

Free

Mythical Issue

May / June 2026

TYKE TAVERNER

the beer consumers' magazine for Bradford and beyond

STAND UP FOR



DARK BEERS



**IN PRAISE
OF THE
DARK SIDE**



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IN PRAISE OF DARK BEERS

Are dark beers still in a minority of those served over our nation's bars? Was it ever otherwise?

It does seem that many regular drinkers don't particularly care for the dark side of real ale (and we shall leave way over to one side of this bar the almost ubiquitous nature of certain keg stouts).

Why is this? Do dark beers look unpalatable? Is there the legacy memory of the bad old days when all sorts of stuff would be filtered back into the dark beer cask at the end of a session?

Is there so much choice of beer styles now

that there is no time to try all that is on offer?

Well, I rather like dark beers, even though some can be a little on the high ABV side. Stouts or porters - there is a difference - but it would take too long - are often used as a vessel for some very interesting taste-enhancing ingredients. A robust basic beer can take a little extra hint of fruit, biscuit, even chocolate.

If you have never, or rarely, tried a proper dark beer - please do. You might well be impressed with your eureka moment.

D.B.

***** FOR BRANCH EVENTS SEE PAGE 30*****


Tyke Taverner is produced by the Bradford Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale Limited.

It is an open forum for views and opinions as well as facts and, as such, readers are reminded that the Editor, the Branch or the Campaign as a whole may not necessarily share the views expressed by the contributors.

Readers are also reminded that their thoughts on relevant matters are as valuable as any other contributor and the Editor will be pleased to receive contributions on appropriate topics such as - whether a trigonometrist can suffer from cosinus problems, or whether Ruby Wax and John Wayne are a moonstruck pair - by post or e-mail. Publication cannot be guaranteed, of course, as space will be at a premium in any free publication. Contributions may be edited, without altering the meaning, and certain grammatical errors, if spotted in time, might be corrected.

Well, it could happen...

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BRADFORD BRANCH OF CAMRA ANNUAL AWARDS

All CAMRA branches throughout the land appreciate our pubs and clubs. Those running these places work hard to serve their customers with fine products in good safe atmospheres. It is right that we should honour them.

Honour them we do here in Bradford by organising an annual review of our pub stock. All branch members (that is CAMRA members living in the branch area) are invited to nominate pubs and clubs for these awards. Then the top few are subjected to random visits by judges.

We apply strict, national criteria to the judging so that there is a common approach and comparable results. Obviously, the supplying of good real ale is paramount in the scoring, although many other aspects are considered with equal seriousness.

These are the 2026 winners:
Inner Bradford Pub of the Year
RECORD CAFE BAR

Runners-up
EXCHANGE CRAFT BEER HOUSE
CORN DOLLY

Outer Bradford Pub of the Year
AINSBURY, Thackley
Runners-up
JUNCTION, Baildon
PEACOCK, Bingley

Overall Pub of the Year
RECORD CAFE BAR

Cider Pub of the Year
JACOB'S WELL

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Only the finest farmers make it into our beauty parade

Shortly after harvest each year the best hop farmers in the UK journey to our brewery in Yorkshire. They bring with them carefully packed parcels of their finest crops. In what has become known as the *hop beauty parade* our expert brewers meticulously assess each batch, judging not just looks but also personality. The brewers rub each hop in their warm hands to feel the quality of the resins and release the delicate aromas that are vital to the signature flavour and balance of our beer. Only then are the *choicest* whole leaf hops selected to brew your *beautiful* pint of Landlord.

All for that taste of Taylor's



DARK BEER IS FOR LIFE, NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS

By Dean Ellison

Last summer I had a splendid time reading Martyn Cornell's excellent *Porters and Stouts: A Complete History*. Dark beer has always been at the forefront of my mind and the detailed look into the history of its origins, evolution, extinction and revival has been informative and left me craving an oyster stout. Alas, over summer, dark beers are harder to find due to the nonsensical notion that they're a winter drink, despite the undeniable refreshing qualities of a pint of Black Band Porter in the sun and robust Guinness sales in Nigeria, Cameroon and Jamaica.

Well, that all changes as autumn gives way to winter and Dark Beer Festival season starts up, and before you know it, you have more mild, stout and porter on offer than is perhaps advisable.

First up is the Back in Black Festival at The Victoria Craft Beer Cafe, a place that is a mainstay of the Halifax scene and with multiple extensions to the building attesting to its success. Back in Black is a highlight of their calendar, and for me it excels as a cask first festival, with an excellent range of well kept Real Ales on offer, while also having enough craft beer to keep the keg heads happy, ensuring that there's something for everyone.

This isn't my first rodeo here, and from past BiBs I've learned to opt for halves, sample a wider range beers across the spectrum of dark beers, and to keep my eye on the ABV. I started with something that couldn't be missed, Eagle Crag's Porter brewed in memory of local CAMRA stalwart John Hartley, who I remember enthusing

about Elland 1872 Porter being served from the wood BiB's past. This porter was smooth and sublime, following 11 months ageing in the barrel. I'd have had a second but I would have felt as if I was greedily denying other people the pleasure.

I was happy to see Leeds' Tartarus on cask and at 4.5% easier going than their usual heavy hitting offer. Although for people into that kind of thing, their Abaddon Imperial Stout with 15 different malts, and at a whopping 17% was on keg at, brace yourselves, £12 a half, and no amount of waving your CAMRA membership card would get you a discount.

The only keg I partook in, was a sample of Dubai Chocolate 6.5% chocolate and pistachio stout, a very on trend taste, but the pistachio just didn't come through for me. My beer of the day, Zorya, a coffee porter from Shiny Brewery, coming in at 5.5%, a roasty-ness approaching smokey, and I thought that the XL Mild from Burton Bridge, a classic mild at 4%, was something I could drink all day.

The history of porters records that as they got sweeter as time went on, but the question was how do you make them sweet without the yeast turning all that sugar into alcohol. Well eventually someone found out that the lactose found in milk is a non-fermentable sugar, giving the world milk stout. It was represented at the festival by Hammerton's Crunch Peanut Butter Milk Stout (5.4%), a pleasure to drink down, with chocolaty notes and a pleasing sweetness. Uplifting stuff, I could see why milk stout was originally marketed as a health drink.

The next weekend was Wirral Beer



Yes, why not create a frothy map of Australia?

Festival, organised by Liverpool's excellent Ship & Mitre, and back for it's 20th time. The festival is hosted in Hulme Hall, a half timbered church hall like building in Port Sunlight with a plague on the door commemorating it being the place where Ringo Starr made his debut with The Beatles.

Although not a dark beer festival itself, enough were on offer for me to stick with them all day, and I quickly worked through the Auld Magowan (4.7%, Darklands Indie Brewery)

with coffee and whiskey flavours and a chocolately Oyster Catcher Oatmeal Stout (4.4% Brimsgate Brewery). Keeping beer in a hall has its challenges, and after finding the choices from the barrels lacked the head I'd like on my pint, I moved onto the hand-pulls, and Stout (4.5%, Mobberley) was a big step in the right direction here and cask Mind Palace, a 5% dark mild from local Black Lodge really delivered, boasting a smooth taste profile.

With the day progressing, attention moved to the Wall of Beer, the festival's keg offering, not my usual scene but some things can't be resisted. Local legends Neptune served up a Treacle, Ginger and Muscovado Stout (5.3%) that stood out for everyone around the table, and fronted a festive flavour profile with the ginger really shining and complimenting the dark sugars. Two kegs from Kirkstall stood out as well, the Closed Loop West Coast IPA (5%) was my only non-dark beer festival and a much needed amuse-bouche at this point. I'm not sure if it worked though, as my tasting notes for my next drink, Kirkstall's Barley Wine (8.4%),



Always the sign of a good festival.

suggest it tasted of cigars and blue cheese (In the most positive way).

Maybe you just had to be there, and a few hours in, to comprehend what that means.

While I indulged in all things dark, my drinking party were distracted by pints of bright neon blue beer circulating the room, a concoction that wouldn't look out of place in a sci-fi movie. This was Scoop Blue Raspberry (6%, Azvek), an ice cream sour tasting of bubble-gum ice lollies from my youth. I'm glad I only had a sample, as it was too tart for my liking, and off-puttingly lumpy.

The afternoon was wrapped up with pints of Beamish all round to the universal acclaim of the table. My pals eyes lit up when I told him Beamish was on, as he'd recently been to Cork and had been enjoying pints of the other black stuff before being struck down with COVID mid-holiday. Sure beer festivals are a chance to try ales from small brewers across the country, but who can resist dipping your toes into the world of mass production every now and again, especially when ruminating on historic stouts?

Before the train back to Leeds, there was time for a quick pint at The Crown, next door to Lime Street Station, where Titanic Plum Porter, Taylor's Landlord Dark and Timothy Taylor / Northern Monk collaboration Unity Stout were on the pumps. A dark beer festival in itself.

Wrapping up the dark beer festival fortnight was Damity, the dark beer festival at Amity brewery in Farsley, where the brewery is a cornerstone of the areas rising profile. This is an almost all keg affair, but I did start with the cask offer, Harmonics, a 5.5% stout, ahead of getting into the heavy stuff.

Amity make a splendid plum porter, Amethyst, found in cask and keg, but for the festival an 8.4% imperial version was on the taps, and it was deceptively easy drinking. Seeing the festival out, I moved to some more out there flavours, such as the Black Velvet (6.5%, Vault City) providing a sour pastry stout, with tart fruity flavours, and a can of No Swimming (8%, Neon Raptor), promising the delicious taste of dirt and worms, which happily turned out to be the taste of gummy worms.

Top tip for if you ever visiting Amity, it's next door to Metz Cheese-monger, who have pleasingly late hours and also have bring your own bottle events where they'll pair your beer with a cheese. The intention was to take the cheese home, but after sampling a bit on the walk down to Rodley the umami flavours paired just too well with the lingering taste of dark beer on the tongue, and Steve and I (Mostly Steve) quickly finished it all before arriving at Rodley Barge. The Dexter Salted Caramel Stout (4.5%, Kirkstall Brewery) on offer, a simple stout, well kept and beautifully poured, was the perfect way to



A flight of fancy: why not indeed?



Above: Happiness. Below: Adventure



wrap up my dark beer festival trilogy, and washed away the lingering salty taste of the cheese.

The three events sated my appetite for all things dark, across styles, shades and serving styles, almost enough for me to want a double dry hopped IPA for varieties sake (almost, but not quite). What I enjoyed most across them all was that they showcased bere festivals come in all shapes and sizes, with a range of drink offers as well. I took away a new appreciation for keg beer, as while Real Ale proved to be the best way for serving straight forward beers that land just right, the kind of drink that makes you want to quaff another, the keg offerings let you experience far-out flavours you would never get in from cask (though I remain unconvinced that I'll be trying any more bright blue or worm beer through). As ever, it seems the right festival and the right drink is out there for everybody and I encourage you to look up the events listing in your local CAMRA paper and get yourself along to try some.

Dean Ellison.

RETURN TO FORM by Matthew Curtis

When I think back to how I first became enthusiastic about cask beer, I fondly remember two distinct experiences.

When I was aged about 21, just over two decades ago, I had returned home from university to Scothern, the Lincolnshire village where I grew up. Here, I joined my dad and one of his friends for a trip to the local. I knew the Bottle and Glass well, having worked there for a few months before leaving home. It was the only pub in the village and not particularly well-regarded for its selection of draught beer.

On this trip, however, dad approached the bar and exclaimed “Landlord!” before ordering us each a pint. These soon disappeared and were replaced with three more, a trend that continued until closing time. It dispelled previous experiences I’d had with other cask beers, such as John Smith’s, which I found to be foisty and difficult. Here was a beer that was snappy, refreshing and characterful without ever being complicated. As a young man, drinking my first Timothy Taylor’s beer instilled in me both the confidence and enthusiasm to try more brews on cask.

A couple of years later I was visiting my then-girlfriend’s hometown of Totnes, Devon. One evening she and her brothers took me to one of the town’s many pubs (you’ll have to forgive me, I’m hazy on which one) where we ordered our first beer based on its name alone. Although it had been in production in nearby Cornwall since 1994, this was the first time I had encountered Doom Bar, and I must admit I remember it very favourably. By now I had begun to notice the differences between ales and even now, as I cast my mind back, I can recall this particular beer’s biscuity quality and undertones of blackberries. We sessioned it all night and it

became a firm favourite. At least until these distinctive characteristics I enjoyed so much began to disappear into shadow.



When multinational beer producer Molson Coors acquired Sharp’s – producer of Doom Bar – outright in 2011, it was the first time I experienced the sensation of a brewery I loved selling out to one of the big guys. Not really knowing how to respond, I continued to drink it, which was simple enough, because as a Londoner at the time it started appearing in pubs across the city.

Something about its charm, however, slowly began to fade. While the beer was still brewed at its home in Rock, Cornwall (the production of the bottled version has been made by Coors in Burton on Trent since 2013) it just stopped tasting the same. Maybe it was because of the dramatic up-scaling of its production? Perhaps the recipe was changed to cut production costs? I don’t have the answer, but I do trust my own tastebuds implicitly.

Despite losing my fondness for it, by 2013 Doom Bar had grown to become the best-selling cask beer in the UK by both value and volume supplanting the previous incumbent, Greene King IPA. It became ubiquitous and by default became a standard bearer for the overall quality of cask beer in the UK. By coincidence, sales of cask beer have been in double digit decline for more than a decade. Much of this is due to the slow death of once-dominant brands like Marston’s Pedigree. I also consider, however, that if the country’s flagship beer in the category it invented isn’t up to scratch, then surely that sector suffers in return. Despite holding this title for more than a decade in 2025 another beer finally topped Doom Bar as the UK’s bestseller – by value, at least. By coincidence, that beer

was Timothy Taylor's Landlord.

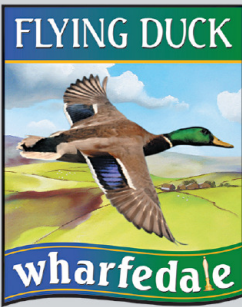
I was lucky enough to visit the brewery in Keighley, West Yorkshire back in 2024. Then CEO Tim Dewey – an American who launched brands like Smirnoff Ice throughout a long career in the drinks trade – was generous enough to give me and fellow drinks writer Rachel Hendry a tour of the production facility. I snapped away with my camera in admiration as I watched voluminous buckets of Fuggles and Goldings hops being administered to a fresh batch of Landlord, but that didn't prepare me for what came next. When it came to fermentation I expected to be met with a row of towering, modern, stainless-steel cylindroconical vessels. What I instead found were open fermenters, similar but not identical to Yorkshire squares, where beer was fermented in the traditional way – a way that this beer deserves.

A pint of Landlord has never tasted the same to me since that visit, broken down as it was into its separate parts, each of them which I now experience again with every sip. Instead of it becoming something I drink less of, however, I find myself drifting towards it with increasing frequency. For me it's the perfect first/ lunchtime/I-only-have-time-for-a-quick-one pint that fills a very specific need in my life and

where I choose to drink it always ticks the boxes in terms of depth of flavour and satisfaction.

I also consider that if Landlord – an independently owned beer that is, on evidence of my recent visit, brewed with great care and attention to detail – is the bestselling by value in the UK, then it is also representative of the category's renewed strength. If other drinkers are turning to this beer and having experiences as good as I was lucky enough to have 20 years ago, then maybe they, like me, will become cask drinkers for life also.

Returning to the Bottle and Glass recently for a solo, mid-afternoon scoop, I noticed the distinct green and gold of the Landlord pump clip and duly ordered myself a pint. What I received was perfectly conditioned, cellar cool, and packed with the distinctive yet balanced character that have combined to make this beer the leader in its category. Every sip was as enjoyable as the last. Perhaps, I thought to myself as I drained the last drops before making my table available in the packed-out pub, this is the start of something exciting. This might just be a sign of the cask category's return to form.



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H & C SPRING PUB OF THE SEASON AWARD 2026

– HOP IN CRAFT BEER AND CIDER, HALIFAX

The Hop Inn Craft Beer and Cider, a new micro-pub and bottle shop located on Union Street in Halifax town centre, has been voted Spring Pub of the Season by members of Halifax and Calderdale CAMRA.

The award was presented at a well-attended

and comfortable, offering a relaxed and enjoyable environment.

The Hop Inn is also notable for its unique range of Belgian bottled beers, many of which are served in the correct glassware. In addition, customers can enjoy canned beers from a vari-



presentation evening, where members of the Halifax and Calderdale CAMRA branch were joined by many local residents to celebrate the achievement.

Owners Nick and Karen were presented with the Pub of the Season certificate and banner by Branch Chair Richard Lee, in front of an appreciative audience of CAMRA members and locals.

Richard explained that there were many reasons why The Hop Inn had been chosen. The hosts are consistently friendly and welcoming, helping to establish this relatively new venue as a valued addition to Halifax town centre. They have created a pub that is both atmospheric

and comfortable, offering a relaxed and enjoyable environment. The pub is one of the few in Calderdale to offer real cider, available both in boxes and bottles.

Richard also highlighted how impressed branch members have been with the quality and variety of cask ales on offer. Real ale is a unique product: it is neither pasteurised nor artificially carbonated, instead developing its natural carbonation from live yeast in the cask. As a result, it requires careful handling to maintain its quality. The owners of The Hop Inn consistently ensure that their beers are kept in excellent condition, meaning customers are guaranteed a first-class pint of real ale every time.

Adrian Steer





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COVID AND RETHINKING ALCOHOL MYTHS

As we all understand now, if not at the time so well, the Covid-19 pandemic was a watershed in world history. In years, perhaps decades or even centuries, to come, historians will look back on the 21st century and write copious dissertations about the impact it had. They might even reach some conclusions. Just now, however, it's still a little too close for us to focus properly especially if you were unfortunate enough to lose somebody as a consequence.

But some outcomes are beginning to become visible and recognisable. Some of these revolve around drinking behaviours in the UK.

Drink had a strange time of it. What one recalls changes over time but 2025 sees the fifth anniversary of the lifting of the first lockdown so it is time to try to remember. There were nearly four months of enforced pub closure. However, through all that time, alcohol was granted a special status that allowed it to be produced and sold. Perhaps it was good for morale, or perhaps the

authorities thought that the risks of creating a black market were too high, or perhaps simply nobody thought about it.

Whatever, there were soon scare stories about how much we were drinking, even though the early evidence suggested that many of us were consuming rather less than usual. For most alcohol consumers drinking was a part of social life and not a separate activity. Remove the social life and alcohol had no place. Others substituted the pub visit by going down to the supermarket or off-licence instead. Others took the opportunity to adopt what they brought themselves to think of as a healthier lifestyle.

And there were some who did, indeed, turn to drink to relieve the stresses and uncertainties of an extraordinary, bewildering and often painful and scary event that none of us had experienced before.

What is now becoming to be understood is that there was a polarisation in drinking behaviours between those cutting down and those consuming more, and a new analysis

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HEPWORTH & IDLE BEER FESTIVAL



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suggests that the difference between the two groups was larger than was thought.

Colin Angus, senior statistician at the Sheffield Addictions Research Group (SARG), has dived into the data on duty revenue (tax) to reveal that, compared with what might be expected from pre-pandemic trends, there was a sharp fall in receipts during each lockdown, followed by a surge in sales as restrictions were lifted. I'm a bit surprised by how surprised he is by this but, then, he does approach this subject from a different focus to me. I think that for most people drinking is determined by social occasions rather than individual compulsion: I suspect his vision is somewhat different.

Nevertheless, he writes: "Across 2020 and 2021, we estimate that we drank almost exactly as much as we would have if they had been 'normal' years – it's just that this conceals significant variation, both in when during the year we were drinking more or less and also in how much people were drinking at the individual level, with some people drinking less and others a lot more."

From 2022, however, possibly partly in re-

action to the soaring cost of living following on from and arising out of Covid, overall alcohol sales have fallen below the expected levels and have continued to decline. Publicans and brewers will attest to that. Indeed, over the past five years, Angus estimates that the Treasury's receipts from alcohol are a staggering £10.3bn lower than what might have been expected in "normal" times : in other words, a shortfall of 12.3%.

Further detailed analysis confirms what most would suspect which is that beer was the hardest hit category by the lockdowns, but it recovered well when the pubs re-opened. There was a sharp increase in spirits sales too, probably reflecting the fashion for cocktails coming out of the pandemic and a craving for "experiences" that can't be fully replicated at home. This is probably telling pub and bar operators what they already know but there is another, perhaps more telling, statistic which isn't as well-known: the decline in drinking since 2019 has been accompanied by a shocking rise in alcohol-specific deaths, which are up 42%.

The public health community and



many pressure groups, aided by bodies such as SARG, have since the mid-1970s espoused the theory that it's alcohol consumption at a population level that ultimately determines harm. This is the model used to argue for greater taxation and restriction at point of sale.

Yet the past post-Covid years appear to have overturned that. There are ways to explain the fact that more people are dying of drink, but it can't be that we're all drinking more. The pandemic exposed a hard core of vulnerable people drinking at dangerous levels who then came under heightened stress: at the same time these people were suddenly deprived of easy access to alcohol.

One or two commentators are now picking up on this angle and suggesting that it might be this vulnerable section of society who are suffering the increase in fatalities. As Phil Meadows, one such commentator, has recently argued in a hospitality industry journal there now seems no going back to the 1970s idea of a disease model that stigmatises the "alcoholic". He goes on to say that it could

be that future historians of medicine will find that the pandemic led to the devel-

opment of a new paradigm for understanding the problem.

The above data and analysis reinforces the long-held view of many industry practitioners that the debate surrounding deaths relating to alcohol abuse needs to be refocused. Those determined to enact some sort of alcohol policy, often motivated by seeking to reduce the costs of associated healthcare needs and social disruption, should spend less time and effort trying to reduce the consumption of the mass of moderate drinkers and focus upon the vulnerable. Penalising the majority by imposing higher duties on everything doesn't appear to be working.

Developing a new model targeted at the most vulnerable is, of course, a more difficult and more costly strategy. But, not only does it have the potential advantage that it might just work and might also help to save the savage decline of the hospitality industry. Thereby saving jobs and supporting future tax take.

Time for a rethink.

B Wise

This article first appeared in New Ale Talk, magazine of the Heavy Woollen branch..

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The Corn Dolly

BRADFORD

A FAMILY RUN PUB FOR 35 YEARS
WITH A PLETHORA OF CAMRA AWARDS
FOR WELL KEPT ALES

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BRADFORD BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL 2026 - A PICTORIAL REPORT (with a few words)



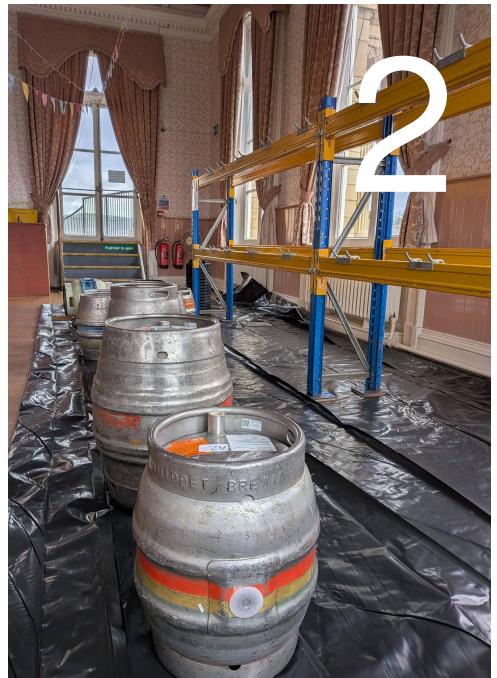
It shows such promise: One of the rooms ready to be transformed.

We start with a beautiful and vacant Victoria Hall in Saltaire - that World Heritage Site of great note.

We finish with a very successful beer and cider festival, which made a good amount of brass for the Campaign, as well as the best-ever contribution to our chosen charity, and the best ever performing Tombola. Well, it is world-famous after all.



The work begins, but first a deep breath.



Beerfest maths:

It's a simple equation:

Take one of 1 and several of 2 and the result is 3.

In several parts of the building too.

It's better than racking the brains, or even ricking the back.



*Pics by
Pete Conkerton
and Josie*



Two of the bars after completion and prior to staffing, and customer-serving. And, yes! Some seating too in many areas.



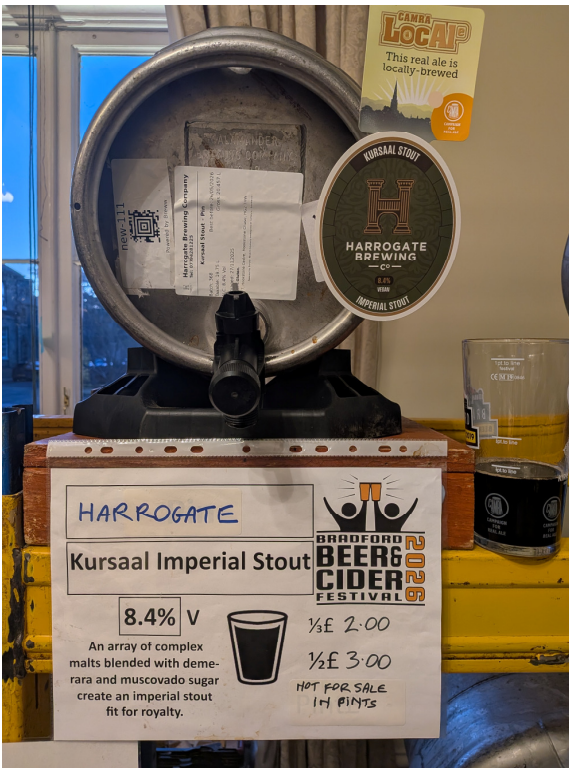


Bars are ready. Membership stand is ready. Food from Binns is ready. Chocolate stand is ready. The world-famous Tombola is ready...



...So let 'em in!





The second strongest cask beer at the event?



Some members of staff kept going by consuming pie and peas and sweet tea.

Beer of The Festival – Bradford 2026

Overall Champion & Best Strong Ale – Five Towns – The Upside Down 8.4%

Best Mild- Sunbeam - Chocolate Mild 4.8%

Best Stout or Porter – Bridgehouse - Rum & Raisin Stout – 4.9%

Best Beer Under 4% - Goose Eye – Goosey Gander – 3.9%

Best Beer 4 - 4.9% - Craven – Dark Cherry – 4.8%

Best Beer 5 – 5.9% - Orms – Dokkr – 5%

Best Indie Keg Beer – Triple Point – Luxe Imperial Porter – 9.2%



Above: Here is evidence of Doncaster Brewery's grand day out. They visited SALT, The Salt Cellar & Fanny's while they were at it.

Cockermouth Brewing Doubles Up

By Timothy Hampson

Cockermouth is celebrating going from no breweries to two in just a year.

Earlier last year brewing returned to the Jennings site, closed in 2022 by Carlsberg Britvic, now it has been joined by the Bitter End pub.

The pub in Kirkgate launched its own beers on in November. Mark Cockbain and his wife Jackie (pictured) bought the pub in spring 2020 and has gained a reputation for good food and cask beers from independent breweries.

Under its previous owner the pub had operated its own brewery in the 1990s, but production ceased around 2000 and the space mothballed.

In June 2020, Mark Cockbain bought and installed replacement equipment but difficulties with the electric supply delayed the start of brewing.

However, having undertaken a brewing course in Sunderland, Mark Cockbain finally started producing in September.

The results were unveiled at a packed event on 21 November.

Two Bitter End beers were on offer, Cocker Gold, at 4.4 per cent ABV, and Yan Tan

Tethera, a dark beer at 4.7 per cent.

West Cumbria CAMRA member Len Wainwright said: "Both beers were excellent. "Also on offer were two beers from the newly established Swig brewery in Frizington. Golden Flarch, at 4.3 per cent and Lady Lush, at 4.8 per cent, plus Head Scratcher stout at 3.9 per cent from another new inde-



pendent brewery at Siloth.

"It was good to see Mark supporting other local newly started breweries besides his own. Mark will be brewing 500 litres at a time with the next beers due mid-December. Mark eventually intends to get a licence so that he can sell his beers to other independent pubs."

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REVIEWING with Russ Petcher

Danny Sapko
Bass Player and Content Creator

I'm pretty sure that Danny is a Bradford lad but I'm definitely sure that he's the best player to walk the earth since the last best bass player to walk the earth.

He's the Jimi Hendrix of bass players who likes to use the word 'Dipstick' a lot and if you haven't seen him on social media then

you're seriously missing out. Danny is a content creator who deserves his own TV show because yes, he really is that good at what he does.

He has me in stitches every time I see him and the guy even has his own merch



so he's obviously doing something right. Danny has won awards for his bass playing abilities and he has my seal of approval because through all the fame and fortune he still seems like a nice, likeable lad who just happens to be a punk icon in mine and millions of others eyes.

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PUB FRANCHISES by Paul Ainsworth

Recent years have seen a significant growth in the number of pubs being run under some kind of franchising arrangement. Various names are used – retail agreements, man-chises (management franchises) or just franchises –but the models are all very similar.

Franchises were pioneered by Marston's, but the bigger companies have now all adopted it, each with their own brand name e.g. Stonegate have Craft Union, Star Pubs & Bars have Just Add Talent and Greene King have two: Hive and Nest. Increasingly, smaller pub-owning breweries are also using this approach. Unlike in conventional managed pubs, the licensee is *supposedly* self-employed. In most cases, their remuneration comes from a percentage (usually 18-20%) of the pub's net turnover. From this the licensee pays himself and all their staff plus incidentals like employer's liability insurance and Council Tax.

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So, what freedom do licensees have to run their own business? In truth, not a lot. The pub company sets the opening hours and the prices, decides what products will be sold, prescribes the menu for any food offer and provides all the equipment. Licensees can also be chucked out at short notice (immediately in the case of Just Add Talent). If there's a stock deficit then they are charged for it and these can be mysteriously large. The advantages for the licensee are the low in-going costs (Hive requires £5000, Nest £3000), they get a roof over their head and have a prospect of making money. To do the last, though, they'd probably need to be taking over £10k a week. Urban, sports-oriented pubs seem to do best under this sort of regime but there are many disgruntled ex-licensees who found the arrangement a quick way to lose their money.

Greene King's Hive scheme offers a somewhat different arrangement in that the fran-

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chisee is guaranteed a franchise fee income of £20k, topped up (if earned) with performance-related bonuses. Staff costs still need to be paid though. Hive pubs have a food offer with live sports and events. Nest pubs are wet led, predominantly located in busy high streets, with a pizza and pie food offer, live sports and events.

The current number of these agreements is unknown, but they have certainly been growing rapidly. Many tenants have been effectively thrown out of their pubs so that the company can convert the pub to what, for them, are more lucrative arrangements.

You can see why the companies prefer this model. It frees them from the responsibility of employing staff whilst retaining full control over what the pub actually does. Additionally, most of the key Pubs Code requirements don't apply to franchised pubs. Back in 2021, a cloud seemed to appear on the franchise horizon when the Supreme Court ruled that

Uber drivers were not self-employed. The parallels with retail agreement licensees are striking and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs are known to have taken an interest. Given the amount of control that the companies exert, can they really argue that these licensees are self-employed? However, nothing has yet come of this and franchising continues to grow.

You may have read recently that Wetherspoons has entered the franchising arena. This, though, is a quite different model. They are looking to partner with the likes of holiday parks, universities and hotels who then provide and kit out the pub space. As franchisees they have access not just to the brand name but also the company's supply chain and their training and marketing resources. The financial arrangements aren't clear but presumably the franchisee pays a set fee plus there may be some kind of profit-sharing arrangement.

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NEWS. GOSSIP. SCANDAL

Update from Ilkley Brewery: Mar 2026

Two new beers are available:

Deep State 4.3% Single Hop HBC638 Pale.

Good Life 4.1% Single Hop Dolcita Pale.

Ilkley Blonde is now 4% instead of 3.9% and is lighter in colour, i.e more blonde!

Ilkley Gold is "new" at 3.9% but was the old Ilkley Blonde.

The Ticket Office and Yard in Ilkley have been purchased from Twisted Bars(Ilkley) Ltd. by a new entity and are continuing to trade.

Also in Ilkley, Fuggles & Golding has been closed - but not for long. New ownership was quick to take over.

The Lord Clyde, Thornton Road, Bradford, has just had completed an upgrading of its outside area. In time for several events over summer and autumn, no doubt, as well as facilitating general outdoor supping.

The Pack Horse, Westgate, Bradford was offering Tetley cask. But even that has gone now.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PUB

Long before the pub, as we now know it, there was the **alehouse**, the origins of which predate the Norman Conquest – though they seem not to have been numerous back then. Up until the late 14th century, plentiful records exist on brewing but little on where the beer was consumed so we can presume it mostly happened domestically.

The hop arrived from Belgium at the end of the 14th century. Its preservative qualities made brewing in bulk more economical (and it made beer taste better) but it also turned brewing into a more specialist trade. Meanwhile the Black Death created a labour shortage which drove up wages and, therefore, disposable income. Both factors led to an increase in alehouses, accompanied by greater regulation of their activities – many in authority regarded them as dens of idleness. Something like 24000 alehouses existed by 1577 when proper record keeping began. These establishments were simply houses which happened to sell beer or ale.

Taverns first surfaced in the 12th century. They were more wine-oriented, were generally

much larger and catered for a “better class” of customer. Never common (only 339 were recorded in the 1577 survey), their golden age was the 17th century when they became **the** place for gentlemen to meet. By 1800 they had been largely usurped by the new-fangled Coffee House.

The **Inn**, as a house for accommodating travellers, also appeared in the 12th century and evolved from larger private houses. By the 16th century, two styles of inn had emerged – the block type comprising a major building facing the road and the courtyard type where buildings ranged round an inner courtyard. The George, Norton St Philip, Somerset is an early example of the former whilst the New Inn, Gloucester is the earliest surviving courtyard inn. By the late 17th century, inns had been boosted by the growing coaching network and the new turnpike roads.

Also around this time, the monopoly on distilling gin was swept away, coinciding with a rise in beer excise duty – leading to the “gin craze” and its attendant social problems. This culminated in the Beer Act of 1830 which

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effectively threw open the licensed trade and heralded an era in which the pub, majoring on beer, developed rapidly.

The term “**public house**” was first recorded in 1669 but was applied to taverns and inns as well as alehouses. In the years before 1830, many alehouses had increased in size, with specialisation in how rooms were used. Many now had a cellar and, by 1800, “bars” were becoming common. However, the public house was still usually a pretty primitive place.

The 1830 Act saw an explosion in beerhouse numbers with on-licences growing from 82000 in 1830 to over 112000 by 1870. This in turn led inevitably to more and more regulation e.g. around licensing hours, the good character of the licensee and minimum standards in public areas. The growth of the temperance movement also dates from this era.

By 1880 obtaining new licenses had become increasingly difficult hence a scramble by brewers to acquire pubs. This resulted in the “golden age of pub building” with many magnificent erections newly adorning our towns and cities.

The early 20th century featured more clamp-downs by the authorities, including, from 1904, a mechanism for closing pubs deemed superfluous by the magistrates. Between then and 1920, some 12500 licenses disappeared. The Great War brought further restrictions as consumption of alcohol was regulated in the interests of the war effort. The Defence of the Realm Act limited opening hours and its impact could still be felt until 1988 when the loosening of restrictions began.

In the period between the wars, many suburban estates were built to replace slums and new pubs arrived to serve them – though their owners usually had to surrender several old licenses to get a new one. These “improved” public houses were typically large and based on a vision of pubs being more than just a place to drink. Different rooms catered for different types of customer, function rooms accommodated events and meetings and the serving of teas, snacks and more substantial meals became standard. Some places even provided waiter service.

After World War Two, times were hard and money short. Also, social habits began changing with the growth of television leading to more people staying at home. Pubs were still being built or refurbished but, typically, materials would be cheap and design utilitarian.

Since the 1970s the tendency has been to open up pub interiors into single spaces, destroying much of their character. Many pub refurbishments sought short-term gain at the expense of tradition, hence the rash of theme pubs and other horrors. These unwelcome developments led CAMRA to start compiling, in 1991, the National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors and you can read more about that [here](#).

As to the future, little suggests that the appetite for large, open-plan interiors will not continue amongst the bigger operators, driven by the needs for high throughputs and quick returns. On the other hand, the recent rise of the “micro-pub” suggests that for many of us, smaller is more beautiful. Our pub stock still contains an enormous range and variety of pubs and long may that remain the case.

Much of the foregoing was summarised from the excellent book *Licensed to Sell: The History and Heritage of the Public House* by CAMRA members Geoff Brandwood, Andrew Davison and Michael Slaughter and published by English Heritage (ISBN 1 85074 906 X)



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CHAMPION WINTER BEER OF BRITAIN

Announced at Liverpool Beer Festival **Beer Street** by London Brewing Co. was named the CAMRA Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2026. The 4.0% ABV amber best bitter was praised for its spicy rye, toffee, and biscuit notes.

Champion Winter Beer of Britain: 2026: Beer Street – London Brewing Co.

Silver Award (Runner-up): Black Gold – Cairngorm Brewery

Bronze Award went to Green Jack's Baltic Trader Export Stout (10.5%).

The announcement was made in February following rigorous blind judging.

The winning beer competed against hundreds of stouts, porters, strong ales, and barley wines.

NEWS. GOSSIP. SCANDAL

There's another new brewery in town. It reveals in the name Skipton Brewery, which gives a huge clue as to where it is situated. It is the latest creation of that local legendary, and sometime peripatetic, brewing legend Dave Sanders.

Seek it out and enjoy its products.

What was the Brown Cow, a Sam's pub in Little Horton, has been unoccupied for many years and becoming more derelict. The building was recently to have been sold.

The Blue Boar, Thornton has been put up for auction by did not make its reserve. So, no sale and no known future.

The Hill Top, Thornton, opened in mid-April. Good news at last.

Buttershaw Lane WMC, Wibsey offers changing real ales on two handpumps.

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NEWS. GOSSIP. SCANDAL

The Commercial, Thackley, now always has a pump for a Whippet beer. Nice.

Now, this new Bradford brewery has not been active long, but already its beers have been praised for their high quality.

Far be it for TT to bang the drum for any particular brewery, but its products do deserve to be more easily found - by being on more bars.

Of course, all local pubs that can should be supporting local beers. Many do: well done.

The Fairfax Club, Menston, has been confirmed as now being closed. A recent prize-winner, too. We are losing too many.

The Fountain, Eccleshill, is another convert to so-called "Fresh Ale" aka brewery conditioned beer on handpump. Naughty.

The Star / Dalesway, Ilkley.

This former hotel, bar and restaurant in a prominent position town centre could soon be brought back into use as 10 apartments, under new proposals submitted to Bradford Council.

The property sits within the Ilkley Conservation Area, and the planning statement says the design has been "conservation-

led", focusing on repair, reinstatement and careful refurbishment rather than extensive alteration or demolition.

Our local go-to man for pub and brewery history, Malcolm Toft, informs us that the exterior Hammonds clock at the pub was removed a few years ago. The substitute clock was smaller and didn't have Hammonds written on the face. See picture below.



GO ON: TELL THE WORLD

(well, a part of it anyway)

Get your business noticed among these pages.

Over 4100 copies of Tyke Taverner are printed, and distribution is really quite wide. Clearly the majority of magazines will find a

home in the Bradford branch area. However, significant numbers do cross the borders to the likes of the Leeds, Halifax & Calderdale, Wakefield, Keighley & Craven, Harrogate & Ripon, Huddersfield and Woolen branch areas.

Contact the Editor for rates etc.

CONSUMER ADVICE

If you have a complaint about goods or services, please contact Citizens Advice for information and advice:

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PUBS NO MORE Can you put names to them?

Ricky Holden provides the pictures; you provide the answers.

Right:

A long, stand-alone pub which sported splendid Melbourne windows and was, until near the end, a Tetley pub. Situated nearer town than pub 3 and off the main road.

Below:

Not far from the University. Basically a comfortable single roomed bar attached to an hotel. The usual offering was Theakston's and Younger's.



Bottom:

On a major road heading nominally west from the centre, this small-ish pub had multiple rooms with tucked away corners until it was sadly knocked about around 1990. Only ever did Tetley ales.



Note:

All three pub names begin with the same letter

The three pubs featured last time were:

Commercial, James Street, Bfd.
Coach House, Lidget Green
Cardigan Arms, Bradford Moor

Bradford CAMRA socials / events May / Jul. All start at 7.30pm unless stated.

Wed 6 May	Menston Arms and Malt Shovel.	Suggest 1846 Ilkley train from Bfd F/Sq.
Sat 9 May 4pm	Corn Dolly. Presentation and social.	POTY Inner r/u.
Wed 13 May	Bradford CAMRA AGM	Saltaire Bar, Shipley.
Wed 20 May	Record Cafe Bar. Presentation, social.	POTY o/all
Wed 27 May	Peacock, North Parade.	
Wed 3 Jun	Jacobs Well. Presentation and social.	Cider POTY.
Sat 6 Jun 2pm	Peacock Bar, Bingley . Presentation.	POTY outer r/u.
Wed 10 Jun	Exchange Craft Beer House. Pres. X2.	POTY inner r/u; POTS.
Wed 17 Jun	Junction, Baildon. Presentation, social	POTY outer r/u.
Wed 24 Jun	Ainsbury, Thackley. Pres., social.	POTY outer.
Wed 1 Jul	Branch Meeting. Venue TBA	
Thu 9 Jul	Jacobs Well. Start of Real Ale Holiday.	Meet our holiday-makers.

Note: Any bus and train details correct at time of compilation. Do check.

HALIFAX & CALDERDALE CAMRA

Sat 2 May TBC	Minibus tour/Colne Valley Tour	Pick up if minibus, otherwise Huddersfield Bus Station.
Thu 7 May 7.30	Dusty Miller, Mytholmroyd	Open Branch Meeting.
Sat 9 May 12 30	Udders Orchard, 70B Acre Street, Huddersfield, HD3 3EL	Lindley Festival of Cider & Perry.
Wed 20 May 7.30	Nan Moor's	Cider Pub of the Year pres.
Thu 21 May noon	Skipton Town Hall	Skipton Beer Festival.
Thu 4 Jun 7.30	Big Six, Halifax Savile Park,	Open Branch Meeting.
Thu 11 Jun 6pm	Barkisland Cricket Club	Club of the Year presentation.
Sat 13 Jun	St Annes on the Sea Railway Stn.	St Annes away day
Thu 18 Jun 7.30	Halifax Catholic Memorial Club TBC	Open Committee Meeting
Fri 26 Jun 3.30	Meet: Market Tavern, Todmorden (then bus to Glen View, Cornholme).	CAMRAmble: Cornholme → Todmorden (TBC)

For more details, contact our Social Secretaries at social@hxcalderdalecamra.org.uk or see <https://hxcalderdalecamra.org.uk/branch-diary/>

Pubs, Pints, People.



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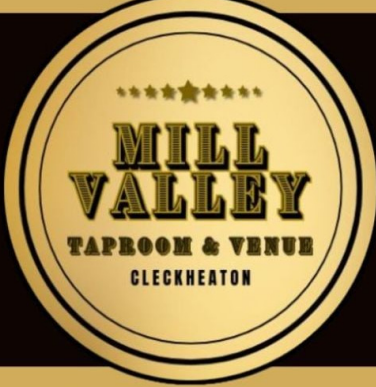
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