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**Stowford Press
Apple Cider**

4.5% ABV

**Stowford Press
Mixed Berries**

4.0% ABV

**Worthington's
Creamflow**

3.6% ABV

WIN!

PRIZE
CROSSWORD
105

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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 COVID-19 debate was weaponised and politicised

But the evidence is clear: non-lockdown Sweden did very well, relative to most EU countries

At the height of the pandemic, a US politician observed that COVID-19 had been “weaponised and politicised”, making sensible debate, and therefore pragmatic solutions, even more difficult.

However, there is evidence on this side of the pond that some of the main newspapers, or at least their contributors, are starting to shake off their tribal allegiances and are analysing the UK's COVID-19 record with something approaching an open mind.

Professor Francois Balloux of University College London, writing in *The Guardian* (see the full article on opposite page), points out that COVID-19 statistics are “inevitably political” and that, rather than enlightening, new data are often used to “harden pre-existing positions”.

However, Professor Balloux discusses the recent huge study of COVID-19 mortality by the World Health Organization (WHO) and concludes that it is a “complex picture ... supporting no single straightforward narrative”.

Even so, according to the WHO's analysis, the professor says that Sweden (which did not lock down) had a COVID-19 fatality rate of “about half the UK's and, while it was above that of the Nordic nations, it still looks flattering, relative to the majority of EU countries”.

The professor also says that the WHO study shows that “the worst performer, by some margin, is Peru, despite enforcing the harshest, longest lockdown”.

Analysis

The professor's analysis, perhaps surprisingly, says that “the strength of mitigation measures does not seem to be a particularly strong indicator of excess deaths”.

In other words, the outcome for nations wasn't as dependent on government action as might be assumed.

However, he points out that famously Draconian New Zealand and Japan, for example, fared very well. The professor believes that “being rich and geographically isolated helps”.

Professor Robert Dingwall of Nottingham Trent University, writing in *The Daily Telegraph* (see page 54), seems to concur with the essence of Professor Balloux's view regarding Sweden, saying that it “had half the excess death rate of the UK and a quarter of that of many eastern European nations”.

As regards the UK, Professor Dingwall says that it was “mid-table”. He says that “the widely circulated view that the UK had a uniquely bad pandemic” is not supported by the data.



The outcome for nations wasn't as dependent on government action as might be assumed



Professor Dingwall, like Professor Balloux, says that the WHO's data “do not support the view that the outcomes have much to do with the restrictions adopted by different governments, how soon they began or the stringency of enforcement”.

Professor Dingwall concludes by asking perhaps the most pertinent question regarding the UK's response to COVID-19:

Why were the carefully prepared plans for a pandemic, developed over decades and approved by the WHO, which did not envisage lockdowns, thrown in the dustbin at the first sign of trouble?

Abandoned

In the professor's words: “Why was the experience of two decades of pandemic preparation abandoned everywhere, except Sweden?”

That will be a perplexing question, indeed, for future historians.

In contrast to *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times* newspaper's report on the WHO study (see page 55) adopted an entirely different tack.

Its review barely mentions Sweden and extensively quoted former SAGE stalwart Sir Jeremy Farrar, described by former Supreme Court judge and libertarian Lord Sumption (see pages 56–57) as “the most hawkish of lockdown hawks”.

Oblivious to the major premise of Professors Balloux and Dingwall, which was that “the stringency of enforcement” did not seem to be a major factor in health outcomes, Sir Jeremy advocated greater stringency – chastising world leaders for a “lack of urgency” and for a failure “to act at the level needed to save lives”.

On the evidence of these articles, *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* are taking a more open-minded and objective approach to the issues, whereas *The Times* appears to be accepting, uncritically, the views of lockdown hawk Sir Jeremy.

The approach of the government during the pandemic has also been perplexing.

Faction

Having torn up our WHO-approved prepandemic plans, the government created SAGE – a narrow faction of

academics – and described its output as “the science”.

Compounding the felony, the government then actively vilified SAGE's critics, using MPs such as Neil O'Brien (see page 59) and apparently employing anonymous online trolls to terrorise those supporting the contrarian views of respected academics and medics, such as Carl Heneghan and Sunetra Gupta.

The opposition was just as sectarian in its approach, lambasting the government for not making even more restrictive rules.

And parliament's actions were equally puzzling, handing over emergency powers to Studio 54 (also known as 10 Downing Street), rather than raking over every policy in the House of Commons.

The collateral health damage of prolonged lockdowns has yet to be definitively quantified.

The economic consequences are more obvious, since government debt has increased by half a trillion pounds or so in the last two years, leading directly to the current inflationary crisis.

The lessons of this strange, and often tragic, chain of events will be defined mostly by future historians – but one moral is that a monoculture in parliament, or indeed in science, which actively seeks to shut down contrarian arguments and debate is bound to end in tears.

In the end, it's not winning arguments which counts – it's being right. And, to be right, you need to encourage debate.

That is true of science, pandemics and, indeed, almost every other area of life.

Tim Martin
Chairman

Editor's note: A battle of ideas has raged in the press about the appropriate government response to the pandemic.

On pages 54–59, Wetherspoon News presents a wide range of views. Former Supreme Court judge Lord Sumption questions the wisdom of lockdown arch advocate Sir Jeremy Farrar (pages 56–57).

In contrast, *The Times* newspaper appears to support the Farrar view (page 55). MP Neil O'Brien (page 59), writing last year, criticises Sweden and supports the UK Government's use of heavy restrictions.

Professor Robert Dingwall (page 54) says that Sweden, alone, stuck to its prepandemic plans, producing good results.

Surprisingly, Matt Ridley (page 58) warns that powers about to be granted to the World Health Organization will allow it, in effect, to order worldwide lockdowns and to impose other restrictions.

Tim says: “Francois Balloux, director of the UCL Genetics Institute, says that the World Health Organization has “ammunition for essentially any narrative”, but that “Sweden’s estimated excess death rate ... is about half the UK’s and, whereas it is above those of the Nordic countries, it still looks flattering, relative to the majority of the European Union”.

A proper examination of the Swedish performance has been dogged by politics, so it’s interesting to see the professor’s view on the issue.”

“SWEDEN? JAPAN? UK? DEBATES OVER WHO HAD A ‘GOOD’ COVID WON’T END

The WHO has spoken but even its huge new report will not settle arguments about pandemic strategies

National Covid death rates are, inevitably, political. How could they not be when they are viewed as evidence for good or bad government on matters of life or death? How did the UK fare compared with, say, Germany? Should both countries have been more like Sweden? However, when new data arrives, far from settling arguments over which pandemic mitigation strategies worked best, it tends to further inflame disagreements or harden pre-existing positions.

So it is with the much-anticipated report by the World Health Organization (WHO) on Covid-associated deaths, released last week. The WHO estimates that around 15 million additional people died because of the pandemic in 2020-2021, about 2.7 times higher than officially recorded deaths.

While staggering, the estimated excess deaths didn’t really come as a surprise to those who have been closely following the situation. If anything, this estimate is lower than many may have anticipated. Indeed, two previous modelling efforts, by the Economist and the University of Washington, suggested around 18 million excess deaths.

That more people died in the pandemic than have been officially registered as Covid deaths should be largely uncontroversial. Many countries simply did not have the diagnostic infrastructure in place to identify every Covid death. The pandemic – and, to an extent, our response to it – has also been devastating to social and healthcare around the world.

Now the WHO report seems to provide ammunition for essentially any narrative and it is unlikely to check the politicisation of the Covid debate – in the UK or elsewhere.

For example, India’s own official excess death estimate is about 10 times lower than the 4.7 million people reported by the WHO. Indian authorities have vehemently rejected the methodology used by the WHO and its estimate for their country. They even opposed publication of the report and released their own 2020 death figures two to three months ahead of schedule to offer a counter-narrative.

Here, many comparisons have been made with other countries to highlight the UK as either the epitome of failure or a roaring success. In fact, according to the WHO report, the UK has fared fairly unremarkably. An estimated 109 excess deaths per 100,000 people places it at 56th in the global ranking of “best performing” countries, and middle of the table relative to the European Union, coming 15th out of the 27 EU member states. The UK’s estimated excess death toll is below Germany’s and Italy’s, but above France’s. According to the WHO estimates, Germany significantly underestimated Covid deaths, France overestimated them and the UK got it about right, suggesting that the much-criticised “death within 28 days of a positive test” approach was a reasonable proxy for Covid death before the Omicron wave.

Some countries became synonymous in the public imagination with particular pandemic mitigation strategies. Sweden has been criticised by some for the lack of stringency of its measures and hailed by others as a shining example of how to protect the rights of its citizens while navigating a health crisis.

To the possible disappointment of both its supporters and detractors, Sweden’s estimated excess death of 56/100,000 is about half the UK’s and, while it is above those of other Nordic nations, it still looks flattering relative to the majority of EU countries.

An additional reason why the WHO report won’t settle many arguments stems from Covid excess death figures being extremely difficult to measure precisely. Even in the absence of ideological disagreements, they do not offer simple, incontrovertible “follow the science” answers. Pandemic excess deaths represent the difference between the number of people who died, relative to a hypothetical number of people who might have died had the pandemic not happened.

The number of actual deaths is accurately registered in high-income countries but this is not necessarily the case in many parts of the world, where estimates can be crude. Getting an accurate number for the hypothetical number of deaths that might have occurred had the pandemic not happened is even more challenging. (The WHO relied on a fairly complex model and the extent to which some of its estimates may have been coloured by modelling assumptions will be scrutinised and criticised.)

The report paints a complex picture supporting no single straightforward narrative. Which shouldn’t be too surprising. A single number for each country is unlikely to capture the full complexity of vastly different socioeconomic situations and two years of often inconsistent policies. Lower-middle income countries in eastern Europe and South America have been particularly badly affected, probably because of a relatively unfavourable age pyramid, low vaccination coverage and disruption to their economy and healthcare systems. Richer countries tended to do better overall, with the exception of the US, which fared quite poorly with 144/100,000 excess deaths.

A few countries kept excess deaths close to, or even below zero, including Australia, Iceland, Japan, Luxembourg, Mongolia and New Zealand. Being rich and geographically isolated helps.

The stringency of mitigation measures does not seem to be a particularly strong predictor of excess deaths. While countries that achieved low excess deaths tended to have fairly tight measures in place, the worst performer by some margin is Peru, despite enforcing the harshest, longest lockdown. This proved ineffective at reducing viral transmission and probably contributed negatively to the excess death toll.

The results from the WHO report will undoubtedly be analysed extensively by pandemic planners, though they are unlikely to be of much help to inform actionable “one-fits-all-follow-the-science” strategies. The major message is that richer, more insular countries kept excess deaths low by limiting the spread of Sars-CoV-2 until the arrival of vaccines and then achieved high vaccination coverage in elderly people. Those relative success stories largely built on pre-existing geographic and socioeconomic advantages rather than unique, well-thought-out mitigation plans.

Read that way, the main thrust of the WHO report boils down to reducing inequality, improving health and providing a robust social and healthcare system offering the best pandemic preparedness. That would be money well spent, even if the next one takes a while to hit.

Francois Balloux is Director of the University College London Genetics Institute.

By Francois Balloux

The Guardian / 8 May 2022

Print credit: Guardian News & Media Ltd 2022

YOUR SAY

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Write to us

Your letter or e-mail really can make a difference. So, please do keep writing. Should you have any suggestions on how we can improve our service, please let us know.

Thank you

wetherspoon



FOOD & DRINKS GIFT CARD

FLAGGING THE BRAVERY OF POLISH AND CZECH PILOTS

Dear editor

Reading the spring edition of Wetherspoon News, I see you featured 'Heroic Polish RAF pilots honoured at landmark pub'.

Would you consider updating the local history on display in The Iron Duke (Wellington, Somerset) to inform visitors of the role played, at the local RAF Culmhead airfield on the Blackdown Hills, by RAF No.2 Polish Wing and RAF Czech Wing?

The Poles were resident during 1941-42 and the Czechs during 1942-43.

These exiled airmen, far from home, helped to defend the local area.

Three are buried locally.

Mr Chris Penney, via e-mail



Tim replies: Happy to oblige. Not only did the incredibly brave Polish and Czech airmen defend the local area, but they played an important role in defending the free world.

HARROGATE BRASS BAND – A BLAST FROM THE PAST



Dear editor

I think you may like this photograph taken in The Winter Gardens (Harrogate). My wife's granddad is in it (first on the right).

Mr Dennis Swales, via e-mail

Tim replies: As the famous writer LP Hartley said in *The Go-Between*: "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there."

This photograph is a fascinating insight into the past. It must be very nostalgic for your family. It would be great if we could display the photograph in The Winter Gardens.

Many thanks for the information.

TIM TO TAKE HIS PLACE ALONGSIDE TOP CHEFS

Dear editor

A request, if I may... my wife has had the opportunity, through corporate links, to be fed by Rick Stein and, recently, Tom Kerridge. We have their signed menus on the wall in the kitchen.

However, we both also enjoy the dining experience at our local Wetherspoon – The Posset Cup (Portishead) and thought to add to our collection a signed 'Spoons' menu. We eat more regularly there, owing to the more affordable offering you provide!

I wondered whether Mr Martin might have the time to sign the front cover of the new cardboard Wetherspoon food menu (which does look and feel very smart indeed). I would frame and add said menu to our wall of famous gastro experiences.

I hope that you may be able to fulfil this request – which I hope does not seem too odd. In anticipation of a positive response and thank you for your attention in this matter.

Best regards

Mr Julian Cornwell, Portishead, Bristol

Tim replies: Not everyone puts me in the same bracket as Rick Stein and Tom Kerridge. However, on further analysis of your letter, I feel that a Michelin star for Wetherspoon is long overdue. I will arrange for a signed copy of the menu, on the basis that it may help our quest for due recognition.

PLEASE WILL YOU FILL THIS PUDDING-SHAPED HOLE?

Dear editor

As a happy customer (also including my wife), visiting lots of your pubs in Kent over a long period and enjoying greatly your excellent range of ales and wines and great food – we are missing the steak & kidney pudding... which is no longer served.

We beg beg beg – please, at some stage, reinstate this most English dish.

Yours faithfully

Henry and Claire May, Dover, Kent

Tim replies: I am pleased to announce officially the return of the steak & kidney pudding, from October, to Wetherspoon's pubs... Remember – you read it here first.

THANK YOU FOR SAVING TIGER FROM EXTINCTION

Dear Tim

I am writing to you regarding The Royal Tiger, in Wednesfield.

As a Wednesfield resident for 50 years, I would like to thank you for saving my local pub and for doing such a wonderful job of its refurbishment.

It has great staff, a warm welcome and beer at the price it should be.

Many pubs in Wolverhampton have been closed down, but The Royal Tiger has survived, thanks to Wetherspoon.

Yours gratefully

Mr D Nicholls, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton

Tim replies: "Tyger Tyger, burning bright, In the forests of the night; What immortal hand or eye, Could frame thy fearful symmetry?"

OK, so William Blake wasn't talking about The Tiger in Wednesfield, but it made an emotional connection with me.

Many thanks indeed for your comments.

THURSDAY-NIGHT FEVER AS TRAVOLTA DANCES IN

Staff and customers at The Romany Rye (Dereham) rubbed shoulders, quite literally, with a real-life Hollywood A-lister, for one Thursday evening at the Norfolk pub and hotel.

While filming in the area, actor and film star John Travolta visited the pub for a bite to eat, much to the surprise of the staff on shift.

Hotel night team leader Warren Knights, pictured with the actor, was one of a handful of 'spotters' to grab a souvenir photo with the celebrity, along with a couple of colleagues.

The visiting actor was more than happy to pose for photos and chat with surprised staff members and curious customers.

Warren said: "I'm convinced this must be one of the most 'A-list' celebrities to ever venture into a Wetherspoon pub."

He added: "The timing certainly didn't help, when attempting to explain to people what had happened. Everyone thought that it was an elaborate April fool's joke!"

Customer Jamie Salter also bagged a selfie and described shaking hands with the movie icon, at the pub, as 'a surreal experience'.

He told the Eastern Daily Press newspaper: "I asked him what he was doing here, because you wouldn't expect to see John Travolta in Dereham. He told me he was there for a week and filming at an old airstrip, for a Christmas movie."

The unusual Wetherspoon visit, of such a high-profile Hollywood celebrity, naturally attracted plenty of media coverage, with the story appearing in numerous national and regional newspapers, as well as online.



TREE-PLANTING BREWER BRANCHES OUT IN BRISTOL

Ale aficionados got to chat with a West Country brewer at The Commercial Rooms (Bristol) while sampling its beers.

Jason Merry of Otter Brewery, based in Luppitt, Devon, hosted a meet-the-brewer night at the pub during the Wetherspoon real-ale festival.

He chatted to customers as they tasted the brewer's Bitter, Amber and Ale products, as well as its seasonal Hawthorn product.

Much of the conversation turned to Hawthorn, as it is the centrepiece of the brewer's environmental focus, in which a tree is planted for every two barrels brewed.

Jason said: "I can't say enough about the staff there – they are so genned up on their ales, with the management really encouraging this."

Pictured on the night (left to right) are team leader Elise Parkinson, Wetherspoon's regional manager Steve Jordan, Jason Merry, pub manager Ben Grainger and team leader Seth Boxall.



AWARDS

COVENTRY

FANTASTIC FOUR ACHIEVE CLEAN SWEEP IN COVENTRY



All four Wetherspoon pubs in and around Coventry have gained recognition in the city's Best Bar None awards, following its relaunch in November 2021.

The Flying Standard (scoring 91 per cent), The Earl of Mercia (90 per cent) and The Spon Gate (89 per cent), all in Coventry, together with The City Arms (90 per cent) in Earlsdon, all received Best Bar None accreditation, following an independent assessment.

The Flying Standard also won the top prize at the awards ceremony dinner, being named as 'overall winner' on the night.

Pub managers Mark Rutherford (The Earl of Mercia), Gavin Healy (The Flying Standard), Tom Clarke (The Spon Gate) and Emma Boardman (The City Arms) are pictured (left to right) with their certificates and trophy, outside Gavin's winning pub.

Each pub also received a plaque to be displayed outside each venue.

Rob Browning, Wetherspoon's area manager for the West Midlands, said: "Congratulations to all four pub managers and their teams for achieving a remarkable clean-sweep for our pubs in Coventry."

"Special congratulations to Gavin and his staff at The Flying Standard for picking up the 'overall winner' title – against tough opposition."

"We are all very proud of their achievement."

Coventry's Best Bar None awards recognise the work by staff at pubs, clubs and other similar premises to improve the safety

and standards of venues and highlight those which are 'raising the bar' for customers on a night out.

Cllr Abdul Salam Khan, deputy leader of Coventry City Council and chair of the city's Police and Crime Board, who presented the awards, said: "The take-up of Best Bar None has been excellent and is something of which the hospitality industry should be rightly proud."

"We all know that the entertainment and hospitality industry has borne a huge brunt of the COVID-19 restrictions over the last two years, and it is fantastic to see how the industry in our city has responded, survived and, now, hopefully begins to grow sustainably."

"The scheme recognises those venues which have demonstrated responsible management and operation of licensed premises, ongoing improvements and social responsibility. Best Bar None's goal is to help to provide a safer environment for all."

"Congratulations to everyone who is a part of the scheme and to those who received special mentions at the awards."

Coventry City Council's licensing team set up the Best Bar None project and administers the scheme, with the support of partners Coventry Business Improvement District (BID) and Destination Coventry, together with West Midlands Police.

ROTHERHAM

BLUECOAT ON THE BUTTON, SAY CAMRA MEMBERS



Receiving the award certificate are (left to right) shift manager Shaun Brown, pub manager Adam Gill, Rotherham CAMRA branch chairman Steve Burns, shift manager Rebecca Pilgrim and Rotherham CAMRA branch pubs campaigns co-ordinator and vice chairman Paul Redfern

The Bluecoat (Rotherham) has been recognised for the quality of its real ale by members of the local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch.

The pub has won first place in the 'pub of the season' winter 2021/22 competition, voted for by branch members of Rotherham CAMRA.

Adam Gill, pub manager at The Bluecoat since April 2019, said: "We are delighted to be named as the 'pub of the season' and thank the Rotherham CAMRA branch members for their support.

"We offer our customers an excellent range of real ales, at all times, including those from regional and local breweries and microbreweries. It is lovely that the team has been recognised for its dedication and hard work."

Among the range of up to nine real ales on offer at the pub, which includes Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King's Abbot Ale and Ruddles, is an ever-changing selection of guest beers.

The Bluecoat, which first opened in October 2000, has previously been voted 'pub of the year' (town and overall) by Rotherham CAMRA and was previously named 'pub of the season' in spring 2018.

The pub is also regularly included in The Good Beer Guide, the annual CAMRA publication, including in the current 2022 edition.

Rotherham CAMRA branch's pubs campaigns co-ordinator and vice chairman, Paul Redfern, said: "The Bluecoat, a pub which is no stranger to winning awards, received the 'pub of the season' award for winter 2021/22 from the Rotherham branch of CAMRA.

"The award is made four times a year, with branch members nominating four pubs to visit and assess each season.

"Each pub is assessed against criteria as set out by CAMRA, including atmosphere, décor, hygiene, service, welcome, community focus, value and sympathy with CAMRA's aims, but, above all, the quality of the real ale and real cider.

"The Bluecoat has consistently served quality real ales since it opened and is a deserving recipient of the award."

PROPER BLOKES FIND A BERTH AT SURREY DOCKS



The Surrey Docks (Rotherhithe) provided the perfect pit-stop for a men's walking group which meets regularly in and around London.

The Wetherspoon pub, in southeast London, is on one of the weekly evening walking routes for members of The Proper Blokes Club (pictured).

The club was set up in September 2020 by organiser Scott Oughton-Johnson (front, second right) to offer a community walk-and-talk group to help to break the stigma of men's mental health.

Scott explained: "It started with a simple Facebook page, showing videos of me walking around my favourite local spots, talking about the issues I've had in the past.

"I wanted to see whether any local lads could resonate with how I was feeling and hopefully get something out of it. It reminded me that, in this struggle, I was not alone.

"A couple of months later, during a break in the lockdown restrictions and when we were allowed to meet in groups again, I put the word

out on the local Facebook group to see whether anyone would like to join me on a walk-and-talk event.

"One lad turned up – and it's grown weekly since.

"The quick growth of the group has shown me that this is something which is really needed in all communities."

The Proper Blokes Club currently offers walking and talking meet-ups in Finchley, Greenwich, Southwark, Sutton, Wallington and Woolwich.

Scott continued: "I want to look into starting up clubs in all London boroughs by the end of 2025, with a view to moving further afield, eventually, outside of London."

The message from Scott: "Let's get talking and walking. Join us and help to break the stigma."

● For full details of the locations and times of the weekly meet-ups, contact: theproperblokesclub@gmail.com
www.theproperblokesclub.co.uk

ROSEBERY STAFF RIDE FOR 25 YEARS

Pictured (left to right) celebrating the pub's 25th birthday at The Lord Rosebery (Scarborough) are shift leader Owen Neal Hayden (on the bike), pub manager Paul Dickinson, bar associate Lauren Briggs and team leader Vicky Dickinson.

The birthday fundraising event, organised by shift manager Emma Chase and Vicky (who joined the team when the pub originally opened in April 1997), collected £143.47 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Fundraising activities, which were organised by Lauren on the day, included taking it in turn to complete 125 miles in 12 hours, in a static bike ride challenge, as well as a cake sale, charity raffle and tombola, fancy dress and face-painting.

The pub was decked out in decorations and there was also plenty of birthday cake for everyone to enjoy.

The pub's manager, Paul Dickinson, said: "It was lovely to celebrate the pub's 25th birthday and to see everyone getting involved and celebrating with us.

"Here's looking forward to the next 25 years of welcoming faces old and new."



JAMES RUNS 60 MILES IN TRIBUTE TO MOTHER

Shift manager James Shields of The Edwin Waugh (Heywood) ran 60 miles over a month to raise money for two cancer charities in memory of his mother, Louise Clynes.

Louise passed away over a year ago, shortly after a cancer diagnosis, at the age of 52.

James, 28, took part in Maggie's Run – a challenge event in which participants must run at least 50 miles in one month.

He notched up his 60 miles mainly by running the 2.5 miles to and from work.

James said: "I did this for my mum, but also to raise money to help people now."

He raised £344 for cancer care charity Maggie's and a further £255 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The pub's manager, Siobhan Higgins, said: "We are all incredibly proud of him."



LARGE BREAKFAST HELPS GAVIN TO KEEP IN STRONG-MAN SHAPE



Gavin Bilton is a regular customer at The Malcolm Uphill (Caerphilly), even though he doesn't drink.

Gavin enjoys a large breakfast (with extra everything) a couple of times per week as part of his training régime.

He explained: "I own and run my own gym, Area 51, not far from the pub – and the team and I enjoy our breakfast there. It is always nicely cooked and value for money."

Gavin, 33, an ex-semiprofessional rugby player, having played in the Welsh Premiership for Bridgend and Newport, has also served for 13 years in the army as an infantry soldier with the Welsh Guards, including two tours of Afghanistan.

It was during his final year in the army that he started to train for his current career as a professional strong man.

At 1.98m in height and weighing 177.8kg, the Caerphilly strong man has already been crowned Wales' Strongest Man twice and won two UK Strongest Man titles in just three years of competing.

Gavin (left), pictured with pub manager John Stephens, said: "I had an interest in the sport from a young age, always wanted to be a strong man and to compete against the world's strongest."

He was among just a dozen competitors at the European competition held in Leeds in April and has his sights set firmly on the world title competition, contested in Sacramento, California.

Gavin added: "My goal is to compete for the World's Strongest Man title within the next two years. I believe that I can do it – 100 per cent. If you don't believe, you won't achieve."

"My wife Gemma, who is an A&E nurse, fully supports me and is my biggest fan."

AWARDS

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

ALE CHAMPION'S LABOUR OF LOVE BRINGS FULL MARKS TO FULL HOUSE



Pictured (left to right) are Mid-Chilterns CAMRA branch chairman Jared Ward-Brickett, shift manager Alex Baker and pub manager Stephanie Robinson. Back (left to right) are team leader Sophie Wesley, bar associate Ella Giles, team leader Alicia Hart and team leader Regan Stokes

The Full House (Hemel Hempstead) has been named Mid-Chilterns CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) Pub of the Year for 2022.

The pub's shift manager and cellar manager Alex Baker has been singled out for special praise by CAMRA members for his efforts in ensuring that the pub offers and serves an excellent range of real ales at all times.

Branch chairman Jared Ward-Brickett said: "Alex has transformed the pub's cellar and ale offering in recent years and deserves praise for his hard work and skill.

"The Full House is a very worthy winner of the award, and Alex has played a vital part in that success.

"The pub champions local brewers Mad Squirrel, Tring, Vale, Rebellion, Leighton Buzzard and others across its six constantly rotating hand-pumps.

"The Full House also offers a host of events with CAMRA members in mind, including 'meet the brewer', 'tap takeover' and 'see the cellar'.

"Alex is well trained in cellar management and is always looking for new brewers to bolster his already-impressive range of ales.

"Local brewers are a focus and are flanked, at all times, by craft keg (also local) and various boxed ciders.

"With drinkers' request boxes, 'battle of the brewers' and festival events held throughout the year, drinkers are spoiled for choice at this family-friendly pub."

Alex, who has worked at the pub since 2015, said: "I am delighted that the pub has won the award, which highlights our commitment and passion for real ale.

"It is a labour of love for me to look after the real ale at The Full House – and it is great that the efforts of all the team here have been recognised."

WOKING

GARY'S CUP RUNNETH OVER AFTER 25 YEARS IN THE GOOD BEER GUIDE

Pub manager Gary Hollis of The Herbert Wells (Woking) proudly displays his certificate from the Campaign for Real Ale after appearing for 25 years in a row in its annual Good Beer Guide.

The achievement, described by a CAMRA spokesperson as "extremely impressive", is a credit to the pub and Gary himself, who has been its manager all that time.

The award was presented by Ian Johnson, chair of the Surrey Hampshire Border branch of CAMRA.

Gary said: "This shows the hard work we put in to making sure that we provide an excellent choice of real ales throughout the year.

"High standards apply to ales, whether they are on the bar regularly, such as Greene King IPA, or from regional brewers occasionally, such as Windsor & Eton brewery's Treason West Coast Pale Ale."

Ian Johnson added: "As well as being impressive, it's extremely consistent to get in the guide every year for a quarter of a century."



EAST DIDSBURY

ALE-LOVERS IDENTIFY PUB AS THE GATEWAY TO PARADISE

Pub manager Kev Muldoon received a certificate as The Gateway (East Didsbury) won South Manchester's 'pub of the month' award from the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

The award was made by the Stockport & South Manchester CAMRA branch, which holds its meetings at the pub.

Kev and his team put in a lot of work to keep up the quality of the ales and offer a good range of regional brews, including those from Brightside Brewery and Saltaire Brewery. Brightside, based in Radcliffe, Manchester, brews the pub's house ale, Gateway to Heaven, a 4.2% ABV pale ale.

Their efforts have been recognised by the fact that the pub has featured in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide for the last nine years, including the current 2022 edition. Kev took over the pub in 2012.

John Clarke, chair of the branch, made a speech in which he spoke not only of the quality of the ales, but also the atmosphere at the pub, which he said was an integral part of the ale-drinking experience.

Branch treasurer Jim Flynn added: "Kev's tenure at the pub has been marked by the high quality of the beer – and this explains why it has nine successive Good Beer Guide entries.

"The team delivers excellent service to customers – and they have responded, making this a vibrant and hugely popular place."

Kev Muldoon is pictured (centre) with John Clarke (right) and Jim Flynn.



STEAK AND CURRY FANS – PREPARE TO GO CLUBBING

Tuesday Steak Club and Thursday Curry Club are back by popular demand

Wetherspoon's ever-popular Tuesday Steak Club® and beloved Thursday Curry Club® have returned.

Back by popular demand, the menu choices for both club-deal days include some celebrated favourites, alongside some brand-new dishes.

Wetherspoon's club meals provide unbeatable value and excellent choice, with offers on a range of great main menu meals.

Classic

Steak Club® is back every Tuesday from 11.30am until 11pm, featuring classic 8oz sirloin steak, served with a choice of jacket potato, chips or Mediterranean salad.

Our prime beef steaks come from Britain and Ireland, are matured for 21 days then seasoned by us.

Also on the Steak Club® menu is the gourmet 8oz sirloin steak, served with either jacket potato or chips, together with peas, tomato, mushroom, three onion rings and a steak sauce – choose Jack Daniel's® Tennessee Honey glaze or creamy peppercorn sauce.

Steak Club® also offers mixed grill (gammon, pork loin, rump, lamb and sausage) and large mixed grill (gammon, pork loin, rump, lamb, two sausages, fried egg and six onion rings), each served with jacket potato or chips, as well as peas, tomato and mushroom.

Gammon

If steak isn't your thing, choose 5oz gammon and egg, 10oz gammon and eggs or BBQ chicken melt, as well as lemon & herb char-grilled half chicken or hot and spicy char-grilled half chicken.

Club-deal choices include almost any drink (soft or alcoholic) as part of the price.

A magnificent seven curries are now being served in Wetherspoon's Curry Club® – now back every Thursday from 11.30am until 11pm.

All Curry Club® meals are served with basmati pilau rice, plain naan bread, poppadums and mango chutney.

Vindaloo

The Curry Club® collective includes chicken korma, sweet potato, chickpea & spinach curry, chicken tikka masala, Mangalorean roasted cauliflower & spinach curry, chicken jalfrezi, beef Madras and Naga chilli chicken vindaloo.

You can change your plain naan bread to a garlic naan and/or 'make your curry large' (for an additional cost) by adding a vegetable samosa and an onion bhaji. Side dishes of two onion bhajis or two vegetable samosas are also on the menu.

With a chilli logo heat-rating system clearly marked on the menu, from one chilli (very mild) to five chillies (extremely hot), there is a curry to suit all palates.

Whatever your meal preference, steak or curry, make sure that you join the club – now back at Wetherspoon.

CURRY CLUB®



Mangalorean roasted cauliflower & spinach curry; Large chicken tikka masala



Club-deal choices include almost any drink (soft or alcoholic) as part of the price



STEAK CLUB®



Gourmet 8oz sirloin steak; Lemon & herb char-grilled half chicken; Mixed grill

COMEDY LEGEND CRYER LEAVES HAPPY MEMORIES IN HATCH END



A man walked in to a pub – the pub was The Moon and Sixpence and the man was Barry Cryer.

Barry, a legend of comedy, was a regular at the Hatch End pub since 2009 and brought much laughter and joviality to its staff and fellow regulars. He died earlier this year, aged 86.

He was known as a panellist on radio shows such as I'm Sorry I haven't a Clue, yet wrote for an enormous range of stars, including Tommy Cooper, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, George Burns, Frankie Howerd, Kenny Everett and Les Dawson, together with famous double acts Morecambe and Wise and The Two Ronnies.

On the day he died, The Evening Standard mentioned all of the exclusive clubs which he had visited, such as The Garrick, yet quoted him as saying: "I've been in to all these clubs because everyone assumes I'm a member."

"I much prefer my local Wetherspoons [sic], The Moon and Sixpence in Hatch End."

He is fondly remembered by the pub's manager, Josie Kennedy, and her staff.

Barry once opened a beer festival for her at the pub and regularly signed photos and autographs for customers.

Josie (pictured) said: "Barry was a very big part of this pub. He would come in on a weekend evening with a group of friends, who would generally sit at the same table, although Barry was a smoker; so, if the weather was nice, they would sit in the garden. "He always started a conversation with a joke."

Jokes and anecdotes were Barry's stock-in-trade, but Josie now has one of her own about him and her son Killian.

Killian was once bribed by one of his teachers – the deal was that, if Killian obtained Barry's autograph, the teacher would never again put him in detention.

The teacher, a huge fan of the comedian, kept his promise.

RITZ'S CUSTOMERS' SOAK-UP SECRETS REVEALED BY BEERMATS BREWERY

Customers got the chance to 'meet the brewer' at Ritz (Lincoln) when representatives from Newark-based Beermats Brewery hosted an evening at the pub.

The brewery's director, Gregg McDermott, led the evening with a short talk, before answering questions and sitting down at customers' tables to offer tastings of his wares.

These included a 4.2% ABV golden citrus ale Soulmate, a 3.9% ABV pale ale Teammates (10p from each pint of which goes to the Alzheimer's Society), a 5.1% ABV red pale ale Matador and a 4.6% ABV stout Diplomat.

Gregg (pictured right) said: "When it comes to ales, the team at Ritz knows its stuff. It was great to meet the customers, who showed a lot of interest in us as a brewery and the different styles of beer we brew."

James Michael (left), shift leader at Ritz, said: "We haven't been able to put on a meet-the-brewer event for a few years, so it was great to be able to do this again."



THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS • EPSOM

FROM GLASS COLLECTOR TO PUB MANAGER – HOW SEL HAS SOARED



Pub manager Sel Devecioglu is a Wetherspoon success story.

Originally from the coastal resort of Marmaris, in Turkey, he moved to the UK in September 2005. Within a month, Sel had started working as a glass collector at The Skylark (Croydon).

He recalled: "I used to work in nightclubs, bars and restaurants in Marmaris, so you could say that I have been married to the industry for a long time."

Sel continued: "When I started work at The Skylark, I could speak hardly any English, but was able to clear glasses and plates and, in 2005, because there was still smoking in pubs, ashtrays as well.

"Steve Meeke was the pub manager and helped me to learn English and also helped me to fix problems with my Turkish work visa, so that I was good to work. He always saw potential in me.

"After four years' work for the same company, the visa allowed me to be able to move jobs, but I have not left Spoons – it is an absolutely fantastic company."

Sel also has Wetherspoon to thank for his personal life, as he met his wife of 11 years, Derya, when she was out with friends at The Skylark.

Sel said: "She has been a huge support and gets a lot of credit for my success."

In August 2008, pub manager Steve (now Sel's area manager) moved to The George (Croydon) – and Sel followed him there.

Sel's career continued to progress through the four grades of shift management – and he took on his first pub manager role in 2015 at The Sir Julian Huxley (Selsdon).

Sel said: "I loved my time at The George. I learned a lot, with training courses and English courses, and it was also a time when many things happened in my life.

"We got our mortgage to buy our first house; we got married; had our children.

"The George was voted south London 'pub of the year' in 2011. We were in the Good Beer Guide and we had a fantastic team. I am very proud of my years there."

Sel revealed: "When Steve left The George, people thought I would become pub manager, but I was waiting for The Sir Julian Huxley – it was always my aim to manage that pub. When the chance came, it was the right time for me to leave The George."

Sel and his family still live in Selsdon, just two minutes from the pub; however, he took over as pub manager at The Assembly Rooms (Epsom) in November 2018, a half-hour commute from home.

He said: "The pub is three times bigger than the one at Selsdon and I am more than happy here.

"I have built up my fantastic team (70 staff members) and, together, we are achieving everything possible within the company."

Sel is keen to praise the whole team, although we cannot name all 70 here, but a handful gets a special mention.

Among them are shift leader Sonata Paskeviciene, who started at the pub as a cleaner in 2019 and has progressed rapidly; shift leader Esme Kennedy, who has faced many personal challenges and is now a driving force for the team; deputy manager Kara Nash, who Sel describes as 'sister to everyone' and is 'number-one on the people side of things', responsible for recruitment, appraisals and staff welfare; kitchen manager Primo Kobylinski, who has worked for the company for 10 years.

Luvana Daly, Nik Petrov, Robert Bennett and Corey Nelson also form part of the management team which Sel praises as "the best I've ever worked with".

Sel added: "They are all proud to work for Wetherspoon – and I am proud of them all. Together, we are making our mark in Epsom.

"I am also proud of working for Wetherspoon. I wouldn't change anything.

"I have learned my whole life, through Wetherspoon, and have a whole network of people who know me in the communities of Croydon, Selsdon and now Epsom. Community is the best thing."

Sel concluded: "My parents, back home in Turkey, have visited the UK a couple of times and are also so proud of me working here and what I have achieved."

AWARDS

ALLOA

HUGE ACCOLADE FOR THE BOBBING JOHN



The Bobbing John (Alloa) has been named, by Pub & Bar magazine, as the best pub in Clackmannanshire.

The magazine covers the whole of the UK – and, as part of its 2022 National Pub & Bar Awards, the pub was named as a ‘county winner’.

The pub, managed by Sarah Hill, was chosen by an editorial panel which, over the course of a whole year, monitors customer service, feedback and various other elements to a venue’s operation.

The magazine’s editor, Tristan O’Hana, said: “Well done to The Bobbing John. We choose pubs based very much on consumers’ journeys – their experiences and how the pub facilitates those.”

Sarah (pictured) said: “We are delighted to have been chosen as the best pub in Clackmannanshire.

“We do work very hard to make the experience a very pleasant one for all our customers, so it is amazing to be recognised for that work.”

The pub opened in 2014 and added an open-air café area for customers during the period of COVID-19 restrictions on alcohol sales.

Sarah added: “It’s part of the pub itself, with café tables – and customers can order coffee, paninis and so on using the Wetherspoon app.”

Indoors, the pub is a monument to the area’s history and is noted for its ‘Treepot’ sculpture – a nod to Alloa’s pottery industry which, weekly, used to produce 40,000 teapots.

Sarah will now be invited to the National Pub & Bar Awards’ final ceremony in June to collect the pub’s certificate.

Regional winners and the national winner are also named at the event.

HULL

ADMIRAL PILOTED PERFECTLY AS HULL EMERGES FROM LULL

The Admiral of the Humber (Hull) was among the shortlisted local businesses at the Hull Business Improvement District (BID) Awards 2022.

The HullBID Awards celebrate and reward the very best the city centre has to offer.

The Admiral of the Humber was shortlisted in the ‘commitment to training and development’ category, one of 11 categories.

The award highlights the positive commitment to developing employees to their best potential.

Now in their eighth year, these awards aim to shine the spotlight on businesses large and small, together with the people behind them, striving to help Hull to shine, all of which are particularly deserving of recognition.

An independent panel of judges, with great experience of business in Hull’s city centre, scrutinises the nominations in each of the award categories, before shortlisting finalists.

Pub manager Katie Younger said: “We were so pleased to be nominated and thrilled to be recognised by HullBID as one of three shortlisted finalists for the ‘training and development’ award.”

HullBID’s executive director, Kathryn Shillito, said: “It’s been a very difficult two years, but the awards are a chance to focus on city-centre businesses getting back to what they do best.”

The awards ceremony gala evening took place at DoubleTree by Hilton, Hull.

FORMER TRAIN-SPOTTER DAVID BECOMES A SPOON-SPOTTER



David Bingham's pub tour of Britain was interrupted by the various restrictions on the hospitality industry, yet he has begun it again with renewed gusto.

Even during pandemic-affected 2021, David managed to add 256 Wetherspoon pubs, taking his total so far to 651.

Accompanied frequently by his partner, Una Cooper, David continued his tour which included the couple's local – The Observatory (Ilkeston).

David and Una travel by public transport, whenever possible, and take selfies and photos of meals, drinks and our pubs' architectural features.

David said: "We enjoy a drink and any unique features in the pubs. We always have a full English breakfast or a wrap."

Una added: "I am a vegetarian. David's favourite drink is San Miguel. We like the curries – and David enjoys everything on the menu. I like to read the history of the pubs and why they are named the way they are."

Una and David have been together since June 2018.

Although she has travelled far and wide across the globe, David is a rail enthusiast and wanted to show his partner new places closer to home.

He added: "Visiting Wetherspoon's pubs has taken us to many places in the UK, and our favourite pubs have included Royal Victoria Pavilion (Ramsgate), The Navigation Inn (Kings Norton) and The Scarsdale Hundred (Beighton)."

The furthest Wetherspoon pubs the couple have visited are The Alexander Bain (Wick), which is 542 miles from Ilkeston, and The Tremenheere (Penzance) – 323 miles away.

Next up are the Northern Ireland pubs, which Una and David are hoping to reach as part of their annual round-Britain cruise in June.

Una joked: "It's all my fault. I got David a Wetherspoon pub directory in 2019 and didn't realise that you cannot give an ex-train-spotter anything which contains a list."

"David loves planning the journeys and likes how Wetherspoon gives a building a new lease of life."

CHICKEN CHOICES

– SO MANY TO CHECK OUT

Unbeatable taste and value to be found in range of new meals

Chicken-lovers are spoiled for choice with a range of **NEW** meals at Wetherspoon.

Pubs are now offering four boneless chicken dishes, each served in a basket – a great range to choose from and unbeatable value which also includes either a soft or alcoholic drink as part of the price.

The selection includes: boneless basket, with three southern-fried chicken strips and five chicken bites; chicken breast bites basket (10 battered chicken pieces); southern-fried chicken strips basket (five strips); Quorn™ 'no chicken' nuggets (eight pieces).

Spicy

Each selection comes with coleslaw and a sauce (BBQ, sticky soy, Jack Daniel's® Tennessee Honey glaze or sweet chilli, depending on your chicken choice) and is served with chips or spicy rice.

Added to the menu, too, among the pub classics (which also includes your choice of soft/alcoholic drink as part of the price), is a **NEW** char-grilled lemon & herb half chicken, served with peas and chicken gravy.

You can choose chips, mash or jacket potato to accompany this **NEW** chicken meal.

Marinated

Wetherspoon's char-grilled half chicken dishes, served on the bone, are marinated, slow cooked and then finished on the char-grill.

The half chicken is either a lemon & herb version, with lemon & herb glaze (plus coleslaw and a garlic & herb dip) or a hot and

spicy version, with Naga chilli & citrus glaze (plus coleslaw and a Naga chilli dip).

Both meals are served with your choice of chips, spicy rice or salad and are offered with a soft/alcoholic drink as part of the price.

Curries

Chicken can also be found in many other Wetherspoon menu choices, across the range, including small plates, deli deals®, salads and pastas, pizzas, burgers, curries and the 'fresh from the grill' menu section.

Among the choices are BBQ chicken pizza, southern-fried chicken & smoky chipotle mayo wrap, chicken & maple-cured bacon salad, BBQ chicken melt, grilled chicken burger, chicken jalfrezi and chicken tikka masala.

Check out the food menu today at your local Wetherspoon pub, or online, for a great range of chicken dishes (and others) to suit everyone.

Food facts

Wetherspoon's chicken nuggets and roasted chicken breast are always whole breast fillet, never formed or reformed.

The chicken served in Wetherspoon's pubs is purchased from approved suppliers, with Wetherspoon undertaking regular farm and site inspections.



Boneless basket; Char-grilled lemon & herb half chicken; Quorn™ ‘no chicken’ nuggets



Small plates – Southern-fried chicken strips; Quorn™ nuggets; Chicken wings; Chicken breast bites

THINGS, AND CUSTOMERS, ARE LOOKING UP AS ROOF DOME BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE



Wetherspoon is committed to ensuring that its pubs are maintained in first-class condition.

And this is certainly the case at The Commercial Rooms (Bristol).

The listed building itself dates from 1810.

It was originally a meeting place and coffee house for the city's merchants.

Wetherspoon purchased the property and reopened it as a pub in August 1995.

One of the outstanding features of the building is its glazed domed roof which also underwent glass repairs and decorating externally.

Wetherspoon has now completed its maintenance project on the roof, a project which took seven months, using skilled craftsmen.

Wetherspoon's regional property manager, Jon Matthews, said: "The work entailed the complete stripping and replacement of the existing roof.

"The work was approved with the listed building officer – and we used a mixture of existing and new slates.

"The domed roof is a key feature of the building – so it was important to restore it.

"The internal ceiling repair work was carried out in the evening and during nights to ensure that the pub could remain open at all times.

"We are still working on further ceiling repairs to the building, likely to take a further few months to resolve, and are also using specialist contractors in their field to carry out these works.

"We used a local contractor for the project – and it also employed local roofing subcontractors, specialists in their field.

"The craftsmanship on the project was exceptional."

The pub's manager, Ben Grainger, said: "The Commercial Rooms is an historic and beautiful building.

"We take great pride in the pub, with the domed roof restoration highlighting this."



POET STEVIE SMITH IMMORTALISED WITH PORTRAITS IN PALMERS GREEN



Three portraits of the poet and novelist Stevie Smith (1902–71) have been placed on permanent display inside The Alfred Herring (Palmers Green, north London).

Smith, regarded as one of the 20th century’s most distinctive and individual poets, used to live in Avondale Road, close to the pub, where a blue plaque has been erected in her honour.

The portraits are the work of local artist Fionn Wilson, who moved to Palmers Green in 2020 and began researching the history of the area to find inspiration for her work.

The figurative painter, originally from South Shields, has her work featured in public collections, including the Museum of London, the National Coal Mining Museum, the Marx Memorial Library and the Museum of Enfield.

Fionn, pictured with the paintings, said: “I discovered that, although Stevie Smith was very well known and highly thought of, there was actually very little in the area to commemorate her life.

“I am a customer at The Alfred Herring and approached Wetherspoon to see whether it would be interested in commissioning my art.

“The pub already features a lot of local history, with framed posters and information boards, so I thought that it would be a good addition to those items already on display.

“I was delighted when Wetherspoon agreed – and the result is that the artwork is now hanging in the pub for all to see.”

There are three portraits in the pub, each depicting Stevie Smith in a different light to illustrate her inquisitiveness, stoic cynicism and her love for local beauty spot Grovelands Park.

The main painting is 60cm by 50cm, the other two measuring 40cm by 30cm.

The pub’s manager, Bogdan Huica, said: “The pub is named after a local war hero, and so we are delighted to extend our commitment to local history with these portraits of Stevie Smith.

“We are also extremely pleased that the paintings have been undertaken by a customer of ours.”

CHANTELLE’S PURPLE PATCH A BOON FOR EPILEPSY ACTION

Kitchen associate Chantelle McNeill of The Thomas Ingoldsby (Canterbury) raised £82 for an epilepsy charity on Purple Day.

Purple Day is an annual event designed to raise awareness of epilepsy and generate funds for Epilepsy Action.

Chantelle, who is an epilepsy sufferer, made purple cupcakes incorporating Epilepsy Society flags and colours and used purple, arched balloons and glow-sticks to decorate the pub. Team leader Grant Duffin helped to decorate and supported on the day.

The pub’s manager, Ali Stevenson, said: “I am very proud of Chantelle and was happy to say yes when she came up with the idea. We all supported her on the day.”

Pictured (left to right) are bar team leader Olivia Bridges, shift manager Lori Taylor, bar associate Charley Hayes, Chantelle McNeill, bar team leader Amber Ingleton and bar associate Anna Jobling.

● Further information about the condition and about Epilepsy Action can be found here: epilepsy.org.uk





VIEW TO A THRILL

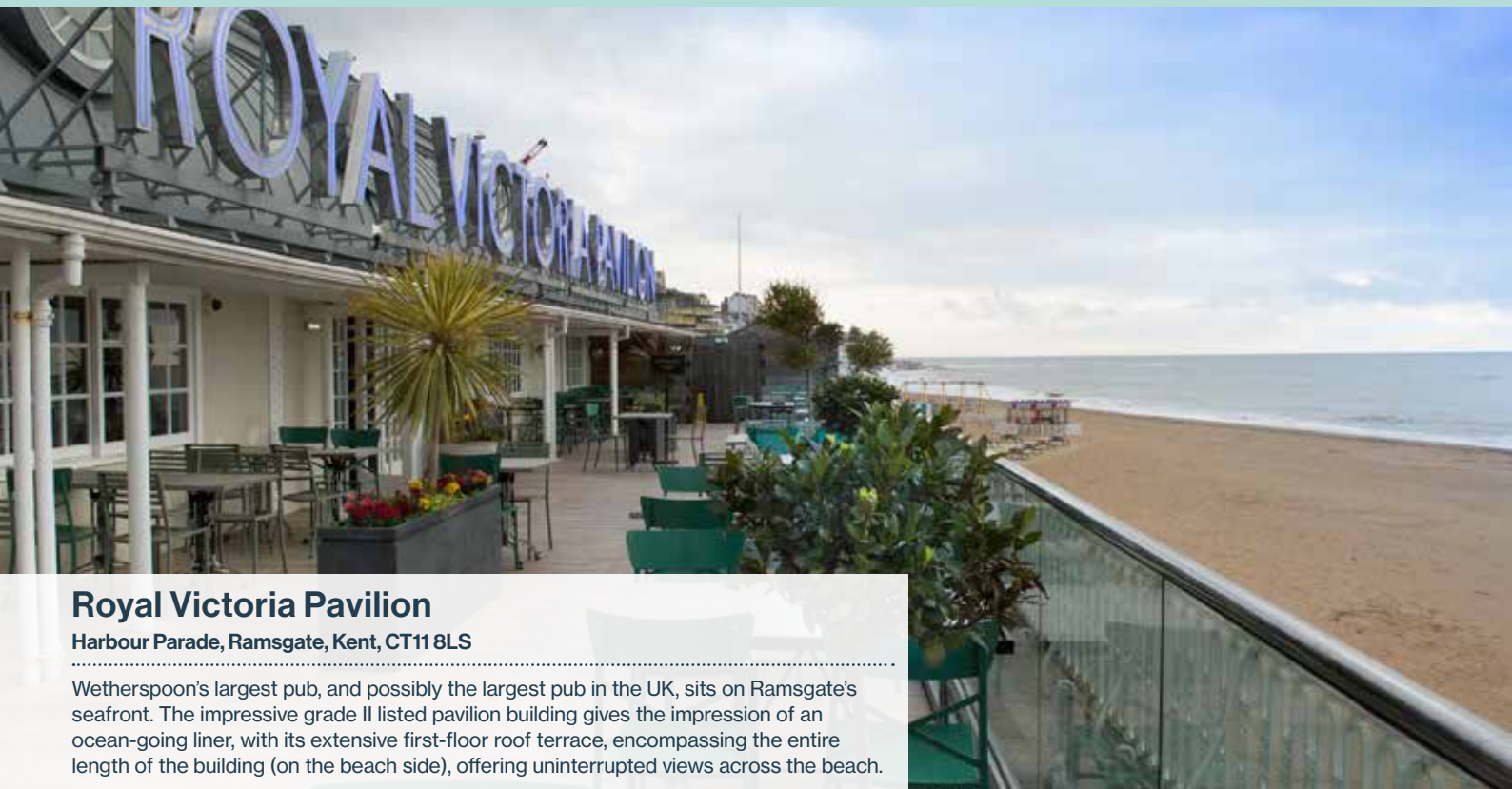
Pubs in stunning locations, from Oban to Ilfracombe, allow customers to relax and enjoy al fresco food and drinks next to spectacular scenery

While you are out and about this summer season, enjoying the sunshine and able to travel freely again, make the most of some stunning locations at a Wetherspoon pub.

Enjoy a pint, a cool glass of Pimm's or a cuppa in a Wetherspoon pub garden or roof terrace 'with a view' – and experience some spectacular scenery near the coast or in the countryside.

Most Wetherspoon pubs offer an attractive and spacious outside drinking area, from a pavement café-style space, decking, courtyard and roof terrace to beer gardens large and small.

However, here, we highlight 10 pubs also offering a wonderful view, while you make the most of warm-weather socialising and a friendly, great-value Wetherspoon welcome.



Royal Victoria Pavilion

Harbour Parade, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 8LS

Wetherspoon's largest pub, and possibly the largest pub in the UK, sits on Ramsgate's seafront. The impressive grade II listed pavilion building gives the impression of an ocean-going liner, with its extensive first-floor roof terrace, encompassing the entire length of the building (on the beach side), offering uninterrupted views across the beach.

The Admiral Collingwood

Wilder Road, Ilfracombe, Devon, EX34 9AP

Situated on the Ilfracombe seafront, the large first-floor roof terrace at this pub, which is surrounded by a glass balustrade, takes advantage of the spectacular views over the Devon coast.

This new-build pub has a very unusual and award-winning design, the inspiration for which was based on the sea's movement.



The Mount Stuart

Landsea House, Stuart Place, Cardiff, CF10 5BU

Located in the old dockland area of the city, the first-floor non-smoking roof terrace of this pub offers spectacular panoramic views over Cardiff Bay.

The pub is housed in a former two-storey dock building, once the offices of Mount Stuart Dry Docks Ltd – now a striking development with an eye-catching gull-wing roof.

The Capital Asset

26 Tay Street, Perth, Perth and Kinross, PH1 5LQ

Until c1452 the early capital of Scotland, historic Perth is the location of this pub, situated on the western bank of the River Tay.

Housed in the imposing former Perth Savings Bank building, alongside the tall spire of St Matthew's Church of Scotland, this pub has fantastic riverside views of the town, which can be enjoyed from the front outside area.



PUBS WITH A VIEW



The Central Bar

13–15 High Street, Carrickfergus, County Antrim, BT38 7AN

This pub is in the centre of town, by the waterfront in Carrickfergus, which sits on the northern shore of Belfast Lough and is the gateway to the Causeway coast and glens.

The paved outside area offers room to enjoy al fresco drinks and a meal, as well as views across the water and of the adjacent Norman-built Carrickfergus Castle.

The Castle Hotel

St Peters Square, Ruthin, Denbighshire, LL15 1AA

A large, attractive paved garden, at the back of this pub and hotel, offers glorious views of the surrounding countryside, including the distant hills of the Clwydian Range.

There is a pretty wooden pagoda, covered bench seating with overhead lanterns and large umbrellas, as well as illuminated decorative blossom trees, shrubs and plants.



The Foley Arms Hotel

14 Worcester Road, Great Malvern
Worcestershire, WR14 4QS

This pub and hotel, located in the Victorian spa town of Great Malvern, are housed in a stunning old Georgian-style coaching inn.

Situated in the heart of the town, which lies at the foot of the Malvern Hills, many of the hotel rooms, as well as rear outside terrace, offer spectacular views across the Severn Valley.

The Angel Hotel

1 New Quay Road, Whitby
North Yorkshire, YO21 1DH

This pub and hotel are perched on the harbour side, close to the historic swing bridge over the River Esk and just a short walk from the main beach.

From the outside terrace, views can be enjoyed across the bustling harbour, where fishing boats and pleasure craft ply their trade in this characterful and historic location.



The Corryvreckan

The Waterfront Centre, Railway Pier, Oban
Argyll and Bute, PA34 4LW

This bustling waterfront location, on the former Railway Quay, is built on land reclaimed from the sea when the railway reached Oban in 1880.

From the pub's garden, customers can watch the ferries arriving from, and departing to, the islands and can enjoy views across the harbour and surrounding coastline.

The Forty Foot

The Pavilion Centre, Marine Road
Dún Laoghaire, County Dublin, A96 P862

Enjoy drinks and meal from the second-floor balcony terrace of this pub, overlooking the harbour and marina to take in the wonderful sea view.

Named after the famous Forty Foot bathing inlet situated under a mile along the rock-strewn coast at Sandycove, this pub is located at Dún Laoghaire harbour.



PUBWATCH PROCESS PROMOTED BY WETHERSPOON'S EFFORTS

Company praised for its 'huge support' for scheme by chairman of National Pubwatch committee



Wetherspoon is proud to be an active member of pubwatch schemes across the UK.

Pubwatch aims to achieve a safe, secure and responsibly led social drinking environment in all licensed premises, thereby reducing alcohol-related crime.

Those involved in their individual pubwatch scheme work together to maintain safety across their venues and ensure that anyone barred from one venue is barred from all.

Wetherspoon encourages its managers and teams to participate in existing schemes and, where none is set up, actively assists them in setting up new schemes.

Presently, more than 530 Wetherspoon pubs are confirmed to be participating in a pubwatch scheme.

The company's ambition is for all of its pubs to be members of a local pubwatch.

Wetherspoon's solicitor, Katie Doyle, who is involved in assisting the company's pubs with pubwatch schemes, said: "We fully support individual pubwatch schemes, as well as National Pubwatch, which oversees the whole project.

"Pubwatch provides increased security and safety for both customers and staff, as well as a close working relationship with other venues, councils and police forces.

"Overall, this results in fewer behavioural issues, owing to the deterrent which it provides.

"Customers can have confidence in socialising in a venue which is an active member of a local pubwatch scheme."

National Pubwatch's committee chairman, Stephen Baker OBE, added: "Wetherspoon is an important partner, as well as a sponsor, of the National Pubwatch awards, held annually in the House of Lords.

"The company has championed the rights of local managers to exclude troublemakers and was a key partner in defending this principle when local schemes have been challenged in the High Court.

"Its support for pubwatch is evident from the huge number of its managers who participate in their local schemes."



Rachael Fisher
 Pub manager – The Star (Hoddesdon)

Pubwatch chair – Hoddesdon and Broxbourne

Rachael joined Wetherspoon as a part-time bar associate in 2008, progressing through the ranks at The Moon and Cross (Waltham Cross) to take over as pub manager for two years.

When The Star (Hoddesdon) newly opened in December 2014, she became pub manager and, within a year, had helped to set up the local pubwatch group.

Rachael recalled: “The new licensing officer, Tal, approached me and asked for my help to launch the group.

“I had previously been involved at Waltham Cross and, between us, we got the ball rolling and I have always been chair.

“We have a different licensing officer now, Zoe, but have a very good relationship and work hard to make it successful.”

Rachael added: “As well as helping to keep customer behaviour within acceptable levels, the scheme ensures that all of the pubs communicate and support one another.

“It’s a community-based voluntary initiative which goes beyond customer behaviour.

“It encompasses all aspects of the town, including events, cleanliness and even how traffic affects the town.

“I don’t think that people appreciate how much hard work is involved and what a valuable and important scheme pubwatch is for everyone.”

Dani Semmens
 Pub manager – The Horseshoe (Wombwell)

Pubwatch chair – Wombwell

Dani Semmens took on two new roles in December 2021, when she was appointed pub manager at The Horseshoe (Wombwell) and chair of Wombwell pubwatch.

She joined Wetherspoon as a part-time bar associate in February 2012, while studying for a degree in psychology, spending three years in that role at The Joseph Bramah (Barnsley).

Dani progressed through the ranks, transferring between the two pubs, wherever the roles demanded, before taking on her first pub manager position at The Horseshoe.

Dani revealed: “The previous pub manager was also the pubwatch chair, so it made sense to continue that link – and everyone was happy for me to take on the role.

“I had been involved with the group in Barnsley, attending meetings in the pub manager’s absence, so it was all great experience for me.”

Dani continued: “Wombwell has a small town centre – and we do liaise with the Barnsley group, as well as share a licensing officer.

“Being part of the scheme promotes communication between pubs, particularly independent ones. We collaborate and support one another, developing relationships with the council, police and other licensees.

“As well as sharing issues and ideas, pubwatch helps to promote a great sense of community.”





PUBS READY TO WELCOME FANS OF SPORT FOR SUMMER OF BRUM

Wetherspoon's hostelries prepared as city hosts Commonwealth Games

Birmingham is hosting the 2022 Commonwealth Games this summer (28 July–8 August), welcoming to the UK more than 4,500 athletes from 72 nations and territories of the Commonwealth.

And visitors to the games will be able to enjoy a warm welcome at several Wetherspoon pubs in the city and across the West Midlands, with the nearest Wetherspoon pub to the main athletics venue, Alexander Stadium, being just half a mile away.

Athletes will compete in 26 sports (including para sports) – and the 2022 Commonwealth Games will feature the largest para sport programme in the games' history.

Pivotal to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will be the enhanced and refurbished Alexander Stadium, the venue for both the opening and closing ceremony, along with hosting the athletics competitions.

The opening ceremony takes place at 7–10pm on 28 July.

Located in Perry Barr, the already-established and internationally renowned athletics venue and home to UK Athletics, Alexander Stadium, has been redeveloped for these games.

Birmingham's three indoor arenas, the NEC, NEC Arena and Arena Birmingham, will host various sports.

The NEC's largest halls will host boxing, judo, table tennis and weightlifting (and para powerlifting), as well as freestyle wrestling.

The NEC Arena will host badminton, while Arena Birmingham will host artistic and rhythmic gymnastics.

Several other venues, located across the West Midlands, will host specialised and other outdoors sports, across the 283 medal events.

Nearest Wetherspoon pub



Wetherspoon's pubs across Birmingham and the West Midlands will also be offering a warm welcome to locals and visitors attending the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

The Wetherspoon pub nearest the main athletics venue, Alexander Stadium, is located just half a mile away.

The Arthur Robertson

Walsall Road, Perry Barr
Birmingham, B42 1AA

- Opening times: 7am until midnight (Sunday to Thursday); 7am until 1am (Friday and Saturday) – extended, during the Commonwealth Games, from the usual 8am opening
- Food served from opening until 11pm, every day
- Outside area with 30 seats
- Step-free access and accessible toilet facilities

The pub is ideally situated right next to the newly built Perry Barr rail station (the closest station to the stadium) and also has a main bus stop within 30 metres. It is located next to the main entrance to the One Stop shopping centre and just three miles from Birmingham's city centre.

Arthur Robertson, after whom the pub is named, was a British athlete who competed in the London 1908 summer Olympics and trained at the nearby Alexander Stadium, with Birchfield Harriers.

He was the Harriers' first Olympian and medal winner, with an individual silver in the steeplechase. Robertson also won gold in the three-mile cycling team race, in the 1908 games.

The Arthur Robertson pub has strong sporting links, not only with athletics, but also with football, where fans meet before watching Aston Villa play at the nearby Villa Park (also the host venue for rugby sevens during the Commonwealth Games).

The pub is very close to Birmingham Brummies speedway at Perry Barr Stadium. The same track, under 300 metres from the pub, is used by both speedway and greyhound-racing.

Perry Barr Stadium was the original Alexander Stadium site and once home to the Birchfield Harriers.





Wetherspoon accommodation

If you are looking to extend your visit to Birmingham during the period of the Commonwealth Games, Wetherspoon also offers accommodation in the city.

The Briar Rose

25 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham, B2 5RE

- Opening times: 7am until 1am (every day) – during the Commonwealth Games
- Food served from opening until 11pm, every day
- Step-free access and accessible toilet facilities
- Hotel accommodation: 40 bedrooms (with single, double, twin, family, executive double and luxury rooms)

The Briar Rose offers a 40-bedroom hotel above the pub (with its own entrance).

The pub-and-hotel venue is situated in the heart of Birmingham city centre, three minutes' walk from New Street train station and 5-10 minutes from Moor Street and Snow Hill train station.

It is a 15-minute journey (by train) from Birmingham Airport/NEC.

The hotel is the perfect place to stay during the Commonwealth Games.

● **To book accommodation at The Briar Rose, visit: www.jdwetherspoon.com/hotels/england/west-midlands/the-briar-rose**





Other nearby Wetherspoon pubs

Here are the other nearby Wetherspoon pubs, including all in Birmingham's city centre, some of which are very close to Commonwealth Games event venues.

The Dragon Inn

Hurst Street, Birmingham, B5 4TD

- Opening times: 8am until midnight (Sunday to Thursday); 8am until 1am (Friday and Saturday)
- Food served from opening until 11pm, every day
- Outside area with 80 seats
- Step-free access and accessible toilet facilities



The Figure of Eight

236–239 Broad Street, Birmingham, B1 2HG

- Opening times: 7am until midnight (Sunday to Thursday); 7am until 1am (Friday); 7am until 2am (Saturday) – extended, during the Commonwealth Games, from the usual 8am opening
- Food served from opening until 11pm, every day
- Large 200-seater beer garden
- Step-free access and accessible toilet facilities



The Soloman Cutler

Regency Wharf, Broad Street
Birmingham, B1 2DS

- Opening times: 8am until 1am (Sunday to Thursday); 8am until 2am (Friday and Saturday)
- Food served from opening until 11pm, every day
- Lloyds bar with music
- Outside area with 80 seats
- Step-free access and accessible toilet facilities



The Square Peg

15 Corporation Street, Birmingham, B4 6PH

- Opening times: 7am until midnight (Sunday to Thursday); 7am until 1am (Friday and Saturday)
- Food served from opening until 11pm, every day
- Step-free access and accessible toilet facilities



Did you know?

The Commonwealth Games is an international, multisport event, held every four years (except during World War II in 1942 and in 1946).

The first Commonwealth Games was held in 1930 in Hamilton (Ontario, Canada) – then known (and until 1950) as the British Empire Games. Eleven countries and 400 athletes participated in just six sports (aquatics, athletics, bowls, boxing, rowing and wrestling).

The 26 sports being competed this time, at Birmingham 2022, are aquatics – diving, aquatics – swimming and para swimming, athletics and para athletics, badminton, basketball 3x3, beach volleyball,

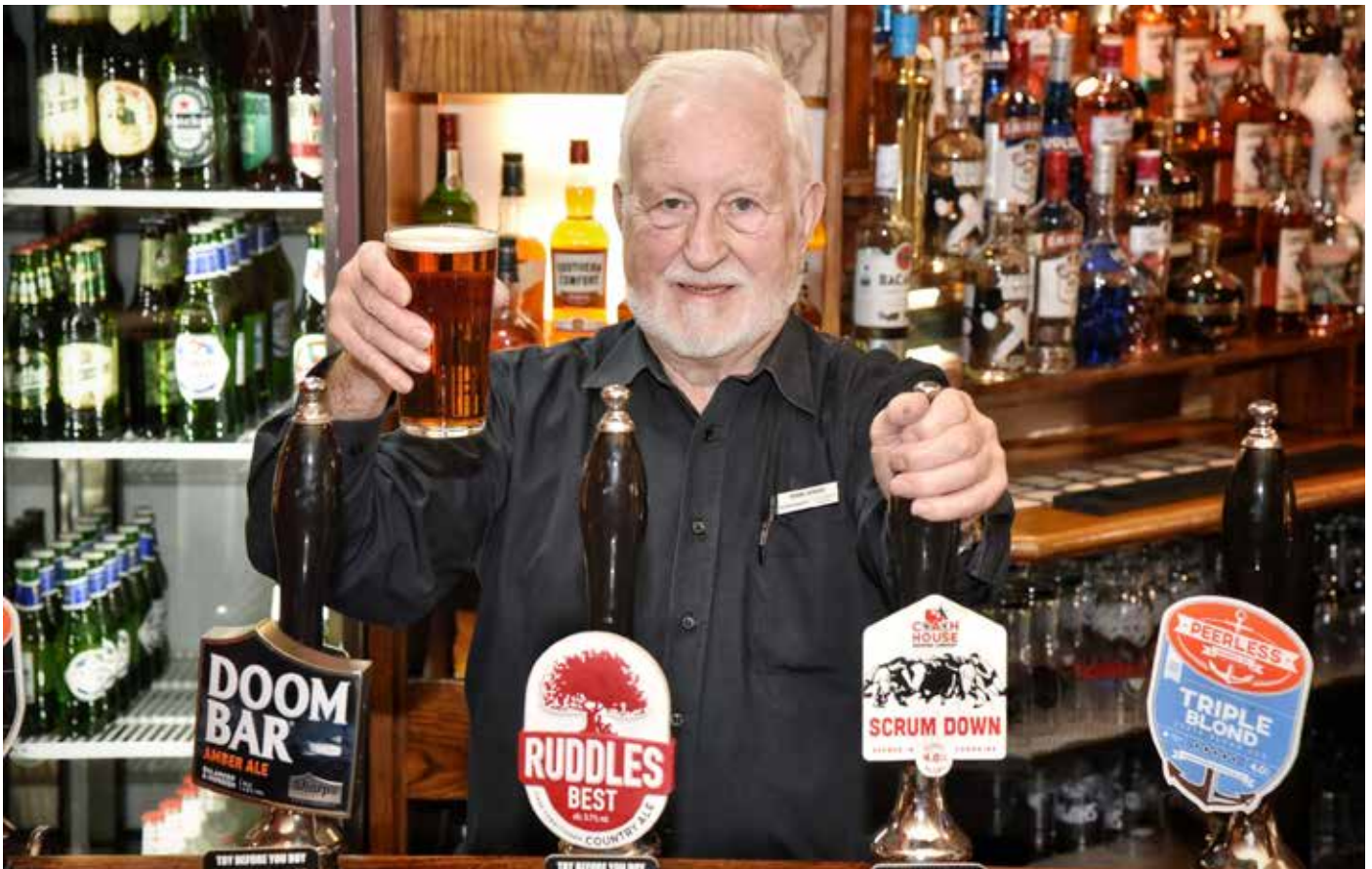
boxing, cricket T20, cycling – mountain bike, cycling – road race, cycling – time trial, cycling – track and para track, gymnastics – artistic, gymnastics – rhythmic, hockey, judo, lawn bowls and para lawn bowls, netball, para powerlifting, rugby sevens, squash, table tennis and para table tennis, triathlon and para triathlon, wheelchair basketball 3x3, weightlifting and wrestling.

Judo and cricket (2022 will be the first time for the T20 format and women's game) have returned, although shooting has been dropped since the 2018 Commonwealth Games in the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia.

The UK has hosted the Commonwealth Games on six previous occasions: London (1934); Cardiff (1958); Edinburgh (1970 and 1986); Manchester (2002); Glasgow (2014).

THE PREMIER • WIDNES

AGE IS NO BARRIER FOR TEAM LEADER JOHN, 82



Wetherspoon's pubs attract customers of all ages and every background... and the company's workforce is no different.

From teenage students to the more mature employees with a previous career and a variety of skills to offer, Wetherspoon is proud of its diverse personnel.

Team leader John Morrissey has worked for Wetherspoon for 15 years, having started by helping for a few hours a week during the summer of 2007 at The Ferry Boat (Runcorn), where his son Mike was pub manager.

Mike is now a Wetherspoon area manager (with more than 25 years' service), while Liverpool-born John, who now works at The Premier (Widnes), celebrated his 82nd birthday in March.

John began his working life as a television and video engineer, with Radio Rentals. He was a field engineer, senior technician and then customer care manager, before taking early retirement.

He recalled: "I decided to call it a day at 55 and thought that I would be able to occupy myself with gardening and DIY.

"A friend, who drove for Jacobs (the biscuits and cracker company), popped round one day with a box of biscuits for me and to show me his delivery wagon. He suggested that I should think about taking a test to drive lorries.

"I passed the heavy goods vehicle test and got a delivery job with Whitbread, driving long haul with overnights, all over the UK, until my early 60s. During my final year with the company, I moved into stock control, an office-based job, rather than driving, before retiring again.

"Then, one day, Mike asked me to help at the pub for a few hours – and I have been with Wetherspoon ever since."

John works 6–10am, on Monday and Tuesday morning, as well as 8am–noon on a Wednesday, working back of house, line-cleaning and doing cellar upkeep, before switching to front of house at 9am, when the pub opens, working on the floor and bar.

He admitted: "It keeps me young. Most of the bar staff are young – and that is very informative for me. I keep up to date with modern affairs, thanks to them.

"If I just chatted to people of my own age, we would always be reminiscing and talking about what went on in the past.

"You can stagnate like that. I like to look forward.

"I also live on my own, since my wife Sandra passed away two years ago, having been together for 50 years.

"The job, which I enjoy very much, helps me to get out and about, talking to and meeting a range of people.

"That's what I would miss the most if I were to stop working at Wetherspoon."

Away from work, John meets up with Mike (one of four sons), who still lives locally, for a drink once or twice a week.

He was also, until selling his sailing yacht last year, a keen sailor – both competitively and for leisure.

He concluded: "It was too expensive to keep, and, with the job, I didn't use it as much."

RIGHT-TO-REPLY DENIED IN HIT JOB ON CHARLES HENRY ROE



Wetherspoon's pubs regularly come under scrutiny from customers and journalists.

The company's staff work hard to ensure that, when in a Wetherspoon pub, customers receive the best service and experience.

However, the company and individual pubs are not above criticism.

But Wetherspoon believes, when criticism in the press is targeted at a particular pub, that it is important that the company should have the right to put over its side of the story.

One such instance was when a journalist from Leeds Live (website) asked Wetherspoon for a response to an article which he was planning to write (and subsequently did).

The journalist claimed that, of all Wetherspoon's pubs in Leeds, our pub in Cross Gates, Charles Henry Roe, had the lowest TripAdvisor rating.

Among the claims made were that social distancing was not being followed, the pub was unclean and staff lazy and rude.

Wetherspoon gave a full response, as requested by the journalist; however, he chose not to use it, so readers ended up with a one-sided story.

Here is the response from Wetherspoon:

The pub's TripAdvisor rating is based on 14 customer reviews since the pub opened in July 2020.

The pub has a Google review rating of 4.1 out of 5, based on 401 customer reviews, which we consider a more accurate reflection of the management of the pub.

The pub is awaiting a visit from Leeds City Council to give it a rating under the Scores on the Doors food hygiene rating scheme.

Wetherspoon's pubs have an average food hygiene rating of 4.98 (out of 5), with 774 of 786 pubs which have been assessed under the scheme having a maximum 5-star rating.

The pub scores highly under the company's own internal quality assessment programme which involves mystery customers attending the pub and ranking it against several specific criteria, including cleanliness, service and delivery times.

While customer feedback is important to Wetherspoon, we do not accept that the pub is unclean or that staff are lazy or rude.

Mandatory social distancing, along with a wide range of other measures to ensure that the pub was COVID safe, was applied at the relevant times, when regulations were in place.

We hope that those customers who did have a negative experience of the pub from their visit will visit again – and we look forward to welcoming them back.

The pub's manager, Tom Reeve (pictured), said: "Charles Henry Roe is a very popular pub, with great customers and staff.

"The Leeds Live story was unfair and one-sided – and we are pleased to have the opportunity to put across our side of the story.

"The pub plays an important role in the community – and we look forward to doing so for years and years to come."

APPRENTICES TAKE CHANCE TO EARN WHILE THEY LEARN

With 10 apprenticeship programmes, Wetherspoon has much to offer ambitious workers

Apprenticeships are available to all^o Wetherspoon employees in pubs, kitchens and hotels.

The company offers 10 apprenticeship programmes, in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, to everyone – from newly appointed associates to area managers and beyond.

Apprenticeships are a great opportunity to gain invaluable experience, to learn while you earn, to develop and improve teamwork, problem-solving skills, communication, organisation, customer service, product knowledge and leadership, along with maths and English (if GCSE level 4/grade C not already achieved). All work is completed during working hours.

On successful completion, participants are awarded a nationally recognised qualification.

During March, the 15th annual National Apprenticeship Week brought together the entire apprenticeship community to celebrate the value, benefit and opportunity of apprenticeships.

The theme for National Apprenticeship Week 2022 was 'build the future' (#buildthefuture), reflecting on how apprenticeships can help individuals to develop the skills and knowledge for a rewarding career – and how Wetherspoon can develop a talented workforce equipped for the future.

Michelle Crooke, Wetherspoon's recruitment and qualifications manager, said: "At Wetherspoon, we had 250 apprenticeship achievers during 2021, 70 per cent of whom received a promotion during or shortly after completing their programme.

"We currently have almost 500 apprentices, throughout the company, so we definitely have something to celebrate."

Here, some of Wetherspoon's apprentices share their stories on how their apprenticeship programme has helped their career development and reveal their plans for the future.

^oGovernment eligibility criteria apply.

Name: *Hayden Brown*

Position: **Bar associate** Pub: **The Coliseum Picture Theatre (Cleethorpes)**

Hayden said: "When I chose to take part in the apprenticeship scheme, it had been less than a year since I decided to leave college. I enjoy my job, so thought I would like to expand on my knowledge of the industry and also wanted to gain my maths qualification.

"I'm still an associate with the company – and the apprenticeship is really supporting my ambition to become a team leader. I applied for a team leader role and received really good feedback from my pub manager.

"My career plan, for after I finish the apprenticeship scheme, is to become promoted to team leader and expand my knowledge further by doing the level 3 food & beverage apprenticeship."



Hayden Brown
Bar associate

Name: *Kim Parkinson*

Position: **Shift manager** Pub: **The Twelve Tellers (Preston)**

Kim said: "I am currently on a level 4 hospitality manager apprenticeship, having previously completed a level 3 apprenticeship, as I want to further my knowledge in the hospitality industry.

"During my time on apprenticeships, I have been promoted from team leader to shift manager.

"The programme has helped me to understand the type of manager I want to be.

"I plan to stay with Wetherspoon and move to a head-office role.

"I would like to run my own pub first and complete the level 6 chartered manager degree apprenticeship alongside this."



Kim Parkinson
Shift manager

Name: *Lewis Whitbread*

Position: **Kitchen shift leader** Pub: **The Steel Foundry (Sheffield)**

Lewis said: "The apprenticeship definitely played a massive role in my ability to carry out my job effectively and gave me a greater understanding of the job role and the importance of carrying out procedures correctly and thoroughly.

"I feel that the apprenticeship gave me a greater understanding of why we do the things we do, daily, and the significance of them, by giving me a better understanding of my job role.

"It allowed me to progress with the company at a faster rate, with several promotions in quick succession and, even more so, a desire to continue that development.

"I could not recommend the scheme highly enough to anyone looking to develop a career with the company."



Lewis Whitbread
Kitchen shift leader



Rosie Maude
Shift leader

Name: *Rosie Maude*

Position: **Shift leader** Pub: **The Percy Shaw (Halifax)**

Rosie said: "I started the apprenticeship as a team leader and have since been promoted to shift leader.

"I feel that I would not have progressed so quickly (two promotions within 10 months) without the apprenticeship opportunity.

"I left school to go travelling and went to college to study beauty therapy, while working for Wetherspoon, but soon realised that it wasn't for me.

"I wanted to learn about the hospitality industry – and the apprenticeship has offered me that. I am hoping to take my third year apprenticeship next.

"It is never too early to think about your next steps, so you need to set yourself goals and targets to aim for."

THE CORONATION HALL • SURBITON

SMALL CHANGE TO HUGE CHANGE – SOFIANE’S INSPIRING JOURNEY



Sofiane Takorabt, pub manager at The Coronation Hall (Surbiton), first started working for Wetherspoon more than 17 years ago.

He joined the company as a kitchen associate in January 2005 and, having recently arrived from his home country of Algeria, couldn't speak English.

Known as Sof, he was hired through a colleague, who was also Algerian, to work in the kitchen in The Kings Tun (Kingston upon Thames), where he worked hard and showed determination to develop – and this was spotted by Ian Taylorson, pub manager at the time.

During his time at The Kings Tun, Ian encouraged Sof to take an English course, to improve on his language, as he could see potential in his work ethic.

Sof, who attended college where he took a course in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), said: "Ian saw that I could work hard, and I am extremely grateful to him."

He progressed well and was subsequently promoted to kitchen manager at The Kings Tun.

In 2012, The Watchman (New Malden) was newly opening – and Ian, now an area manager, asked Sof to help with the launch and run the kitchen.

Sof recalled: "As the kitchen was the first open-plan one in which I had worked, I spent a lot of time communicating directly with customers. This made me want to learn more of the front-of-house side of things."

So, Sof moved from the kitchen to the bar to learn and gain experience. Approximately six months later, he was promoted to pub manager at The Edward Rayne (Raynes Park), now closed.

Nine months after that, Sof applied for a larger pub, The Coronation Hall, where he is currently the pub manager.

Summing up his approach to the job, Sof said: "I work very hard and show determination, but it is also important to treat your staff well, to create a positive team environment.

"If you are prepared to work hard and show determination, there are great opportunities with Wetherspoon."

THIRTY YEARS SINCE TALLY HO, AND DEBBIE'S STILL IN THE SADDLE



When regional manager Debbie Whittingham was invited to attend a meeting, at The Moon Under Water (Manchester), she was in for a surprise.

Wetherspoon area and regional managers, together with general manager Ged Murphy (all pictured), had gathered to recognise Debbie's 30 years of service for the company, with a surprise celebration.

Recently appointed as an employee director (a member of the company's board of directors), Debbie's Wetherspoon career began as a shift manager in 1992, at The Tally Ho (North Finchley), with her first pub manager role coming a year later, at J.J. Moon's (North Harrow), both now closed.

Debbie recalled: "I was due to start a nursing degree, in Sheffield, and was working in pubs while I waited for the course to begin.

"I liked the work and attended an open day, having seen an advert in the newspaper, for a pub company offering careers in the industry.

"I knew nothing about Wetherspoon and was curious, so went along to find out more. One thing led to another, I filled out an application form, had a successful interview and was offered a job.

"I thought it was all too good to be true, so drove to North Finchley to see The Tally Ho (in 1992, there were very few Wetherspoon pubs outside of London) to see for myself.

"I had never seen a pub like it before, it was just beautiful and

completely revolutionary at the time, including a no-smoking area, which was unheard of then. Wetherspoon clearly did pubs very well and always have done."

When Debbie joined, the company had just 38 pubs and had yet to float on the stock market.

She confirmed: "It was still very early days for Wetherspoon, but I joined, never did my nursing degree and have loved every minute."

Debbie became pub manager at The Tichenham Inn (Ickenham), in 1999, before becoming an area manager in 2002.

She was named Wetherspoon's 'area manager of the year' in 2014, having taken on her current regional role the previous year, covering the West Midlands.

Debbie is also head office sponsor for the company's Women's Network Group, providing support for the Wetherspoon initiative.

She concluded: "I love my job, it's incredibly varied and I meet and work with some amazing people.

"Together, everyone helps to make Wetherspoon what it is today."

General manager Ged Murphy said: "Debbie has done a tremendous job for Wetherspoon in the last 30 years.

During this time, she has been instrumental in many changes and has developed lots of our people along the way.

"Debbie – many thanks for all of your hard work and commitment during this time."

WE TOP HYGIENE CHARTS FOR PUBS

Wetherspoon's industry-leading ratings are not an accident, but are the result of the company's unrelenting pursuit of excellence

Wetherspoon's pubs consistently top the charts in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), among the biggest pub chains.

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

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 0 requires 'urgent improvement'.

Wetherspoon had the highest average FHRS rating, per premises, of any large pub company.

It was ahead of pub companies including Slug & Lettuce and Walkabout and was also rated higher than restaurant and sandwich chains, including, PizzaExpress, Miller & Carter, Pret a Manger and Greggs – although all of those companies also scored highly.

Of our pubs, 781 currently have an FHRS rating, with 98.34 per cent of those achieving the highest-possible rating of five.

Scotland operates the Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS). This scheme has a pass/fail rating – with 65 Wetherspoon pubs in Scotland gaining a 'pass' score – a 100-per-cent success rate.

The ratings for both FHRS and FHIS follow an independent assessment of food hygiene at premises, determined by local authority environmental health officers visiting outlets to assess hygiene levels.

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

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

Wetherspoon's personnel and retail 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 in either scheme.

"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 records

Did you know?

As well as the independent assessments by the FHRS across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and the FHIS in Scotland, Wetherspoon also monitors its own pub hygiene standards.

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

The only independent government scheme assessing food hygiene standards

FOOD HYGIENE RATING



	Total premises scored	Average premises score out of 5
Browns	20	5
Waitrose	345	4.99
Aldi	777	4.99
Nando's	402	4.98
Wetherspoon	781	4.98
McDonald's	1123	4.97
GBK	38	4.97
TGI Fridays	75	4.96
Walkabout	20	4.95
Slug & Lettuce	80	4.95
Lidl	658	4.95
Greggs	1345	4.94
Sainsbury's	926	4.94
Miller & Carter	112	4.94
Giraffe	14	4.93
ASK	59	4.93
Tesco	1729	4.93
PizzaExpress	315	4.92
Las Iguanas	40	4.92
Pret a Manger	367	4.92
Morrisons	386	4.92
Oakman Inns	23	4.91
Table Table	44	4.91
O'Neill's	34	4.91
Starbucks	769	4.91
Costa Coffee	2080	4.91
Burger King	398	4.9
Bill's	68	4.9
Be At One	32	4.9
Nicholson's	63	4.9
All Bar One	49	4.9
YO! Sushi	46	4.89
Yates	35	4.89
Hungry Horse	237	4.89
Prezzo	156	4.88
Sizzling Pub Co	177	4.88
KFC	805	4.87
Vintage Inns	149	4.87
Asda	525	4.86
Café Rouge	40	4.85
Chef & Brewer	135	4.85
Côte	86	4.84
Brewers Fayre	125	4.84
Coffee#1	94	4.84
Zizzi	112	4.83
Turtle Bay	42	4.83
Young's	128	4.83
Bella Italia	82	4.82
Harvester	155	4.82
Carluccio's	41	4.8
Geronimo	35	4.8
Beefeater	126	4.8
Toby Carvery	141	4.8
Subway	1367	4.78
Caffè Nero	545	4.77
Loungers	174	4.74
Pitcher & Piano	16	4.69
BrewDog	44	4.67
Brains	69	4.32

Information in this table was sourced from www.scoresonthedoor.org.uk on 3/5/22, listing 781 Wetherspoon pubs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with an average food hygiene rating of 4.98. 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.

GEORGE HOTEL RIGHTLY PROUD OF ITS MAGNIFICENT SEVEN



Many of our pubs (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) have, in successive annual hygiene inspections, achieved the highest-possible rating of five.

Among the company's pubs achieving a continuous maximum rating of five is The George Hotel (Hailsham).

It has achieved the top rating on each inspection since opening in 2010 (the most recent being in March 2022).

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

The pub, in East Sussex, has been managed for two years (in September) by James Goldsmith (pictured).

He also previously worked there as a shift manager, before spells at The London & County (Eastbourne) and The John Logie Baird (Hastings), and has been with the company for 10 years.

Shift manager Samantha Gray has worked at the pub since it opened in May 2010, progressing from bar associate to her current role. Kitchen manager Julie McLoughlin (pictured) has been at the pub for 11 years and is described by James as an 'unsung hero', when it comes to the pub's hygiene rating success.

He explained: "Julie set up a list of weekly jobs for her kitchen team, on top of what is already in place by the company, years ago.

"Those tasks were then adopted for the front of house too, with a real focus on attention to detail.

"We have built up a culture of good practice.

"The little things have become second nature and are the first things which staff look for.

"If you take care of the small jobs, before they become a large problem, then issues don't escalate unnecessarily.

"For example, we ensure that maintenance issues are reported immediately and not left to become a big problem down the line."

The highest-possible rating of five is something of which James and his team are rightly proud, with notices in pride of place by both pub entrances.

James said: "It is hugely important to the whole team and, although customers don't mention it, they are very aware, especially since the pandemic and lockdowns.

"The fact that our scores are still good just highlights the fact that our performance and standards did not drop during those closures.

"We place a high priority on being a clean, tidy and safe pub – and the five rating is a reward for doing our job to the best of our ability."

WETHERSPOON, ITS CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES HAVE PAID £5.6 BILLION OF TAX TO THE GOVERNMENT IN THE LAST 10 YEARS

The government needs taxes, but there should be tax equality between supermarkets and pubs, says Wetherspoon

In Wetherspoon's 2019 financial year (12 months to July 2019), before COVID-19, it generated £764.4 million in tax – about £1 in every £1,000 of ALL UK government taxes. The average tax generated per pub in 2019 was £871,000.

In the financial year ended July 2020, when pubs were closed for a long period, and the company made a substantial loss, £436.7 million of taxes were generated, net of furlough payments. The table[^] below shows the tax generated by the company in its financial years 2012–2021.

During this period, taxes amounted to about 40 per cent of every pound which went 'over the bar', net of VAT – about 15 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 understands the need for taxes, yet, like the hospitality industry generally, believes that there should be tax equality among supermarkets, pubs, restaurants and similar businesses.

"Until recently, supermarkets have paid zero VAT on food sales, whereas pubs, restaurants and hotels, for example, have paid 20 per cent.

"The chancellor, Rishi Sunak, in July 2020, announced a temporary reduction to five per cent VAT for pub and restaurant food sales, but VAT has now reverted back to 20 per cent.

"Pubs also pay about 20p a pint in business rates, whereas supermarkets pay only about 2p.

"It's quite wrong that dinner parties in Chelsea, for example, pay zero VAT for food bought from supermarkets, when pub customers pay 20 per cent VAT for fish and chips.

"Equality and fairness are important principles of efficient tax régimes, and we urge the government to introduce equality in this area – sensible tax policies will increase investment and government revenues."

Wetherspoon's tax payments in financial years 2012–2021	2021 £m	2020 £m	2019 £m	2018 £m	2017 £m	2016 £m	2015 £m	2014 £m	2013 £m	2012 £m	Total £m
VAT	93.8	244.3	357.9	332.8	323.4	311.7	294.4	275.1	253.0	241.2	2,727.6
Alcohol duty	70.6	124.2	174.4	175.9	167.2	164.4	161.4	157	144.4	136.8	1,476.3
PAYE and NIC	101.5	106.6	121.4	109.2	96.2	95.1	84.8	78.4	70.2	67.1	930.5
Business rates	1.5	39.5	57.3	55.6	53.0	50.2	48.7	44.9	46.4	43.9	441.0
Corporation tax	–	21.5	19.9	26.1	20.7	19.9	15.3	18.1	18.4	18.2	178.4
Corporation tax credit (historic capital allowances)	–	–	–	–	–	–	-2.0	–	–	–	-2.0
Fruit/slot machine duty	4.3	9.0	11.6	10.5	10.5	11.0	11.2	11.3	7.2	3.3	89.9
Climate change levies	7.9	6.1	10.4	9.2	9.7	8.7	6.4	6.3	4.3	1.9	74.0
Stamp duty	1.8	4.9	3.7	1.2	5.1	2.6	1.8	2.1	1.0	0.8	25.0
Sugar tax	1.3	2.0	2.9	0.8	–	–	–	–	–	–	7.0
Fuel duty	1.1	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.9	2.1	2.0	1.9	20.2
Carbon tax	–	–	1.9	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.7	2.7	2.6	2.4	23.3
Premise licence and TV licences	0.5	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.6	0.7	0.7	0.5	8.2
Landfill tax	–	–	–	1.7	2.5	2.2	2.2	1.5	1.3	1.3	12.7
Furlough tax rebate	-213.0	-124.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-337.1
Eat out to help out	-23.2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-23.2
Local Government Grants	-11.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-11.1
TOTAL TAX	37.0	436.7	764.4	728.8	694.6	672.3	632.4	600.2	551.5	519.3	5.6bn
TAX PER PUB (£000)	43	528	871	825	768	705	673	662	632	617	6.3
TAX AS % OF NET SALES	4.8	34.6	42.0	43.0	41.8	42.1	41.8	42.6	43.1	43.4	39.7

[^]Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2012–2021

MILESTONE PASSED BY PUBS BORN IN THE NINETIES

During March and April 2022, several Wetherspoon pubs celebrated a significant birthday of 25 years or more.

Seven pubs marked their 'silver' anniversary, clocking up an incredible combined total of 175 years serving their respective communities across the UK.

The 25-year celebrations were held at The Picture House (Stafford), The William Jameson (Sunderland), The Eight Bells (Dover), The Thomas Ingoldsby (Canterbury), Opera House (Tunbridge Wells), The Lord Rosebery (Scarborough) and The Walnut Tree (Leytonstone).

Other long-serving pubs during that two-month period included 31 years for both J.J. Moon's (Tooting) and The Moon on the Hill (Harrow), 29 years at The Moon Under Water (Norbury), 28 years for

The Elms (Leigh-on-Sea), as well as 27 years each at The Sovereign of the Seas (Petts Woods) and The Moon on the Square (Feltham).

Six pubs marking 26 years in that same spell were The Postal Order (Blackburn), The Coronet (Holloway), The Potters Wheel (Swansea), The Regal (Gloucester), The Isambard Kingdom Brunel (Portsmouth) and The Troll Cart (Great Yarmouth).

Also clocking up 20 years' service during March and April were 11 other pubs.

They were The Monkey Walk (Coalville), The Welkin (Liverpool), The Claude du Vall (Camberley), The Mannamead (Plymouth), The Poste of Stone (Stone), The Ralph Fitz Randal (Richmond), The Assembly Rooms (Epsom), The Glass House (Norwich), The Ice Wharf (Camden), The Society Room (Glasgow) and The Society Rooms (Maidstone).

J.J. Moon's, Tooting

This pub, managed by Jordan Brett and which opened as a Wetherspoon in March 1991, faces the tube station.

Opened in 1926, the station completed Tooting's village-to-London-suburb transformation. The 1868 OS map of the area records a National School for Infants on the site of this pub. It was later replaced by Tooting Public Baths, which opened in 1907 and was demolished in 1981.

The name J.J. Moon's was inspired by the Moon Under Water, the 'ideal pub' imagined by George Orwell, who described the fictional pub in a 1946 article.

Pictured (left to right), marking the pub's milestone birthday, are bar associate Livia Zacharova, shift manager Hayley Czyher and bar associates Philip Morris and Lisa Davis.



The Moon on the Hill, Harrow

This pub first opened as a Wetherspoon in April 1991.

The building was previously a general store. Until 1979, for over 60 years, it had been Wheatlands Furniture Shop.

The 'moon' part of the name links it with the ideal pub described by George Orwell. The well-known writer called his fictitious pub Moon Under Water.

Pub manager Georgina Woolf is pictured (front right) with team members. Marking the 31st birthday, outside the pub, are bar associates Stephanie Cheung and Toby Crawford, shift leader Malichi Robinson, bar associate Lia Bentley, duty manager Calvin Donovan, shift leader Jimmy O'Connor and (front) kitchen associate Viktor Lahos.

The Moon Under Water, Norbury

Pictured (standing, left to right) are shift manager Emma Smallman, kitchen manager Karol Lepkowski, pub manger Jennifer Bray, cleaner Neil Tilley, kitchen team leader Caron Tilley, shift manager Gerry Whitworth and bar associate Tayjja Meikle. Front (left to right) are kitchen shift leader Rachael Turner, bar associate Andrew Anderson and kitchen associate Chloe Ballard.

The name of this Wetherspoon pub, which opened in April 1993, was inspired by the ideal pub described in detail by George Orwell.

The famous writer called his fictional pub Moon Under Water.

The pub premises occupy (more or less) the site of Sorrento Villa.

The Victorian villa was one of the few buildings along London Road, before Norbury developed into a suburb.



26
YEARS



The Postal Order, Blackburn

Pictured (left to right), marking the pub's 26th birthday, are shift managers Chloe Morris, Dave Matthews and Emily Cookson, who are all among the pub's long-serving staff members.

Matty Ward took over as pub manager in November 2021 – and his team includes other long-serving members kitchen shift leader Dan Freear and shift leader Chantel Harrison.

The pub's name remembers the building's previous life as Blackburn's former general post office, typical of the grand Edwardian post offices of the early 1900s.

In 1906–7, history legend has it that the plans were mixed up and the building in Blackburn was originally intended for Blackpool (and vice versa).

It was later extended to accommodate the telephone exchange.

The William Jameson, Sunderland

The pub, which opened in Fawcett Street in April 1997, is named after William Jameson, who, on behalf of the Fawcett family, laid out Fawcett Street and the surrounding roads.

Part of the pub building was once home to Binns Department Store, one of Sunderland's longest-running stores, originally founded by George Binns in 1807 as a drapery business.

After various location moves, takeovers and facelifts later, the shop finally closed in 1993.

Pub manager Leanne Surtees (second left) who has 21 years' service for the company, took over in October 2021.

She is pictured with team members (left to right) bar associate and cleaner Deb Porton, duty manager Sal Jones and kitchen manager Laura Peplow.





VOTES KEEP ROLLING IN FOR WASHINGTON INCUMBENT

The Sir William de Wessyngton entered in The Good Beer Guide by CAMRA for 14th straight year

Wetherspoon is proud of the quality of the real ale 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 Campaign for Real Ale's (CAMRA) Good Beer Guide.

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

Current

In the current guide (2022, the 49th edition), there are 213 Wetherspoon pubs listed.

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

The Sir William de Wessyngton (Washington), which celebrated 20 years earlier this year, having first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in February 2002, has featured in the guide every year for the past 14 years.

Customers at The Sir William de Wessyngton toasted the 20th anniversary with a birthday beer from Houghton-le-Spring-based Maxim Brewery – a particular favourite at the pub.

Kelly Dunn, who has been with the company for 15 years, moved from The Bishops' Mill (Durham) to take over as pub manager in February, having previously spent five years at the pub before her brief three-month spell in Durham.

Deputy manager Beth Shiel (pictured) arrived at the pub in December 2021, working three months with previous pub manager Richie Freeman, before he moved on to The William Jameson (Sunderland). Beth has worked for Wetherspoon for nine years and was also previously at The Bishops' Mill.

Beth said: "We have a lot of real-ale-drinkers at the pub – with Maxim's beers very popular with many of them."

Birthday

"We organised a 'tap takeover' for the birthday celebrations, with six Maxim beers on offer."

The ales were Double Maxim (4.7% ABV), Samson (4.0% ABV), Lambton's (3.8% ABV), Swedish Blonde (4.2% ABV), New Zealand Pale Ale (4.6% ABV) and Anderson's Best Scotch (4.2% ABV).

Apart from the birthday 'tap takeover', The Sir William de Wessyngton's 10 hand-pumps usually offer Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles, as well as three ever-changing guest ales.

Newcastle's Tyne Bank Brewery's core range is popular, including Castle Gold (3.8% ABV), Monument (4.1% ABV), West Coast IPA (4.0% ABV) and Northern Porter (4.5% ABV).

Popular

Beth continued: "We also select from a great range via the team at East-West Ales – and, although not local, Suffolk-based brewery Adnams' beers are also very popular with customers."

"The whole team gets involved in the upkeep of our real ale, with all managers fully trained in cellar-management procedures.

"Shift manager Craig Wake (pictured) takes a particular interest. He is local and has worked at the pub for a long time, certainly as long as Richie was here, which was nine years.

"Craig knows the regulars and what they like to drink. His chats to them – and their feedback is so important to help in gauging our beer selection and orders."

Beth concluded: "The fact that The Sir William de Wessyngton has been in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide for 14 consecutive years is something worth shouting about.

"It is certainly a big deal to the team and something of which we are proud."

What The Good Beer Guide 2022 says:

THE SIR WILLIAM DE WESSYNGTON

This large open-plan Wetherspoon used to be a snooker hall and ice cream parlour. It is named after a Norman knight and lord of the manor, whose descendants later emigrated to the United States.

The pub offers value-for-money beer and the usual well-priced Wetherspoon menu. The regular ales are complemented by at least four guests.

Twice-yearly beer festivals are held. A large selection of local and international bottled beers is available.

Recipient of a CAMRA 'lockdown hero recognition' award.

● 2-3 Victoria Road, Concord, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE37 2SY

What CAMRA says:

In November 2020, Sunderland & South Tyneside CAMRA asked members for nominations for 'lockdown hero recognition' awards, to recognise any pub, club, brewery or bottle shop in their local area which had gone that extra mile to show community spirit and support during the COVID-19 emergency.

The Sir William de Wessyngton received a 'lockdown hero recognition' award from the branch, 'in recognition of supporting the community during lockdown', following the pub's food donations to a local community hub and foodbank. Sunderland & South Tyneside pubs officer, Ken Paul, said:

"I have been drinking at The Sir William de Wessyngton more or less since it opened.

"The pub serves well-kept real ale, hence the inclusion in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, with local and regional microbreweries featuring regularly.

"In 2014, Washington New Town marked its 50th anniversary.

"The then manager, Richie Freeman, worked with CAMRA and two local breweries (Maxim and former brewery Jarrow) to showcase two one-off real ales.

"Also, in the past, the pub has organised coach trips and brewery trips – which were always well patronised."



The winning team – The Brocket Arms (Wigan)

DARTS PLAYERS LOOK SHARP IN NATIONAL FINAL

The Brocket Arms (Wigan) has been crowned the champion of the Wetherspoon charity darts competition for 2022.

The team, which previously won the tournament in 2018, beat The Rodboro Buildings (Guildford) in the final held at The Trent Bridge Inn (Nottingham).

Following the forced cancellation of the 2020 and 2021 tournament, Wetherspoon’s employees were more than ready for their annual charity darts contest this year.

Staff from pubs across the UK and the Republic of Ireland have been at the oche, once again, raising funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The teams from Wetherspoon’s pubs in the Republic of Ireland were raising funds for LauraLynn.

More than 400 teams battled it out in area heats, at 63 venues across England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, hoping to win the highly coveted darts trophy (and bragging rights) for 2022.

In a bid to reach the national final, across pubs from Brecon to Brighton, Dundee to Dublin and Croydon to Carlisle, the arrows have been flying for fun and fundraising.

Area heat winners progressed through to regional finals, including in Ireland, with 10 victors from those tournaments competing in the national final, at The Trent Bridge Inn.

The other eight finalists were The Old Unicorn (Leeds), The Admiral of the Humber (Hull), The Golden Lion (Newmarket), The Furze Wren (Bexleyheath), Palladium Electric (Midsomer Norton), The Lord Caradoc (Port Talbot), The Crown (Berkhamsted) and The South Strand (Dublin).

Regional manager and event organiser Richard Marriner said: “It was great to be able to run the national final after having to cancel the last two years, owing to COVID-19 restrictions.

“I’d like to thank the pubs which hosted the area heats and did so well raising money for Young Lives vs Cancer, as well as pub manager Philippa McFadden and her team at The Trent Bridge Inn for hosting the final.

“Thanks to the efforts and generosity of staff and customers at all of the participating pubs, the tournament raised more than £160,000 for Young Lives vs Cancer.”



Teams from The George Hotel (Brecon) and The Coliseum (Abergavenny) are pictured at the area heats held at The George Hotel



All of the competing teams at area heats staged at The Society Room (Glasgow)



Runners-up – The Rodboro Buildings (Guildford)



All of the finalists at The Trent Bridge Inn (Nottingham)



All of the participating teams taking part in the area heats at The Crown (Worcester)



At The Joseph Bramah (Barnsley), teams enjoy the fun and fundraising of the area heats



All smiles during an area heat match at The Gate Clock (Greenwich)



Participating teams pictured at the area heats staged at The Rodboro Buildings (Guildford)



All of the participating teams taking part in the area heats at The Palladium (Llandudno)



Pictured at the area heats at The Mile Castle (Newcastle) are (left to right) pub manager Kayla Herdman from The Rohan Kanhai (Ashington), area manager John Hudson and shift leader David Walker from The High Main (Byker)



At The Standing Order (Derby), teams from the home pub, as well as The Babington Arms (Derby), The Stag & Pheasant (Mansfield) and The Red Lion (Ripley), all pictured, took part in the area heats



Participating teams pictured at the area heats staged at The Last Post (Paisley)



All of the participating teams, from pubs in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, taking part in the all-Ireland area heats at Keavan's Port (Dublin)

NO ACHY BREAKY HEART FOR LINE DANCE PIONEER AND WIFE

When Jack and Hilda Chalkley got married in March 1962, they couldn't afford a wedding reception. The Shoreditch newlyweds simply enjoyed some food and drinks at Hilda's parents' home and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The pair returned to Hackney Town Hall recently to relive memories of their special day as they celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary. This time, they had a quiet after-party at Baxter's Court, Wetherspoon's pub across the road.

Self-confessed 'toyboy' Jack, 82 (Hilda is 83), has been a Wetherspoon regular for several decades at his local The Moon and Stars (Romford), where he enjoys a glass of Chardonnay or pinot grigio.

He is well known in the pub for his ready wit, amusing anecdotes and singing. Jack worked as a typesetter for The Sun and has played squash with its former editor Kelvin Mackenzie. Jack used to own a wine bar and had a career as an entertainer, during which, he claims, he introduced line-dancing to the UK.

Daniel Griffin, pub manager at The Moon and Stars, said: "Yes, we know Jack and Hilda. They are a wonderful couple – and we'd like to add our congratulations on their 60th wedding anniversary."

Jack and Hilda particularly enjoyed Wetherspoon's wine festival, staged a few years back, and have a message for Wetherspoon's chairman Tim Martin.

Jack said: "Can you please bring back the wine festival, Mr Martin?"

But the couple remain firm fans. Jack said: "You can't beat Wetherspoon. It's such good value for money."

"The staff were very helpful and friendly at Baxter's Court and I really like the roof garden at The Moon and Stars, with a glass of wine on a sunny day."

When asked about the secret of a long marriage, older couples usually say that it's all about give-and-take, but not Jack.

"Imagine married life were a day – you spend eight hours working, eight hours sleeping, two hours at Wetherspoon, one hour in the betting shop, one hour eating... and that leaves four hours – if you can't make a woman happy in four hours, then you're doing something wrong."

Jack and Hilda are pictured with their 60th wedding anniversary card from Her Majesty The Queen.





Shift manager Natalie Robson at The Harry Clasper (Whickham)

Note from the editor: Wetherspoon has been named as a top employer by the Top Employers Institute for the last 17 years in a row (as featured on The Guardian newspaper's website).

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.

£454 MILLION IN FREE SHARES AND BONUSES PAID TO EMPLOYEES SINCE 2006

83 per cent paid to pub staff

Since 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 11 employees who have worked for the company for over 30 years, 326 for over 20 years, 3,049 for over 10 years and 8,827 for over five years.

Since 2006, the company has paid £454 million to its employees in respect of bonuses and free shares.

BONUSES AND SHARES

Of the recipients, approximately 96 per cent were 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 2021, when pubs were closed for a substantial period and the company made a loss of £136 million, bonuses and free shares of £22.8 million were awarded (see table[^] below), with 79 per cent of employees receiving a bonus and/or shares in that period.

In previous financial years, when pubs were open for the entire time, substantially higher payments were made.

For example, £46 million was awarded in 2019, when 97 per cent of staff also received a bonus and/or free shares.

At the current time, 15,171 of our 40,670 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 – more even, in the last five years, than John Lewis – a company owned by its employees.

Since the share scheme was introduced, Wetherspoon has awarded 20.6 million shares to employees – approximately 16 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 V profits, 2006–21

Financial year	Bonuses and free shares	Profit after tax (loss/profit after tax)	Bonus etc as % of profit
	£m	£m	
2021	23	-136	-
2020	33	-30	-
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
Total	454	641	49.3

[^]Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2006–21

ROBERT DINGWALL

Professor of Sociology at Nottingham Trent University

Tim says: "Professor Robert Dingwall believes that Sweden stuck to its pandemic plan, rather than adopting the 'novel' approach of a lockdown, initiated by China.

The Swedes made mistakes, especially in respect of care homes, but their strategy which 'invited citizens to co-operate' was more successful than, say, the UK's authoritarian 'top-down' strategy."

“SWEDEN'S WHO FIGURES MUST RADICALLY CHANGE THE TERMS OF THE COVID INQUIRY

Unlike the UK where elites told people what was good for them, Sweden explained its public health thinking and invited people to cooperate

"Judge me in a year" said Anders Tegnell, Sweden's State Epidemiologist, in July 2020, when his country was being attacked for sticking to its pandemic plan rather than adopting the novel intervention of lockdown. The latest World Health Organisation figures add to the evidence that has been accumulating since summer 2021. Sweden managed the pandemic more successfully than most, with much less disruption of everyday life and economic activity.

The WHO has published estimates of excess deaths globally for 2020 and 2021. This approach covers all deaths from Covid, whether formally diagnosed or not, together with collateral damage in deaths from other conditions that went untreated. Looking at Europe, where official data are usually robust, Sweden had half the excess death rate of the UK, Germany or Spain – and a quarter of that of many Eastern European nations.

In turn, the UK tends to be mid-table, in line with other large Western European countries, while Eastern European countries have had much worse experiences. There is a widely-circulated view that the UK has had a uniquely bad pandemic. The data simply do not support this.

Nor do they support the view that the outcomes have much to do with the restrictions adopted by different governments, how soon they began, or the stringency of enforcement. The question, then, is how governments came to adopt highly restrictive policies in the first place. This must be the starting point for any national inquiry. Why was the experience of emergency planners, and two decades of pandemic preparation, abandoned everywhere except Sweden?

Sweden never 'let it rip'. There were restrictions on large gatherings, and on restaurants and some other places of entertainment. Secondary schools and universities switched to remote learning at some points. Masks were never thought to be of benefit but social distancing was encouraged. The approach was based on the minimum intervention necessary to manage the highest risk environments.

Mistakes were made and acknowledged. In the first wave of the pandemic, Sweden had a problem with Covid deaths in care homes, which tend to be larger than in the UK. Once the virus got into a home, it could circulate around a larger number of people than would be possible in UK homes. When additional infection controls were introduced, residents were as

well shielded as anywhere. Unlike the UK where elites assumed that people should be told what was good for them, and then compelled or frightened into doing it, Sweden explained its public health thinking and invited citizens to cooperate.

Many UK problems can be traced to its top-down approach. No-one asked the academics who know about laws and rules whether they would work in this situation. Officials and politicians made those decisions on the basis of their own, often simplistic, beliefs. But rules are inflexible tools, which invite confrontation and dispute. How can anyone comply with a law that cannot differentiate between a party and a work-related gathering? The Swedish approach allowed citizens to think about applying broad public health messages to the circumstances of their own lives.

Sweden shows that there was another path not taken, that could have brought this country through the pandemic in far better shape, socially and economically. The inquiry must not be diverted into the minutiae of arguments about whether we should have locked down a week or two weeks earlier. It must be free to examine the whole strategy - in particular, why robust social science evidence on managing emergencies, and its contribution to pandemic planning since the early 2000s, was abandoned so precipitately.

Robert Dingwall is Professor of Sociology at Nottingham Trent University.

By Robert Dingwall

The Daily Telegraph / 7 May 2022

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Tim says: “This article says that “Australia and New Zealand’s strict lockdown and quarantine policies resulted in 28 fewer deaths per 100,000 people than normal”. However, as Professor Balloux points out (see page 5), “the worst performer, by some margin, is Peru, despite enforcing the harshest, longest lockdown.”

The article also implicitly praises the Chinese performance, when it is clear to most analysts that its zero-COVID policies are doomed to failure.”

UK’S COVID DEATH RATE LOWER THAN IN GERMANY AND SPAIN, SAYS WHO

The UK had a lower Covid-related death rate during the pandemic than Italy, Germany and Spain, according to a study from the World Health Organisation.

The analysis suggests that governments around the world have massively under-reported the number of deaths that can be linked to Covid-19. It estimates that between January 2020 and December 2021 an extra 15 million people died because of Covid and the disruption it caused.

Governments reported only 5.4 million Covid-related deaths in the same period. By comparison, the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 is estimated to have caused 50 million deaths, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The new analysis looked at what is known as excess mortality — the difference between the number of deaths that have occurred and the number that would have been expected had a pandemic not struck, based on data from earlier years.

It aims to include deaths directly caused by Covid infections and also those that came about indirectly because of the pandemic’s broader impacts on health systems and society.

Britain stood out for the apparent accuracy of its official figures. The government had estimated about 150,000 excess deaths and the WHO estimate was virtually the same. By contrast, the Indian government claims it has suffered fewer than 500,000 extra deaths. The WHO said yesterday that the real figure was nearly five million.

The WHO estimates that the UK had 109 excess deaths per 100,000 people per year over a two-year period. That compared with 133 for Italy, 116 in Germany and 111 in Spain.

European countries with fewer deaths per 100,000 included France, with 63, and Ireland with 29. For India, the equivalent figure was 171.

The report estimated that in Australia and New Zealand strict lockdown and quarantine policies resulted in 28 fewer deaths per 100,000 people than normal.

In China, two fewer people died per 100,000 than normal in 2020 and 2021. In Norway, one less person died per 100,000 than would otherwise have been expected.

Sweden, which was criticised in the early stages of the pandemic for resisting a mandatory lockdown, had an average excess death rate of 56 per 100,000 in 2020 and 2021.

Professor Devi Sridhar, chairwoman of global public health at the University of Edinburgh, told The Daily Telegraph: “The lesson from Sweden is to invest in your population’s health and have less inequality.”

The WHO claimed that its estimates were based on the best available data but experts warned against trying to rank closely comparable countries.

“Caution is needed when using these estimates,” Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter, of the University of Cambridge, said. For instance, the WHO analysis estimated that the UK had between 98 and 121 excess deaths per 100,000 people. For Germany, the range is 96 to 137. As they overlap, the figures cannot be used to claim a significant difference.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the WHO, called the global figure of 15 million “sobering”. He said the figure pointed “to the need for all countries to invest in more resilient health systems that can sustain essential services during crises”.

Dr Jeremy Farrar, director of the Wellcome Trust, the medical research charity, said that a lack of urgency from governments had contributed to the number of deaths. “There have been too many times in the past two years when world leaders have failed to act at the level needed to save lives. Even now a third of the world’s population remains unvaccinated,” he said.

“More must be done to protect people from the ongoing pandemic and shield humanity against future risks. Climate change, shifting patterns of animal and human interaction, urbanisation and increasing travel and trade are creating more opportunities for new and dangerous infectious disease risks to emerge.”

By Rhys Blakely, Venetia Menzies and Constance Kampfner

The Times / 6 May 2022

Print credit: The Times / News Licensing

JONATHAN SUMPTION

Ex-Supreme Court judge and historian

Tim says: “The Times (see page 55) quotes, at length, former SAGE member and lockdown fanatic Sir Jeremy Farrar.

Former Supreme Court judge Lord Sumption criticises Farrar in the article below as representing “most of what has gone wrong”, for speaking well of “Chinese methods of disease control” and for brushing aside “the appalling collateral consequences of lockdown”.

TYRANNY OF THE COVID EXPERTS: FINGER-WAGGING SAGE SCIENTIST JEREMY FARRAR PENNED A BOOK ABOUT HOW HE'S THE ONLY PERSON BORIS JOHNSON SHOULD EVER HAVE LISTENED TO, WRITES EX-SUPREME COURT JUDGE JONATHAN SUMPTION

Professor Sir Jeremy Farrar is a distinguished epidemiologist, a member of the Sage scientific committee, the director of the Wellcome Trust health research charity and an influential government adviser. He is also the most hawkish of lockdown hawks, and he has written a book with journalist Anjana Ahuja, called *Spike*. It is a revealing read.

Spike is basically about Farrar himself: how he saw it all coming, how he personally forced the Chinese government to release the genetic sequence of the Covid-19 virus that allowed scientists to develop a vaccine, how he warned the world of imminent doom, how the Government could have saved lives by treasuring his words more, and how he risked assassination by the Chinese (‘If anything happens to me, this is what you need to know’, he told friends).

The talk is all of wars, battle plans, and people heading for precipices. All this is a bit melodramatic and self-obsessed for my taste. But Farrar is a distinguished scientist who means well. He is terrifyingly sincere and really does have the interest of mankind at heart. Therein lies the problem.

There are few more obsessive fanatics than the technocrat who is convinced that he is reordering an imperfect world for its own good.

If *Spike* is largely about its author, it also tells us much about those who have been in charge of our lives through Covid-19.

Farrar represents most of what has gone wrong. His main target is the British Government. But he actually agrees with nearly everything they have done.

Farrar’s complaint is that they did not do it quickly or brutally enough when he suggested it, and stopped doing it before he gave them the all-clear.

His views about how governments should deal with public health crises are broadly the same as those of Dominic Cummings. Both men are frustrated autocrats who believed that from Day One we needed ‘a command-and-control structure’. He speaks well of Chinese methods of disease control.

‘Panic was called for,’ in March 2020, he says at one point. At another, he tells us that at a time when governments were panicking all over Europe, there was not enough panic in Britain.

This is all very odd. It does not seem to have occurred to Farrar that the jerky, ill-considered and inconsistent improvisations that passed for policy-making in the Johnson Government, and which he rightly criticises, were the direct result of the panic that he recommends.

The great object is of course to ensure that ‘the science’ is applied. No ifs, no buts and no delay. In Farrar’s world, this is easy as there is only one science, namely his own.

He is convinced he’s right and the Government should listen to no one else. Challenge from other scientists is normally regarded as fundamental to scientific advance. But for Farrar disagreement is a ‘hurdle’. It just gets in his way.

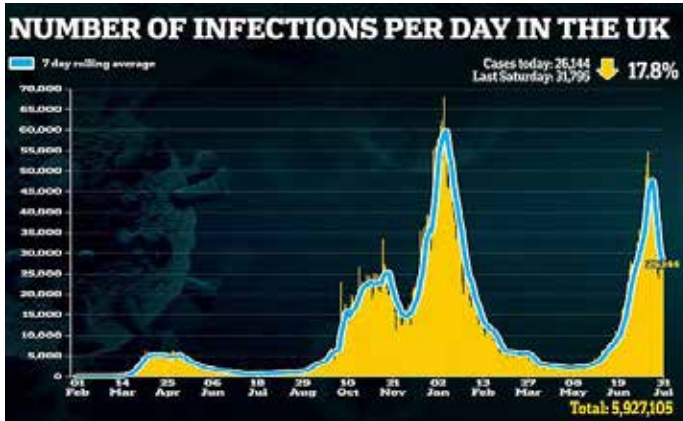
So, serious scientists such as Professors Carl Heneghan, Karol Sikora and Sunetra Gupta, who have had the temerity to offer opinions differing from his own, are dismissed as being ‘responsible for a number of unnecessary deaths’, although Farrar has had a great deal of influence on Government policy and they have had almost none.

This kind of attitude to colleagues is, frankly, unworthy of a scientist of Sir Jeremy’s eminence.

Anders Tegnell, the Swedish state epidemiologist, is dismissed in a brief footnote, although Sweden is a standing repudiation of much that Farrar stands for. Sweden has avoided a lockdown, yet has done much better than the UK.

Like many technocrats, Farrar believes in coercion. Otherwise, people might not do what he wants. ‘You cannot tell people to stay at home only if they feel like it,’ he says.

This is an obtuse misunderstanding of the argument against coercion. The point is that people differ widely in their vulnerability to Covid-19. It causes serious illness among the old and those with severe underlying conditions, but the symptoms are mild for nearly everyone else.



lockdowns: other illnesses which go untreated such as cancer or accelerate like dementia, impacts on education, equality and public debt, not to speak of the worst recession in 300 years.

Farrar regards all this as a regrettable but unavoidable result of desirable measures, and not as reasons for questioning whether they were ever desirable in the first place.

In keeping with this blinkered approach, he refers to the collateral disasters as consequences of Covid-19. They are not. They are man-made consequences of the policy responses he has been advocating.

I shall resist the temptation to apply to him the criticism he gratuitously and unfairly applied to Messrs Sikora, Heneghan and Gupta.

Entirely missing from Farrar's worldview is any conception of the complexity of the moral judgments involved. Of course public health matters, but it is not all that matters.

Interaction with other human beings is a fundamental human need. Criminalising it is a sustained assault on our humanity. Doing so without assessing the wider consequences is irresponsible folly.

Sir Jeremy Farrar adopts the current habit of using 'libertarian' as a word of abuse.

But I am proud to be a libertarian. Personal autonomy is a basic condition of human happiness and creativity. I am a libertarian because the opposite of liberty is despotism.



By Jonathan Sumption

The Mail On Sunday / 31 July 2021

Print credit: Text available by Jonathan Sumption, Ex-Supreme Court Judge ©The Mail on Sunday

We therefore have to be able to make our own risk assessments. It is simply untrue that the vulnerable would ignore advice 'if they felt like it'. People have a basic sense of self-preservation.

This was Sage's consistent advice right up to the first lockdown. Farrar denies it, but the record speaks for itself.

On March 10 and 13, the minutes record that Sage advised guidance on isolation, selectively directed to the old and vulnerable.

On March 13, they said that the public should be treated as 'rational actors, capable of taking decisions for themselves and managing personal risk.' Farrar participated in both meetings.

Of course, selective coercion would be impractical, as he points out. But universal coercion is pointless, inefficient and wasteful.

It treats people as if all were vulnerable, when only some are. Instead of spending several times the cost of the NHS on paying young, healthy people who were at negligible risk not to work, we should have been pouring resources into protecting the vulnerable.

Interestingly, Farrar accepts that lockdowns only push infections and associated deaths into a future period after they are lifted.

He also appears to accept it would have been intolerable to lock down the whole population until a vaccine was developed and everyone had received it, which would have taken at least 18 months and possibly never happen.

His preferred course seems to be a series of lockdowns starting each time that we look like approaching the intensive care capacity of the NHS. In other words, very much what we have had. However, Farrar has wagged his finger every time that restriction has been lifted.

In theory, we can switch lockdown on and off like a malfunctioning internet router, but in practice it seems that the time is never ripe. We only have to look around us to see that lockdowns have failed to halt the virus, either here or anywhere else in the world. The problem is in the concept, not the application.

This brings me to the most remarkable feature of this book, which is Farrar's brushing aside of the appalling collateral consequences of

Tim says: “In the UK, parliament, in a COVID-19 panic, agreed on emergency legislation which transferred power to ‘party central’, ie 10 Downing Street. In effect, power was given to the ‘quad’ (four Oxbridge graduates), including Matt Hancock and Boris Johnson, with no scientific qualifications among them.

In this article, Matt Ridley points out the dangers of an ‘accord’ among nations which, in poorly defined circumstances, could effectively transfer worldwide power to the World Health Organization, which, itself, is heavily influenced by both software developer Bill Gates and authoritarian China.”

A WHO PANDEMIC PACT WOULD LEAVE THE WORLD AT CHINA’S MERCY

Lessons have still not been learned, so why should we trust the WHO in a future pandemic?

On 22 May, the World Health Organisation meets for the World Health Assembly, an annual summit to which all the world’s countries are invited – except Taiwan, which is excluded at China’s behest. On the agenda is a “pandemic accord” that would greatly expand the WHO’s powers to intervene in a country in the event of a future outbreak.

The European Union, true to form, pushed for a legally binding pandemic “treaty” instead, but that won’t happen for two reasons: the American Senate would need a two-thirds majority to ratify it; and the Chinese government would not allow even its pet international agency to tell it what to do. But the accord would still have substantial force of international law behind it, to make governments impose domestic lockdowns, for example – despite the WHO’s own figures showing little correlation between lockdown severity and death rates.

Though some of the measures make sense, such as more sharing of vaccines with other countries, the plan skates around WHO’s errors during the Covid pandemic. It ignored Taiwan’s early alarm call, praised the Chinese government for its transparency at a time when it was denying human-to-human transmission and punishing whistleblowers, delayed declaring a health emergency, flip-flopped on masks and lockdowns and mounted a farcical Potemkin investigation into the origin of the virus. Added to its poor performance in the 2014 ebola outbreak, when for months WHO resisted calls from doctors and NGOs to declare an emergency to avoid offending member governments, this track record does not inspire confidence.

According to the meeting’s agenda, the accord would be part of six “action tracks” focused on: healthcare systems; zoonotic outbreaks; endemic tropical diseases; food safety; antimicrobial resistance; and protecting the environment. What is missing from that list? Something WHO itself and the US and other governments insist might well have been the cause of the Covid pandemic, namely a laboratory experiment gone wrong or a virus-hunting researcher infected while sampling bats in the field.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO director general, said in July last year that it was premature to rule out a lab leak, a view echoed by the G7 summit in Cornwall. Since then if anything the evidence has grown stronger. A book published this month, Preventable by Professor Devi Sridhar, argues that a lab leak is “as likely an explanation as natural spillover and should be pursued until evidence emerges to the contrary”.

A former software developer by the name of William Gates has written a book called “How to prevent the next pandemic”. Its main message, according to one uncharitable reviewer, is that we can prevent the next pandemic by “doing all of the things that did not stop the last pandemic event, only more, faster and harder”. But even Mr Gates does allow that

“regardless of how COVID started, even the remote possibility of lab-related pathogen releases should inspire governments and scientists to redouble their efforts on lab safety, creating global standards”.

Over the years laboratory accidents have resulted in deaths of researchers and others from smallpox, anthrax, SARS and other pathogens. In one case, a global epidemic of flu resulted from a mistake with an experimental vaccine in China in 1977. In recent years there was a dramatic increase in the number of coronaviruses taken from bat caves into labs for experiments, most of them in a city called Wuhan. The experiments tested how easily the viruses could be induced to infect human cells. Some scientists compared this to searching for a gas leak with a lighted match.

This pandemic began a long way from where the infected bats live but very close to the world’s leading laboratory for collecting and manipulating SARS-like coronaviruses. That, plus the continuing failure to find an animal infected with the virus in food markets or elsewhere, added to some peculiar features of the virus’s genome, has led many to conclude that a proper investigation of the Wuhan Institute of Virology is warranted. But the institute has refused all requests to open up its 22,000-item database for international inspection even though doing so could go a long way to reassuring the world.

So you might think the World Health Assembly might have put lab safety and transparency of research on the agenda next week at the very least. But nowhere are these even mentioned. Presumably China would object. In February the WHO held the third “Covid-19 Global research and innovation forum”. In the titles of the 49 sessions, the word “origin” did not appear once. Though it has set up a committee, the WHO seems to be paying no more than lip service to its own commitment to investigating the possibility of a lab leak. Like some western scientists, it may be hoping the question of the origin of this dreadful pandemic remains unsolved lest the answer ruffle diplomatic feathers.

Here’s what a pandemic accord should include, in my view: a commitment by all national governments to share the genomic data of all viruses collected in the wild and to share details of all experiments being done on potential pandemic pathogens (yes, including in biowarfare labs). Something similar happens with nuclear research and with airline accidents, so it can be done. If China’s government refuses to sign, then let’s gradually shame it into doing so. But it looks like we will have to do this outside the WHO.

By Matt Ridley

The Telegraph / 14 May 2022

Print credit: © Matt Ridley/Telegraph Media Group Limited 2022

Tim says: “Conservative MP Neil O’Brien attacked critics of the government’s lockdown policies, including respected academics like Sunetra Gupta and Carl Heneghan, both online and in the press.

As the World Health Organization (WHO) report shows, O’Brien’s thesis in this article, which was that “countries taking the toughest measures were getting great results” was cobblers.

As Professor Balloux says (see page 5), the “stringency of mitigation measures does not seem to be a particularly strong predictor of excess deaths”.

O’Brien’s criticism of Sweden looks particularly absurd today, in light of the WHO report.”

I'D LOVE TO IGNORE 'COVID SCEPTICS' AND THEIR TALL TALES. BUT THEY MAKE A SPLASH AND HAVE NO SHAME

The Tory MP on the fantasies of those in the media, and beyond, who oppose lockdown

If you had opened certain newspapers over the past year, you would have read the following. In spring, you'd have been told the virus was fizzling out. You might have been treated to the views of epidemiologist Sunetra Gupta, who claimed: “The epidemic has largely come and is on its way out in this country.” This wasn't due to the lockdown, she argued, but “the build-up of immunity”, which government advisers were apparently underestimating.

By the summer, you would have read that it was all over. In June, Toby Young, editor of the Lockdown Sceptics website predicted: “There will be no ‘second spike’ – not now, and not in the autumn either. The virus has melted into thin air. It’s time to get back to normal.” Telegraph columnist Allison Pearson wrote: “The terrible Coronabeast will be gone from these isles by September.”

By July, the sceptical narrative had changed. According to Ross Clark in the Daily Mail, there was nothing to fear. Boris Johnson’s warning of a possible “second wave” was an unjustified “emotive” use of language. Rising cases in countries such as Spain were “little more than a statistical illusion” due to increased testing.

Globally, countries taking the toughest measures were getting great results. Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Japan and Taiwan all saw case rates at about a 20th of the EU average. The Covid sceptics trashed their approach as “sheer panic”. Instead, libertarian Sweden was all the rage. Never mind that its death rate was 10 times that of its neighbours. They would have no second wave because they had wisely built up “herd immunity”. In fact, there was a brutal second wave; Finland and Norway offered emergency medical assistance as Stockholm’s hospitals overflowed. Even the king slammed the failed strategy.

As infections built up again in the autumn, the story changed once more. Though it looked like cases were rising, it was a “casedemic” brought on by faulty tests. “At least 91% of ‘Covid cases’ are FALSE POSITIVES,” thundered Talk Radio host Julia Hartley-Brewer in September. “There is no evidence of a second wave.”

By autumn, there were more people in hospital with Covid but several papers ran pieces saying our hospitals weren’t unusually busy in November. Some continued the pretence for an absurdly long time. On 29 December, Pearson wrote: “ICU occupancy is 78% today. Remarkably low for this time of year” and that “winter 2020 is the lowest hospital bed occupancy for 10 years. Yes, really.”

However, as the new variant exploded and television news showed ambulances queuing outside hospitals that were full of people gasping for breath, the story had to change again. Yes, people were now dying but not in unusual numbers. On 4 January, Hartley-Brewer reassured us: “The virus kills. It just isn’t causing excess deaths anymore.” This was rather difficult to square with the Office for National Statistics saying 2020 saw the largest increase in deaths in England and Wales since 1940. So, others resorted to a different argument. Yes, 89,000 extra people had died but

they would have died anyway. They were old or had “prior conditions”, so were already on the way out. They didn’t mention that 8,300 of them were of working age or that many “prior conditions” were non-fatal, such as asthma, diabetes, mental health or learning difficulties.

Powerful Covid-sceptics in the media have got it wrong at every stage. They fought to stop or delay every measure necessary to control the virus. They opposed masks, resisted travel restrictions, fought local lockdown tiers as well as national measures, often with conflicting arguments. Clark wrote again in October that local tiers were unfair and the PM wanted to “trash the northern economy”, but when national measures proved necessary, he complained “we are going to close down restaurants in Cornwall to try to fight an epidemic in Manchester”. In December, he said we should prioritise vaccinations in “the parts of the country which add most to the economy, London especially”.

They rubbished those who knew what they were talking about. Professors Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance were “Messrs Doom and Gloom”, “fear-mongering” and “self-serving”. That Whitty and Jonathan Van-Tam used their tiny amount of spare time to volunteer in hospitals suggests that’s not true. Now, as the death toll still rises, the same people crawl from the woodwork to demand we lift all restrictions as soon as the most vulnerable are vaccinated.

It’s great that we are leading Europe in vaccinations and lockdown has meant cases are starting to fall back. But if we drop our guard, we could still risk many lives agonisingly close to the finish line.

Because they are still dangerous, I have pointed out the mistakes of some Covid-sceptics on Twitter. They regard this as outrageous. An MP shouldn’t be getting involved in this. I “must not have any constituents who’re struggling”, says Hartley-Brewer. Young deleted all his tweets from last year and, in a joint podcast with alt-right conspiracy theorist James Delingpole, I was accused of being “a wrong un”, a “fascist”, and compared to Stalin’s secret police chief Lavrenti Beria. (I didn’t know you could be a Nazi and a Commie.) I’ve touched a nerve, it seems. Politicians are used to accountability. The guilty people within the media are not.

The truth is, the Covid-sceptics aren’t really sceptics at all. They engage in motivated reasoning; they make stuff up and double down on disproved claims. They are powerful figures, not used to being questioned. But the truth is that they have a hell of a lot to answer for.

Neil O’Brien is Conservative MP for Harborough, Oadby and Wigston, a former director of Policy Exchange and a vice-chair of the Conservative party.

By Neil O’Brien

The Guardian / 17 January 2021

Print credit: www.theguardian.com

NOW OPEN



Waterford

AN GEATA ARUNDEL

Pub manager Ollie Brierley and shift manager Sophie Charles are pictured at An Geata Arundel (Waterford, Republic of Ireland).

Ollie manages the pub with Helen Malcolm.

Wetherspoon has invested almost €4 million in developing the outlet on the site of a former bank and ladies' wear shop.

It is the company's ninth pub in the Republic of Ireland, together with two hotels.

Arundel Square takes its name from the nearby gate of the same name in Waterford's ancient city wall.

Long since demolished, the Arundel Gate stood in Arundel Lane, immediately north of the new pub's site.

An Geata Arundel is on two floors (ground and first floor), offering a combined internal customer area of 539m², and features two enclosed courtyard terraced gardens, as well as an open kitchen.

During the redevelopment work, an original shop front and historic timber beam were discovered, on the Broad Street side. These have been restored and reconstructed, along the lines of the original fishmonger's 'Flanagan' shop front.

Historical photos and details of local history, as well as artwork and images of local scenes and characters of the town, are displayed in the pub, together with information boards relating to local events.

The pub also features commissioned artwork, including paintings by Helen Morgan and Shelia Mac Nally, as well as photography by Sean Corcoran and Christine Simpson and a bespoke carved sculpture from local artist John Hayes.

Commissioned bespoke feature lighting, to highlight the importance of Waterford glass, has been installed. As part of The Walls Project, murals by artists Curtis Hylton, James Kirwan and Magdalena Karol are also on display, commissioned by Wetherspoon for the terrace and the ground-floor snug.

Helen said: "Ollie, our team and I are delighted to welcome customers to the pub and are confident that it will be a great addition to the Waterford community."

9 Arundel Square, Waterford, X91 RD35





Photos of our new pubs in Bourne and Heswall will feature in the next Wetherspoon News.

Bourne

THE RAYMOND MAYS

Wetherspoon has opened its new pub in Bourne (7 June), in two former shops located on the town's 'principal commercial street'. The pub is managed by James Ladym.

The new pub, which is on one floor, features a large, glazed, double-height space, leading to a large landscaped garden at the rear of the premises.

The pub's name remembers the motor-racing legend Raymond Mays, who lived in Bourne all of his life.

The design of the new pub focuses around the career of Mays, with references to his driving career in commissioned artwork pieces and fittings, including a large sculpture of Brookland racetrack, with a miniature model of Mays' racing car.

Mays' successful career as a racing driver began in 1931, with hill climbs and speed trials.

Mays was later the driving force behind English Racing Automobiles (ERA) and then British Racing Motors (BRM) racing cars – which feature in a permanent exhibition at the Bourne Heritage Centre.

44–48 North Street, Bourne, Lincolnshire, PE10 9AB

Heswall

THE PRENSE WELL

Wetherspoon's newest pub on Merseyside, The Prense Well, is set to open (28 June).

Housed in the short-lived former Exchange Bar, in premises which were once a telephone exchange, as well as a pair of semidetached late Victorian villas, The Prense Well will be managed by Caroline Campbell.

The roof of the original telephone exchange building has been retained, together with existing arched windows and generous ceiling heights, showcasing the unique form of the building.

A new extension has been added to extend the customer area, with a large contemporary roof light and open solid fuel fireplace features.

Heswall is situated on The Wirral peninsula, with its history stretching back beyond the Norman Conquest – once a village with many wells, including Hesse Well.

The Penns or Prense Well seems to have been one of the main wells, on Telegraph Road, little more than a stone's throw from the new pub which now bears its name.

5 The Mount, Heswall, Merseyside, CH60 4RE

NEW LOOK

Otley

THE BOWLING GREEN

The Bowling Green, in Otley, has reopened, following a £1.5-million expansion project.

Otley's town deputy mayor, Councillor Linda Hoare, officially opened the pub with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

She is pictured with the pub's manager Rebekah Black and shift leader Gareth Brittain.

Having originally opened as a Wetherspoon in July 2010, this pub in Bondgate has been managed by Rebekah since May 2015.

A total of 40 new full- and part-time jobs has been created at the newly extended pub. Current staff, who had been deployed to other local Wetherspoon pubs during the expansion project closure, are now back at the pub to complete the full team of 65 staff members.

The pub, which had been closed for five months, underwent its expansion project at the rear of the premises.

Wetherspoon purchased the former Harry Travis agricultural store building at the back of the pub, as well as utilising a small existing outdoor courtyard area, at the side of the building, to extend the indoor customer area to almost double its original size.

The large beer garden remains.

The bar area has been moved to the back of the pub, with the kitchen area also extended and new facilities added.

Rebekah said: "Customers have been impressed with the pub's new look.

"The investment highlights the company's commitment to the pub and to the town itself.

"I am also delighted that we have been able to create new jobs."

18 Bondgate, Otley, West Yorkshire, LS21 3AB



Stockton-on-Tees

THE THOMAS SHERATON

The roof terrace at The Thomas Sheraton (Stockton-on-Tees) has doubled in size, thanks to a refurbishment project.

The sun trap has benefited from the addition of four new trees, planters, hanging baskets, new decking, new fencing and extra tables and chairs.

It has an increased capacity of 80 customers.

This roof terrace is one of very few in the town, leading pub manager Jonathan Carney to expect the area to be very busy.

Jonathan (pictured) said: "There are only a few other pubs in the town with a roof terrace.

"Customers have been saying how much they like the new-look terrace and appreciate the extra space.

"It's a sun trap, so the perfect place to enjoy a drink and something to eat in the sunshine."

The town centre is undergoing a £30-million redevelopment – to include a new office block and commercial centre.

Jonathan added: "I'm confident that the roof terrace will fit in nicely with the new-look town centre."

**4 Bridge Road
Stockton-on-Tees
County Durham, TS18 1BH**



Sheerness

THE BELLE AND LION

Pub manager Kelly Smith is thrilled with the new-look garden at The Belle and Lion (Sheerness).

An investment of £283,000 at the Kent pub has seen the garden extended at the side of the premises – to triple its original size.

There is now space to accommodate 126 customers in the outside area.

The new garden extension, which had been overgrown and neglected land, is now paved to match the current garden area, with an additional 'compass' paving feature.

Two-thirds of the new outside space is covered with a steel-and-glass canopy.

Outside dining tables and chairs, festoon lighting and half-moon flower baskets have also been installed.

An existing outbuilding has been fully refurbished, also, to provide a 'snug' area – perfect for groups.

The garden, as well as the pub, is all on one level and fully accessible for wheelchair users.

Kelly said: "The new-look garden complements the pub perfectly and has been welcomed by customers."

**22-24 High Street
Sheerness, Kent, ME12 1NL**

Sunderland

THE COOPER ROSE

Pub team leader Mason Connor Williams is pictured on the new roof terrace at The Cooper Rose (Sunderland).

The roof terrace garden, offering views across the city, features two covered pergolas.

It is housed in a fully glazed enclosure and accessed via a curved staircase, as well as a lift, enabling access for all.

2-4 Albion Place, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR1 3NG



OLD SOLDIERS ENGINEER REUNION AT SPON GATE



Forty veterans from the Royal Engineers held a St George's Day reunion at The Spon Gate (Coventry).

Many of the group, who served with 73 Independent Field Squadron and 73 Field Squadron, hadn't seen one another in more than 40 years.

To get to the event, the ex-soldiers travelled from as far north as Fort William and as far south as Plymouth.

Scotty Murdoch, who organised the event, said: "It was absolutely brilliant to meet up with everyone after such a long time.

"We swapped stories and had a right laugh about old times."

He added: "The pub's staff were absolutely great, so helpful, and we got the chance to have a chat with a few of them as well."

Orders for replacement barrels of Guinness, Stella Artois and Carling were placed soon after the group left.

Shift leader Matt Cepas said: "They were brilliant, very friendly and really pleased to see one another again – a great day."

Pictured with the veterans, their Corps flag and specially made squadron-emblmed T-shirts are Matt Cepas and team leader Ieva Kemerzunaite.

CUSTOMERS GO NUTS FOR ACORN ALES AT MALTBY TAP TAKEOVER

The Queens Hotel (Maltby) launched a monthly tap takeover event, with an evening featuring beers from Barnsley's Acorn Brewery.

The series of events – which takes place on the first Tuesday of every month – was the brainchild of shift manager Sam Murray.

Sam joined the team in December 2021 and immediately set about promoting ales, working with the pub's manager – Beth Burns.

Among the beers on offer from Acorn were Gorlovka, a black 6.0% ABV stout with hints of liquorice, and Black Oak, a 4.5% ABV seasonal dark ale with flavours of cocoa and roasted malt.

As part of its ale drive, the pub has also launched a loyalty card, so that customers get one pint free for every 10 purchased.

Beth said: "Customers were given samples of the ales – and we were particularly keen to encourage lager-drinkers to try them.

"The evening went really well – and customers were receptive and interested. We look forward to our next tap takeover."



Shift leader Emily Barrett serves customer Keith Loader a selection of Acorn Brewery's ales, as bar associate Jade Hunt looks on

St George's Day ROUND-UP



The Rawson Spring (Sheffield) Customers Alexandria Turner (left) and Sophie Carrington share a pitcher of Classic Pimm's in the beer garden

FLAGONS, NOT DRAGONS, ARE DOWNED ON ST GEORGE'S DAY

Customers visiting Wetherspoon's pubs on the feast day of Saint George (23 April) toasted the patron saint of England during the St George's Day celebrations.

Among the drinks being served were a guest red ale, Patron Saint (4.3% ABV), brewed for the occasion by Cambridgeshire-based Elgood's Brewery.

Classic Pimm's, with lemonade and lots of fruit, was also on the drinks menu, served by the glass or in a pitcher to share.

Other made-in-England drinks options included Bathtub Gin from Kent (with a mixer included, from a selected range) and Surrey-based Denbies Broadwood's Folly English sparkling wine.



The High Main (Byker) Brothers David (left) and John Anderson try the St George's Day guest ale, served by shift leader Sophie Eke



The Paramount (Manchester) Team leader Alex Gordon and shift manager Naomi Greenhalgh



The Earl of Mercia (Coventry) Shift manager Marta Olkiewicz serves customers Alison Wells (left) and Leanne Tudor-Whittingham



The Walnut Tree (Leytonstone) Customer Ray Edwards, proudly wearing the red rose of England, toasts St George's Day, served by team leader Mia McFarlane (right) and bar associate Kylie Coffie

THE MOON UNDER WATER • WIGAN

SUPER-BUSY VICKY REACHING TOP SPEED AFTER 20 YEARS



Vicky Jackson of The Moon Under Water (Wigan) has been looking back on her Wetherspoon career as she celebrates 20 years with the company.

Vicky has progressed from working behind the bar as an associate to shift manager (grade four) – one step below pub manager – while bringing up two children and helping out at a local school.

Training has been the main driver behind Vicky's career progression with Wetherspoon.

She has taken company apprenticeships and external college courses in hospitality, travel and tourism.

Vicky (pictured with shift manager Dave Higham) joined The Glass House (St Helens) after being alerted by her cousin, who worked as a door staff member at the pub, that pub manager Will Fotheringham was hiring staff.

Under Will, now a Wetherspoon regional manager and board member, Vicky progressed to team leader, while also studying at college.

She went on to work for The Friar Penketh (Warrington), The Ferry Boat (Runcorn), The Watch Maker (Prescot), The Sir Thomas Gerard (Ashton-in-Makerfield) and The Premier (Widnes) in between stints at her first pub – The Glass House.

While working at The Premier, she got married and now has two children: Adam, 10, and Hannah, 9. Vicky is a parent governor at their school.

She said: "I have a very busy lifestyle running the children to football, Brownies, gymnastics and dancing.

"However, when I do get time to myself, in between working at The Moon Under Water and my family life, I like to go to the cinema or read."

She added: "I have made lots of friends through working for the company, among both customers and colleagues, and I would never have done that without Wetherspoon.

"I am very happy in my current role at the pub; however, my ambition is to become a pub manager."

Tafarn Y Porth (Caernarfon)
Shift manager Stephanie Owen (left) and bar associate Sophie Hughes mark St David's Day with Welsh beers and spring blooms



WALES OF A TIME AT CYMRU PUBS ON ST DAVID'S DAY

Wetherspoon's pubs across Wales celebrated St David's Day (Dydd Gwyl Dewi Sant – Tuesday 1 March) with a selection of Welsh drinks.

Several pubs were hosting their own St David's Day activities this year, including a week-long Great Welsh Ale Festival at The Gatekeeper (Cardiff), with a range of real ales from breweries across the country.

The ales from Wales included those from Boss Brewing, Brains, Brecon Brewing, Evan Evans, Glamorgan Brewing Co, Mumbles Brewery, Purple Moose Brewery and Rhymney.

Fundraising events at some of the pubs collected donations for Young Lives vs Cancer, among them a bake sale at The Black Bull Inn (Bangor), with Welsh treats including Welsh cakes and bara brith.

Wetherspoon's general manager, Steve Edge, said: "Our customers across Wales were able to celebrate St David's Day in style, with a range of events, as well as Welsh food and drinks choices."



The Malcolm Uphill (Caerphilly) Glamorgan Brewing Co hosted a meet-the-brewer session, with samples of its beers including Welsh Pale, Jemima's Pitchfork and Crrw Gorslas. Shift leader Sonia Herbert is pictured with (left to right) Paul Ware, Philip Kidd and Robert Duffy – representatives from the brewery



Pen Cob (Pwllheli) Flying the flag for Wales and celebrating St David's Day are customer Kirk Ward and bar associate Adam Jones



The Godfrey Morgan (Newport) Pictured sporting their national colours to mark St David's Day are (front, left to right) shift manager Mary Schwartz and customers Becky Smith, Lloyd Walsh, Miriam Schwartz and Rebeca Blackmore, along with (back, left to right) bar associate Amber Clarke, shift manager Abby Mitchell, pub manager Jensen Clarke and bar associates Ciaran Andrews and Tom Paul



The Black Bull Inn (Bangor) Shift leader Dan Brown and team leader Debbie Jones showcase the Welsh bake sale treats being sold at the pub in aid of Young Lives vs Cancer

HUNGRY? GRAB A PIZZA THE ACTION

Highly trained pub teams have been producing perfect pizzas for five years

Pizzas never fail to hit the spot.

They are the perfect dish to share with family and friends – or as a treat just for you.

Since launching the pizza menu more than five years ago, Wetherspoon has seen a growing popularity and interest in its pizza range.

Perfect

After installing dedicated pizza ovens in every pub and training the kitchen teams to produce perfect Wetherspoon pizzas, the pubs' teams have been serving the 11" and 8" freshly baked offerings and toppings ever since.

Margherita (mozzarella, basil) is currently the most popular choice.

Every Wetherspoon pizza is available as part of a meal deal (in our small-plate section's '3 for' offer, in deli deals® and as 11" pizzas).

For deli deals® and 11" pizza choices, there's a soft/alcoholic drink included as part of the price.

The secrets behind the great Wetherspoon pizzas are a perfect base and the fresh toppings.

The pizza base is made using sour dough, pressed and stretched in the pub's kitchen (not premade), then freshly baked.



8" Margherita

Crispy

The light and crispy sour dough bases are all first topped with a rich tomato sauce.

It is made using 100 per cent Italian tomato to provide an authentic taste and high-quality pizza topping.

Made by experts Cirio, with more than 160 years' Italian tomato-growing expertise in the Emilia-Romagna region, the pizza tomato sauce is enriched with a blend of Mediterranean herbs for that authentic taste of traditional Italian pizza.

The cheese is the perfect blend of grated mozzarella and Cheddar. Why a mix? As well as a great taste, it ensures a beautiful 'browning in the baking' for the perfect pizza every time.

Choices

Wetherspoon offers seven choices of pizza, although each individual topping is available as an extra topping.

The pizzas choices are: Margherita (mozzarella, basil); pepperoni (mozzarella, pepperoni); ham and mushroom (mozzarella, ham, mushroom, rocket); BBQ chicken (mozzarella, BBQ sauce, chicken breast, red onion, rocket); roasted vegetable (mozzarella, mushroom, roasted pepper, courgette, onion, basil); vegan roasted vegetable (mushroom, roasted pepper, courgette, onion, basil); spicy meat feast (mozzarella, ham, pepperoni, chicken breast, sliced chillies, rocket).

Extra toppings include: red onion; sliced chillies; maple-cured bacon; chicken breast; pepperoni; roasted vegetables.

We also offer an 11" and 8" garlic pizza bread, with or without cheese.

Whatever your choice, there is a Wetherspoon pizza waiting to be freshly made for you.



11" roasted vegetable

DID YOU KNOW?

The modern pizza, as we know it today, evolved in the late 18th and early 19th century from Neapolitan flatbreads, sold on market stalls and in bakeries.

London's first Italian restaurant, located just off Leicester Square, was owned by Joseph Moretti during 1803–05, although pizza was very unlikely to have been served then.

In the first mention of pizza in London (The Tatler, July 1952, 'Dining Out Abroad' section), Isaac Bickerstaff writes: "If you want to get away from altogether messy [Italian] dishes – and let us confess, most of them are – keep an eye open for ... pizza, a baked sandwich in many varieties, sweet or otherwise."

The first dedicated pizza restaurant in the UK opened in Soho, London, in 1965.

THE GREYHOUND • BROMLEY

AFTER AN AMAZING 21 YEARS, ANDY AND DOREEN HAVE NO REGRETS



In September, pub managers Doreen and Andy Bawn will be celebrating 21 years with Wetherspoon.

They have been running The Greyhound (Bromley) for more than a decade, since it first opened in July 2011, and have no plans, just yet, to bring their long career in hospitality to an end.

Doreen, originally from south Wales, was previously a cadet nurse in Bristol, and Bristolian Andy was in the navy. Doreen had been married before and met Andy when she was working as a bar maid.

The couple almost joined Wetherspoon two years before they actually did. Working for Whitbread at the time, they had a successful interview and were offered a management position at The Skylark (Croydon).

They were also offered a move to Salisbury with Whitbread and, with their youngest of three being a teenage boy at the time, decided to stay with that company and move to Wiltshire, rather than London.

However, a combination of inflexible working conditions and a chance conversation with a staff member at The Commercial Rooms (Bristol) led them to applying again for a job with Wetherspoon.

Doreen recalled: "We thought that all big companies would have the same attitude towards staff, but Wetherspoon has always been a great company to work for.

"My only regret is that we didn't join a bit earlier.

"But I am a great believer that everything happens for a reason – and our move to Wetherspoon was the right thing to do, at the right time."

They spent an initial three months at The New Cross Turnpike (Welling) with Richard Marriner (now regional manager) and a year at The John Logie Baird (Hastings), at the time one of the first Wetherspoon pubs with a children's licence.

Doreen and Andy then moved to Bromley, although first to the town's other pub – The Richmal Crompton.

Doreen said: "The pub was originally called Wetherspoons, before becoming The Richmal Crompton, and we were there for nine and a half years. Those were interesting times."

Doreen remembers one particularly colourful character who arrived for an interview wearing a bright red suit, white shoes and a white hat and, as no surprise to Andy, she employed him as a kitchen associate.

That was in 2005 – and the guy in the suit was Cesar Kimbirima.

Cesar went on to become a pub manager himself and currently runs The Brockley Barge (Brockley), just one of several successful Wetherspoon pub managers to progress thanks to Doreen and Andy's development.

The current management team members at The Greyhound have all been working with Doreen and Andy for many years.

Among them are shift managers Rachel Tompsett (11 years) and Kelsie Rothery (10 years), kitchen manager Julie Rogers (on and off for more than 20 years, including at The Richmal Crompton) and shift manager Chloe McLaren (five years).

Other long-serving members are shift leader Nick Wharram (nine years), kitchen shift leader Joe Furlong (six years), shift leader Tom Naylor (five years) and team leader Dishawn Gordon (five years).

Three long-serving floor associates and key members of the team are Simon Jarvis (20 years), Edward Hamilton (10 years) and Anna Biggs (five years).

Doreen concluded: "We have a great team at The Greyhound, and Wetherspoon is very good at looking after its staff.

"We have had the opportunity to buy our own house, something which we could never have done before working for Wetherspoon.

"The company treats its staff and managers well – and being able to own our own home is something we're thankful for."

MALTBY

ROTHER VALLEY MP ELECTS TO SERVE BEHIND THE BAR

Pictured (left to right) are area manager Hudson Simmons, Alexander Stafford MP and pub manager Beth Burns



Pub manager Beth Burns welcomed a new member to the team for a one-off shift at her pub, The Queens Hotel (Maltby).

Alexander Stafford, MP for Rother Valley, was keen to experience, at first hand, those challenges facing business owners in his constituency, so rolled up his sleeves and got stuck in to a Saturday-night shift (7.30pm until 1am on Sunday morning) at the pub.

A local Conservative MP, Mr Stafford wanted to discover what it would be like serving his constituents and getting a feel for their working life.

The opportunity came about following a meeting with Beth, just the previous week, to discuss recent issues and concerns in and around the town of Maltby.

Beth said: "We were delighted that Mr Stafford wanted to see for himself what a busy Saturday-night shift at The Queens Hotel is like.

"He was eager to help and learn, as well as taking the opportunity to chat to staff members and customers during the shift."

Mr Stafford reported: "I had a fantastic time at The Queens Hotel, helping behind the bar and serving and clearing tables, as well as speaking to constituents.

"Wetherspoon is a great local employer – with jobs like these the bread and butter of our local economy here in Rother Valley.

"I believe that the only way to really understand the life of my constituents is to get stuck in.

"It was a lot of fun and gave me a better insight into some of the challenges which Beth and her team face – especially the shift from 12.30am onwards – and how quickly things can change.

"Pubs have had a hard time during the pandemic – and The Queens Hotel is a great asset to Maltby, so we must do everything we can to support it."

He concluded: "Many thanks to Beth and her whole team for looking after me, for showing me the ropes and for all of their amazing work which they do for our community."

CAMBUSLANG

CAMBUSLANG CAKES RAISE A LOT OF DOUGH

A charity bake sale at The John Fairweather (Cambuslang) raised £600 for a local educational project for children.

The sale, featuring cakes, cupcakes, doughnuts and other goodies, was augmented by a raffle and a tombola, with prizes including Champagne, wine, gin, perfume sets and Easter goodies for the kids.

In addition, youngsters got the chance to paint mugs to take home with them.

The pub's manager, Michael Easton, said: "I arrived at the event just a few minutes in, but there wasn't much left for me – everything had been selling like mad."

Pictured (left to right) are Siobhan Cameron, Mhairi Henderson and Vanessa Correa, all of whom work for Cambuslang Out of School Care, which provides learning programmes, such as art lessons and educational play sessions.

● More information can be found here: <https://outofschoolcarecam.wixsite.com/cambuslang>



LOO OF THE YEAR'S JUDGES ARE ENGAGED BY WHAT THEY FIND

Wetherspoon won numerous accolades at the Loo of the Year Awards 2021.

The awards are aimed at highlighting standards of away-from-home washrooms.

Independent inspectors visit pubs' toilets anonymously and judge them on a range of criteria, including décor and maintenance, cleanliness, accessibility, overall management and hand-washing and hand-drying equipment.

Wetherspoon won three national awards: Champions League Standards of Excellence Award, Corporate Providers Entries UK Winner and Market Sector Award (Hospitality).

In addition, it was named a national winner in the Scotland Accessible Toilet Entries (The Carrick Stone, Cumbernauld) and a national winner in the Ireland Accessible Toilet Entries (The Forty Foot, Dún Laoghaire).

It won a further two awards in the Republic of Ireland: Washroom Cleaner of the Year Award for its in-house cleaning team (Ireland) and national winner of the individual category entries (The Silver Penny, Dublin).

More than 820 Wetherspoon pubs across the UK and the Republic of Ireland also achieved high individual ratings, following visits from inspectors to judge their toilets.

Wetherspoon's operations director, Martin Geoghegan, said: "We are thrilled to have won so many awards and recognition for our pubs' toilets.

"We invest time and money, along with creating great designs, to ensure that we provide our customers with excellent toilets.

"The fact that independent judges have rated Wetherspoon's pubs so highly, in terms of design, cleanliness and facilities, is very rewarding.

"We will continue to offer the best-possible toilets in our pubs."

Loo of the Year's managing director, Becky Wall, said: "Wetherspoon wins several awards each year for different areas of the entry categories and also for the standards which it has achieved.

"Those which have won awards this year were of exceptionally high standards of cleanliness and offered good facilities on the day they were inspected.

"Wetherspoon has raised the bar and is continuing to do so."

Criteria

Each year, trained independent inspectors make unannounced visits to the majority of Wetherspoon's pubs, throughout the UK and Ireland.

Pubs are assessed against 100 criteria and, each year, the inspectors comment on the fact that the facilities are being improved – and even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To meet these criteria, individual pubs must look at the overall cleanliness, the state of the facilities and the type of facilities offered, including male, female, accessible, baby change and also Changing Places facilities (where available).

Awards

Champions League Standards of Excellence Award

This award is presented to any organisation or local authority with eight or more entries and awarded five or more platinum or diamond awards which, in the opinion of the inspectors, is maintaining a consistently high standard of management in all of its Loo of the Year Awards entries.

Corporate Providers Entries UK Winner

This trophy is awarded to any corporate organisation or authority with 10 or more entries which, in the opinion of the inspectors, is maintaining a consistently high standard of away-from-home washrooms.

Market Sector Award (Hospitality)

This award is presented to the best entry from each of the market sectors, of which there are 14.



The Carrick Stone (Cumbernauld)

THE COMPANY ROW • CONSETT

17 PUBS IN 25 YEARS – TIM CELEBRATES AN EPIC PUB CRAWL



Tim Chaplin was awarded a certificate and bottle of Champagne as he celebrated 25 years' service with Wetherspoon.

He has worked at 13 Wetherspoon pubs during that time – 17 of his four stints as a holiday relief manager are included – and now at The Electrical Wizard (Morpeth).

It all started back on 12 December 1996 when Tim joined The Harvest Moon (Orpington) as a school-leaver at the age of 18.

"It was straight in at the deep end – and I very much learned from my mistakes as I went along," said Tim. "It was quite nerve-wracking at first."

But he overcame these early hurdles to quickly become a team leader and then a shift manager at the pub, before his career path took a turn northward as he moved in 1999 to The Wheatshaf (Stoke-on-Trent).

It was during his time here that he met his wife Nicola, who was working as a bar associate and later a shift manager.

The pair were married in 2002 and took over The Exchange (Banbury) as a management couple.

But most of Tim's career has been spent in the northeast, following a move in 2003 to The Thomas Sheraton (Stockton-on-Tees).

Tim and Nicola moved to Newcastle and now have three daughters.

To spend more time with their daughters, the couple returned to their former roles as a shift manager.

Tim has worked at a wide variety of Wetherspoon pubs in the region, from Wetherspoons (Gateshead's Metrocentre) to the much smaller pub The Water House (Durham) and The Leaping Salmon (Berwick-upon-Tweed) (now sold).

Outside working life, Tim 44, is a keen football fan and was a strong youth player, representing his beloved Tottenham Hotspur and Queen's Park Rangers as a teenager.

He is pictured with area manager John Hudson (left) and regional manager Anthony Buckley, at one of his former pubs, The Company Row (Consett).

GRAHAM ANSWERS THE CALL AFTER CALL OF DUTY EMERGENCY

Pub manager Billy Thornton is understandably proud of the bond which his team members share, both at work and away from the pub.

At the beginning of March, having completed his shift in the kitchen at The Salt Cot (Saltcoats), kitchen associate David Webster (left) was at home, enjoying an evening of online gaming with a colleague and friend, shift leader Graham Colvin (right).

Billy takes up the story: "They were both off duty and playing 'Call of Duty: Warzone' online together, when David suddenly began to become unwell and unresponsive.

"Graham, who was listening to the situation unfolding through his headset, managed to alert David's parents and sister, who called the emergency services.

"Graham doesn't drive, but rushed to David's house, a 15- to 20-minute walk away, arriving before the ambulance, to see how David was doing."

David, who has worked at The Salt Cot for five years, since joining at the age of 16, had no history of medical problems, but had suffered an aggressive seizure, resulting in hospitalisation.

Thankfully, he has since made a full recovery and, after taking some holiday leave, is now back at work.

Billy revealed: "When I arrived at the pub in July 2020, Graham was on the verge of leaving the company.



"He has since progressed from bar associate to shift leader, with five years' service, and we are all glad that he was in the right place at the right time, with presence of mind, to help David.

"They say that everything happens for a reason."

Billy concluded: "This incident, without Graham's quick actions, could have been a lot more severe for David.

"Not only does this demonstrate how close our team members are, but that you don't always need to be on shift for your colleagues to be looking out for you."

MURAL MAKES ITS MARK AT BENJAMIN FAWCETT



Shift leader Claire Dennis and former colleague Dan Longbottom are pictured standing in the revamped staff room at The Benjamin Fawcett (Drifffield).

The 4.26m mural of local landmark the Sledmere Monument – also known as The Sir Tatton Sykes monument – adorns the wall of the new staff facility.

Dan, who now works at The Cross Keys (Beverley) as a kitchen shift leader, took up photography during lockdown.

"It got me on walks, got me out of the house and I've since spent a fortune on equipment, lenses and so on," he said.

Claire worked with him more than five years ago, when Dan was a kitchen associate at The Benjamin Fawcett.

She said: "We needed a mural for the wall, so I remembered that Dan is into photography and asked him whether he could help."

The upgraded staff area features changing rooms with individual cubicles, a separate kitchen and eating area and equipment such as a microwave oven, a kettle and an ironing board.

Meet the brewer

Wetherspoon is committed to serving the best range of beers in its pubs, including sourcing from microbreweries throughout the UK and Ireland. Here, we feature two brewers whose beers are enjoyed at the pubs.

GOOD THINGS BREWING AT ELGOOD'S SINCE 1795

Family-run brewery on River Nene, in Cambridgeshire, delivers to Wetherspoon's pubs across East Anglia

Brewery's name: Elgood's Brewery, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire



Elgood's was established in 1795 at the North Brink Brewery and was one of the first classic purpose-built Georgian breweries to be constructed outside of London.

In 1878, it came under the control of the Elgood family and remains a family-owned business, with the fifth generation of the family continuing the tradition of running the company, situated on the banks of the River Nene, in the Fenlands of Cambridgeshire.

The sisters – managing director Belinda Sutton (pictured left) and financial director Jenny Everall (pictured right) – are the current custodians of the traditional brewery. Their father, Nigel Elgood, now retired, still lives next door with his wife Anne and is a frequent visitor to the four-and-a-half-acre brewery site and gardens.

Beautiful

Plans are well under way to make the most of those beautiful gardens by adding a conference centre and wedding venue to the business – which already boasts 28 of its own pubs.

Elgood's Brewery has a team of 15–20, with head brewer Alan Pateman (second left) at the helm in the brew house for the past 30 years.

Open to visitors, Elgood's North Brink Brewery, built more than 200 years ago, produces its beer using equipment dating from 1910 to the present day.

Relationship

Sales director Marcus Beecher (second right), who has worked at Elgood's for the past 12 years, said: "Our relationship with Wetherspoon stretches back well over 20 years, probably nearer to 30 years.

"My predecessor worked for the brewery for 20 years before me and was instrumental in forming the partnership."

That business partnership sees Elgood's delivering directly to Wetherspoon's pubs across East Anglia, among them those at Cambridge, Huntingdon, March, Norwich, Peterborough and Whittlesey.

Festival

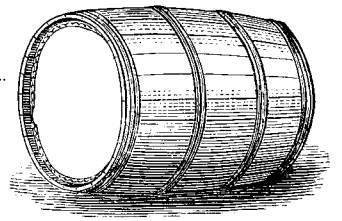
Marcus continued: "We have also produced beers regularly for the Wetherspoon real-ale festival and, at least three times a year, enjoy regular national listings."

Among the Elgood's ales which have been enjoyed by Wetherspoon's customers are its gold-medal-winning flagship brew Cambridge Bitter (3.8%ABV), its vegan Plum Porter (4.5% ABV) and Greyhound (5.2% ABV).

Marcus revealed: "We will supply whatever David Aucutt and the team at East-West Ales are looking for." (David and his team are responsible for sourcing real ales for Wetherspoon's pubs.)

"For instance, we hadn't brewed Greyhound for three or four years, yet brewed it again on request.

"Our partnership with Wetherspoon is incredibly valuable to us and highly regarded."



KAREN OF KELBURN GRASPS HOT POTATO AFTER DAD DEREK RETIRES

New boss of brewery has had a baptism of fire, but is now emerging like a phoenix from the flames

Brewery's name: Kelburn Brewing Company, Barrhead, Glasgow



April 2022 marked 20 years since Kelburn Brewing Company brewed its first beer at its Barrhead-based brewery.

The family-run business was set up in October 2001 by Derek Moore and his son Ross, with daughter Karen also part of the team (on and off after university and a year's travelling) from the very beginning.

Paisley-born Derek began his working life as a maths teacher, turning his hand during the 1980s to home brewing and volunteering at the now-defunct Strathalbyn Brewery, where he developed his brewing skills.

Dream

In 1996, Derek was involved in founding Houston Brewery, where he worked as head brewer for four years, before realising his dream of forming his own brewery – Kelburn Brewing Company.

In February 2020, Karen took over the family business, after dad Derek's retirement and her brother Ross's move overseas.

With two daughters of her own, Karen admits that the first two years running the brewery have been "a bit stressful", to say the least. However, with the pandemic, lockdowns and pub closures now (hopefully) a thing of the past, business is slowly picking up again.

Emotions

Karen reported: "The first two years have been a real mix of emotions, but we are now thankfully getting back on track again."

Kelburn Brewing Company has been supplying Wetherspoon's pubs from the start of its business and, when the first lockdown happened, was preparing to brew for a national listing for the first time.

Karen (pictured) said: "It would be great if we could soon get that opportunity again to be able to showcase our beers further afield for Wetherspoon."

Delivering

"We currently supply Wetherspoon's pubs in Glasgow, Edinburgh and the central belt in Ayrshire, delivering directly to around 40 pubs.

"Our nearest and most regular customer is The Last Post (Paisley), with both The Counting House and The Sir John Stirling Maxwell (both Glasgow) also busy customers of ours.

"In terms of cellar management, the staff and managers know what they are doing, and it is always great to get our product and name out there with a company as big as Wetherspoon."

Among the Kelburn Brewing beers enjoyed by customers at Wetherspoon's pubs in Scotland are its flagship brew Jaguar (4.5% ABV), Goldihops (3.8% ABV) and Dark Moor (4.5% ABV).

Karen added: "Jaguar, which has won 'champion golden ale' awards at both CAMRA and Beer of Britain competitions, is the most popular of our beers at Wetherspoon, although Goldihops and Dark Moor, as well as our various seasonal beers, are also regularly delivered and popular with customers."

The Glass House (St Helens)



Well Done Folks!
£827
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Staff from The Glass House (St Helens) raised £827 for Young Lives vs Cancer by staging a walk in their pyjamas and onesies.

The group walked 3.6 miles to The Watch Maker (Prescot), collecting money along the way to add to donations from pub customers.

Shift manager and charity champion Chantelle Briscoe-Williams said: "I am so proud of all of our team and everyone who donated."

Pictured (back row from left) are cleaner Anna-Marie McGann, shift manager Chantelle Briscoe-Williams with her partner pub manager Ashleigh Briscoe-Williams, shift leader Ellie Callaghan, bar associate Ben Parkinson, cleaner Karen Taylor and kitchen shift leader Heather Arnold; (front row from left) Karen's daughter Joanne Taylor, Karen's mother Barbara and bar associate Shannon Whittle.

The Childwall Fiveways Hotel (Liverpool)



Well Done Folks!
£550
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Shift leader Mark Warnes (pictured) celebrates the end of his cycling stint as he and colleagues at The Childwall Fiveways Hotel (Liverpool) raised £550 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The team cycled 60 miles on a static bicycle, installed so that staff could take it in turn throughout World Cancer Day (4 February 2022).

The event was organised by shift manager Danny Yilmaz, with help from shift manager Sasha Yilmaz, shift leaders Emma O'Neill and Mark Warnes, kitchen shift leader Georgia Cornes and shift leaders Makeda Blythe and Rachel Stevens.

As customers enjoyed the spectacle, they were treated to a cake sale and a tombola, with prizes including perfume sets and bottles of ale.

Emma said: "It went so well. We didn't really expect to raise that much, so we are very grateful to customers for their donations."

Mark added: "It's a good way to keep fit and raise money for charity at the same time."

The Poste of Stone (Stone)



Well Done Folks!
£55
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Shift manager Becky Waldron put her organisational, as well as baking, skills to the test in aid of charity.

A fundraising bake sale, to coincide with The Poste of Stone (Stone) pub's 20th birthday, raised £55 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Becky, pictured with pub manager Neil Ridgway, also encouraged her colleagues to take part, producing their own home bakes to ensure that no one went without cake for the celebration.

The Punch Bowl (York)



Well Done Folks!
£350
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Shift leader Rachel Southwell did not have time to get the January blues, thanks to a month-long charity challenge.

Rachel, who works at The Punch Bowl (York), took part in the 'month of movement' challenge, raising awareness and funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

She joined thousands of other fundraisers, across the UK, moving for 30 minutes every day for 30 consecutive days – running from 15 December 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Participants could choose their own start date (making sure that the challenge was completed by 31 March) and their daily 30-minute movement.

Walking (with or without a dog), running alone or with friends, cycling, swimming or yoga – the possibilities were endless.

As well as plenty of running and walking outdoors, in her spare time, Rachel clocked up the steps during her shifts at The Punch Bowl to record a month-long total of 100 miles.

She said: "It was a great challenge to take part in and helped with my fitness."

"Thanks to everyone who donated and helped me to raise £350."

The Three Hulats (Leeds)



Well Done Folks!
£533
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

The darts team at The Three Hulats (Leeds) held a tournament to raise £533 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

While the evening-long competition was going on, pub staff and team members went around the pub selling raffle tickets and collecting donations.

Raffle prizes included a hamper of Easter eggs, bottles of gin, wine, candles and chocolates.

The pub's manager, Maria Church, said: "The team came to us with the idea and then organised it themselves. They even brought in the raffle prizes."

"We do really appreciate the kind generosity of our customers."

Some of the participating players are pictured on the night.

The Dog Beck (Penrith)

Well Done Folks!
£2,000
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Riders at The Dog Beck (Penrith) cycled 270 miles to raise cash for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Staff members took turns on a static cycle in the pub to motivate customers to donate to the charity.

Among those who each managed an hour's cycling were the pub's manager Colin Birchall.

He said: "It was a great effort from the team – and we'd like to say a big thankyou to everyone who donated."

"At the time of the cycle, we were leading the way with our charity fundraising, topping £2,000 during 2022, so far."

The 270-mile target distance was picked because it is the fastest driveable route among all seven of the company's pubs in the area, which are under the guidance of regional manager Craig Coombes.

Colin was joined in the effort by shift manager Sam Reekie, bar associates Jenni Edmead, Sophie Scott, John Kirkpatrick and Natasha Wharton, team leader Callum Watson-Stevenson and shift leader Dan Parker.

Pictured (back, left to right) are Sam, Colin, Callum, bar associate Jake Winder and Dan; (front) John and Sophie.

The Iron Duke (Wellington, Somerset)

Well Done Folks!
£242
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



A pizza-and-cider night at The Iron Duke (Wellington, Somerset) raised almost £250 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Customers paid £10 each for the ticketed event, in return for a selection of pizza slices and samples from Sheppy's Cider Farm, based in Taunton.

A talk on cider was given by the cider-maker's head of sales, Alex Sheen, who also answered customers' questions afterwards.

There was also a raffle for prizes, including a hamper donated by Sheppy's and a tour of the company's factory.

The pub's manager, Mat Turner, said: "The evening was a great success, raising £242 for the charity, as well as showcasing our wonderful pizzas and Sheppy's ciders."

Pictured (left to right) are floor associates Ellie Groves and Athena House, Sheppy's business development manager Jessica Banwell and head of sales Alex Sheen, with customers Sarah-Ann Miles and Gill Sellick.

The Wagon & Horses (Sheffield)

Well Done Folks!
£2,020
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Colleagues Jacob Grubb and Laura Morris (pictured) at The Wagon & Horses (Sheffield) have raised more than £2,000 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

When bar associate Laura heard that team leader Jacob planned to run the Sheffield half marathon, she launched a one-woman fundraising campaign – including a 100-mile sponsored walk.

While Jacob trained, Laura collected sponsorship money for more than a month. Her own sponsored walk involved walking 100 miles throughout February.

She said: "Customers were incredibly generous – and I'd like to thank them all so much."

Jacob tore a calf muscle during the 13-mile run, but completed the course before going to hospital for treatment.

The pub's manager, Peter Bryan, said: "I just want to say massive congratulations to my new team leader, Jacob, who ran the Sheffield half marathon and a huge well-done to Laura. It's an absolutely amazing achievement and I'm proud of both of them."

The Devonshire Inn (Skipton)



Well Done Folks!
£782
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Seven magnificent fundraisers from The Devonshire Inn (Skipton) took part in a charity fundraising sponsored walk.

The group walked from The Bowling Green (Otley) to their pub in Skipton, North Yorkshire, a distance of 19 miles.

Taking part in the trek were (left to right) shift manager Bethany Dale, floor associate Louise Summerscales, bar associates Mia Hutchinson and Eleanor Fuggle and team leaders Madelaine Presland and Owen Gallear. Kitchen associate Joe Scratcher (not pictured) also took part.

Cash donations and sponsorship pledges totalled £782.47.

RICHARD AND STEVE JOIN 34 HEROES PEDALLING TO PARIS



Wetherspoon's regional manager Richard Marriner (far left) and area manager Steve Meeke (far right) were among 34 Wetherspoon employees taking part in a charity cycle challenge.

Team Young Lives was raising funds and awareness for Young Lives vs Cancer by participating in the Paul's House-to-Paris Cycle Challenge 2022 (12–15 May), which took place at the time of going to press (a full round-up will appear in the next edition).

Richard and Steve are pictured with shift manager Luvena Daly (second left) and duty manager Kara Nash at The Assembly Rooms (Epsom), one of two pubs which the pair visited as part of their fundraising activities in the run-up to their departure for Paris.

Cash collections and the proceeds of a bake sale at The Assembly Rooms and The Watchman (New Malden) totalled £500, while further generous donations online, from family and friends, boosted their personal £1,600 (minimum) fundraising target.

Richard said: "This cycle challenge was not about the hard training alone, but about raising funds and awareness for a great charity.

"Thanks to the fantastic generosity of customers at both pubs, as well as our family and friends pledging money online, Steve and I both reached our fundraising target for this event and could then concentrate on the physical training for the real thing."

The traditional London-to-Paris event is one of the very best cycling experiences, taking in two of Europe's most iconic cities, but this

Wetherspoon challenge was extra special, starting at Young Lives vs Cancer's London Home from Home, called Paul's House.

After being waved off at Paul's House, the team members headed south to Portsmouth (95 miles), where they boarded the overnight ferry to France.

Arriving in Caen, day two was a cycle through the open countryside of northern France for 85 miles to Évreux.

On day three, the team pedalled the remaining 70 miles from Évreux to Paris, winding through the city, before arriving at the Eiffel Tower's finishing line.

Team Young Lives' participants also included general manager Alistair Broome, people operations manager Tom Ball, area managers John Hudson and Calum Brennan, retail auditor Chris Ward, regional trainer team manager Isaac James, pub managers, shift managers, pub team members and head-office staff.

When their child is going through cancer treatment in London, Paul's House is a haven for families, offering free accommodation, close to the principal treatment centre, often many miles from a family's own home. It allows young cancer patients to be close to their families at a difficult time, when they need each other most.

The White Ball Inn (Tiverton)



Well Done Folks!
£750
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

When Luke Roberts got the all-clear from cancer, he was determined to raise some money for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Luke, 29-year-old kitchen manager at The White Ball Inn (Tiverton), had his lengthy beard shaved off to raise £750 for the charity. He is pictured with new facial hair, alongside a mug depicting his previously lengthy whiskers. Customers donated in the pub, as well as online. Luke's wife Sarah Roberts (at the time Sarah Lazarus) had already featured in these pages after raising £2,000 through a parachute jump for the same charity.

"I feel like I have a new lease of life," said Luke, who was diagnosed with bowel cancer two years ago. "I was really driven to do something to help fellow cancer sufferers."

The Bourtree (Hawick)



Well Done Folks!
£1,105
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

A race night at The Bourtree (Hawick) raised £1,105 for Young Lives vs Cancer. Customers were invited to pick a horse during a series of televised races from nearby racecourse Kelso.

Eight races attracted minimum bets of £2 each. The main event was followed by televised pig-racing, again from Kelso, in which piglets race over hay bales to reach bowls of milk.

Shift leader Angie Turvey said: "It's the second one we've done. Last time, we raised £800, so that was our target, and we smashed it."

"It was such a fun night, and we would like to thank everyone who took part and contributed."

The evening was hosted by event organisers Jamie Gent and Angie's daughter Elise Nicholson. Angie said: "They do a great job for us and are partly the reason why we are top of the Wetherspoon charity fundraising league in Scotland and 10th in the UK – of which we are very proud, considering that we are a relatively small pub in a small town."

Pictured (left to right) are Angie Turvey, Jamie Gent, pub manager Richard Conway, Elise Nicholson and kitchen associate Heather Mirk.

The Rocket (Putney)



Well Done Folks!
£170
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

A special boat race event at The Rocket (Putney) raised £170 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Customers were challenged to take part in a competition to see who could row the greatest distance on a static rowing machine in 30 seconds, in return for a choice of prizes, including bottles of spirit and gym membership.

The rowing machine and the gym membership prize were provided by Pure Gym.

The event took place during the annual University Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge, with the pub just a stone's throw from Putney Bridge, the starting point of The Championship Course (as the route is known officially).

Staff contributed £1 each to the charity to wear pink for the day, with money also raised through a tombola featuring prizes such as sweets, face masks and fluffy socks.

An outdoor bar was available as the pub catered for crowds of boat race fans.

Shift leader Nichole Busuttill said: "It was an amazing atmosphere – and the pub was full of rowers and supporters. We are really pleased that we raised so much money."

Pictured from left are (front row) bar associate Teaghan Claire Eastman, Nichole Busuttill and (back row) bar associate Michelle Bannister, kitchen manager Damaine Williams, kitchen associate Destiny Olusegin, pub manager Ciara Wilczur, shift leader Lydia Emerson, shift manager Daisy Ashworth, shift managers Samantha Mathis and Jack Lyons, bar associates Shannon Maguire and Molly McKee.

The Giant Bellflower (Selby)



Well Done Folks!
£877
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

A crackers quiz night at The Giant Bellflower (Selby) raised £877 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Alongside the main event, customers were challenged to eat three cream crackers as fast as possible, in order to win prizes such as cuddly toys, T-shirts and drinks.

Boosting the fundraising initiative during the evening, kitchen associate Tom Ward (pictured) had his head shaved, while team leader Cory Main had his legs waxed.

The event, organised by mother-and-son duo, floor team leader Maureen Winterburn and shift leader Jake Winterburn, was one of a series of similar events held at the pub every other month.

The pub's manager, Laura Haith, said: "We packed a lot into the evening. Customers came away feeling thoroughly entertained and were happy to have given to the cause."

YOU ARE NEVER FAR AWAY FROM A GORALSKI AT THE STANDING ORDER



The Standing Order (Edinburgh) now counts five members of the same family among its staff.

Bar team leader Kamil Goralski was the first to join the pub in May 2019.

His brother Damian joined as a bar associate in the August of that same year.

But it wasn't until COVID-19 and lockdown changed so many lives that two of their relatives – their father Andrej and step-mother Teresa Wochna – came to join them from The Sir Walter Scott, one of three Wetherspoon pubs at Edinburgh airport.

The pair had to move pubs because of COVID-19 travel restrictions which affected so many airport workers and resulted in the pub's closure.

Andrej is now a kitchen porter and Teresa a floor associate at The Standing Order.

And a fifth member of the family joined the team in September 2021 as a kitchen associate – Kamil and Damian's sister Martyna.

But perhaps fittingly, it is Andrej who can claim seniority through length of service, as he has been with the company since March 2016.

He said: "It is lovely to work here, where I can see that my family is happy – and all of the team here are good people. It is a good place to work."

The Standing Order's pub manager is Susan English.

She said: "It is unusual, but great, to have five members of the same family working in the one pub.

"They are fantastic staff members with a lot of experience among them in different aspects of pub life – from the kitchen to serving food and running the bar."

Pictured (left to right) are Damian Goralski, Andrej Goralski, Teresa Wochna, Kamil Goralski and Martyna Goralski.

ACTOR POLLY AIMING TO PROGRESS FROM BAR TO STAR

When not working as a team leader at The Red Well (Wellingborough), budding actor Polly Jones is pulling out all the stops to push her stage and screen career.

Polly, 23, is auditioning for drama school and has already found work as an actor and model, not to mention voiceover work and commercials.

She said: "It is very demanding. Sometimes, after a shift ending at 1am, I get up again at 4am to drive hundreds of miles for an early film shoot or audition."

Polly's early career has picked up momentum since she signed with Wellingborough-based LDP Agency.

She had played Dorothy in local pantomime The Wizard of Oz and landed two lead roles in short, small-budget films.

"I really enjoy working at the pub, but I'm doing everything I can to get into drama school and then take things from there," added Polly, whose professional profile can be found here: www.spotlight.com/9094-6753-9288



OUTSIDE HELP ALL ADDS UP AT THE BANK STATEMENT



Customers at The Bank Statement (Swansea) are continuing to enjoy al fresco socialising (weather permitting), thanks, in part, to the local authorities.

Swansea Council has been supporting local businesses, following the COVID-19 restrictions, by allowing free licences for outdoor seating areas.

The scheme has now been extended until March 2023, suspending fees, although businesses must still apply for a licence.

Paul Morris, pub manager at The Bank Statement, said: "The outdoor seating area is very popular with our customers and the suspension of fees, for a further year, is very welcome as businesses slowly recover from the pandemic."

Swansea Council, together with Swansea BID, have also worked in partnership to improve Wind Street with green spaces, flower beds, event lighting and street furniture, in a £3-million investment project which has further boosted the local businesses and the community.

The Bank Statement, housed in a former bank building on Wind Street in the city centre, offers outdoor seating for 60 customers on the pavement area in front of the pub, with dining tables and chairs.

Swansea BID's chief executive, Russell Greenslade, said: "We worked closely with our local authority and other partners on the suspension of pavement café licences in summer 2020 – and, in January this year, it was extended until March 2023.

"It was aimed at helping businesses as they operated within the pandemic restrictions and at helping to bring added life and vibrancy to our BID area's hospitality businesses.

"Its continuation further supports our BID area's businesses, and we supported our BID levy payers to help them to secure licences for offering services on paved areas adjoining their premises."

Swansea BID aims to make Swansea city centre a better place to shop, stay, visit and do business. It aims to drive the city centre forward, improving experiences, standards and adding value, working in collaboration with all sectors.

NEW AUTHOR IAN COOKS UP ROD THE COD IN SIX BELLS

Wetherspoon's customer Ian Woolley has published his first book, initially a lockdown project, which was completed at his local – The Six Bells (Lymington).

Originally from Wales, he moved to the New Forest more than four decades ago and has worked as a train driver for 46 years.

Ian recalled: "I think my love of storytelling started as a boy, when I was sometimes asked, when the teacher popped out, to keep the class amused by making up stories."

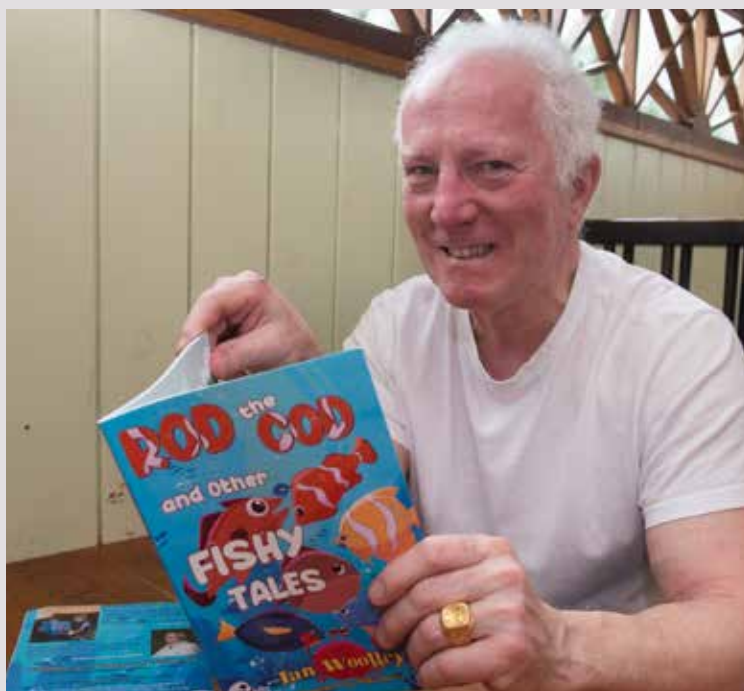
Ian's first published work (the first of several planned books) – Rod the Cod and Other Fishy Tales – with stories aimed at four- to 10-year-olds, was tested initially on his grandchildren in Wales.

Ian reported: "The Six Bells was an ideal place to sit and very often finish off several of the stories over a drink.

"I enjoy a pint of real ale – and it has a good selection, which is changed regularly."

As well as the day job, driving trains between London and Bournemouth, and his new-found role as a children's author, Ian also writes for music magazine The Beat, along with co-hosting and promoting quiz events, including fundraisers at The Back of Beyond (Reading).

● **Published by Pegasus, Rod the Cod and Other Fishy Tales (priced £9.99) is available to purchase online via [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk), as well as at bookshops including Waterstones, Blackwell's and WHSmith.**



St Patrick's Day ROUND-UP



The Tullow Gate (Carlow) Customers Chloe, Casey and Kayleigh Jeffers (left to right)

PUB REVELLERS ARE SPOILED FOR CHOICE

Customers at our pubs toasted the patron saint of Ireland on St Patrick's Day (17 March).

Draught Guinness and Jameson Irish whiskey were available.

Guinness hats were popular with customers and staff alike.

Our pubs in the Republic of Ireland were serving draught Beamish Irish Stout and Jameson Irish whiskey.



The Three Hulats (Chapel Allerton, Leeds) Customers were entertained by members of Doncaster-based Nadine Martin Academy of Irish Dancing (pictured). The St Patrick's Day performance coincided with the pub's 23rd birthday



The Ivory Peg (Chelmsford) Toasting the occasion with a pint of the 'black stuff' are (left to right) customers Thomas D Keery, Michael Drane, John Cole and David Brooker



The Bridge House (Belfast) Enjoying drinks and dressed for the occasion are (left to right) customers Rachel Cummins, Grace Holway, Alex McIlwaine and Beth Francis



The Great Central (Manchester) Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Danielle Bateson, shift leader Liam Potter and team leader Tom Lane, getting into the spirit of the occasion in fancy dress

TRAVEL WRITER TIM TAKES A SHINE TO THE SILK MERCER

Travel writer Tim Saunders celebrates the beautiful British Isles in his book – Family Staycations.

More than 30 destinations are featured in alphabetical order, to consider as a family holiday in the UK, starting with Cornwall and finishing in Wiltshire.

With his own young family, Tim has visited all of the destinations featured and provides honest accounts of their experiences.

Family-friendly self-catering accommodation and hotels are included. From an affordable static caravan on the Isle of Wight to a cosy cottage in Dorset or a luxury hotel in Jersey, there are options to suit all budgets.

Among the places to eat, in his section about Wiltshire, Tim features The Silk Mercer (Devizes).

Tim, based in Locks Heath, Southampton, and a frequent visitor to The Old Gaolhouse (Winchester), said: “We had lunch at The Silk Mercer, which has a family-friendly environment and is value for money.”

His book also includes 15 attractions, perfect for day trips, with his own photographs accompanying his reviews.

Tim added: “Many aspire to a foreign holiday, but this book seeks to prove that holidaying in the UK is just as rewarding.

“You need to reward yourself while, at the same time, not breaking the bank.

“That time to go away, unwind and re-energise is absolutely vital. The soul craves it.”

● **Family Staycations is available to buy via Amazon.co.uk, priced £17.99 (paperback) and £29.99 (hardcover); Kindle edition also available.**



CALEY PICTURE HOUSE PAIR MAKES SMALL-SCREEN DÉBUT WITH AL MURRAY

Two Wetherspoon customers represented The Caley Picture House (Edinburgh) on a TV pub quiz show hosted by popular comedian Al Murray and actor Shaun Williamson.

Craig and Debbie Stephens appeared in The Great British Pub Quiz 2 – in which pubs from all over the country go head to head.

The pair had the strong support of their friend Matt Knowles, manager at The Caley Picture House.

He said: “It was fantastic to see the couple representing the pub on TV.

“Craig and Debbie are regulars at the pub, and it’s always a pleasure to see them.”

The couple flew to England to participate in the quiz, meeting the hosts.

Craig said: “We used to take part in quizzes in the pub and then saw Al Murray’s show and decided to apply to take part.

“The quiz was head-to-head, at the end, and the other team, unfortunately, pipped us to the post.”

Debbie added: “Although we didn’t win, it was a great experience.”

Craig (pictured with Debbie and Al) said: “Al said that he is partial to a good Wetherspoon and admitted he likes to ‘nosh down a good burger’. He is a lovely man – and so is Shaun.”

Debbie and Craig prefer a curry while out at the pub, washed down with a bottle of Prosecco.

Craig added: “We usually go on a Saturday night, but, no matter how busy the pub is, Matt always makes time to have a chat with us.”



REAL-ALE FESTIVAL
Round-up



The Observatory (Ilkeston)
Shift manager **Georgia Clarke**
toasts the festival

MANY TEMPTERS TO TASTE AT SPRING REAL-ALE FESTIVAL

Real-ale enthusiasts enjoyed a wonderful selection of beers during Wetherspoon's UK and Ireland-wide spring real-ale festival.

Customers could choose from up to 25 beers during a 12-day festival.

The beers included three from overseas brewers (Australia, Italy and USA). There were also beers from Jersey and Orkney.

As well as featuring a range of malt and hop varieties from around the world, there were also beers which included cherries, spices and rye in their ingredients.

The festival collection included vegan (also suitable for vegetarians), as well as gluten-free beers.

Among the beers on offer were Rooster's Tenderfoot, Sambrook's Tomahawk, Orkney Dragonhead, Terrapin Jazz (USA), Vale Jekyll and Hyde, Birrificio Foglie d'Erba Hot Night at the Village (Italy), Batemans Beast from the East, JW Lees Malt Crush and Young Henrys Real Ale (Australia).

The festival's organiser, Jen Swindells, said: "Wetherspoon is committed to offering its customers the widest range of real ales.

"The beer festival gave our pubs the opportunity to showcase a superb selection of beers, including many available in the pubs for the first time and some brewed especially for the festival."



The Gold Cape (Mold) Shift leader **Dylan Wyatt-Jones** serves customer **Alan Martin**



The Wallace Hartley (Colne) Bar associate **Sue Landers** serves customer **Sylvia Driver**



The Great Wood (Blanchardstown) Customer **Adrian James** is served a festival pint by bar associate **Dean Byrne**



The George Inn (Littlehampton) Cleaner **Chelsea Saunderson**, shift leader **Danny Scovell**, kitchen associate **Daryl Beddis** and team leader **Hannah Jones** (left to right)



The Thomas Burke (Leigh) Shift leader Lucy Martin with a pint of festival ale



The Foot of the Walk (Leith) Duty manager Dean Ballantyne



Golden Cross Hotel (Bromsgrove) Bar associate Devon Smith, team leader John Broad and shift manager Kieran Clements (left to right)



The Wyndham Arms Hotel (Bridgend) Customers Terry Thomas (left) and Bernard Tilley enjoy a festival pint



The Stanley Jefferson (Bishop Auckland) Shift leader Jay Bowers with a pint of festival ale



The Good Yarn (Uxbridge) Shift leader Mason Chittenden and duty manager Chloe Reilly serve third-of-a-pint festival ales to customer Stinder Bal



The Prestwick Pioneer (Prestwick) Customers David Hill (left) and Tony Adair enjoy a festival pint



The Herbert Wells (Woking) Bar associate Deimantas Grybauskas serves customer Peter Anscombe

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS • BEDFORD

MARK AND DAWN CLOCK UP 20 YEARS AS MANAGERS



Mark Judd's first shift as a pub manager would have put many people off the trade for life.

Four coachloads of Cardiff City fans arrived at The White House (Luton) after a Boxing Day match with Luton Town FC – and mayhem ensued.

Despite the drama of his first shift, he persevered – with his wife Dawn and him having just celebrated 20 years as pub managers with Wetherspoon.

The pair, now managing The Pilgrim's Progress, the pub and hotel in Bedford, originally came to the UK from Hamilton, New Zealand, to work for his parents who ran a pub in Leicestershire.

A friend joined Wetherspoon and recommended the company to Mark and Dawn – who were quickly accepted on the fast-track management course.

Mark said: "We have enjoyed our time with the company. "It has been a very fruitful 20 years."

At The Pilgrim's Progress, Mark looks after the hotel side of the business, while Dawn takes care of the pub. "It's a great division of labour and works very well," added Mark.

The couple joined the pub as its managers in September 2014 – and, the following year, it was closed for five months for a refurbishment, when the hotel facility was added.

"I have learned a lot about the wider hospitality business since we added the hotel," said Mark.

Outside of work, Dawn and Mark enjoy snowboarding together. Mark is also a keen supporter of the All Blacks, but has been a Tottenham Hotspur supporter as well since the age of 10, when a cousin living in London sent him a Spurs shirt. It wasn't until about six months later that he found out that Spurs wasn't a rugby team.

He and Dawn (pictured) received a card and a bottle of bubbly from their area manager, Callum Brennan (also pictured), to mark their 20 years' service.

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CHERYL ON TRACK TO VISIT 50 NEW PUBS BEFORE TURNING 50

Cheryl Marland always likes to have a project on the go – and her latest one is to visit 50 Wetherspoon pubs before her 50th birthday in August.

Cheryl, from Preston, is already half way towards her goal, having visited 25 pubs from London to Glasgow.

This is in addition to more than 100 Wetherspoon pubs which she has already previously visited.

Cheryl, who enjoys a burger with a gin and tonic or a glass of Prosecco on her visits, works for a rail company.

Her local pubs are The Grey Friar and The Twelve Tellers (Preston).

“I love Wetherspoon,” said Cheryl, who has also signed up to this year’s London Marathon to raise £2,000 for Cats Protection, formerly the Cats Protection League.

Her inspiration for running the London Marathon is her dad – he ran the event in 1982, accompanied, for the last half mile, by Cheryl.

● **Watch out in future editions of Wetherspoon News for an update on Cheryl’s progress.**



YOUNG RILEY INSPIRED TO DRAW BY MARY SHELLEY



One of our youngest readers – five-year-old Riley Mundy – has something of a fascination for all things Frankenstein and is a regular customer at The Mary Shelley (Bournemouth).

Shelley wrote her Frankenstein novel in 1818, as has been explained to Riley by mum and dad, Lauren and Nathan, on their visits to the pub, where framed, illustrated posters provide a wealth of background information about the novel.

The author is buried at St Peter’s Church, also in Bournemouth and located opposite the pub.

On a recent visit, Riley offered to draw a picture of Frankenstein’s monster for the staff there and wondered whether it might be used in this magazine (and we are happy to oblige, Riley).

Riley told Wetherspoon News: “Frankenstein is one of my favourite things, but I also like Dungeons & Dragons, Halloween and Egyptian stuff like mummies.”

Dad Nathan is interested in the Dracula legend and has visited Whitby in pursuit of this. He and Riley like to watch the family comedy film Hotel Transylvania.

He said: “We always enjoy our visits to the pub, where we will have a meal and a drink – and a dessert, when Riley is with us. The staff like to chat to him and are often impressed with his Frankenstein knowledge.”

The pub’s manager, Peter Goatley, said: “We know Riley and his interest in Frankenstein. We are delighted to have received his picture of Frankenstein’s monster and help him in his ambition of getting in Wetherspoon News.”

THE GEORGE • WANSTEAD

FORMER CAB DRIVER ROB, 60, NOT READY TO BE A PASSENGER



Sixty-year-old former black cab driver Rob Nixon has described his new job at The George (Wanstead) as “like coming home”.

Rob gave up his London cab because of COVID-19 and was unemployed for two years before he joined the pub in October 2021 as a kitchen associate.

“I love it here,” says Rob. “I love the fact that you get to talk to people, be around people and I love the challenge when the pub is packed out.”

His new role in life has also improved his fitness. “It’s hard work, and I sometimes walk home, which takes 90 minutes. I have lost nearly 16kg since I started here.”

Rob, who is married with four children and two grandchildren (so far – there is another one on the way) used to drink in The George as a young man, before it was owned by Wetherspoon.

“It’s like coming home, working here. Of all the jobs, this was the one I wanted to do,” he said.

“I like to be busy and I really respect how hard the staff here work.

“I don’t think people realise sometimes how hard we work.”

Rob was interviewed for his job by shift manager Christabel Ampofo-Manu.

“I told her that I didn’t have to work – that I wanted to work.

“She gave me a chance,” said Rob.

“The staff here are great and have all helped me, particularly the kitchen manager, Gary Faulkner, who has been showing me the ropes, and shift manager Matt Turner.”

Rob has made many friends among the staff – not least by turning up at Christmas with gifts of boxes of chocolates for his co-workers.

Shift manager, Matt, said: “Rob is a lovely guy to have around and a very good worker. He has made a big change in his life, at the age of 60, and we respect that.”

St Piran's Day ROUND-UP



The Towan Blystra (Newquay) Bar associate Heidi Parr and shift leader Luke Jackson are pictured with some of the Cornish gin and cider drinks being served on St Piran's Day

GOOL PERAN LOWEN — A CELEBRATION IN CORNWALL

Staff and customers at Wetherspoon's pubs in Cornwall enjoyed a happy St Piran's Day (Gool Peran Lowen) 2022.

Eleven Wetherspoon pubs across the region hosted activities to mark St Piran's Day (5 March), celebrating Cornwall's patron saint. A selection of Cornish drinks was served at the pubs, including ales, ciders and spirits all produced in Cornwall.

Wetherspoon's area manager, Chris Martin, said: "We always celebrate St Piran's Day in style at our pubs across Cornwall and are very proud to showcase a range of great local Cornish products, while supporting local businesses."

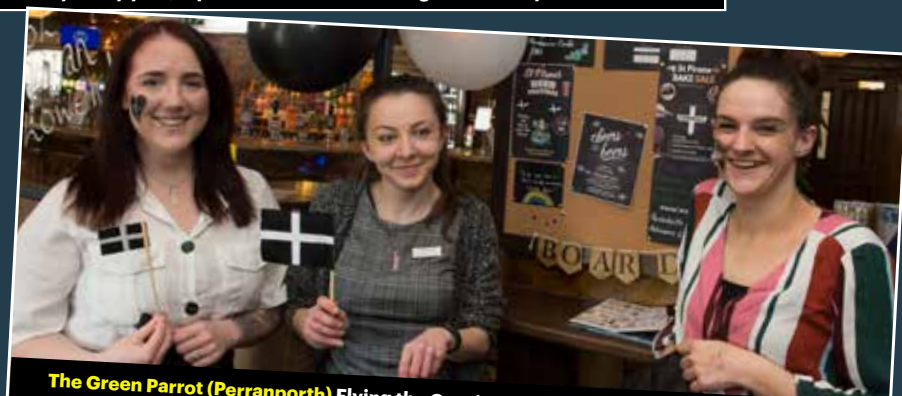
The Cornish pubs are Chapel an Gansblydhen (Bodmin), The John Francis Basset (Camborne), The Packet Station (Falmouth), The Towan Blystra (Newquay), The Tremeneheere (Penzance), The Green Parrot (Perranporth), The Rann Wartha (St Austell), The Hain Line (St Ives), Try Dowl (Truro), The Coinage Hall (Helston) and The King Doniert (Liskeard).



The Rann Wartha (St Austell) Team leader Jordanlee Rowe is pictured serving a pint of Cornish real ale alongside the Cornish bunny - the prize up for grabs in a charity raffle which raised £50 for Young Lives vs Cancer



Chapel an Gansblydhen (Bodmin) Customer Alastair Quinnell, who marks St Piran's Day every year, is pictured with shift manager Steve Day



The Green Parrot (Perranporth) Flying the Cornish flag during a three-day St Piran's beer festival, featuring locally sourced real ales, are (left to right) shift manager Aisling Murphy, team leader Isabel Hunt and shift leader Charlotte Coogan

HEBRIDEAN DONNA'S ACCENT BRINGS COMMENTS GALORE! TO GLASGOW PUB

Whisky Galore! is a cult classic Ealing Comedy set on the isle of Eriskay – and Donna Walker, pub manager at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew, Glasgow) is a massive fan.

That's partly because she claims heritage from the part of the world where the film was made – so much so that her accent is very much resonant of the deliberate, dulcet tones which emanate from many of the film's characters.

Native Gaelic speaker Donna is from the Hebridean island of South Uist, joined to Eriskay by a causeway. Eriskay is home to a well-known hotel called Am Politician ('Am' being Gaelic for 'The'), named after the whisky-carrying ship which sank off Rosinish Point in 1941, setting the scene for a battle of wits over the resulting 264,000 bottles of alcoholic loot between an English Home Guard officer and local citizens.

Donna's mother, Morag, knows everyone on Eriskay, as she used to deliver the post by van.

Donna, who is partial to an occasional 'wee dram' herself, said: "People do

sometimes notice the accent, of which I am very proud – and that can lead to conversation about the film, which means a lot to me, as I'm from where the original ship sank.

"I have, of course, been to the hotel, Am Politician, which still has actual bottles of whisky from SS Politician."

SS Politician really did sink on 5 February 1941, during World War II.

Thanks to the subterfuge of the islanders, who hid, sold and drank much of the loot, the true story of what happened to at least 24,000 bottles of the treasure trove will never be known.

One version of events is portrayed in the film.

Julia Campbell, who runs Am Politician with husband Stephen, said: "We would be delighted to see Donna at any time and swap stories with her.

"Of course, we knew her mother Morag.

"But I'm afraid we won't be opening any of the bottles of King's Ransom or Spey Royal whisky, recovered from the SS Politician and kept securely on the premises."



REGULAR MOLLY, 7, CREATES MODEL OF ABERDARE PUB



Young Wetherspoon customer Molly Lewis has reproduced one of the company's pubs as part of a school artwork project.

Seven-year-old Molly created a model of Yr Ieuan Ap Iago (Aberdare) when her class was tasked with making models of buildings and shops in their local town.

Molly's immediate choice was the former post office building, in High Street, which first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in November 2002.

Steph Morse, kitchen manager at Yr Ieuan Ap Iago, said: "Molly was so excited to do this project, as she visits the pub most weekends for breakfast with her grandparents, so knows the building very well.

"Her mum and dad helped a little with the project, but Molly stuck all of the bricks on the 3D model of the building by herself.

"We were very proud to display her finished model at the pub for everyone to see."

Pictured (left to right) are kitchen manager Steph Morse, Molly Lewis and shift manager Lucy Mooney.

NEWTOWN

SARA'S BIN BAG BRAINWAVE BACKED BY PUB'S STAFF

Armed with bin bags and litter-pickers, staff at The Black Boy (Newtown) are ready for action as the pub moves to support Keep Wales Tidy.

The pub has joined Keep Wales Tidy's Litter-Free Zone project and has vowed to volunteer to keep rubbish off the area around the pub – and away from the nearby River Severn.

It will also provide volunteers to clear up, should the area be hit once again by stormy weather.

The link-up was the brainchild of shift manager Sara Davies, who was inspired to contact the scheme earlier this year after storm Franklin.

She said: "We have put up bilingual posters up in the pub to encourage customers not to litter and to support the project.

"It's important to the community that we keep Newtown tidy – and, now that we are linked in, we will be there to clear up after storms, if necessary, as well."

Clean-ups will be recorded on the Epicollect5 app, so building a detailed profile of what litter is commonly found where.

Keep Wales Tidy's project co-ordinator, Rachel Palmer, said: "We are pleased to have The Black Boy on board – and it is a pleasure to work with Sara and her colleagues.

"Litter costs Wales roughly £70 million to remove each year, but it also has devastating effects on our marine and local wildlife. On average, RSPCA Cymru reports receiving 200 calls a year about animals affected by litter."

Rachel has provided the pub with posters, stickers and litter-picking equipment. The litter project is part of the wider Caru Cymru initiative (a Welsh phrase meaning 'love Wales') – to eradicate unnecessary litter in Wales.

● For more details: <https://keepwalestidy.cymru/our-news>



Pictured (left to right) are Rachel Palmer (Keep Wales Tidy project co-ordinator), shift manager Sara Davies and pub manager Stephen Penny

THORNTON CLEVELEYS

JOLLY TARS FIVE'S SADDLES SOAR

A team of five from The Jolly Tars (Thornton Cleveleys) embarked on cycling a 110-mile round trip – to raise funds for a little girl suffering from cancer.

When floor associate Marc Smith read about the plight of local six-year-old Isabelle Grundy, he asked colleagues to take part in a charity bike ride.

The quintet began its journey from local landmark Blackpool Tower to Manchester's Piccadilly Gardens, before returning (on the same day) to The Jolly Tars.

The campaign to save Isabelle has captured the public's imagination locally – recently, Blackpool Tower was lit up to raise awareness as £200,000 is sought for life-saving treatment in the US.

Emma Walton, a shift leader at the pub, has been galvanising support. She said: "The five of us who did the bike ride are all parents, so we wanted to do what we could."

Emma also ordered in collection buckets and sponsorship forms, contacting every Wetherspoon pub in West Lancashire to get them involved.

Emma and Marc were joined on the bike ride by kitchen shift leader Jon Earnshaw, kitchen associate Kelly Marshall and friend and former colleague Gemma Hamilton.

● To donate and find out more, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/2mun4dw>



Pictured (left to right) are kitchen shift leader Jon Earnshaw, kitchen associate Kelly Marshall, local charity fundraising organiser Emma Robinson, shift leader Emma Walton and bar associate Marc Smith

CLECKHEATON

WILD WEATHER FAILS TO MATCH SUNNY MOOD OF GARDENS OF EDEN WALKERS



Pictured (left to right) are team leader Molly Mitchell, bar associate Rebecca Asquith, team leader Autumn Devereux, shift leader Michaela Wood and floor associate Georgia Malone

Five staff from The Obediah Brooke (Cleckheaton) walked 110 miles to raise £700 for young cancer sufferer Eden Smith.

The five took part in the circular Gardens of Eden Tour, starting and finishing at Holmfirth and taking in local parks and the John Smith's Stadium in and around Huddersfield.

The event was staged by Eden's Army, a volunteer group raising money to help six-year-old Eden, who has neuroblastoma.

Shift leader Michaela Wood and her 14-year-old daughter Robin took part in the walk, along with team leader Autumn Devereux, team leader Molly Mitchell, bar associate Rebecca Asquith and floor associate Georgia Malone.

Approximately 400 people took part, raising almost £200,000.

Michaela said: "The weather was absolutely horrendous all day, from start to finish. There were hailstones, heavy rain and it was windy – but we ploughed on. My daughter Robin managed 14 miles... and we all loved it, especially the finish line!

"We are very pleased and proud to have raised £700 for Eden.

"It was a pleasure to take part."

● **Donations to the fund to help Eden can be made here: www.solvingkidscancer.org.uk/Appeal/eden**

DEAL

NORMAN WISDOM REGULARS PRAISED FOR BEING REAL DEAL

Staff and customers at The Sir Norman Wisdom (Deal) have, once again, supported the annual Clifftop Challenge, helping to raise money for Breast Cancer Now.

The annual event, which started in 2014 and has so far raised £170,000 for the breast cancer charity, is organised by local man Mike Griggs.

The local community event includes runs to suit all abilities, ranging from the 55-mile ultra to a five-mile challenge, as well as a local live music festival, food and drinks.

Mike said: "A huge thankyou to Wetherspoon and the team at The Sir Norman Wisdom, including pub manager Dan Sutton and area manager Mark Powell, for their support once again."

● **To take part in the event, visit: www.clifftopchallenge.com**

MIKADO MAKES A MERRY RETURN TO OPERA HOUSE



The annual opera performance, this time *The Mikado*, made a welcome return to Opera House (Tunbridge Wells).

Opera House, our pub in the Kent town, which reverts to its original use at least once every year, hosted the well-known Gilbert & Sullivan's opera, performed by the touring Merry Opera Company.

The latest production, directed by John Ramster, with musical direction by Bradley Wood, served up plenty of good-humoured frivolity for the opera-loving sold-out audiences.

The modern take on a merry classic took them on a trip to the topsy-turvy town of Titipu, in the land of Pagan, for a tale of romance, chicanery and a legal conundrum, under the capricious eye of the *Mikado*.

The story unfolded of Nanki-Poo, who cannot marry Yum-Yum because she is betrothed to Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner, who cannot do his duty without executing himself. However, when the *Mikado* insists on an execution, somehow no one loses their head.

A sell-out audience enjoyed either a matinée or the Sunday evening show, in seats from the balcony (no dining) or from boxes or stall seats with preshow dining included in the ticket price.

Past shows at Opera House have included *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Magic Flute*, *La bohème* and *Kiss Me, Figaro!*

Pub manager Ross Markwick, pictured with shift manager Joanne Russell and shift leader Aurora Lloyd (right), said: "We were thrilled to welcome back to Opera House the Merry Opera Company, with their production of *The Mikado*."

"The annual show, which was greatly missed during the restrictions, is always eagerly anticipated and much loved – by staff and customers alike."

A charity raffle at the event, with donated prizes up for grabs, also raised £850 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Merry Opera Company's Matthew Quirk said: "It was our absolute Merry pleasure to return to the stage, at Opera House, with our brand-new production of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado*."

"After an incredibly difficult year and a half, we couldn't think of a better way to celebrate a return to Merry form than with this surprising and high-octane romp through a beloved operetta classic."

The original theatre, The Opera House, opened in 1902, built by the firm of John Jarvis, with the architect JP Briggs.

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



WOO-HOO, DREAMS DO COME TRUE FOR A COUPLE STIRRED BY SPOONS



A married couple, having visited 321 Wetherspoon pubs, have been showered with media attention for their efforts.

Phil and Julie Fox, who live in Rastrick, West Yorkshire, have appeared in the Daily Mirror, the Daily Star, the Hull Daily Mail and the Huddersfield Examiner newspapers – and have been featured on the web at Wales Online, Surrey Live and – bizarrely – Spanish magazine Zona de Prensa and US news site TechnoTrenz.

But they have told each of these titles that the magazine they most want to appear in is Wetherspoon News – and we are happy to oblige.

Phil and Julie are regulars at The Richard Oastler (Brighouse), where manager Maddison Compton-Page said: “We are all extremely impressed with their achievement and are always delighted to see them here.”

The couple have visited pubs as far afield as The Admiral Collingwood (Ilfracombe), Globe Hotel (King’s Lynn) and The Chief Justice of the Common Pleas (Keswick).

Their tour began in 2004 and is not over yet – a trip to the south of England is planned for June.

Phil said: “It’s like a holiday for us: we explore the sights of a local area and have either lunch or dinner, plus a drink, in ‘Spoons’.

“I enjoy a pizza and an IPA, while Julie enjoys a steak and a porter.

“We are delighted that our story is being featured in Wetherspoon News.”

PEAKY CLIMBERS: SUPER SIX AIMING FOR THE TOP

Six super fundraisers from The Benjamin Fawcett (Driffield) are taking part in the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge (25 June) for charity.

Pub manager Leah Fisher and shift managers Maxine Powell, Hayley Martin and Jess Allison, together with shift leader Claire Dennis and kitchen shift leader Lucy Adams, are all taking part. Emma Norsworthy, who worked at the pub previously, is also joining the team.

As well as sponsorship, donations and pledges, the team is raising money through raffles and a ‘yellow day’ fundraiser, including a cake sale, all in aid of Marie Curie.

Maxine said: “Our target is £1,400, with each of us individually aiming for £200 in donations. We are sharing the details on social media and have also asked people to donate and wear yellow for our ‘yellow day’ fundraiser at the pub.”

The Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge is to complete, in just 12 hours, all three of Pen-y-ghent (694m), Wharfedale (736m) and Ingleborough (723m) peaks, through a 24.5-mile loop trek in the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Marie Curie (mariecurie.org.uk) is the UK’s leading end-of-life charity, providing care and support through terminal illness. It provides frontline nursing and hospice care and a free support line, as well as information and support on all aspects of dying, death and bereavement.



MANCHESTER

NATALIE AND FATHER KEEP HELPING THE HUNGRY



Pub manager Natalie Hodgson has been volunteering for several years now for a foodbank – and has just been joined by her 78-year-old father.

Natalie, who runs The Paramount (Manchester) with husband Mark, goes out and about with dad, Victor Radford, every Wednesday afternoon, delivering supplies in and around Oldham to people on the breadline.

She said: “Dad carries the heavy shopping for me and chauffeurs me around.”

During the first lockdown, Natalie began volunteering for Oldham Foodbank. “I was fed up at home with nothing much to do,” she says. When restrictions were lifted, her dad was allowed to join her.

She remembers a difference between those in need in those days and those in need today. “When Manchester was put into tier three restrictions, a lot of people in need were quite well-to-do, but had no income, as they were self-employed and not covered by any of the government schemes.

“Now, it’s people on a low income and benefits. Universal Credit has been cut by £20 a week – and they fear that it’s going to get worse as fuel bill increases feed through and National Insurance goes up,” said Natalie.

She added that Wetherspoon was happy to facilitate the necessary shift-changes to allow her to carry on volunteering.

Natalie concluded: “If everyone could consider donating to their local foodbank, that would be amazing.”

WHICKHAM

TALENTED TYLER DOES NOT CRACK WHEN FACED WITH EGG CHALLENGE

When a cancer charity approached The Harry Clasper (Whickham) to say that it needed 156 Easter eggs, the team was only too happy to help.

The pub’s manager, Tyler Hudson, is a talented fundraiser, as regular readers of these pages will be aware.

She organised a raffle, with bottles of gin and boxes of chocolates as prizes, and the pub raised enough money to buy 162 eggs – making sure that there was one each, at least, for the 156 children on the books of Fighting All Cancers Together (FACT), which operates throughout northeast England.

Tyler said: “We were asked whether we could organise enough eggs for one egg between two children, but I said that there was no way I was having any child share an Easter egg, so the target became 156 eggs – and, in the end, we got 166 within two weeks.

“I’m incredibly proud of the community spirit, as well as the work, of my staff and managers to achieve the target in such a short space of time.”



Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Johnny Crawford, pub manager Tyler Hudson and shift manager Natalie Robson

BRIDPORT

VETERANS BACK IN THE TRAPS AT THE GREYHOUND



Bridport Veterans' Breakfast Club is back up and running again at The Greyhound, now that COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted. The group, which welcomes ex-service personnel from all three branches of the armed forces, started meeting back in 2019 at the pub on East Street, Bridport. Earlier this year, it held its first breakfast for two years, attracting around 30 service veterans of the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and British Army. The pub's manager, Steve Newstead, said: "They are a lovely bunch of people – and we are so pleased to be able to accommodate them." The group meets during 9–11am on the first Sunday of every month. According to group chair Bill Davis, this is to fit in around church services.

He said: "Some of them want to go to the early services before 9am, while others want to go to the later services starting around 11am." Bill, a keen Wetherspoon man, Campaign for Real Ale member and regular reader of Wetherspoon News, added: "Steve and his team have been very good to us. We had a sit-down to decide when would be best to hold our meetings and are so pleased that they are happening again regularly." The group welcomes all three services because numbers in single-service veterans' groups have been dwindling. This way, it can appeal to those associated with the region's barracks, airfields and naval ports. Pictured with bar associate Megan Loibl is Alan Kidson of the Royal Air Force Association, with Bridport Veterans' Breakfast Club members in the background.

WORCESTER AND GREAT MALVERN

ARMOUR-CLAD MEDIEVAL BATTLEERS SLOG TO TOP OF MALVERN BEACON

Dressed as medieval soldiers, Matt Adams and Chris Jones climbed the Malvern Beacon to raise £750 for a local regimental association. Matt, deputy manager at The Postal Order (Worcester), and his friend Chris began their charity hike at The Foley Arms Hotel (Great Malvern). The pair are both members of the Armoured Combat Gloucester medieval battle club and have taken part in international competitions with other groups.

"It was tough," said Matt, "with the armour weighing about one-third of our bodyweight. "But as we wear the armour a lot, we coped with the burden." Matt (pictured right) got involved with the group through a friend. "I have always been a bit of a history geek," he said. The money raised will go to the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regimental Association.



HARTLEPOOL

FUNDRAISER PHIL INSPIRES WARD JACKSON TO HELP HOSPICE



The Ward Jackson (Hartlepool) launched a series of fundraisers in support of a local hospice, starting with a quiz.

The week of events, which raised £300, was inspired by community volunteer Phil Holbrook, who has dedicated much of his life to raising money for the Alice House Hospice, providing care services for those suffering from life-limiting illnesses or bereavement.

Shift manager Tom Fitzgerald, pictured front (right) with Phil, said: "Phil is known to us here in the pub and very well known in the town as well for his fundraising activities."

Phil began raising money before the death of his first wife, Sally, in a car crash in 2012 and continued to do so afterwards, despite suffering serious injuries in the same incident.

Over the years, he has completed the Great North Run 29 times.

Tom added: "Phil remarried in 2017, but we heard over Christmas just gone that his second wife, Gillian, had passed away.

"But he is still raising money. Nothing can stop this man – and we just felt that we had to do something as well."

● **Further information about the hospice and Phil Holbrook can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/2s4a93zh>**

STRETTFORD

BLAIZE FOLK GET CRACKING AFTER HATCHING EGG PLAN

An Easter egg collection, with donations from all the staff and some customers, amassed 50 chocolate treats at The Bishop Blaize (Stretford, Manchester).

Organised by pub manager Ben Plunkett (left) and bar associate Martin Johnson, both pictured with some of the eggs, the egg collection was given to children at a local hospital in time for Easter.

Ben said: "We wanted to choose a local charity and decided on Ronald McDonald House Manchester, which serves Royal Manchester Children's Hospital and St Mary's Neonatal Unit.

"Thanks to the whole team for their support and to everyone who donated eggs."

Manchester House is a space for families to stay close to their children, while they are in hospital, providing free 'home away from home' accommodation.



CRAMLINGTON

PUB-BASED KNIT & KNATTER MEMBERS ARE WOOLLY WONDERS IN CRAMLINGTON



Community group Knit & Knatter – which meets each Wednesday at John The Clerk of Cramlington (Cramlington) – has picked up two awards for its charity work.

The pub has hosted the group for five years, with its members, such as Margaret Derrick, well known to staff and other customers there.

The group knits clothes for premature babies and distributes their products to local hospitals and care units.

Knit & Knatter was named ‘best community group’ and ‘overall winner’ at Cramlington Town Council’s annual community awards ceremony.

Margaret said: “We were surprised and delighted to win not just one, but two awards. We are so grateful to the team at the pub for their consistent support over the years. They will always do anything for you.”

Members enjoy a coffee or an orange juice as they knit and natter.

The pub’s manager, Mark Streener, said: “A big well-done from all the staff at John The Clerk of Cramlington.

“We look forward to welcoming new knitters to join in during 9am–noon, each Wednesday.

“Whether you can knit or not or just want a good natter, then get yourself along.”

As well as their Love Cramlington 2021 award trophies, the group also received £500 from sponsor Dräger, as Love Cramlington ‘charity champions’, which they split equally between two local chosen charities.

Dogs First and Fighting Blood Cancer, nominated by Knit & Knatter, each received £250.

Pictured (left to right) are Jean Wood, Nick Furno (Dräger), Maggie Martin (Cramlington Town Council), pub manager Mark Streener and Margaret Derrick.

● For further information about the group, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/mu64sc49>

FOREST GATE

CHOC SHOCK AS LEIGH-MARIE SEES EGG MOUNTAIN SOAR

Shift leader and charity champion Leigh-Marie Price was responsible for a chocolate egg mountain at The Hudson Bay (Forest Gate), in the run-up to Easter.

Leigh-Marie (pictured, front right) organised an Easter egg collection, to be given to youngsters at local hospitals.

Donations of approximately 350 eggs, together with a few Teddies and toys, came flooding in from staff and customers.

The Easter gifts were distributed to nearby Newham General Hospital and Queen’s Hospital in Romford, as well as local foster homes.

Pub manager Remy Tobin-Puigserver (back right) said: “Leigh-Marie worked hard to make the collection so successful – and it was great to be able to support the local community.”

Also pictured, with some of the donations, are shift manager Liam Watkins (back left), shift manager Rosemary Privett (front left) and bar associate Liuda Ramaneckiene.



AU VODKA TAKEN FOR SPIN AT THE POTTERS WHEEL

Customers at The Potters Wheel (Swansea) enjoyed a meet-the-distiller event and were able to sample a new and locally made vodka.

Au Vodka (blue raspberry) (35.2% ABV) is one of two new vodkas now being served at Wetherspoon – and this one is made just a stone's throw from the pub.

Members of the Au Vodka sales and marketing team, including Tom Smith and Lewys Canton, attended the special launch event organised by shift manager Simon Martin (pictured).

Simon reported: "They arrived in their eye-catching Au Vodka gold van, chatted to, and served samples for, customers, then shot a social media video. Staff members also received T-shirts."

"Swansea is a university town – and vodka is a very popular drink with students here."

"They were very impressed to see the Au Vodka guys in the pub – and we received great feedback about the event."

Au Vodka, which is available in all Wetherspoon pubs, combines Au's multiaward-winning vodka with fresh raspberry, creating a sweet, fruity and unique blue vodka.

An ultra-premium British vodka, Au Vodka, in its signature gold bottle ('Au' being the periodic table's symbol for the chemical element gold), was founded in 2016 by close friends Charlie Morgan and Jackson Quinn, in their home city of Swansea.



CHAIRMAN FINDS NONE LEAVING IN NUNEATON, AT FELIX HOLT

On a visit to The Felix Holt (Nuneaton), Wetherspoon's chairman, Tim Martin, had the pleasure of meeting up with the pub's long-serving staff members.

The pub, having opened in July 1997, has been managed by Nic Webb for the past 12 years. Nic has worked for the company for 21 years.

Kitchen manager Ryan Forknall joined Wetherspoon 19 years ago and has been heading up The Felix Holt's kitchen team for the past three years, having been at the pub for nine. Kitchen shift leader Leon Jakeman (eight years) and kitchen team leader Becky Martin (five years) are among the team.

Shift managers Matt Urwin (10 years with the company, all at The Felix Holt) and Skye Beasley (eight years) are also among the long-serving staff.

Bar associate Donna Meek has clocked up 15 years' service for the company, all at this same pub.

Tim (43 years, himself, with the company) said: "We are proud of all of the long-serving staff at The Felix Holt – and it was a pleasure to meet them during my visit."

"Throughout the whole company, Wetherspoon has many long servers among its 42,500 staff members, with five, 10, 20, 25 and even 30 years' service – and we are proud of them all."



Pub manager Nic Webb (front) with (back, left to right) bar associate Donna Meek, shift manager Matt Urwin, kitchen manager Ryan Forknall and kitchen shift leader Leon Jakeman

ARTIST GILLIAN COMBINES BAR WORK WITH BRUSH WORK



Shift manager Gillian Calvey of The Quay (Poole) rediscovered her painting skills during lockdown, with her work now adorning the covers of books written by local author Kenzo Fago.

Gillian, who has worked at The Quay for four years, has several of her paintings hanging in the pub itself – a talking-point for customers.

She said: “I studied art for a photography course at university, yet took up painting again only during lockdown.”

Gillian has her own Facebook page, Gillian Calvey paintings, where many examples of her work can be seen, including book covers for Kenzo’s works.

She was moved to work with Kenzo, since several of his books are inspired by his journey through terminal cancer.

Such works include *And Afterward...* listed on the Amazon website, where she was named as the illustrator.

Both the books and illustrations are inspired by a love of nature.

The pub’s manager, Charlee Blanchard, said: “Customers really enjoy the paintings here – and they brighten the place up.

“It’s an inspiring story, with customers often asking Gillian about her work and Kenzo’s story.”

MAXIM TAP TAKEOVER BRINGS MAXIMUM JOY FOR ALE-SEEKERS

A 20-strong group of Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) members descended on The Hat and Feathers (Seaham) to try its selection of real ales.

The group, from the Sunderland and South Tyneside and Durham branches of CAMRA, was welcomed by the pub’s ale champion, shift leader Ryan Mitchell-Hall.

Ryan focuses on a different brewer each month, under a rotating ‘tap takeover’ event.

A special long table was reserved for the visiting members, who enjoyed ales from brewery of the month Maxim, based in nearby Houghton-le-Spring. Featured beers included Double Maxim (4.7% ABV), billed as the only brown ale still made in the north of England, and 4.2% ABV pale ale Swedish Blonde.

Ryan said: “They are a lovely group – and it was great to be able to show off our ale selection to CAMRA’s members. It was a great night. We all enjoyed ourselves – and there was a really good atmosphere.”

CAMRA branch chair Paul Dobson added: “It was a great evening – and we would like to thank Ryan and the rest of the team for their efforts on the night, coping with such a large group.”

Paul is pictured (left) with Ryan as CAMRA members enjoy their beers in the background.





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1 PRIZE TO BE WON EVERY WEEK IN JUNE

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*25+, residents of England & Wales only. 4 chances to enter. To enter, follow the instructions above during one (or more) of the following time periods: (1) 00:00 on 6.6.22 & 23:59 on 12.6.22; (2) 00:00 on 13.6.22 & 23:59 on 19.6.22; (3) 00:00 on 20.6.22 & 23:59 on 26.6.22; and (4) 00:00 on 27.6.22 & 23:59 on 3.7.22. 1 entry per person during each of 4 periods stated. Winners & guests cannot enter again/independently. Internet access, email account & Instagram account allowing 3rd party messages required. Photos mustn't show under 25s or irresponsible/illegal drinking. Prize: 4 prize packages available in total, 1 per time period stated (i.e. 1 each week), for a 2 night trip to Erding, Germany for the winner & 1 guest specifically: return economy flights from a major UK airport to Munich, Germany (hand luggage only); airport transfer to/from hotel; bed & breakfast hotel accommodation (1 room); £200 food allowance (shared between winner & guest); 2 Erdinger Brewery tour tickets & day entry "TROPICAL SPA & VITALITY OASIS" tickets for Therme Erding on date notified to winner. Other travel, expenses, equipment, activities (e.g. spa treatments) & additional facilities excluded. Prize must be booked before 31.12.22 & taken before 31.5.23. Excluded dates: 23.9.22 to 3.10.22; & UK/DE statutory/public holidays. Ticket T&Cs & venue regulations apply. Prize is non-transferable, resale prohibited, no cash alternative. Winners & guests must be legally able to travel to Erding on date booked for travel (incl. meeting all Covid-19 rules) & provide own travel insurance. Winners & guests must provide valid ID proving they are 25+ within 5 days of being contacted. Winners drawn at random & contacted by direct Instagram message within 7 days of applicable closing date. Prize must be claimed within 5 days of notification. Full T&Cs & privacy policy available at uk.erdinger.de. Promoter: Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company Limited, WV1 4JT. Please drink responsibly

Enjoy responsibly. be.drinkaware.co.uk

★ TUNBRIDGE WELLS OPERA HOUSE

25
YEARS

Opera House (Tunbridge Wells) turned 25 years old on 11 April, having first opened as a Wetherspoon pub on that date in 1997.

The pub, which was decked out in decorations for the birthday occasion, staged a charity fundraising raffle, with Easter eggs and goodies up for grabs.

Its raffle draw on Easter Sunday raised funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The pub's manager, Ross Markwick (pictured centre with shift managers Tom Curley and Josie Houghton), who has managed it since November 2017, said: "It was great to share our 25th birthday celebrations – a significant milestone – with regular customers and visitors alike, as well as raising funds for our charity."

The pub, which underwent extensive ceiling restoration work last year, is housed in the listed building which was originally an opera house.

Built by the firm of John Jarvis, with the architect JP Briggs, the opera house first opened in 1902.

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

The pub reverts to its original use at least once every year, hosting an annual sell-out opera performance by the touring group – The Merry Opera Company.



★ NEW MALDEN THE WATCHMAN

10
YEARS

The Watchman (New Malden) marked a decade since opening with a birthday celebration day at the pub.

The event was organised by pub manager Amy Longden-Rogers (pictured back), who has managed The Watchman for the past three years, together with shift manager Mary-Petra Obika (front centre), shift leader Kayley Hornegold (left) and team leader Ryan Beresford.

An outside bar was set up in the pub's beer garden, which seats 120 customers, to showcase beers from Battersea-based Sambrook's Brewery.

A charity raffle, with prizes donated by local businesses, also raised £577 for Young Lives vs Cancer. There was also a 'guess the staff member' baby picture competition, 'guess the Easter bunny's name', a lucky dip and quiz.

Shift manager Liam Clark said: "The occasion was a great excuse to enjoy some fun activities with the whole community, throughout the day, and to thank them for their support during the past 10 years."

The pub opened in April 2012 in the former police station – a local landmark since the early 1890s.



★ STONE THE POSTE OF STONE

20
YEARS

With a visit of local dignitaries and cake for all, The Poste of Stone (Stone) marked two decades since opening.

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Andrew Best, pub manager Neil Ridgway, Stone Town Mayoress Mrs Nancy Powell, Stone Town Mayor

Cllr Jonathan Powell, Wetherspoon's regional manager Debbie Whittingham and bar associate Max Pinkstone.

The pub opened 20 years ago, in April 2002, in the former post office building, and has been managed by Neil Ridgway for the past six years.

A regular customer at the pub, Cllr Powell said:

"I was honoured to be part of The Poste of Stone's birthday celebrations. I can't believe that it's been 20 years, but it has always been an integral part of Stone and its community."



★ EPSOM THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS

20
YEARS

The team at The Assembly Rooms (Epsom) marked the pub's 20th birthday with specially printed T-shirts, charity bake sale and quiz, raising £450 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Sel Devecioglu, shift manager Kara Nash, team leader Sonata Paskeviciene, kitchen shift leader Anna Paduch and shift manager Luvena Daly.





★ WORKSOP

THE LIQUORICE GARDENS



Long-standing customer John Gaskell turned up to celebrate the 20th birthday of his local pub The Liquorice Gardens (Worksop).

John, pictured (right) with the pub's manager James Nott and shift manager Laura Jepson, not only enjoys a pint of real ale, but sometimes asks for his favourites to be ordered in.

James said: "We have been known to order in beers for John, since we know that his recommendations will be enjoyed by friends and other pub customers."

"John is a lovely guy, a real treasure – and we are glad that he was able to join us on the day."

James joined the pub as manager in 2014, while Laura joined as a bar associate in 2011, working her way up to shift leader within two years.

Customers and staff enjoyed a celebratory atmosphere amid balloons and banners to mark the 20th anniversary of The Liquorice Gardens' opening on 14 January 2002.



★ WIGAN

THE BROCKET ARMS



When The Brocket Arms (Wigan) celebrated its 20th birthday, two staff members in particular had cause to reminisce.

Housekeeper Sue Haynes and night manager Caroline Saoudi have worked at the hotel since it opened in March 2002.

The pair were presented with 20-year-long service certificates as part of the pub and hotel's anniversary celebrations.

The pub side of the business joined in celebrations, attended by local businesses, with a craft fair, cake and balloons. A barbecue and sweet-selling stall also helped to raise £437.50 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Hotel manager Laura Quinn said: "It's a special time for us all, but it's very important to recognise the contribution of Caroline and Sue, since they have been here from the start in 2002."

She added: "I thought this celebration would be a nice thank you to the team for all of their hard work since I joined them."

Area manager Mike Morrissey is pictured with (left to right) Caroline, Sue and Laura. Also pictured are Ella (left) and Lily, daughters of hotel manager Laura Quinn.



★ DONCASTER

THE GATE HOUSE



The Gate House (Doncaster) celebrated its 20th birthday with balloons and a special birthday cake.

The pub, which opened on 4 February 2002, was built on the site of a former medieval friary's gatehouse.

Its longest-serving staff member is shift manager Rachel Torr, who joined the team in 2012.

The pub's manager, Ben Leese, said: "It was nice to be able to have some fun – and cake – with customers to celebrate 20 years of The Gate House."

Ben is pictured (centre) with kitchen shift leader Garry Sykes, who organised the cake, and shift leader Jane Jimmison.



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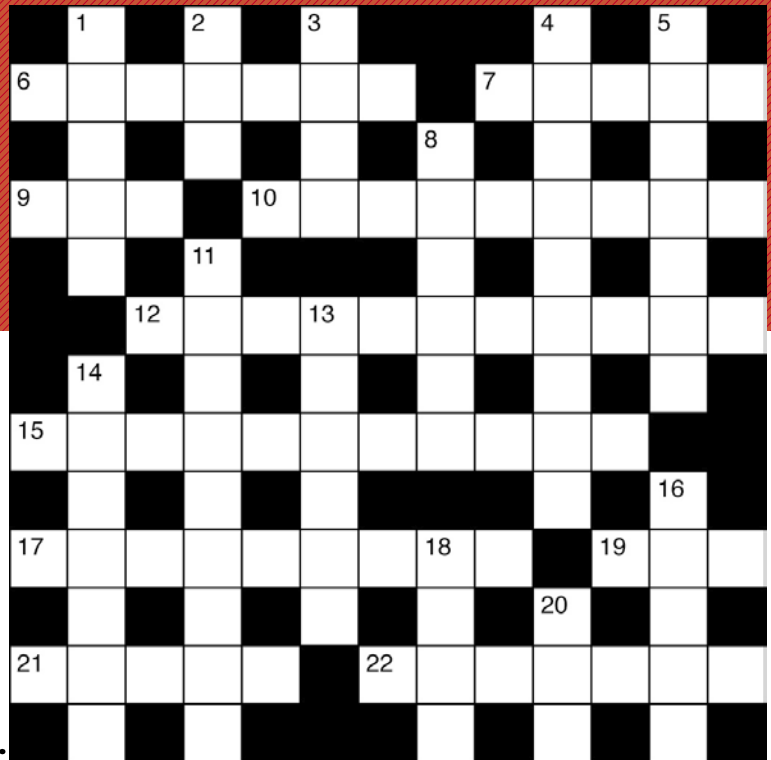
The first four correctly completed crosswords to be pulled out of the hat will win each of those entrants a Wetherspoon gift card worth £30.

Closing date for entries: 10 August 2022

Post to:

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PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

4 X £30 PRIZES TO BE WON



Across

- 6. Ralph Waldo, U.S. essayist and poet who died in 1882 (7)
- 7. Francis, Dublin-born painter who died in 1992 (5)
- 9. Ernie, 1994 U.S. Open golf champion (3)
- 10. Unfinished novel by Franz Kafka (3,6)
- 12. 1929 operetta by Noel Coward (6,5)
- 15. American athlete who won the 1968 Olympic men's high jump gold (4,7)
- 17. Highest peak in the Andes (9)
- 19. Bird of the crow family such as the Eurasian Garrulus glandarius (3)
- 21. Wading bird with a long neck, slim body and grey or white plumage (5)
- 22. Opera by Beethoven (7)

Down

- 1 & 11Dn. 19c American poet whose published collections include 'Bolts of Melody' (5,9)
- 2. Mr. Garfunkel, former singing partner of Paul Simon (3)
- 3. Robert, German Nobel prize-winning scientist who isolated the cholera bacillus (4)
- 4. Large flightless bird of Australia and New Guinea (9)
- 5. --- Dam, former name, 1933-47, of Hoover Dam, U.S.A. (7)
- 8. Beetle regarded by the ancient Egyptians as divine (6)
- 11. See 1 Down.
- 13. Apostle who refused to believe in Christ's resurrection until he had seen his wounds (6)
- 14. "--- Martin", novel by William Golding (7)
- 16 & 20Dn. Highest wicket taker in Test cricket (5,3)
- 18. Leon, author of Exodus (4)
- 20. See 16 Down.

SOLUTIONS (Spring 2022 issue)

Across: 7 Yehudi Menuhin; 8 Clerihew; 9 Noon; 10 Hannah; 12 Rupiah; 14 Lesbos; 16 Discus; 18 Skin; 20 Iron Lady; 22 Chiang kai-shek.

Down: 1 Tell-tale; 2 Curren; 3 High; 4 New World; 5 Turnip; 6 Miro; 11 Hastings; 13 Amundsen; 15 Bonsai; 17 Splash!; 19 Kohl; 21 Opah.

The spring 2022 crossword winners were:

★ NC, Bristol ★ EC, Houghton-le-Spring ★ EM, Slough ★ TR, Ross-on-Wye



Please complete the answers and your details, as shown, and send the completed page to:

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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 10/8/22. 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.

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Nik Antona is national chairman of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

Cheers

FEEL THE LOVE IN A SUMMER OF PUB

CAMRA's national chairman Nik Antona explains how his organisation is encouraging drinkers to enjoy a Summer of Pub

After lockdowns and social distancing on and off for two years, our pubs are finally throwing open their doors to a summer without restriction.

Finally gone (we hope!) are the days of enforced table service, one-way routes, hand sanitisers and face-coverings.

Of course, this is a huge cause for celebration among pub-goers and beer-drinkers, who are eager to reunite with family and friends at their local beer garden.

It's also an opportunity to raise a glass and support the industry after an incredibly difficult two years.

That is why CAMRA is once again launching its Summer of Pub campaign (running to 29 August), aiming to encourage people to head to their local over the summer.

CAMRA will be urging pubs and breweries across the UK to organise a range of events to celebrate the first summer without restrictions – whether an open-mic night, pub quiz or tap-takeover.

Whatever the format, there's more than enough reason to celebrate, and CAMRA will work hard to spread the word.

As a beer-drinker, taking part couldn't be easier – all you need to do is head to your local for a pint.

If you've ever needed a reason (as if you would), we have the answer for you – our new Summer of Pub map will showcase events and activities taking place across the UK, allowing you, the consumer, to find those pubs, clubs and tap rooms nearby which are organising fun events.

To take part, just visit:
<https://summerofpub.camra.org.uk>

We'll also be working with partners to promote pub-going around key dates over the summer season.

First up will, of course, be the Queen's platinum jubilee celebrations over the long bank holiday weekend (2–5 June).

As part of the celebrations, CAMRA is supporting The Good Beer Co to get a limited-edition Thank Brew beer on tap in pubs countrywide over the big jubilee weekend.

Thank Brew (3.5% ABV) is an easy-drinking pale ale created by Fergus Fitzgerald from Adnams.

Breweries are encouraged to adapt the recipe and put their own take on it to help to toast our locals, raise a glass to HM The Queen and generate funds for three great causes over the jubilee weekend.



Another big cause for celebration this year will be the return of the Great British Beer Festival



We'll also be working with the official event organisers for the jubilee weekend to promote and celebrate The Big Jubilee Lunch, encouraging communities to organise street parties and get-togethers over the weekend.

We'll also be supporting Thank You Day (5 June), a thankyou party to raise a glass to the Queen for 70 years' service and say a great big thankyou to one another for getting through the past few years of the pandemic.

You can find activities and events available on our Summer of Pub map, as well as information on where to find Thank Brew on tap.

The celebrations don't end there – we've come up with a whole calendar of events throughout the summer to encourage people to visit their local.

These include:

- * 15 June: Beer Day Britain
- * 19 June: Father's Day
- * 4 July: Independence Day (America)
- * 6–31 July: Women's Euros

- * 5 August: International Beer Day
- * 15 August: Pub Games Day
- * 29 August: Summer bank holiday

Another big cause for celebration this year will be the return of the Great British Beer Festival, back at Olympia London during 2–6 August, after a two-year hiatus.

Featuring over 1,000 cask beers from across the UK, America and beyond, this is the only place to find, under one roof, the very best cask beers from around the world.

At the festival, we will be raising a glass, of course, to a Summer of Pub and our partners and even featuring a brand-new homebrew competition, to be sampled and judged at the festival.

If you've ever needed an excuse to try your hand at homebrewing, now is your chance.

Find all events' details and book tickets by visiting: <https://gbbf.org.uk/>

Whether you're able to join us in a Summer of Pub this year or simply plan to head to your local beer garden for a pint, we hope that you have a wonderful beer-filled summer and get a chance to raise a glass to the hardworking staff who've seen us through to the other side of the pandemic.

- **For more information, visit:** <https://camra.org.uk/summerofpub/>
- **To get involved in the jubilee weekend celebrations, visit:** <https://thankyouday.org.uk/>
- **To join CAMRA for just £28.50 a year, visit:** join.camra.org.uk

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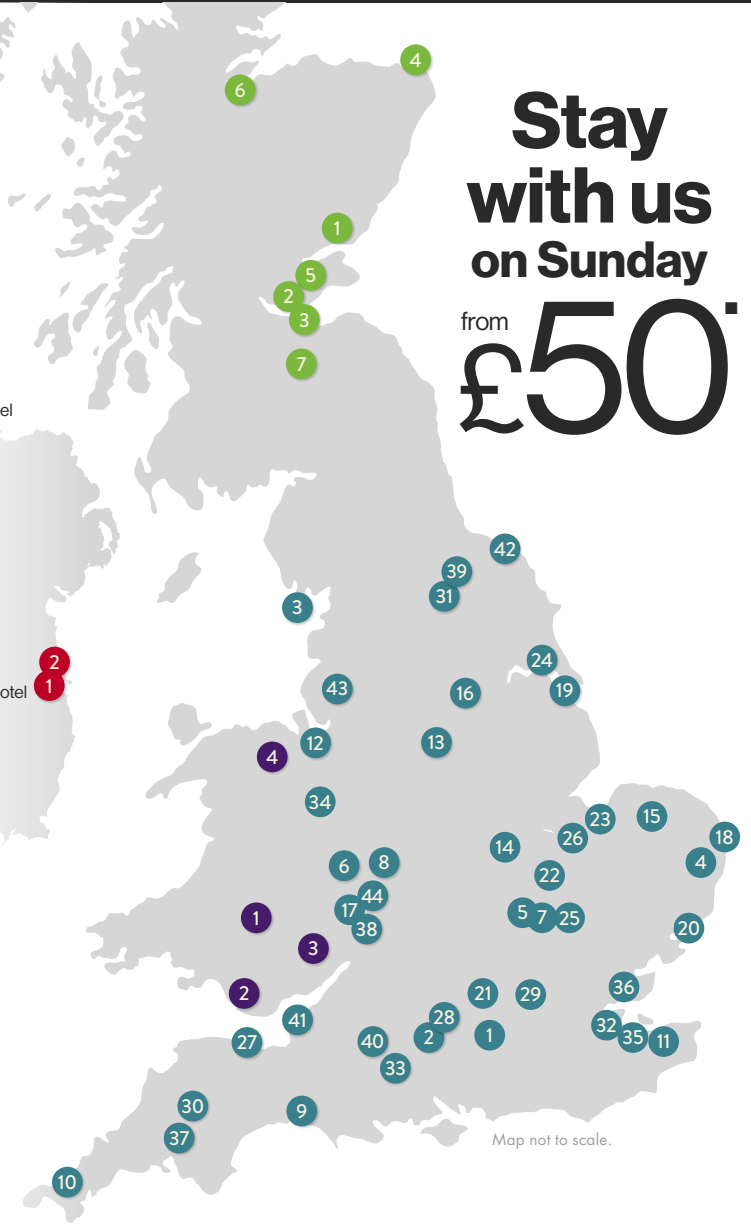
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