford FC, Tring Brewery and Jade Webb from Jade's Space, who did the face-painting."

The day raised £300 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pictured (back, left to right) are shift leaders Alicia Hart and Sam Dakaj, Jared Ward-Brickett (behind), bar associate Megan Wardle, shift manager Sophie Wesley, pub manager Sian Wardle, floor associate Honey Braund and shift manager Alex Baker. Front is face-painter Jade Webb (right), with some of the participating children.



## KEIGHLEY

# KEIGHLEY LIONS ROAR THEIR THANKS TO SOPHIE AND THE LIVERY ROOMS



The Keighley Lions Club has placed its gratitude on record with a letter of thanks to The Livery Rooms (Keighley).

The Lions, part of a nationwide charitable and volunteer network, asked the pub's manager, Sophie Turner, whether it could hang its large yellow-and-blue banner on the front of the pub.

Sophie was only too pleased to say 'yes' – and the banner is visible to motorists as they drive along North Street, the main route into Keighley.

The club's vice president, Roy Hallahan, wrote in The Lions' local newsletter: "Thanks to the pub's generosity, it is hoped the move will help to promote the club's great work and reach more people."

"We are grateful to The Livery Rooms for its support with our banner. Keighley Lions does great work in our town and it's important that we promote ourselves as much as possible."

"The banner is in a perfect location for anyone coming into the town or simply walking about."

Roy added: "We love popping down to The Livery Rooms for a pint after our meetings, going there frequently to have chats about our work."

"And bar associate Aasta Clark's grandfather, Alan Clark, is the club president."

The club's vice president, Roy Hallahan, is pictured (front right), with the pub's shift manager, Daisy Bennett, alongside him and members of The Keighley Lions Club.

● **Anyone wishing to get in touch with the group can find it on Facebook under Keighley Lions Club or visit its website: [www.keighleylions.org.uk](http://www.keighleylions.org.uk)**

## LEIGH

# DANNY AND DISCO BALLS SHINE AT BENT AND BONGS BEER BASH

Shift leader Danny Hartley (pictured) is used to serving pints across the bar at The Thomas Burke (Leigh).

He also volunteers, though, at the annual Bent and Bongs Beer Bash festival, in nearby Atherton, where the pub sponsors a barrel of beer.

This year, The Thomas Burke sponsored Disco Balls, a gluten-free IPA brewed in Derby by Shiny Brewery.

The pub pays for the barrel which is then sold, with profits going to a variety of local charities – since its launch in 1994, the festival has made £500,000 for charity.

In return for the sponsorship, the pub gets 10 free tickets to the event and its name on the barrel (pictured).

The festival attracts around 3,000 people over three days.

Danny said: "It's always good to get to Bent and Bongs Beer Bash festival – as well as ales, there is great food and music and I'm happy to help behind one of the bars."

Pub manager Rachael Evans said: "This is one of a range of things which the pub does to help to build contacts in the ale world locally."





# AREA MANAGER AMANDA IS INSPIRATIONAL ROLE MODEL



Wetherspoon's area manager, Amanda Dunn, is an inspirational role model to any student working as a part-time bar associate or contemplating applying for a job with the company.

In November 2023, Amanda completed her first year as an area manager.

In January this year, she celebrated 20 years with the company – and all before her 40th birthday in February.

As well as a successful Wetherspoon career, she has also raised a family, with two daughters now aged 15 and 12 years old.

Amanda said: "A career and family is no more than anyone else in life, but the past 20 years (half my life at Wetherspoon) has flown by – it certainly doesn't feel like 20 years."

Amanda was studying for a degree in sports and exercise at university in Sunderland, when, at the age of 19, she took on a part-time bar associate job at The William Jameson (Sunderland).

When she finished her studies, she joined the company full time and progressed to shift manager in four years at that pub.

Amanda transferred to The Lambton Worm (Sunderland) (now closed), where she worked for a further four years, taking over as pub manager for a year in 2011.

A 10-year tenure as pub manager at The Mile Castle (Newcastle) followed, before Amanda took on her current role.

She recalled: "The Mile Castle is a busy pub in a fantastic location, and I had great success there."

"In August 2022, I was asked to cover for an area manager who was off at the time; by November, the position became available and was advertised – and I was the successful applicant."

Amanda, responsible for 11 pubs in the northeast, explained: "It had always been in the back of my mind, as something I wanted to do, but the area managers in the northeast were long-serving employees, so it was hard to break in."

"When I got the chance to cover for a few months, it made me realise that I enjoyed it and it really felt like the next natural step for me."

"I do miss the staff and customer aspect of running a pub, but stepping out into this role feels right – and I am loving it."

She added: "The role has helped me to develop, as I see and deal with a lot every day."

"It is also very rewarding to see the success of others whom I, in turn, have helped to develop."

Amanda concluded: "The company has come a long way in the past 20 years and continues to improve. To see and be a part of that has been amazing."

"Wetherspoon is a very good company to work for."

"The staff are well looked after, as a first priority, and that adds to the value of any achievement."

"We are all striving to be better, with a happy work-life balance. It is hard work, but you get out of it what you put in. Everything is what you make it."

NEWTOWNARDS • BELFAST

## BURGERS GALORE AS GAME AND GIVEAWAY PLAYED AT PAIR OF PUBS



Two Northern Ireland pubs joined forces to distribute 300 burgers and hundreds of snacks to local homeless people.

Staff at The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards) and The Bridge House (Belfast) rose to the challenge, cooking and boxing up the burgers ready for collection by local charity workers.

More than 1,600 snacks were also ordered and given away, including crisps, peanuts and biscuits.

The burgers were all ordered on the Wetherspoon app by users of Facebook page 'Wetherspoons Game and Giveaway'.

All of the orders came through within a 45-minute period.

Shift manager Jordan Quail, who led the operation at The Bridge House, said: "There were 182 orders within the first 10 minutes.

"We had to work hard, but I had put a plan in place to get the burgers, buns and boxes ready.

"The team did brilliantly, as it was already a busy food-service period.

"When customers were made aware of what was happening, they ordered even more burgers at the tills, as they wanted to play their part."

The Spirit Merchant's shift manager, Maxine MacDonald, said: "It was a busy time, but we were well organised and had everything ready, with a conveyor-belt production-line system to enable us to cope with this level of orders."

Staff produced 100 burgers and sold 830 snacks in one hour.

Pictured (below) at The Bridge House is shift manager Jordan Quail handing over meals to Julie Kelly of local charity Team Haven (centre) and Roslynn Algie of Reaching Out.

Pictured (above) at The Spirit Merchant are kitchen associates Sam Rainey (left) and Matty Browne handing over hot meals to Megan Weimann of The Warehouse Newtownards and Aaron Beattie of Northdown Communityworks.



ILKLEY

# THE LISTER ARMS PUTS MILITARY VETERANS AT EASE



Veterans' leaders have presented pub manager Em Tetley and the team at The Lister Arms (Ilkley) with a plaque to honour the support which they have received in the past year.

A special breakfast was held to mark the group's first breakfast there in April 2023, attended by MPs John Lamont (a minister at The Scottish Office) and Robbie Moore, who represents Keighley and Ilkley.

The Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Clubs group has been holding monthly breakfasts there for a year now – and members wanted to show their thanks for the consideration they have been shown.

The brass plaque reads: 'With grateful thanks to the management and staff of The Lister Arms, Ilkley, for all their support to our veterans and club.'

Also attending were West Yorkshire Deputy Lieutenants Vicky Reynolds and Suzanne Watson.

Representing the veterans was Mark Sugrue, who founded the local group with Paul Wilson and Jason Sands.

Mark said: "The team at the pub has been exemplary – and we wanted to do something to show our appreciation.

"Em is an absolute star – all of the staff are."

Pub manager Em Tetley said: "It started really small, with just a few coming, but it's grown now – and the pub is a safe space for the veterans and a good social occasion.

"The team here has come to know them well and built up a rapport.

"They are a very lively and pleasant group to host."

Pictured (left to right) are West Yorkshire Deputy Lieutenant Vicky Reynolds, veterans Mark Sugrue and Jason Sands, pub manager Em Tetley and Deputy Lieutenant Suzanne Watson.

Also attending the event were Peter Barker, who co-established the first veterans' breakfast club 15 years ago.

LIVERPOOL

# CROCHET QUEEN ANGELA IS A REAL SUPERLOOPER

Angela Roddan, a customer at The Childwall Fiveways Hotel (Liverpool), crochets toys and clothes for a variety of local good causes, as well as raising funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Angela, a member of a local Knit and Natter group, has knitted hearts of varying colours, caterpillars, worms, Easter chicks and even St Patrick's Day leprechaun hats which the staff at the pub use to raise money for charity.

The crocheted items are placed on the bar for customers to choose for a donation – usually a minimum of £2.

But in addition to this, Angela sends her work to children at local hospitals, such as Alder Hey, and to mothers in maternity units caring for premature babies, as well as to Marie Curie hospice care.

Shift manager Emma O'Neill said: "Angela uses all of her own materials and asks for nothing in return, just that all of the money raised from the sale of her crocheted items go to our chosen charity.

"She's an angel."

Angela said: "The group loves to help as many people as possible – and, when I've got spare time, I would rather be making than doing nothing. I find it very therapeutic.

"I always say – if you can't do something nice, then don't do anything at all."



## HEMSWORTH

# SENIORS SOCIALISE AT BLUE BELL BREAKFAST



Senior citizens attend a monthly breakfast hosted by The Blue Bell (Hemsworth) and charity Age UK Wakefield District.

Some 10–15 people attend the events, many of whom live on their own and might not otherwise get out to socialise.

As well as meeting new people, experienced charity staff give a themed talk on subjects such as heating, how to avoid scams and how to claim benefits.

The pub is one of three in West Yorkshire hosting similar events under Age UK Wakefield District's Time4Tea programme – the other two being The Broken Bridge (Pontefract) and The Glass Blower (Castleford).

In February, The Blue Bell hosted a festive event for the group (as there wasn't a meeting over the Christmas period).

Pub manager Simon Barker said: "It started with just a handful of people attending, but word has spread and we are now getting more and more people.

"It's good to see people who live on their own and, in some cases, vulnerable getting together socially and receiving advice and help from the experts at Age UK."

Brenda Wardle, programme manager of the Time4Tea programme, added: "We wanted to expand these meetings beyond cafés and supermarkets, as they were not attracting enough males.

"So, we started looking at pubs – and Wetherspoon just fitted the bill straight away, offering free coffee refills, with food which is good value for money and they have the (importantly warm) space to fit us in.

"Simon and his team have been wonderful, and the fact that the events are attracting more people is a testament to their friendly service."

Simon Barker is pictured (left) with bar associate Charley Papworth alongside him and shift leader Emily Murkin (back left).

## ACCRINGTON

# HUNDREDS RAISED AT ACCRINGTON PUB FOR FAMILY OF 'ARSENAL ANDY'

Pub staff raffled hampers at The Commercial Hotel (Accrington) to raise money for the family of a regular customer known as Arsenal Andy, who passed away suddenly.

Hampers, including boxes of beer, chocolates and other goodies, were raffled, raising £551.26.

Andy, who enjoyed a pint of Guinness or Bud Light, was a keen supporter of Arsenal FC and the England national rugby league team.

Shift manager Becci Bairstow said: "Andy had been coming here regularly since the pub opened in 2011.

"He was very popular and was one of the best guys you could hope to meet."

She added: "We would like to mention special thanks to the team and customers for this amazing effort which helped the family in its time of need."



# BRIDPORT TABLE SKITTLES TEAM GETS IN THE SWING AT THE GREYHOUND



Table skittles team The Jesters has been playing at The Greyhound (Bridport) for 10 years.

Composed of customers, the team regularly enjoys success and recently won the Bridport Table Skittles League Cup.

Brenda Ackerman, league treasurer, was on hand to congratulate husband Keith, who is captain of The Jesters.

She said: "It's a lovely place to come and play on a Monday and it's good that the pub can play host."

"We do call ourselves the pub's team, as this is where we play our home matches."

Pub manager Nadine Lane said: "It's always lovely to see The Jesters, whose league has been going for 40 years. We are thrilled that the champions of that league play at The Greyhound."

"There aren't that many pubs where you see pub skittles being played these days, so we're happy to keep the tradition going."

Pictured is Brenda Ackerman by the skittles table, with The Jesters.

## BISHOP'S STORTFORD

# PICTURES OF THE PAST AT PORT JACKSON PARTY

The Port Jackson (Bishop's Stortford) held a community party to celebrate its 10th birthday.

Pub manager Amy Vernon had a special chocolate & cream cake made at Olyar Greek Bakehouse, which is next to the pub.

Customers brought in old photos of the town - which served as talking points during the event.

Amy said: "We wanted to involve the local community in some way and so we came up with the idea of asking people to bring in old photos of the town."

Pictures included one of former manager Nicole Cottage, in fancy dress, with her twin sister and current shift manager Danyell.

Another featured Amy and the cakes baked for the king's coronation, while another showed the pub on the day it opened in April 2014.

Several staff have worked at the pub since it opened, including team leader Anna Daniec, bar associate Tracy Vincent and bar shift leaders Natasha Walman and Rosheene Connolly-Canaii.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Tracy Vincent, pub manager Amy Vernon, bar shift leader Natasha Walman, bar associate Vanessa Jordan, kitchen associate Anna Gdaniec and bar shift leader Rosheene Connolly-Canaii.



## WAKEFIELD

# FORGOTTEN WOMEN OF WAKEFIELD NOT FORGOTTEN AS SIX CHIMNEYS REOPENS

Wetherspoon's £3-million refurbishment and expansion work at The Six Chimneys (Wakefield) saw the pub reopen in February.

As well as Wakefield's mayor, Cllr Josie Pritchard, officially reopening the pub, guests included local history group members – the Forgotten Women of Wakefield ([forgottenwomenwake.com](http://forgottenwomenwake.com)).

Pictured outside the new-look pub, dressed in historical costume, are (left to right) Jacqueline Milnes, Shanon Wishon and Sarah Cobham.

Wetherspoon's historian Robert Renak, who regularly collaborates with local groups for pub history projects, said: "We wanted to extend an invitation to the reopening event to the Forgotten Women of Wakefield."

"They made a considerable contribution to the local history artwork display at the pub, and we were keen to show our appreciation and thanks."

Among the women remembered and celebrated in the new artwork displays at The Six Chimneys are artist Louisa Fennell (1847–1930), teacher and botanical artist Eliza Eve Gleadall (1806–87) and professional singer Phyllis Lett (1883–1962).

Forgotten Women of Wakefield's co-founder, Sarah Cobham, said: "We are delighted to see the

artwork panels now on display at The Six Chimneys, including some new research and information which really tells the women's stories.

"There is nowhere else in the city with such a visual and visceral permanent collection.

"It is an incredible gift to the city and us.

"We thank Wetherspoon for this collaboration and hope that people come to see and learn about these women and, possibly, be surprised at Wakefield's cultural history."

The group, comprising around 20 volunteers, also organises guided heritage walks.

Sarah concluded: "The Six Chimneys will be the perfect finishing point for our Louisa Fennell walk, which honours the life and legacy of the artist in the city, incorporating buildings and views which she painted.

"With a whole alcove dedicated to her history, visitors can read her story while enjoying the pub's food and drinks."

There is a plaque in the pub with a full list of the people who, and organisations which, helped with The Six Chimneys' local history display.



## CAMBERWELL

# VAL MBE LAUDED AS LOCAL ROYALTY BY FOLK AT THE FOX

Staff and customers at The Fox on the Hill (Camberwell) paid tribute to customer Val Fenn, following her awarding of an MBE for services to the local community.

Val has campaigned tirelessly for the local area as chair of the mid-Elmington Tenants and Residents' Association.

She said: "I have been going to The Fox on the Hill for years and have been a Wetherspoon regular for 16 years.

"It was lovely to be made a fuss of by the pub's staff and customers for my MBE.

"To be honest, I thought that the phone call telling me of my MBE was a scam – and didn't believe a word of it.

"It was only when I received an official letter that I knew it to be true.

"It was a great honour to go to Buckingham Palace and receive my MBE from Anne, Princess Royal."

The pub's manager, Adrian Latkowski, said: "Val is a wonderful lady – and we are all proud to know her.

"Over the years, she has helped so many people with housing and other issues and simply never gives up. She thoroughly deserves her honour."

Val is pictured (centre) with her friend Gloria Hill (left) and pub team leader Katie Corne.





**Spa Lane Vaults (Chesterfield)** Shift manager Adele Wagstaff with regular customer Terry Kirk

# GORGEOUS BREWS FLOW ON ST GEORGE'S DAY

Customers raised a glass to the patron saint of England, St George, as they celebrated St George's Day.

Among the drinks on offer were Elgood's Patron Saint.

Customers also enjoyed Camden Hells, Worthington's Creamflow, Classic Pimm's, Carling and Bathtub Gin.

Wetherspoon's marketing executive, James Vaughan, said: "St George's Day is always a popular time in our pubs, with customers thoroughly enjoying themselves."



**The Blue Boar (Billericay)** Shift leader Emma Cresswell serves customer Harry Harris a pint of Elgood's Patron Saint



**The Wallace Hartley (Colne)** Customers Tricia Wood (left) and Rose Fort raise a glass on St George's Day



**The Boot Inn (Burnley)** Team leader Connor Birnie (left) serves customers James Smith and Sian Cook a drink to toast St George



**The Six Templars (Hertford)** Team leader Carol Venables (left) serves customers Brenda and Kenneth Dyer with Margaret and Brian Foster (back right)

## SUNAK DRAWS A CROWD AT THE QUEENS HOTEL



**Pictured (left to right) are Rother Valley MP Alexander Stafford, Rishi Sunak, Wetherspoon's area manager and worker director Hudson Simmons, shift manager Eleanor Hill and pub manager Beth Burns**

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak visited The Queens Hotel (Maltby).

Mr Sunak spent more than two hours at the pub, where he addressed local residents and Wetherspoon staff members, including those from the company's other pubs in the region, as well as giving several press interviews.

Also attending was Rother Valley MP Alexander Stafford, as well as Cllrs Adam Tinsley and Simon Ball.

Pub manager Beth Burns said: "We were delighted to host the prime minister in The Queens Hotel.

"As well as his speech, he also took part in a question-and-answer session.

"He was more than happy to speak to staff members and also have his photo taken with them.

"He mentioned that he had the Wetherspoon app on his phone and that he was a frequent visitor to Wetherspoon's pub in Richmond (The Ralph Fitz Randal), close to his constituency, where he takes his daughters for breakfast."

Area manager and worker director Hudson Simmons added:

"Following the visit, we were delighted to receive a signed letter from the prime minister addressed to Beth and me.

"The letter stated: "Thank you for inviting me to The Queens Hotel (Maltby) on my recent visit to South Yorkshire.



"It was fantastic to hear about the great work you are doing to support the community, drive charitable fundraising and reduce antisocial behaviour in the area.

"It was excellent to get the opportunity to meet some of your staff from the local area, and I was glad to take on their questions.

"I fully appreciate the amount of work that goes into my visits and please do pass on my thanks to all those involved in making it happen."

**This story was written before the general election.**

## PAT, 84, IS CLACTON CHARITY CHAMPION

Floor associate Pat Sewell has raised an estimated total of more than £40,000 for charity since she started working at Moon and Starfish (Clacton-on-Sea) in 1999.

Pat, 84, organises the Bonus Ball lottery game on a Monday night, in which customers pay £1 for a chance to win £30.

The event regularly raises £30 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Her fundraising total also includes an annual total of around £170 raised at Christmas, when Pat dons a traditional garter outfit while taking collection buckets around the pub.

Pat said: "I love to organise charity events.

"It's important to support people with cancer, and their families."

Pat, who worked as a silver-service waitress in the same building when it was The Royal Hotel, added: "I enjoy having a chat with customers – I know all of the regulars, of course, and everyone gets along great here.

"I don't want to retire. What would I do? Stare at the four walls all day – no.

"I've spoken to [Wetherspoon's founder and chairman] Tim Martin about it – and he is very supportive and a great guy to sit and have a chat with.

"So, as long as I can still do my job, I will."





LIVERPOOL

# BIG GAME IN LIVERPOOL FEEDS 300 PEOPLE



More than 300 meals were donated to homeless people in Liverpool, thanks to a charity initiative involving two Wetherspoon pubs and Facebook group Wetherspoons The Game.

The online group usually sees Wetherspoon's customers requesting drinks from strangers among its database. Recipients then do likewise for others.

On this occasion, however, group members were asked to donate a classic burger meal or a snack to help homeless people.

In the end, 334 meals were ordered in just 19 minutes via the Wetherspoon app and distributed from The North Western and The Lime Kiln in the city.

In addition, 5,200 snacks were ordered in just 18 minutes.

Pub manager Christian Greenlee described the logistical challenge faced at The North Western.

He said: "This was a joint effort, months in the planning. We worked closely with Chris Illman at Wetherspoons The Game and made sure that we had enough ingredients and snacks in stock for the day.

"We put on extra staff – and the day went brilliantly well."

A queue of 100 volunteers from seven local charities formed outside The North Western before the online ordering started. They then took the meals to recipients at nearby distribution points.

Chris Illman, who founded the Facebook group, said: "We are incredibly grateful to Christian and his team – they couldn't do enough for us. Christian even suggested that a proportion of the burgers should be vegan – something which we hadn't considered, yet were more than happy to agree to."

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Christian Greenlee, Wetherspoons The Game's moderator Nicola Raspin-Flower, its founder Chris Illman and team leader Ellie Morrissey.

COLWYN BAY

# PICTURE HOUSE TRIATHLETES DELIVER EPIC PERFORMANCE

Shift manager Harry Bennett organised a 'triathlon of events' for three charities at The Picture House (Colwyn Bay).

The events raised £1,875.

Staff took part in a half marathon, a 12-mile walk and a 106-mile cycle ride around the coast of Anglesey over three days to raise cash for Young Lives vs Cancer, St Kentigern's Hospice and maritime safety charity Coastwatch. All three charities have permanent collection boxes on the pub's bar.

Harry said: "It went really well and, thankfully, the weather was kind to us. It was an ambitious project and our first go at it, but we are now thinking of making it an annual fixture on the calendar."

The outstanding effort of the weekend was accomplished by shift leader James Simpson,

who cycled alone along Anglesey's coast.

"It took him nine and a half hours," said Harry, adding, "incredible effort."

Kitchen associate Gareth Slater took part in the half marathon with Harry, who also did the 12-mile walk two days later, this time accompanied by kitchen associate Rhys Bailey and bar associate at The Palladium (Llandudno) Daniel Chapman.

Wetherspoon's staff, regular customers and members of Coastwatch are pictured at The Picture House (Colwyn Bay) at the sponsored walk, including (front row, left to right) William Holliday (charity organiser for St Kentigern's Hospice), kitchen associate Rhys Bailey and shift manager Harry Bennett.



## BIDDULPH

# SHIFT LEADER'S BOOK CLUB BRINGS BIBLIOPHILES TO THE BRADLEY GREEN

During May 2024, shift leader Christine Keen celebrated one year's work with Wetherspoon.

With previous experience in customer care, Christine joined the team at The Bradley Green (Biddulph) as a bar associate and has quickly progressed to gain promotion.

Also studying a level 2 hospitality apprenticeship, Christine has set up a book club in her own time, as part of her course work project.

Christine, 45, said: "I've always loved to read and didn't have anyone to talk to about books or reading.

"When the opportunity came up to organise an event at the pub, I sent a message on a local social media group just to see whether anyone might be interested.

"To my surprise, the group has really taken off, with some members not previously customers at the pub."

Held at The Bradley Green on the first Monday of every month (unless a bank holiday, when the group moves to the second Monday), the group has attracted a dozen or more avid readers.

A monthly book raffle, the day after each book club event, also raises funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Christine added: "We have also had a couple of authors come to the group meeting to talk about their new books, as well as how they started writing, which has really made for interesting sessions.



"We have read and reviewed the books too – and I've also ensured that the local library has received a copy, as it is also really on board with the book group."

Christine concluded: "The whole project has been an amazing success, attracting new customers and really bringing the community together – everyone seems grateful for it."

## SITTINGBOURNE

# MILITARY VETERANS ANSWER CALL AT THE GOLDEN HOPE



A special event for armed services veterans was held at The Golden Hope (Sittingbourne).

Veterans have been meeting monthly at the pub for five years, where Samuel Coomber has been manager since March 2024.

Samuel joined forces with Armed Forces & Veterans' Breakfast Clubs organiser Stewart Kitching to put on a special breakfast event, designed to promote awareness of the group and the pub's support for it.

Upwards of 50 people came to mark the occasion.

The veterans meet at the Kent pub on the fourth Saturday of each month, from 10am.

Some of them bring their families, and Stewart's wife Janet and daughter Stephanie often accompany him.

Samuel said: "Some of the veterans have started coming to the pub outside of the monthly meetings – and our staff know them well.

"We were happy to put on the event and have designed some point-of-sale material to promote the group for the future, with the aim of attracting new additions."

Stewart added: "Samuel was very helpful as he and his team always are.

"We have built an excellent rapport with them and are grateful for the service which they provide and the use of the regular space."

Pub manager Samuel Coomber is pictured (far right) with Stewart Kitching (to his immediate left). Stewart's wife Janet and daughter Stephanie stand third and fourth from the left.

**BRIGHTON**

# BRIGHT CONCLUSION TO JEZ'S 40-MILE WALK TO BRIGHTON

A man who walked 40 miles to honour the firefighting community which saved him ended his journey at The Bright Helm (Brighton).

Surrey Fire Service's catering contractor Jeremy 'Jez' Dutfield and a dozen firefighters walked from Purley, in Surrey, to the pub, raising more than £7,000 for the Fire Fighters Charity.

Firefighters contacted Jez after a horrendous period in his life, during which his brother Nick took his own life and parents Cherry and Dave passed away in the months following.

He was then diagnosed with cancer.

"I was lost," said Jez, "I was in a really bad place, but friends at Surrey Fire and Rescue picked me up.

"The Fire Fighters Charity has been absolutely brilliantly helpful as well. It scooped me up off the floor and got me well again."

He added: "The walk was to thank the charity, to recognise the help which it gave me and to raise awareness of suicide prevention.

"I really want to stress that there is always someone to talk to, always someone who can help. I wish my brother had."

When researching a possible finishing point for his walk, Jez called The Bright Helm and discovered that an old friend, Ross Markwick, was the pub manager.

"We met when I was working at The Jack Fairman," said Ross. "Jez was a customer and we became friends. When he called The Bright Helm, he didn't know that I was working there."

Ross told area manager Becky Dunkley of the event and she laid on complimentary food, soft drinks and tea and coffee for the walkers, in a cordoned area upstairs at the pub.

He added: "They all seemed in great shape, despite walking from Purley - Jez even ran the last stretch up the road to the pub."

Jeremy 'Jez' Dutfield is pictured on the second step from the bottom, on the left, with fellow walkers.

● If you'd like to donate to Jez's cause: [tinyurl.com/3dhrm3s8](https://tinyurl.com/3dhrm3s8)



**RUNCORN**

# VETERANS BOWL UP FOR MONTHLY BREAKFAST AT THE FERRY BOAT

A group of military veterans has started meeting for breakfast once a month at The Ferry Boat (Runcorn).

The social meetings started after Kevin Walsh of Halton Veterans' Legion asked pub manager Emma Ford about the idea.

Kevin said: "Emma was brilliant - she couldn't have done more to help."

Since then, Emma has gone on maternity leave, with the pub now run by Dave Grabaskey.

Dave said: "The group attracts about 20 people. They come in for breakfast and a chat, with some staying on afterwards."

Kevin added: "Apart from the social aspect of the meetings, our group helps with issues such as mental health, homelessness and subsidised food."

● The meetings begin at 10am on the last Saturday each month. The group can be found on Facebook and at: [www.haltonvl.com](http://www.haltonvl.com)



## CINEMA FAN'S NEW BOOK PEEKS BEHIND CURTAIN AT THE REGAL



Cinema duty manager turned author Ross Campbell has written a book about the history of a former cinema, now home to a Wetherspoon pub – The Regal (Gloucester).

The pub was the obvious venue for his book launch of Regal, Gloucester 'Now & Forever' Vol.1.

Ross Campbell is pictured (centre), with his wife Lorraine and The Regal's shift manager Brian Davies, outside the pub.

The Regal's construction began in late 1939, with rebuilding then starting in mid 1955, with its opening in 1956.

Ross, currently duty manager at the Sherborne Cinema, in Gloucester, said: "I started the book back in 2015, but lockdown helped to spur me on – I then secured a publisher and so here I am with my first-ever book.

"I have always loved cinema and was an avid 'project' writer, when at school.

"Now, my fascination with cinema, and cinemas themselves, have all come together in book form."

The book, in a diary format, covers from the late 1920s to the end of 1962, month by month, year by year.

It tells the story of what happened at the ABC Regal from opening on Monday 19 March 1956, with the film *Now and Forever*.

The book also covers a variety of other local topics, including the Gloucester Carnival, visits by stars to the city and other entertainment-linked curiosities of the day.

Ross added: "Long before the building became a Wetherspoon pub, many live acts performed here, including the opening act baritone singing star David Whitfield.

"Apart from pantomimes, speech days and special screenings, others to perform on The Regal's stage were Tommy Steele, Norman Wisdom and Ruby Murray."

Ross concluded: "The book would not have become reality without the help of many.

"My thanks go to Gloucestershire Archives, Gloucester Operatic and Dramatic Society – sponsors – and Reach plc for allowing me to delve into its archive and give the necessary permissions."

● **Regal, Gloucester 'Now & Forever' Vol.1. is available to buy, priced £16.95, at: [gfh.org.uk/product/regal-gloucester/](https://gfh.org.uk/product/regal-gloucester/)**

● **Coming soon! Regal, Now & Forever – Vol.2: 1963 till today**

## BALLOONS OUT FOR BOBBING BIRTHDAY

Staff gathered to celebrate as The Bobbing John (Alloa) marked its 10th birthday.

Party hats and balloons were the order of the day as colleagues tucked in to a birthday cake slice.

Cleaner Gemma King has worked at the pub since it opened in March 2014.

Pub manager Sarah Murdoch said: "It was lovely to mark the milestone and also to salute Gemma who has played an important part in the success of the pub since its opening day."

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Danielle Murphy, bar associate Alyssa Shand, pub manager Sarah Murdoch, bar associate Charlie Ross, cleaner Gemma King and kitchen team leader Helen Green.





**The Packet Station (Falmouth)** Shift manager Rebecca Chin-Quee serves customer Carol Bassett a glass of Cornish Tarquin gin

# CELEBRATING CORNWALL

**C**ustomers at Wetherspoon's 10 pubs in Cornwall celebrated St Piran's Day (Gool Peran).

Among the Cornish products available were Tarquin's Cornish gin and Rattler Cornish cider.

Wetherspoon's general manager, Cornwall, Steve Edge, said: "Customers enjoyed celebrating the national day of Cornwall in the pubs."



**The Green Parrot (Perranporth)** Bar associate Braden Webster serves a pint of Tintagel Brewery ale to customer Roger Heys



**The King Doniert (Liskeard)** Customer Craig Hamson is served a pint of Cornish Doom Bar beer by shift manager Courtney Jade Smith



**The Coinage Hall (Helston)** Shift manager Grace Edwards serves Tarquin's Cornish gin to customers Jeremy Owen and Shane Eddy (right)



**The Towan Blystra (Newquay)** Customers Wendy Searle (far left) and Stephen Gill (far right) are served Cornish cider by bar associates William Hanlan (second left) and Christopher Connolly



**The Hain Line (St Ives)** Customers Mrs and Mr Pacey are served by shift manager Andy Trembath

# SALT COT DARTS TEAM IS SEASONED WINNER, AFTER PEPPERING TREBLE 20



The Salt Cot (Saltcoats) The winning team

**W**etherspoon collectively raised almost **£200,000** in the company's annual charity staff darts tournament.

The team from The Salt Cot (Saltcoats) was crowned the winner, beating The First Post (Cosham) in the competition's final to lift the 2024 Young Lives vs Cancer darts trophy.

This year's competition, which was first set up in 2012, began with an initial 366 teams from pubs across the UK and Ireland competing in the first-round matches.

Sixty teams then progressed through to the regional finals, with tournament matches subsequently held across 12 venues, including The Mile Castle (Newcastle), The Velvet Coaster (Blackpool), Keavan's Port (Dublin) and The Gate Clock (Greenwich).

Nine of the top teams travelled to The Trent Bridge Inn (West Bridgford, Nottingham) to take part in the competition's knock-out-style final.

All pub teams worked hard to fundraise for their place in the tournament over three months. (The pub teams in Ireland raised funds for LauraLynn.)

Together, the 366 host pubs and competitors raised £198,284.50, which will help Young Lives vs Cancer to continue to be there for children, young people and their families.

Alex O'Connell, partnership fundraiser at Young Lives vs Cancer, said: "We love to see the pub teams coming together to raise such an incredible amount for children and young people with cancer.

"A very special thankyou to the customers and colleagues who continue to support Young Lives vs Cancer."

Wetherspoon's general manager and one of the event's organisers, Richard Marriner, added: "We have been holding this annual tournament for several years and it continues to be very popular with the teams.

"Darts is becoming more popular, with the standard as high as ever again this year.

"A big thankyou to all the host pubs and the teams who took part, and also for raising an incredible amount for this brilliant charity."



The First Post (Cosham) Runners-up



All of the 2024 tournament finalists



**The Royal Oak (Dorchester)** Customers Katie Demett (left) and Sinead Byrne are served by shift managers Tiffany Eccles and Rae Scott (right)

# IN-CIDER TRADING

**A** selection of up to 15 craft ciders from producers across the southwest region and beyond was available at 70 Wetherspoon pubs.

The festival line-up included Moonshine Rum & Raisin (Broadoak Cider), Chilli Ginger (Cockeyed Cider), Muddy Scamp (Purbeck Cider), Vintage (Rich's Cider) and Perrylicious (Weymouth Cider).

Wetherspoon's senior marketing manager, Rich Cripps, said: "The festival was a celebration of craft cider."

"It offered customers the opportunity to not only enjoy a selection of craft ciders not usually available in the pubs, but at the same time support the cider producers."



**The Commercial Rooms (Bristol)** Shift leader El Trickey serves customer Max Lynch



**The Bell Hanger (Chipstow)** Duty manager Jon Geister



**The Richard Hopkins (Newton Abbot)** Shift leader Noah Harris



**The Savoy (Swindon)** Customers Lori O'Sullivan, Vikki Edwards and Leo Edwards Davids (left to right) toast the festival



# COLOURFUL CHARACTER BRIGHTENS THE DAY AT HUNDREDS OF PUBS

'Colourful Mick' Horan has visited 329 Wetherspoon pubs – frequently wearing his range of vibrant and flamboyant clothing.

Mick, whose local pub is The Glass Blower (Castleford), has been to pubs in all four UK nations, as well as all the furthest corners of England.

It was in The Glass Blower that he earned his nickname, as he almost always arrives in brightly coloured hats, jackets and T-shirts.

Mick is often accompanied on his Wetherspoon visits by his wife Angela (both pictured).

She regularly books coach holidays on which they tick off Wetherspoon hotels and pubs.

Angela said: "Until about 10 years ago, Mick used to dress in drab grey, blacks and whites, then he suddenly changed and has worn vibrant colours ever since."

Mick's 300th pub visit was The Dee Hotel (West Kirby) during a trip to Liverpool, where he and Angela visited 13 Wetherspoon pubs.

Their favourite pubs include The Palladium (Llandudno) and The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury).

The Glass Blower's manager, Sarah Heppinstall, added: "Mick is well known to customers and staff at the pub.



"He wears the brightest clothes on his visits and is easy to spot.

"We wish him well on his future travels to Wetherspoon pubs."

# CHOKING DINER SAVED IN THE NICK OF TIME



Shift manager Nick Semple acted swiftly and professionally when a customer was choking during a meal at The Plough & Harrow (Hammersmith).

Bar associate Angel Banks alerted Nick via the staff radio network, who dropped everything and rushed to help the customer.

Nick successfully performed abdominal thrusts (sometimes known as the Heimlich manoeuvre) on the customer.

Nick said: "I was taught the Heimlich manoeuvre during an in-house training course.

"I am thankful that I was able to perform it on the customer and that he was fine.

"In fact, he carried on with his meal and left the pub an hour later, after I had been to check on him.

"It just goes to show the value of first aid courses."

When news of Nick's calmness under pressure reached head office, colleagues were so impressed that they awarded him a 'certificate of commendation'.

Pictured (left to right) are shift leader Anna Rebisz-Kwaitkowska, shift manager Nick Semple, area manager James Cobley and bar associate Matthew Kurland.

## FRUITFUL PUB VISIT FOR MR PINEAPPLE

When author Steve Mathieu (aka Mr Pineapple) travelled to London from Canada earlier this year, there was an obvious destination on his to-visit list.

Montreal-based Steve, author of The Pineapple Theory book series (thepineappletheory.ca), planned a Wetherspoon lunch at The Red Lion & Pineapple (Acton), during his time in the capital.

Steve (pictured) said: "I was visiting for The London Book Fair and to capture missing pieces for my next book.

"The publication will untangle the history of the pineapple and will be a travel book for pineapple places to visit around the world, as well as a recipe book, with health benefits research.

"My visit to The Red Lion & Pineapple will be included in the book, along with my experience and photos.

"It was great to visit the pub and learn more about the history of the area, as well as the reason for the pub's name."

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in December 1993, took its name from two older pubs in the vicinity.



## CHLOE'S BAKE SALE TAKES THE BISCUIT

Parsons' Barn (Shoeburyness) celebrated its 10th birthday with a charity fundraising day.

The event was organised by bar shift leader Chloe Smith and fellow events team colleagues Anita Riches, Maddie Govier, Molly Govier and Kiya Wilson.

It featured a charity bake sale and a birthday cake charity raffle, raising £400 for the pub's chosen charity – Young Lives vs Cancer.

The birthday week coincided with schools' half-term holiday – and the pub hosted events for children, including games, face-painting and kids' crafts.

Pub manager Dan Simpson, who has worked at the pub since June 2019 and managed it since April 2023, said: "We were thrilled to mark our milestone birthday with a host of events which customers enjoyed.

"Our thanks to our events team for all of their hard work."



**Pictured (back row, left to right):** Kitchen shift leader Molly Govier, bar associate Kieran Loe, bar shift leader Dawn Robertshaw, bar associate Hilary Buckland, bar shift leader Chloe Smith  
**Front:** Bar team leader Ash Jones-Barry and bar associate Billy Clark

## WHOLE LOTTA HULATS AS LEEDS PUB PAIR CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

Managers Graham and Maria Church led the celebrations as they marked the 25th anniversary of their pub The Three Hulats (Chapel Allerton, Leeds).

The couple has worked at the pub since November 1999.

They invited former members to join customers for the occasion, including Loreena Gumbs, who worked as a bar associate at the pub (1999–2001).

Graham said: "We have enjoyed several anniversaries over the years – and this is certainly one of the special ones.

"The pub's anniversary coincided with St Patrick's Day, so the atmosphere in the pub was fantastic.

"We had a special cake made, with icing in the shape of balloons, which the staff enjoyed."

Pictured (left to right) are customers Iain Gilbert and Rod Morris, managers Maria and Graham Church, former colleagues Loreena Gumbs and Ryan Scott, shift manager Olivia Atherton with baby Max.



## MATTY'S NATTY NEW LOOK SENDS £500 TO BREAST CANCER UK

When Matty Brown discovered that his grandmother had breast cancer, he decided to raise money to help her and others with the same condition.

Matty, a bar associate at The Company Row (Consett), had his head shaved for Breast Cancer UK, raising £500.

One of the pub's customers, John Geoghegan (brother of Wetherspoon's operations director Martin Geoghegan), stepped up to chop off Matty's lengthy locks as his friends and relatives looked on.

Matty said: "A lot of people, including my family, turned up to support me and watch the event."

"I didn't think we'd raise that much."

Pub manager Shelley Hobbs said: "Matty had a lot of support – and we are grateful to everyone who contributed."



## PUB FAN ELLIE FINDS A FELLOW TRAVELLER



Ellie Clark has visited more than 200 Wetherspoon pubs since 2017, many with boyfriend Tom Stokes.

She began her Wetherspoon odyssey at The Three John Scotts in her home city of Hull.

The pair have since moved to Hampshire, yet regularly visit friends and relatives in Humberside.

Tom said: "We pick a Wetherspoon pub along the way to visit each time."

Early on, Ellie started to compile a list of pubs she has ticked off.

Ellie and Tom have visited 69 of them together.

The list includes pubs in Scotland, Yorkshire, the northeast, northwest and Kent.

Their favourite is Opera House (Tunbridge Wells) because of the architecture and design.

## LEGENDARY STRIKER HITS THE BAR AT THE NORTH WESTERN

Liverpool and England forward Robbie Fowler popped in to The North Western (Liverpool Lime Street) for a drink and a bite to eat – and signed an autograph for shift leader Cath Meadows.

The Liverpool legend scored 128 goals in 266 appearances for the club, as well as seven goals in 26 appearances for England.

Fellow shift leader Marcus Louch (pictured with Cath and Robbie) served the former footballer.

He said: "Cath quietly asked him whether he'd mind giving an autograph for her dad – and he was only too happy to do so."

"He also had his photo taken with us."



## TAEKWONDO STAR AIDEN PULLS PINTS, BUT NOT PUNCHES



When bar associate Aiden Morton finishes his shift at The Paddle Steamer (Largs), he regularly swaps his uniform for his taekwondo outfit (or 'dobok').

Aiden, 18, represents Scotland in taekwondo and has won numerous medals, including four golds at the 2023 European Championships in Northern Ireland.

He also earned a bronze at the Madrid European Championship.

Aiden said: "I started taekwondo when I was nine. My mum signed me up and I really took to it and later realised that I was pretty good at it."

He began his Wetherspoon career as a floor associate aged 16, becoming a bar associate after he reached the age of 18.

Aiden said: "My colleagues support me – which is great.

"After returning to the pub from tournaments, I am always asked how I did.

"And my manager Ryan is always very accommodating when it comes to needing time off to compete."

Pub manager Ryan Gallacher added: "Aiden has achieved great success at a young age.

"Everyone at the pub is very proud of him."

## AN EXTRA-SPECIAL EXPEDITION AS BEERS CROSS THE PENNINES

Beers from a brewer which brews exclusive beers for Wetherspoon's pubs were showcased at The Spinning Mule (Bolton).

Huddersfield brewer Lord's Brewing Co sent sales representative Gavin Kieran to speak about the ales at a meeting chaired by shift leader and real-ale champion Chelsea Hulme.

The event coincided with a gathering of Bolton's Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch, with members keen to listen to what Gavin had to say.

Pub manager Simon Long said: "Because the ales come from the other side of the Pennines and are available only in Wetherspoon's pubs, CAMRA members and customers were very interested in them."

Samples of Lord's ales Extra Special Bitter, Expedition Blonde and Stout were available to try.

Simon added: "The Extra Special Bitter was extremely popular."

Chelsea said: "The night was a massive success and a huge thankyou to everyone who came along to support the event."

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Simon Long, Lord's Gavin Kieran, shift leader and real-ale champion Chelsea Hulme and CAMRA Bolton's newsletter editor Jez Wadd.





**The Bank Statement (Swansea)** Shift manager Frankie Kelly with a selection from Au Vodka

## IMBIBE WITH ME: ST DAVID'S DAY CELEBRATED WITH WELSH DRINKS

**C**ustomers at pubs in Wales celebrated St David's Day with a selection of Welsh drinks.

The drinks on offer were Calon Lân (Purple Moose Brewery), Brecon Special Reserve gin, Penderyn whisky and Au Vodka blue raspberry.

Wetherspoon's regional manager, Wales, Steve Edge, said: "St David's Day proved very popular in the pubs.

"It was the perfect opportunity to showcase some excellent drinks produced in Wales."



**The Lord Caradoc (Port Talbot)** Shift manager Tia Dowding serves a pint to customers Chris Wheeler (left) and Alan Owen



**The Palladium (Llandudno)** Shift leader Judith Stone and customer Andy Monk, in Welsh costume, celebrate the occasion



**The Red Lion Inn (Morrison)** Shift leader Natasha Greenall, in national dress, with customers Alistair and Carol Power



**The Sussex (Rhyl)** Shift leader Jordan Park (right) serves customers Steven Boyd and Debbie Barlow

## The Jolie Brise (Teignmouth)



Well done folks!  
**£900**  
...raised for our chosen charity.

Duty manager Lucy Routledge of The Jolie Brise (Teignmouth) led a team of three on a tough half-marathon along the challenging terrain of Devon's South West Coast Path.

Lucy, team leader Ash Houlahan (pictured centre) and Lucy's brother Jamie walked and ran the scenic 13.3-mile Total Coastal event from Preston (near Paignton) back to Shaldon (near Teignmouth).

She said: "It's a difficult event – and we mainly walked it, so that we could all stick together."

The trio took 5 hours 30 minutes to complete the half marathon, raising £900 through customer donations and online contributions.

Lucy added: "We are grateful to everyone who supported us."

## The Wrong 'Un and The Furze Wren (both in Bexleyheath) The New Cross Turnpike (Welling) The Tailor's Chalk (Sidcup)



Well done folks!  
**£1,069**  
...raised for our chosen charity.

Wetherspoon's pubs in Bexley teamed up with their local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch members to raise more than £1,000 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The Wrong 'Un and The Furze Wren (both in Bexleyheath), The New Cross Turnpike (Welling) and The Tailor's Chalk (Sidcup) all supported the Bexley CAMRA Beer Festival 2024.

Wetherspoon's area manager, Lauren De Souza, explained: "The Bexley pubs sponsored the annual Bexley CAMRA event.

"As part of the sponsorship, they agreed to have Young Lives vs Cancer as their festival charity, raising more than £1,000."

Bexley CAMRA Beer Festival organiser Andy Wheeler added: "Thank you to Wetherspoon for sponsoring the T-shirts this year – the beer festival was very successful.

"As promised, we collected funds for Wetherspoon's company charity Young Lives vs Cancer and raised £1,069.20."

## The Iron Duke (Wellington)

A four-strong squad from The Iron Duke (Wellington) tackled a 5k obstacle course to raise £235.

The challenge saw the team run among, clamber over and crawl through numerous inflatable impediments at Westpoint indoor arena, in Exeter.

"It was tough – none of us is really a runner," said shift leader Kirsty Allen.

She was joined by fellow shift leader Leona Jolly and bar associates Matthew Chandler and Ana-Maria Anghel, all wearing their Young Lives vs Cancer vests.

Well done folks!  
**£235**  
...raised for our chosen charity.

## The John Francis Basset (Camborne)



Well done folks!  
**£587**  
...raised for our chosen charity.

Skydiver Sharleen Devey said that her "heart dropped" with fear as she looked out of an aeroplane before her first-ever charity parachute jump.

But team leader Sharleen, 19, who works at The John Francis Basset (Camborne), made the leap of faith at 10,000ft and, after she landed, wanted to do it all over again.

She said: "I should just have obeyed the instructor, who had told me not to look down, but I couldn't help it.

"It was amazing – I could see all of Cornwall."

The jump was made from Skyline Cornwall's Perranporth base – and Sharleen (known as Shar) raised £587.60.

## The Edwin Waugh (Heywood)



Well done folks!  
**£305**  
...raised for our chosen charity.

Dani Jones (pictured) completed the Paris marathon to raise funds for her six-year-old daughter's football team, as well as for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Dani, shift manager at The Edwin Waugh (Heywood) completed the marathon in 6 hours 19 minutes, raising £610.

The money was split evenly between Young Lives vs Cancer and Heywood's St James under-7s girls' football team.

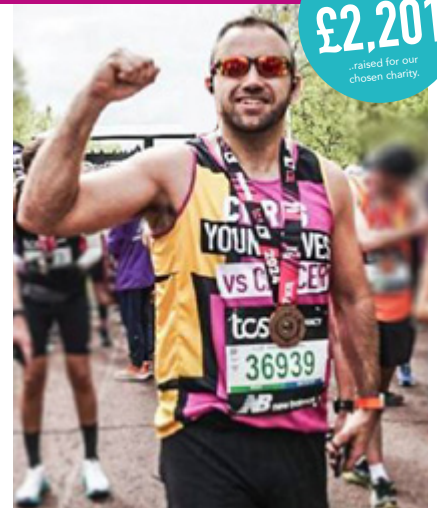
Daughter Maisie J plays for the team, while husband Ross is the coach.

Dani said: "It's great that the club has set up a girls' team. Maisie J loves to play."

## The Coliseum (Abergavenny)

The pub manager at The Coliseum (Abergavenny), Chris Went, completed the TCS London Marathon 2024, his first-ever marathon, clocking up an impressive 3:52:47 finish.

Chris (pictured), who is hoping for a place again next year, in support of Young Lives vs Cancer, said: "I also raised £2,201 for this amazing charity."



Well done folks!  
**£2,201**  
...raised for our chosen charity.

# AMAZING 275-MILE CYCLE RIDE TO AMSTERDAM RAISES £65,000



**T**wo dozen fundraisers took part in a four-day challenge called Sam's to the Dam, collectively raising an incredible £65,000.

The 275-mile cycling fundraiser, which started at Sam's House in Bristol and ended four days later at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, included 10 Wetherspoon staff members and 14 other fundraising champions.

The team set off from Sam's House in Bristol, one of Young Lives vs Cancer's 10 Homes from Home across the UK.

The Wetherspoon employees were area managers Lee Gregory, Robert Tokarski and Steve Meeke, auditor Chris Ward, pub managers Sam Cross (The Union Rooms, Plymouth) and Clare Myring (The Glass House, Norwich), with other staff members Hannah Wilkinson and Leon Pang (both from The Lime Kiln, Liverpool), Ashley Clayton (Ritz, Lincoln) and Peter Bramall (The Flying Boat, Dartford).

They travelled via Oxford, the Chiltern Hills and Stansted, through Essex to Harwich, where pub manager Dagan Bolton and regional manager Richard Marriner hosted refreshments at The Bottle Kiln (Harwich), before boarding the overnight ferry to Hook of Holland.

Sam Hughes-Smith, partnership manager at Young Lives vs Cancer, joined the team and took on the challenge herself.

She said: "The whole group of cyclists taking on the challenge really pushed themselves with their fundraising and cycling. It was a tough, but really rewarding, week.

"We are so grateful to the Wetherspoon employees for getting stuck in to our challenge events and for all of their continued support over 22 years.

"This £65,000 will make a huge difference to children and young people with cancer.

"We would like to thank, especially, the 10 Wetherspoon employees who took on this Sam's to the Dam event."



Well done folks!  
**£65,000**  
...raised for our chosen charity.

## The Queens Hotel (Maltby)



Well done folks!  
**£751**  
...raised for our chosen charity.

A wall of Easter eggs and other goodies was raffled at The Queens Hotel (Maltby), raising £751.

The confectionery wall contained almost 60 items donated by staff and customers.

It was the second successive year that manager Beth Burns and her team have conducted an Easter raffle of this kind.

Beth said: "We raised more money this year than last – and we'll be doing it again next year. We are grateful to everyone who donated eggs and other chocolates."

As well as the raffle, the pub hosted a children's Easter bonnet competition and put on arts and craft activities.

Beth is pictured (right) with shift manager Sophie Wilcox.

## The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats, Sheffield)



Well done folks!  
**£211**  
...raised for our chosen charity.

Youngsters Millie Martin and Corson Brown (pictured) ran a bake sale at The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats, Sheffield)

Millie (9) is the daughter of shift manager Hayley Martin, while Corson is the 11-year-old son of pub manager Rick Brown.

The friends were supervised at all times, but given free rein to offer cakes to customers.

Rick said: "Millie and Corson ran the bake sale brilliantly and did a great job, raising £211."

## The Elihu Yale (Wrexham)



Well done folks!  
**£500**  
...raised for our chosen charity.

When bar associate Calan Jones asked her shift leader Sarah Griffiths (pictured left to right) to sponsor her charity sponsored cold swim, Sarah gave her the best reply.

"I said I can do better than that, I'll do it with you."

Soon afterwards, the pair set off from The Elihu Yale (Wrexham) to Prestatyn Beach, accompanied by bar associate and door supervisor Lewis Mitchell.

The three colleagues spent an hour in the evening in the cold North Sea before heading home.

"It was freezing, but, after a while, you get used to it and it's actually really enjoyable," said Sarah, a former poolside lifeguard.

"It's called plunging," Sarah added. "It's really good for you."

Between them, thanks to generous sponsorship from friends, family and customers, they raised £500.

## The William Adams (Gorleston-on-Sea)



Well done folks!  
**£800**  
...raised for our chosen charity.

Regular customer Ian Grant braved the shave to lose his long locks, all in the name of charity.

Ian, 70, a regular at The William Adams (Gorleston-on-Sea), collected £620 in the fundraising event at the pub, as well as £180 with online donations, totalling £800 for the company's charity.

Pub manager Dan Bullion said: "A huge thankyou to Ian for his brave fundraising efforts and to everyone who supported his great charity cause so generously and enthusiastically."

Ian is pictured before and after the charity scissors were snipped by Marley, from Colby's Hair & Beauty Lounge, Gorleston-on-Sea.





**The Queens Arms (Winsford)**

Well done folks!  
**£700**  
...raised for our  
chosen charity.

Shift leader Charlotte Maidment had her hair shaved, raising £700 for charity.

The event, called Brave The Shave, did not take place in The Queens Arms (Winsford), but was live-streamed there by video link, so that colleagues and customers could watch.

Pub manager Ben Burgess said: "We are very proud of Charlotte, and are delighted that she was able to raise so much money."

**The Iron Duke (Wellington)**

Jewellery and crocheted items made by bar associates Ana-Maria Anghel (pictured) and Teigan Regan helped to raise £496 in a sale and raffle at The Iron Duke (Wellington).

Ana-Maria makes her own jewellery and donated bracelets and necklaces, with Teigan donating crocheted Easter chicks, bookmarks and hair scrunchies.

Boosting the fundraising total were a raffle for a confectionary hamper and a competition to guess the number of mini eggs in the jar, as well as a bake sale.

Shift leader Kirsty Allen said: "Ana-Maria and Teigan are very talented – and we are delighted that they used their skills to raise so much money for our chosen charity.

"We are extremely grateful for the customers' generosity."



Well done folks!  
**£496**  
...raised for our  
chosen charity.

**The John Fairweather (Cambuslang)**

Well done folks!  
**£330**  
...raised for our  
chosen charity.

Shift manager Shannon Stokes made Easter cupcakes for sale at The John Fairweather (Cambuslang).

Bar associate Shannon McQueen, deputy manager Scott Nobes and fellow bar associate Samantha McQueen (pictured left to right) sold the cupcakes to customers, raising £330.

**The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats, Sheffield)**

Well done folks!  
**£850**  
...raised for our  
chosen charity.

Rugby forward Jake Dunn isn't used to running very far – but the shift leader at The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats, Sheffield) completed a half marathon to raise £850.

Jake, 21, used to play flanker for Leicester Tigers' junior sides.

He said: "I'm not sure that I've run more than 10 yards in a game without falling over, so I thought the half marathon would be a good challenge."

Jake completed the 13-mile Sheffield Run For All event in just over two and a half hours.

He added: "I feel great to have raised so much money. Thanks to colleagues and customers for supporting me."

Pub manager Rick Brown said: "This was a great effort by Jake – and we're all proud of him."

**The Swan & Angel (St Ives)**

Well done folks!  
**£325**  
...raised for our  
chosen charity.

An 11-hour static cycle ride at The Swan & Angel (St Ives) raised £325.25.

Staff took it in turn to ride the bike as collection buckets were passed around customers.

The ride covered the equivalent of 150 miles, with the 11 hours representing the 11 Homes from Home funded by Young Lives vs Cancer.

Shift manager Jess Lent said: "It was a lot of fun – and we're very pleased with the total raised."

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Jess Lent, shift leader Billy Parr and bar associates Fleur Darlison and Charlotte Leddy.



The William Webb Ellis (Twickenham) Bar team leaders Melissa Chitura-Bidwell (left) and Chanel Johnson

## FESTIVAL-GOERS FOND OF BREWS FROM BEYOND

**C**ustomers at Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK and the Republic of Ireland were able, once again, to enjoy a range of 30 real ales, including five from overseas brewers, during a 12-day beer festival.

The overseas brewers were from Belgium, Germany, Italy, Taiwan and the USA.

The pubs served several beers brewed especially for the occasion.

Among the festival collection were also vegan (suitable for vegetarians as well) beers.

As well as featuring a range of malt and hop varieties from around the world, there were also beers which include chocolate and vanilla in their ingredients.

The festival line-up included Spring Frenzy (Daleside Brewery), Grizzly Bear IPA (Shepherd Neame), Disco Macaw (Redpoint Brewing, Taiwan), Crafty Fox (Hook Norton Brewery), Bite the Bullet! (Oakham Ales), Bingo Lady (The Lost Abbey Brewing Company, USA), Chocolate Ale (Leikeim Brewery, Germany), Parts and Labour (Rooster's Brewery), Germain (Brouwerij De Bock, Belgium), Roasted Nuts (Rebellion Brewery) and Falstaff (Birrificio Gregorio, Italy).

Wetherspoon's marketing manager, Jen Swindells, who organised the festival, said: "The festival was a great celebration of real ale."

"It allowed us, over a 12-day period, to showcase a selection of value-for-money beers, including those from overseas."

"The event also gave customers the opportunity to enjoy several beers which have not previously been available in the pubs, as well as those from overseas and some brewed specially for the festival."

Tasting notes on all of the beers were available in the pubs as part of the festival magazine (with a digital version available on the Wetherspoon app and website).



The West Kirk (Ayr) Team leader Mia White serves customer David Blair a festival ale



The Elihu Yale (Wrexham) Bar associate Jennifer Stelling, with some festival ales



The White Horse (Brigg) Customers Pat Tipler (left) and Pat Taylor



**The Lady Chatterley (Eastwood, Nottingham)** Customers Andy Noble and his daughter Bethany Noble

Don't miss the next

# BEER

WED 9 - SUN 20 OCT

# FESTIVAL



**The Felix Holt (Nuneaton)** Pub manager Nic Webb (right), with customers Leon Jakeman and Rosalyn Hughes



**The Pilgrim's Progress (Bedford)** Bar associate Eliana Orsini serves customer Theodore Young



**The Silver Penny (Dublin)** Customers Maria Luz Marinas (left) and Eumic Canu Salazar



**The Horse Shoe Inn (Crook)** Sibling customers Nicola Hutchinson and Luke Klijn toast the festival



**Robert the Bruce (Dumfries)** Pub manager Andrew Daish



**The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards)** Customers Billy and Janice Mahood

## SAFFRON WALDEN

### THE TEMERAIRE WELCOMES BREAKFASTING VETERANS



The Saffron Walden Veterans' Breakfast Club has been meeting at The Temeraire (Saffron Walden) for the past eight years.

Led by founder Mick Birnie, the group attracts around 20 veterans to its monthly gatherings, along with serving service personnel.

The group is purely social, but, should members require help or advice, the group has strong links with The British Legion.

Mick said: "Before we started meeting here, we were part of the Braintree group, which meets about 20 miles away.

"We asked the manager at The Temeraire whether they would be willing to host us and they agreed.

"Staff at the pub have been magnificent – and we are very well looked after.

"There is a large area at the front of the pub where the staff reserve tables for us and even put up bunting."

Shift manager Jacob Massey (pictured handing Mick his breakfast) said: "It is a pleasure and an honour to host the group members.

"They are a lively bunch and have a lot of stories to tell."

● **The Saffron Walden Veterans' Breakfast Club meets on the second Saturday of each month at The Temeraire, starting at 9am. It can be reached through Facebook at Saffron Walden Breakfast Club (SWBC).**

## CAMBUSLANG

### COOKIES AND CUPCAKES CAPTIVATE CAMBUSLANG



Pub customer Mhairi Henderson joined staff at The John Fairweather (Cambuslang) to organise a bake sale.

Mhairi, together with pub staff, baked cookies and cupcakes for sale in the pub, raising £560 for Cambuslang After-School Care.

The pub's duty manager, Ryan Egan (pictured with Mhairi) said: "Mhairi is well known in the area for her charity efforts – and we were more than happy to assist her on this occasion.

"We would both like to thank everyone who bought an item in the bake sale, helping to raise so much for a great cause."

## RENFREW

### STARRING ROLE FOR EASTER EGGS WHICH CAME ROLLING IN THE ISLES



Pub manager Donna Walker (pictured) handed over 50 Easter eggs to the local YMCA and Renfrew West Parish Church.

The eggs were donated by the pub's customers.

Donna, who runs The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew), said: "The customers' generosity allowed me to donate the eggs to two very worthy sets of people."

NORWICH

# BELL STAFF GO LIKE THE CLAPPERS TO COOK 300 BURGERS IN 20 MINUTES

Kitchen staff at The Bell Hotel (Norwich) cooked 300 burgers in just 20 minutes to feed homeless people in the area.

The event was part of a series organised by Wetherspoons The Game, through its Facebook page.

Its followers were notified that they could order the burgers at the pub for a limited time period, via the Wetherspoon app, with all orders going to feed homeless people.

Organisers sought permission from the pub four weeks in advance.

Kitchen shift leader Leigh Gardner said: "We were ready for the challenge and started cooking the burgers as soon as the orders came in."

"It was a mad 20 minutes, but the kitchen team was pleased to have completed the 300-burger order in that time."

"Hopefully, we can repeat this next year."

Volunteers from several homeless charities, together with other charities, were at the pub to deliver the burgers to those sleeping on the streets or in temporary accommodation, as well as to the local YMCA and families registered with food banks.



Kitchen manager Alex Hammond

WEDNESBURY

# EASTER EGGS ROLLED OUT TO CHILDREN, THANKS TO BELLWETHER'S CUSTOMERS



Hundreds of Easter eggs were donated to local hospitals by staff at The Bellwether (Wednesbury).

The pub's shift manager Jordan Richards (pictured left) and shift leader Megan Smith (pictured) delivered 210 eggs to children at New Cross Hospital (Wolverhampton) and Walsall Manor Hospital (Walsall).

It was the third annual Easter egg collection held at the pub.

Pub manager Ian Harvey said: "The Easter egg collection is popular with customers, who are always very generous."

"It is wonderful that so many children across both hospitals are able to receive an Easter egg."

MILE END, LONDON

# I SHOULD COCOA - GENEROUS MILE ENDERS DONATE EASTER EGGS



Staff from The Half Moon (Mile End, London) delivered Easter eggs and craft supplies to children at The Royal London Hospital during Easter.

Shift manager Genevieve Bowden (pictured left) and kitchen shift leader Chris Chapman (pictured) delivered the eggs and craft supplies, including crayons and colouring-in books.

Genevieve said: "Chris organises the collection at the pub each year, with customers generously donating items."

"Nurses and fellow staff at the pub are always pleased to receive them on behalf of the children."

# DOUBLE-DIGIT MILESTONES FOR PUBS

**Numerous venues, from Aberdeen to Brighton, celebrate clocking up two decades or more**

**F**rom 1 April until 31 July 2024, numerous Wetherspoon pubs celebrated a significant birthday of 20 years or more.

The 20th anniversary was marked by 10 pubs, clocking up an impressive 200 years serving their respective communities since 2004.

During April, 20-year celebrations were held at The Eric Bartholomew (Morecambe), The Justice Mill (Aberdeen) and The Packhorse Inn (Sleaford).

Throughout May, there were 20-year celebrations held at The Devonshire Inn (Skipton), The Ward Jackson (Hartlepool) and The Reeds Arms (Burnham-on-Sea), while The Livery Rooms (Keighley) marked the same milestone in June.

During July, The John Fielding (Cwmbran), The King of Wessex (Bath) and The West Quay (Brighton) reached their 20-year milestone each.

Silver anniversary celebrations were marked at nine pubs during the four-month period, clocking up a collective 225 years' service since 1999.

The pubs reaching their 25-year milestones were The Wyndham Arms Hotel (Bridgend), The Wheatsheaf (Stoke-on-Trent), The High Cross (Leicester), The Crosse Keys (City of London), The Swan (Weymouth), The Waterfront Inn (Brierley Hill), The Prince of Wales (Cardiff), The George Inn (Littlehampton) and The Wheatsheaf Inn (Kilmarnock).

Pubs marking three decades since opening were The Moon and Stars (Romford) in May, together with The Wrong 'Un (Bexleyheath) and The Great Spoon of Ilford (Ilford), both in June.

The Moon Under Water (Norbury), Goldengrove (Stratford) and The Old Manor (Bracknell) all opened in 1993, so each marked its 31st birthday, while The Moon Under Water (Leicester Square, London), in June, celebrated 32 years since opening.

The Moon on the Hill (Harrow) and The Moon Under Water (Hounslow) both clocked up 33 years, in April and July, respectively, while Wetherspoon's oldest pub The Rochester Castle (Stoke Newington) marked 41 years since opening in May 1983.

## The Wheatsheaf (Stoke-on-Trent)

Celebrating the pub's birthday are kitchen shift leader Richard Heath, pub manager Tom Rudnicki and bar team leader Mel Buchan (pictured left to right).

Tom has managed the pub since August 2020, having worked for Wetherspoon since May 2008.

Long-serving staff include Mel (since May 2001) and Richard (April 2013), as well as shift managers Katie Wright (February 2002), Sherron Leech (May 2009) and Mathew Jackson (October 2016), shift leader Lizzie Kett (November 2017) and cleaners Angela Evans (June 2011) and Laura Benn (April 2018).

The Wheatsheaf first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in May 1999 and remembers a well-known local landmark in its name.

Standing at the junction of Church Street and Campbell Place, the original Wheatsheaf Inn dates from at least 1818.

By 1834, the thrice-weekly coach, which ran between Newcastle-under-Lyme and Derby, called at The Wheatsheaf, by then the town's leading coaching inn.



## The High Cross (Leicester)

Named after the High Cross, which stood outside, this pub first opened as a Wetherspoon in May 1999.

Pub manager Rob Pole took over in January 2017, having worked for the company since June 2001.

At the point where Highcross Street meets High Street, outside this pub, some granite is laid into the road in the shape of a cross. This marks the site of the High Cross, the centre of medieval Leicester.

Pictured enjoying a birthday balloon-fest are pub manager Rob (centre) and shift managers Jamie Lee Sergent (left) and Janett Kis.

Long-serving staff members include Jamie Lee (16 years) and Janett (eight years), as well as kitchen manager Tom Hardy (16 years), bar associate Mandy Packwood Clarke and kitchen team leader Gary Shelly (both 10 years), kitchen associate Terry Shelly (nine years) and shift manager Josh Green (eight years).

Several others have also clocked up six and seven years' service.

## The Justice Mill (Aberdeen)

Pictured (left to right) marking the birthday at the pub are kitchen associate Laura McLenan, pub manager Andrew Wallace, customer Norrie Kerr and shift leader Ross Chalmers.

Norrie, 77, has been a customer at the pub since it first opened 20 years ago, while Andrew has managed the pub since January 2024, having started as a bar associate at the same pub in July 2014.

Laura is among the long-serving staff members (13 years at the pub), together with shift managers Rebecca Mann (19 years with the company, five at The Justice Mill), Cara Morrice (11 years with Wetherspoon, 10 at the pub) and Ross Nicholson (eight years with the company, six at The Justice Mill).

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in April 2004, takes its name from the two medieval mills once situated at the rear of this building, on the south side of today's Justice Mill Lane.

The Upper and Lower Mill were originally known as Justiciar's Mills.

First mentioned in a charter of 1343, the two corn mills were driven by water from Howe Burn.



20  
YEARS

20  
YEARS



## The Packhorse Inn (Sleaford)

Built in the early 18th century, this Wetherspoon pub (opened April 2004) was one of Sleaford's old coaching inns, originally known as The Packhorse Inn.

The inn was used mainly by traffic heading north, along the main east-coast road, to Lincoln and Hull. It appears on the map of Sleaford, drawn around 1770, as The Packhorse Inn.

Shift manager Vicky l'Anson is pictured celebrating the milestone with bar associates Peter Cowley and Emily Moses (left to right).

Pub manager Emma Metheringham has been in charge since November 2022, having rejoined the company in April 2017.

Vicky is the longest-serving staff member (21 years), with many others clocking up more than five years' service.

They include kitchen manager Sophie Smith and cleaner Ella Karim (both 10 years), kitchen shift leader Lucy Robinson, bar shift leaders Emma Marshall and Eva Stark, bar associate Samuel Marnier and cleaner Kirsty Briggs (all eight years).

## The Devonshire Inn (Skipton)

Built as an inn in c1800, this was originally known as The New Inn. Designed by the Earl of Burlington, it was renamed The Devonshire Inn when the earl's daughter married the Duke of Devonshire.

It was later The Devonshire Hotel, providing accommodation for stagecoach travellers.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in May 2004, has been managed by Connor McAvoxy since January 2024.

Connor started with the company in February 2017.

Among the many long-serving staff members are kitchen manager Scott Greenwood (since October 2016), shift managers Georgia Bancroft (February 2009), Jessica Wales (March 2017) and Shannon Howarth-Quayle (March 2018) and cleaner Liam Metcalfe (December 2010).

Pictured (left to right) celebrating the pub's birthday are shift leaders Claudia Reyner and Ben Turner, with team leader Nicole Cawthorne.



20  
YEARS

20  
YEARS



## The Ward Jackson (Hartlepool)

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in May 2004, is named after Ralph Ward Jackson, who opened the first coal dock in Hartlepool in June 1847 and whose statue stands in front of the pub.

The new town of West Hartlepool is said to date from this time, when the Hartlepool West Harbour & Dock Company was formed.

Pictured (left to right) at The Ward Jackson's birthday are regular customer Allan Peter Gillies (a customer at the pub since it first opened), bar associate Zachary Baxter and bar shift leader Gregg Owens.

The pub has been managed by Lindsay Carney since June 2012.

An experienced pub manager with 26 years' service with Wetherspoon, Lindsay's team comprises many staff members with more than five and 10 years' service.

# MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS



## The Wheatsheaf Inn (Kilmarnock)

The Wheatsheaf Inn first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in July 1999, although the history of the building dates from at least the 18th century.

It was one of the town's main coaching inns, given a Georgian-style front in c1820 and is said to have been frequented by Scotland's national poet – Robert Burns.

Pictured (left to right) celebrating The Wheatsheaf Inn's 25th birthday are team leader Rachel Berry, regular customer Peter Shedden and shift manager Abby Rennie.

Pub manager Sharna Glackin, who has worked for Wetherspoon since January 2010, took over in June 2023 as manager at The Wheatsheaf Inn.

There are numerous staff members with 10 or more years' service on the team, including shift managers Amy Mollison (16 years) and David Price (10 years), shift leaders Nicola Whyte (18 years) and Courtney Walley (15 years), kitchen team leader Jacqueline White (10 years), bar associate Scott Todd (17 years) and kitchen associate Steven Baird (12 years).



## The Livery Rooms (Keighley)

Pub manager Jess McGrattan is pictured (centre) with long-serving staff members kitchen team leader Fiona McIntyre (left) and shift manager Nat Haigh, marking the pub's 20th birthday.

Jess took over as pub manager at The Livery Rooms in March 2024, having joined the company in September 2014.

Fiona, the longest-serving staff member, has worked at the pub for 19 years, while Nat has clocked up 12 years' service.

Shift manager Daisy Bennett and kitchen manager Sean Turner have both also been at the pub for 12 years.

Kitchen shift leader Amy Atkinson has been at the pub for 10 years, while other long-serving members have each clocked up five and six years' service.

The Livery Rooms, which first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in June 2004, is named after a time when horses and horse-drawn carriages were available for hire from the livery stables, which was next door to, and partly on the site of, this pub.



# WIN A £30

## WETHERSPOON GIFT CARD

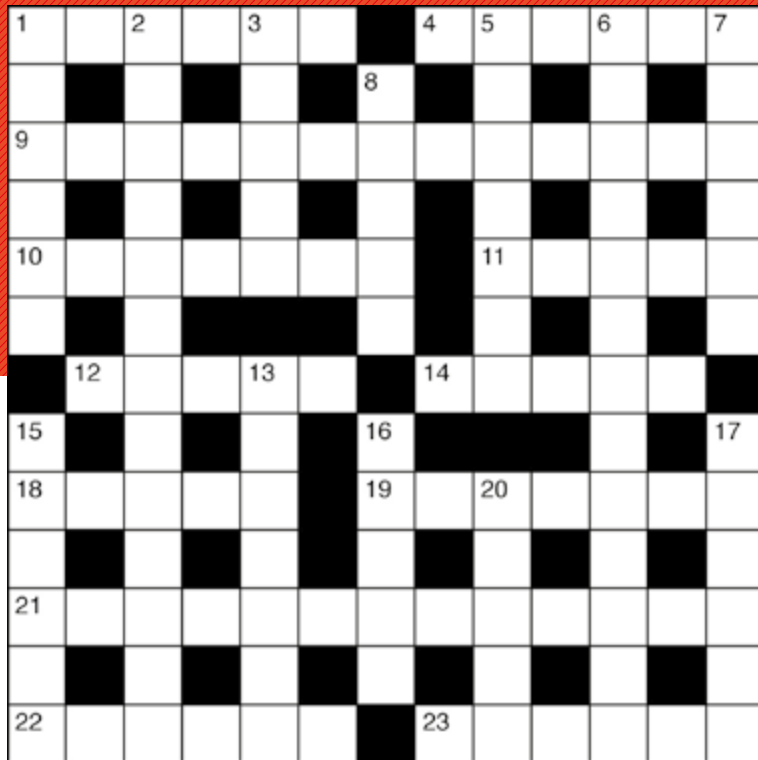
The first four correctly completed crosswords to be pulled out of the hat will win each of those entrants a Wetherspoon gift card worth £30.

Closing date for entries: 17 October 2024

**Post to:**

Wetherspoon News Magazine Competition  
PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

## 4 x £30 PRIZES TO BE WON



### Across

- 1. --- Bay, inlet of the Tasman Sea surrounded by the suburbs of Sydney (6)
- 4. "Teeth 'n' ---", 1975 play by David Hare (6)
- 9. 1965 film for which Rod Steiger was nominated for Best Actor Oscar (3,10)
- 10. Pear-shaped fruit used to make guacamole (7)
- 11. Ole, American comedian whose partner was Chic Johnson (5)
- 12. The edible internal parts of an animal (5)

- 14. Samuel, diarist who recorded the Great Fire of London (5)
- 18. Fourth month of the year (5)
- 19. Tropical plant which is the source of tapioca (7)
- 21. West Indian batsman who in 1948/9 completed five centuries in successive innings in Tests (7,6)
- 22. Duke of Illyria in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night (6)
- 23. Edwin, known as Buzz, second man to set foot on the moon (6)

### Down

- 1. Comic book character whose alter ego is Bruce Wayne (6)
- 2. 1957 novel by Muriel Spark featuring the character Georgina Hogg (3,10)
- 3. African lake also called Lake Malawi (5)
- 5. Philip, character in Chandler's The Big Sleep (7)
- 6. Character played by Mark Hamill in the film Star Wars (4,9)
- 7. Draped skirtlike garment worn by men and women in the Pacific (6)

- 8. "The --- Field", novel by Joseph Wambaugh (5)
- 13. Washington, American romantic painter of the Hudson River School of artists (7)
- 15. Texas frontier town on the Rio Grande (6)
- 16. "--- of a Woman", 1992 film starring Al Pacino (5)
- 17. Ted, actor who played Sam Malone in the comedy Cheers (6)
- 20. "--- Magnolias", 1989 film based on a play by Robert Harling (5)

### SOLUTIONS (Spring/summer 2024 issue)

- Across:** 1 Southernwood; 7 Nylon; 8 Aloha; 9 S.O.B.; 10 Metreveli; 11 Albert; 12 Monaco; 15 Galantine; 17 Leo; 18 Egret; 19 Anton; 21 Cosi Fan Tutte
- Down:** 1 Star-Spangled; 2 Hel; 3 Renate; 4 Whalebone; 5 Obote; 6 Casino Royale; 7 Nabob; 10 Marinetti; 13 Allen; 14 Cicada; 16 Largo; 20 Tit

### The spring/summer 2024 crossword winners were:

- ★ AG, Edinburgh ★ NS, Prudhoe ★ CH, Boreham ★ YR, Cardiff



### Please complete the answers and your details, as shown, and send the completed page to:

Wetherspoon News Magazine Competition  
PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

**Your details:**

Name: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: .....

Telephone: .....

I am over 18 years (signature): .....

Age: .....

Year of birth: .....

**Terms and conditions:** The crossword is open to all UK residents over the age of 18, excluding employees of the promoter, their respective families and agents or anyone directly connected with this competition. Acceptance of the rules is a condition of entry. No purchase necessary. Entries must be received no later than 17/10/24. Proof of dispatch is not proof of receipt. The winners will be the first correctly answered entries drawn. Where multiple prizes are offered, the winners will be the first relevant number of correct entries drawn. The judge's decision is final; no correspondence will be entered into. One entry per household. The winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative available. The promoter reserves the right to cancel or amend this promotion, owing to events arising beyond its control. The promoter is not responsible for any third-party acts or omissions. Once the competition has been drawn all entry slips and information provided therein will be securely destroyed and shall not be retained by J D Wetherspoon plc or its affiliates.



Nik Antona is national chairman of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

# Cheers

## DON'T BE FOOLED BY KEG BEER SERVED FROM FAKE HANDPUMPS

**What fresh hell is 'Fresh Ale'? Wetherspoon won't ask you to swallow this fakery, but other outlets may not be as diligent, says CAMRA's national chairman Nik Antona**

**When visiting the pub, the last thing you'd expect when you get to the bar is to be duped.**

Unfortunately, this is what punters can expect from pubs which decide to stock a new range of 'Fresh Ale' from one of the world's largest brewery conglomerates, Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company (CMBC).

These are filtered and kegged versions of their cask range, which are then served through cask handpumps.

As a campaigning organisation which stands for consumers' rights, CAMRA is extremely concerned about this misleading dispense method.

For generations, a handpump on the bar has been a mark of assurance in cask-conditioned beer.

Where cask is well kept, consumers can be sure of a spotless cellar, well-trained bar staff and a commitment to offering the best of UK brewing.

By hijacking the handpump to dispense a kegged product, all of those expectations are thrown back in the consumer's face.

Thankfully, Wetherspoon has already confirmed that it won't be stocking 'Fresh Ale' and will instead continue to champion cask beers.

### CONDITIONED

The 'Fresh Ale' range comprises Wainwright Gold, Wainwright Amber and Hobgoblin IPA, and each should have 'brewery-conditioned beer' displayed on the pump clip.

However, it will still be hard for most consumers to spot them.

At the time of writing, we are yet to see evidence of the 'brewery-conditioned' pump clips in use in the wild.

Consumers' choice is paramount to what CAMRA campaigns for, and the 'Fresh Ale' range removes an option of a cask product from the bar.

CMBC has positioned 'Fresh Ale' as a way to 'revive' cask, by giving it a longer shelf life.

However, at a time when cask brewers are struggling with the perfect storm of the cost of goods and employing staff, stubbornly high energy bills, unfair business rates and customers reeling from the cost-of-living crisis, this move from CMBC feels like nothing less than a betrayal.

Following the sale of the Eagle brewery, the closure of Jennings and the removal of all of its cask products from the Marston's estate in Scotland, this is yet another reminder that CMBC isn't 'reviving' cask... but abandoning it.



**We're calling on our members, and all cask champions, to let us know if they see the range in the wild**



### COMPLAINTS

So, what can we do as lovers of cask beer? CAMRA has already written to the chair of National Trading Standards and the Secretary of State for Business to raise our concerns formally and will be launching a campaign of nationally co-ordinated complaints to Trading Standards departments.

We believe that CMBC's actions come under the scope of the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, as average consumers may choose to buy the product on the basis that they believe it to be cask-conditioned beer which, in this case, it is not.

We have also decided that any pubs or clubs which serve 'Fresh Ale' through a handpump will be removed from the CAMRA Good Beer Guide and will be ineligible for our pub or club awards.

We're also calling on CAMRA's members and all cask champions to let us know if they see the 'Fresh Ale' range in the wild.

We would love to see pictures of the pump clips, so that we can spread the word and let other consumers know what to look out for.

If you've any questions or sightings to share with us, get in contact: [press@camra.org.uk](mailto:press@camra.org.uk)

### CASK

Let me be clear – this is not about a cask versus keg debate.

Brewers should be proud of their whole range of beers and should not need to resort to misleading consumers to sell them.

Likewise, this is also not a call to boycott your local if it serves 'Fresh Ale' – it's much better to engage with the licensee and staff about why you won't be opting to drink it.

And if anyone is in doubt over what's being served to them at the bar, simply 'ask whether it's cask'.

This way, we can let licensees know that the issue of this misleading dispense is important to consumers – and they can understand why we won't be purchasing it.

In the 1970s, when CAMRA was founded to combat the decline of cask beer, the loss of a handpump was often a canary in the coalmine for pubs and clubs.

We can't let that happen again.

Cask beer has survived the existential threat of the global pandemic, and we're very happy to see that cask beer volumes have increased as a percentage of small and independent brewers' output.

Global brewers like CMBC could learn a lesson or two from these statistics and champion cask beer by brewing more of it, rather than hiding a keg beer on the bar, using a handpump.

● **To join CAMRA, or to give a gift membership to a friend or loved-one, visit: [join.camra.org.uk](http://join.camra.org.uk)**

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The John Russell Fox  
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- 3 **Barrow-in-Furness**  
The Furness Railway  
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- 4 **Beccles**  
The Kings Head Hotel  
01502 718730
- 5 **Bedford**  
The Pilgrim's Progress  
01234 344566
- 6 **Bewley**  
George Hotel  
01299 406970
- 7 **Biggleswade**  
The Crown Hotel  
01767 310510
- 8 **Birmingham**  
The Briar Rose  
0121634 8100
- 9 **Bridport**  
The Greyhound  
01308 421905
- 10 **Camborne**  
The John Francis Basset  
01209 613230
- 11 **Canterbury**  
The Thomas Ingoldsby  
01227 463339
- 12 **Chester**  
The Bull and Stirrup Hotel  
01244 394840
- 13 **Chesterfield**  
The Portland Hotel  
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- 14 **Corby**  
The Saxon Crown  
01536 203672
- 15 **Dereham**  
The Romany Rye  
01362 654160
- 16 **Doncaster**  
The Red Lion  
01302 732123
- 17 **Great Malvern**  
The Foley Arms Hotel  
01684 580350
- 18 **Great Yarmouth**  
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- 19 **Grimsby**  
The Yarborough Hotel  
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- 20 **Harwich**  
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The Catherine Wheel Hotel  
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- 22 **Huntingdon**  
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01480 432402

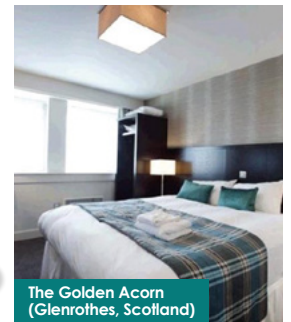
- 23 **King's Lynn**  
Globe Hotel  
01553 668000
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- 31 **Ripon**  
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- 33 **Salisbury**  
The King's Head Inn  
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- 34 **Shrewsbury**  
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- 35 **Sittingbourne**  
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01795 476791
- 36 **Southend-on-Sea**  
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01822 612455
- 38 **Tewkesbury**  
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01684 274039
- 39 **Thirsk**  
The Three Tuns  
01845 524605
- 40 **Warminster**  
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Cabot Court Hotel  
01934 427930
- 42 **Whitby**  
The Angel Hotel  
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- 43 **Wigan**  
The Brocket Arms  
01942 823800
- 44 **Worcester**  
The Crown  
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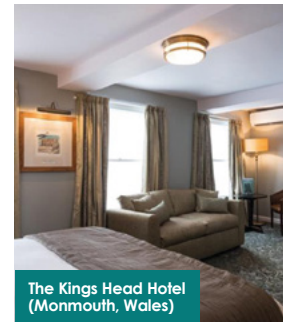
The Saxon Crown  
(Corby, England)



Keavan's Port Hotel  
(Dublin, Ireland)



The Golden Acorn  
(Glenrothes, Scotland)



The Kings Head Hotel  
(Monmouth, Wales)

## Ireland

- 1 **Dublin**  
Keavan's Port Hotel  
+353 1 405 4790
- 2 **Swords**  
The Old Borough  
+353 1 808 4103

## Scotland

- 1 **Broughty Ferry**  
Jolly's Hotel  
01382 734910
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The Guildhall & Linen Exchange  
01383 724060
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The Golden Acorn  
01592 751175
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The King's Highway  
01463 251800

## Wales

- 1 **Brecon**  
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01874 403231
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