

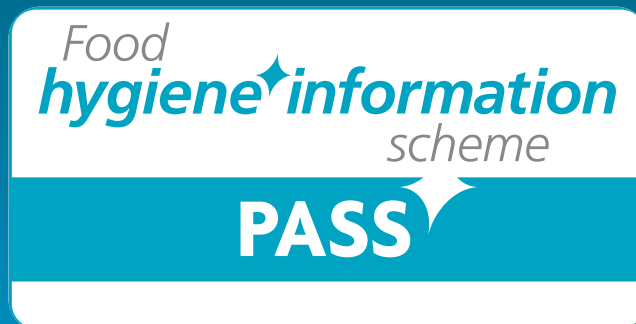
YOUR FREE MAGAZINE | SPRING/SUMMER 2024

WETHERSPOON NEWS

UK EDITION



**794 Wetherspoon pubs (99%)
have been awarded the
maximum food hygiene rating.**



For details, see pages 10-11.

WETHERSPOON GIVEN HIGHEST- POSSIBLE THREE-STAR AWARD

by The Sustainable Restaurant Association

AGE NO BARRIER

Wetherspoon is an age-positive employer, with training and career development opportunities

BREWERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

Launched in 2008, Wetherspoon's initiative has introduced hundreds of amazing ales to British pub-goers

PRESS CORRECTIONS

The Daily Mirror, Daily Record and Independent correct false claims about Wetherspoon



The Perfect Serve AT J D WETHERSPOON



OFFICIAL PARTNER



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PRIZE
CROSSWORD
117

INSIDE

FEATURES

Tim's viewpoint Piping pub news and common-sense opinion directly to customers for 33 years	4
794 Wetherspoon pubs (99%) have been awarded the maximum food hygiene rating Once again, Wetherspoon has scored highly in the food hygiene rating league table	10
Wetherspoon given highest-possible three-star award by The Sustainable Restaurant Association	14
Brewers from all over the world Launched in 2008, Wetherspoon's initiative has introduced hundreds of amazing ales to British pub-goers	16
Take a fresh look... Customers can be assured of responsibly sourced local ingredients	22
Now open The Captain Flinders (Euston, London) and The Five Stones (Filey)	26
Loo of the Year Winning national awards, with some pubs also winning individual national awards	28
Wetherspoon's pubs have become part of British culture As evidenced by numerous online and TV mentions	31
£6 billion of tax paid to the government in the last 10 years The government needs taxes, but there should be tax equality between supermarkets and pubs, says Wetherspoon	32
£520 million in free shares and bonuses paid to employees since 2006 83 per cent paid to pub staff	36
Forking out? Just Payit™ New pay-by-bank-account solution, in use by 24 major banks	38
Local pubs; local histories Cardiff-based historian Dr Nathan Smith says that he and his fellow academics often struggle to get through to a mass audience	40
Pub histories The Watch Maker (Prescot)	41
Ramen is coming in new menu choices Japanese-style broth featuring noodles... and oodles more	42
Craft beer in any of 12 regions Popular craft beer initiative expanded again, with new brews for the West Midlands, Scotland and Yorkshire	44

42



Real ale The Silver Penny (Dublin)	48
Common sense from The Sunday Times The Sunday Times editorial of 3 March 2024	52
Press corrections Misleading articles about Wetherspoon	54
Every wine's a winner baby A closer look at three red, white and rosé wines	60
Trusted suppliers know their onions - and lettuces, cucumbers and tomatoes Providing customers with the very best-quality and value-for-money food and drinks	70
How to keep pubs safe? Conscientious Wetherspoon pub managers put safety first by signing up to 538 separate pubwatch schemes	96
Birthday cake galore Pubs' birthdays aplenty as milestones whizz by	114

THE REGULAR STUFF

Letters	6
Meet the brewer	78
People	39, 50, 55, 68, 94, 99, 100, 105, 106
Community	86, 89, 92, 98, 102, 104, 107, 109, 113
Young Lives vs Cancer	80, 82, 84
CAMRA's bar talk	118

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

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It was the best of times and the worst of times

But have today's political leaders forgotten the lessons of the 1970s?

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”

Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

Charles Dickens wasn't writing about the 1970s, but he could have been.

As The Sunday Times article by 'wide-eyed millennial' Josh Glancy explains, on the opposite page, problems then seemed to dwarf today's: higher unemployment, higher inflation, more industrial strife, political deadlock, the Cold War, war in the Middle East and so on.

To add to the sense of decline, England, after losing to Germany in the 1970 football World Cup quarter finals, didn't even qualify for the finals again until 1982. Even the Rolling Stones abandoned ship and moved to France to escape the punishing 93% tax rates.

Shortages

Having left school in 1973, I was working in the Slumberland bed factory in Wokingham, Berkshire, when the country was plunged into a three-day week, necessitated by power shortages, although pubs stayed open, thank goodness.

There was a widespread sense of decline in the country, focusing particularly on the UK's troubled economic performance.

From memory, in about the mid 1970s, a brilliant series of articles by economist Terry Burns and other London Business School (LBS) alumni appeared in The Sunday Times, analysing the causes of the malaise – and comparing the sclerotic UK with the dynamic USA.

The remedy, proposed by the LBS, involved measures mainly to promote private enterprise and encourage investment.

The LBS highlighted two issues, among several others, which were holding back the UK.

The first was the difficulty which companies had, at the time, in obtaining planning permission for new developments – all expanding companies need planning permission of some kind.

It was alleged that planning permission for new supermarkets in the USA took about 12 weeks, yet that in the UK sometimes took 12 years.

The second issue related to what economists called 'mobility of labour'.

In the USA, it was said that, through a reasonable supply of rented accommodation, workers were able to move around the country easily, whereas it was far more difficult in the UK, owing to laws which discouraged renting – so, some people became trapped in their home town.

The relaxation of planning laws and the increased availability of rented accommodation were particularly relevant for Wetherspoon.

In London, where we started trading, most pubs were owned by major brewers, unwilling to sell them.

Planning

Wetherspoon was able to obtain planning permission for 'change of use', enabling us to convert shops and other buildings into pubs, thwarting the brewery monopoly. We were also able to rent flats or houses where pub managers could live.



Callaghan, Thatcher, Major, Blair, Brown et al realised that governments don't create wealth or tax revenue – individuals and businesses do



Coffee shops and restaurants, across the country, also proliferated in the pro-business environment.

It is perhaps overemphasising the influence of the LBS/Sunday Times articles, but there seemed to follow several decades during which politicians of all parties, whatever their rhetoric, encouraged free enterprise.

Wealth

Callaghan, Thatcher, Major, Blair, Brown et al realised that governments don't create wealth or tax revenue – individuals and businesses do.

Supermarkets, for example, have proliferated and, in doing so, have improved both the range and price of goods available to the public, thereby improving living standards and real, inflation-adjusted incomes.

Wetherspoon says that supermarkets have an unfair tax advantage over pubs, but that's another story.

Hospitality businesses and supermarkets are just examples. Every type of business was encouraged by the pro-business environment – domestic and foreign companies, making everything from cars and coffee to computers, invested hundreds of billions in the UK.

However, to quote a Bob Dylan song: "Things have changed."

The current crop of politicians grew up in the 1980s, rather than the 1970s, and isn't scarred by the same history – and those who don't learn from history risk repeating its mistakes.

So, for example, when Marks & Spencer applied for planning permission to redevelop its Oxford Street store, it was torpedoed by government minister Michael Gove, overruling the local authority, which had granted permission.

The same minister has announced plans which will make property-letting more difficult for landlords – likely, perhaps, to reduce the pool of rented property.

Let's not be too unkind to Mr Gove.

However, he's a similar age to many senior politicians in the main parties, with a similar educational background – and the pro-business, London Business School state of mind, born in the 1970s, appears to be absent or, at least, heavily diluted.

For a decade or more, politicians of all the main parties appear to be making policy 'on the hoof', based on the latest focus group or opinion poll soundings, rather than on deep-seated economic principles, designed to improve living standards in the medium and long term.

To be sure, business people, like politicians, like journalists and like humanity generally, have plenty of faults.

However, businesses are, ultimately, the source of ALL government and personal income.

So, for the sake of the treasury, jobs and the country, let's encourage investment in the UK as a top priority for all political parties.

Tim Martin
Chairman

Tim says: “Someone once made the droll observation: ‘If you can remember the 1960s, you weren’t really there.’ However, as Josh Glancy illustrates in *The Sunday Times*, the 1970s, for other reasons, were even more cataclysmic.”

THE DOOM-MONGERS CLAIM BRITAIN IS BROKEN. IT COULD BE WORSE, THOUGH – IT COULD BE 1974

Oil shocks, murder plots and a three-day week: life 50 years ago was gloomy yet bizarre, writes Josh Glancy

Until two weeks ago, I was fairly convinced that this was the winter of Britain’s discontent. A government seemingly uninterested in governing. Strikes so prolonged we’ve given up complaining about them. The price of a pint approaching the hourly minimum wage. Royals blighted by illness. Recession.

After the drama of Brexit and Liz Truss, it seemed we had settled in for a long, slow and terminal decline. Britain was irredeemably broken and nobody could be bothered to fix it. Then I listened to Tom Holland and Dominic Sandbrook’s *The Rest is History* podcast series about 1974. Now I’m wondering whether we’ve ever had it so good.

The series is a typically vaudevillian romp through what may well be the nadir of modern British history, taking in two profoundly depressing general elections, more strikes than a bowling alley, the move to a three-day week, a state of emergency in Northern Ireland and an apparent plot to murder the prime minister’s political secretary, by his main advisers.

I’ll admit that much of this was quite new to me. I wasn’t even nearly alive in 1974. I also never studied it in school, due to the lack of Nazis being vanquished. Boy, did I have a lot to learn. What on earth, I was left wondering, were you lot smoking back then?

I’d always thought Harold Wilson as a clever, dull chap who might have been better off as an Oxford academic than prime minister. I didn’t know he spent much of his time in Downing Street locked in a BDSM relationship (quite probably consummated) with his political secretary, Marcia Williams.

Williams exerted quite terrifying control over Wilson, wielding lunch access to the boss like a fearsome club bouncer. At one point, Wilson sneaked off from a dull function to do some work with his speechwriter, Joe Haines. Williams was having none of it. “You little c***,” she called Wilson, on finding him in his study. “What do you think you’re doing? You come back with me at once.” You little what now?!

It’s no surprise that the prime minister’s main advisers were sexist and patronising towards Williams. But they also appear to have discussed the possibility of assassinating her, with Wilson’s doctor suggesting to Haines and the policy chief, Bernard Donoghue, that they rid the PM of his troublesome mistress with a hefty dose of tranquillisers. It makes Nadine Dorries’ allegations of plots and rabbit slaughter look rather vanilla.

To our older readers, this may all seem familiar, if a little distant. But to a wide-eyed millennial like myself, it was flabbergasting. Thanks to miners’ strikes and oil shocks, the telly stopped broadcasting at 10.30pm, with Netflix nowhere to be seen. When the working week was cut to three days, the *Daily Mail* recommended that people use their spare time to experiment in the bedroom, which presumably sent sales of *The Joy of Sex* soaring (no Pornhub, poor darlings).

An air of shabbiness prevailed. Everyone was half cut at lunch. And on brandy, bizarrely. Dandruff was rife. Football stadiums were banned from using floodlights, meaning matches had to be moved to weekday afternoons.

There were matters far graver, of course, than the disruption of Match of the Day. I knew IRA bombs had ripped through pubs in Birmingham and Guildford. But it was quite another thing to hear about bodies eviscerated by explosions, the kind of shattering violence that today we might associate with the unhappier parts of the Middle East.

All this amid not one but two flaccid election contests between Wilson and Ted Heath, a pair of knackered old geezers who make the looming Donald Trump versus Joe Biden rematch look positively refreshing. It will be 50 years on Monday since Heath resigned in a huge sulk, yet somehow he fought another election seven months later. After four episodes of this series, I was left positively gasping for Margaret Thatcher to take over and spank everyone into submission.

And yet, as Sandbrook and Holland rightly observe in their tour de force, headlines about inflation and Westminster melodrama never tell us the full story. People’s lives are so much deeper and richer than the news. There was more cultural cohesion back then, with everyone pottering about on Space Hoppers and playing *Masterpiece* and gathering round the telly to watch *Porridge*. They didn’t have the ambient anxiety of social media either.

The prime ministers may have been exhausted, but the culture wasn’t. They had Bowie, we have Ed Sheeran. They had De Niro in *The Godfather II*, we are lucky enough to watch Ryan Gosling play the Ken doll.

And, perhaps most importantly, the economy may have been in the toilet in 1974, but inequality was also at a historic low. They were in it together; we are riven by stark divisions.

Still, all things considered, between Marcia’s potty mouth and the cancelled footy matches, Britain was clearly a complete mess in 1974. And so I ended my voyage of discovery feeling pleasantly reassured; that these difficult moments in history do pass, and most people are too busy having sex and playing games to notice anyway.

By Josh Glancy

The Sunday Times / 3 March 2024

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Note from the editor:

As well as the article above by Josh Glancy, please also see the editorial from *The Sunday Times* of 3 March 2024, on page 52.

YOUR SAY

Write: The Editor, Wetherspoon News, J D Wetherspoon plc
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Should you have any specific feedback, to which you wish to receive a reply, please write to the customer services team at the postal address above or use the customer feedback form on our website.

There's £20 of Wetherspoon gift cards for every letter we print

All letters and e-mails to the editor are read, considered and also passed onwards (if appropriate), yet, owing to correspondence volume, not all may be answered.

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

SEEKING STOUT WITH ALCOHOL TAKEN OUT

Dear Tim

For medical reasons, my husband cannot drink alcohol – and you have made great strides in your low-alcohol and alcohol-free menu.

I wanted to beg you to consider adding the Guinness 0.0 to your menu.

It is, by far, the best and closest non-alcoholic drink which we have ever tasted and, looking at Google, people agree, as the market (and thus the growth for this drink) is huge.

I keep looking for it, in earnest, on your menu in our local Spoons.

Thank you for looking into and considering this. If you could let me know your thoughts, I would be interested.

Kindest regards

Claire Pierce (via e-mail)

Tim replies: My old man (see picture below) worked for Guinness for 31 years, mostly abroad, so I learned, at first hand, that it doesn't come cheap. I'll approach Guinness about 0.0, but let's keep your sky-high recommendation between you, me and your hubby. If they think we're keen, they may be unable to resist whacking up the asking price.



Ray Martin, who worked for Guinness also in New Zealand, England and Ireland, pictured (far right) with the Guinness Jamaica team, c1975

LET THEM DRINK DUBONNET

Dear Timothy Randall Martin

Re: Elizabeth II's favourite tippie

I tend to frequent your establishments whenever I get the chance. I find them good value, pleasant and the company and staff are usually great – your pubs could do with a jukebox or two, though.

However, I was concerned to learn that you do not serve Dubonnet (a type of sweet, aromatised wine-based drink, made in France), as this was Elizabeth II's favourite drink, mixed with gin.

I was wondering whether you could stock Dubonnet, so that we could all raise a glass in her memory. I'm sure that it would be not only a winner, but a sell-out.

Thanking you, in advance, for your kind attention in this matter.

Best wishes

Howard John Pendlebury (via e-mail)

Tim replies: I'm trying to reconcile in my mind Elizabeth II, Dubonnet and a jukebox. Something is incongruous, but I can't put my finger on it... actually, I've always felt that the royals have a hard job, but your letter provides some insight. Fortified by rocket fuel like Dubonnet and gin, maybe it wasn't so bad. Billy Connolly joked that Elizabeth II thought that everywhere smelled of fresh paint – maybe that's why she needed a sherbet.

BRIGHT FUTURE FOR HOUSE OF LORDS

Dear Mr Martin

When I told my teenage daughter that the House of Lords is likely to be abolished, she immediately replied: "They should turn it into a Wetherspoon!"

I hope that you think this is more fun than you personally getting a peerage.

Regards

Gareth Jones (via e-mail)

Tim replies: Your daughter has excellent commercial instincts.

If the House of Lords were abolished, Wetherspoon would be in there like a shot.

It's an interesting question as to why that house has never been abolished. Elected MPs could do so, of course, at any time, since real power is vested in the House of Commons.

The Lords acts as a 'revision chamber'. In effect, it can make suggestions and cause slight delays, but, ultimately must give way to MPs.

My personal assumption is that governments and MPs must find the House of Lords useful.

They are slightly detached (some would say very) from the day-to-day hurly-burly of politics and can offer a second opinion.

It's hard to justify an unelected chamber, but, maybe, it somehow works.

PUBS NEED PLAY AREAS

Dear Tim

I don't need to effervesce over the perfect vibe in your amazing collection of rescued and restored significant buildings around the land or the wide assortment of people who enjoy your hospitality, but...

I noticed, in Bournemouth today, a few women with small kids restlessly wriggling on their seats and had a thought...

In China, pretty much every fast-food joint has a small, dedicated kids' play area which keeps mums happy and kids even happier – why not Wetherspoon too?

You wouldn't have to go down the tacky plastic kids' equipment route, but could develop a bespoke, Wetherspoon, eco-kids-vibe, wooden-toy-style alternative.

Your places are sprawling enough to set aside an area separate from other guests, then remove it before the evening gang arrives.

I know so many mums and kids who would love this kind of space.

Just a thought for Wetherspoon's ever-flexible, ever-creative, innovative and ever-sensitive-to-customers'-needs melting pot.

Best regards and best wishes for your ever-flourishing fiefdom
Jane Hepburn (via e-mail)

Tim replies: Thanks for the comments, Jane. Interesting point.

As legendary American baseball coach Yogi Berra ("It ain't all over 'til it's over.") also said: "In theory, theory and practice are the same. In practice, they're not."

Your theory can't be faulted. The question is whether, in practice, it would interfere with the pub vibe to which you refer. I'll discuss with the team. A bit left-field, as a baseball coach might say, but might be worth an experiment.

JOURNALIST DENIS SWAPS INK FOR ALE AFTER 70-YEAR SENTENCE



Journalist Denis Robinson is pictured enjoying a celebratory real ale at The William Peverel (Bulwell) to mark a very special anniversary.

In October 2023, Denis completed 70 years writing for the Hucknall Dispatch newspaper – and there was only one obvious venue to toast the occasion: his local Wetherspoon pub.

Denis confirmed: “On 19 October 2023, I completed 70 years for the Dispatch. Is this a record?”

“I joined the paper soon after my 16th birthday – and I’m now 86.”

Denis added: “I also officially opened The William Peverel back in September 2011, the only time I have had a pint of beer at nine o’clock in the morning!”

“In the pub, there is a display of photos taken of me during my career, as well as an example of the typewriter which I used for most of my career.”

Denis continued: “I can hardly believe that I have now reached the very special milestone of 70 years writing for the same newspaper.

“I wonder whether it would be worth a mention in the publication by Guinness World Records.

“When I started my career as a trainee reporter on the Hucknall Dispatch, soon after leaving school, only a few weeks after my 16th birthday, I never thought that I would still be getting articles in the paper seven decades later.”

He said: “I went to a Nottingham school which was also a secretarial college, so I learned shorthand and typewriting as part of the curriculum.

“A typewriter like the kind I used (until we switched to word processors in 1986) is on display at The William Peverel, together with a selection of photos taken of me during my career.

“One of these shows me being presented with a replica of a Trentbarton bus.

“This was because I had just completed 50 years travelling on the company’s buses from Bulwell to the former Dispatch office in Hucknall – and back again. I have never driven a car.

“Another of the photos on view shows me sitting on our office toilet. This was taken to go with an article I wrote about getting locked in a public loo for two hours!”

Denis revealed: “I have a very long connection with The William Peverel.

“It used to be the Palace Cinema, where I went regularly as a youngster for the Saturday-afternoon children’s matinee cartoons.

“My dad had a radio shop just across the road.”

His seven decades’ dedication to his profession and local community, must surely represent an unrivalled record of life-long commitment.

Lauren Finney, who has been pub manager at The William Peverel for the past six years, said: “Denis has always been well liked, by both staff and customers, and is always warmly welcomed by all when he visits.

“It’s clear that Denis has had a great journalistic influence on the local area – and it’s a privilege to be able to display his achievements in the pub.”

CAPTAIN FLINDERS A SPECIAL STOP-OFF FOR WETHERSPOON EXPLORERS

When Wetherspoon opened its newest pub in London, in early January, the launch sparked celebrations among the company's superfan community.

For four Wetherspoon 'collectors', The Captain Flinders (Euston) signalled a milestone in their individual bids to visit all of the company's pubs.

Railway shunt driver Kieran Wildman, from Ashford in Kent, completed his 946th and final Wetherspoon pub on visiting The Captain Flinders. He is pictured (middle) outside the new pub.

Wetherspoon News first met Kieran in 2017, when he had clocked up 450 venues.

Kieran has now more than doubled that total.

Kieran said: "I love the different buildings, old and new.

"My favourites include Royal Victoria Pavilion (Ramsgate), where I was the first customer, and Cabot Court Hotel (Weston-super-Mare), where I stayed at the hotel."

Agnieszka (Agnes) and Alan Forbes first came to the attention of Wetherspoon News in 2019 as they surpassed 435 pub visits in their mission (which started in May 2016 and was interrupted by the pandemic) to visit them all.

They are pictured (top) at The Captain Flinders, marking 899 pub visits, during a whirlwind trip which took in their 898th pub, Luther's Bar (Newcastle University), on a Sunday morning, Euston on the Sunday evening and then Star Light (Heathrow T4) two days later (pub number 900), to complete their mission to visit all open pubs.

Those visits also included their wedding night at The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury), their 600th pub, and 15 various pubs on their honeymoon in Scotland.

Alan said: "We have converted numerous friends and family to Wetherspoon and have met up, unexpectedly, with many friends around the country, thanks to Agnieszka's regular Facebook updates of our progress."

Mick Allen, from Dartford in Kent, is pictured (bottom) on its opening day enjoying a pint at The Captain Flinders, clocking up his 690th Wetherspoon pub visit there.

Wetherspoon News first met the current chairman of Gravesend and Darent Valley Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch in March 2023 at The Stargazer (The O2, Greenwich), when it newly opened.

Mick said: "I enjoy my visits to new Wetherspoon pubs, especially if they are close to where I live – the closest 'unvisited' pub for me is The Bear & Ragged Staff (Bedworth).

"I always enjoy the guest ales and value-for-money which Wetherspoon offers."

Mick concluded: "On my visit, I found The Captain Flinders to be both welcoming and friendly."



STEVE JOINS RARE BREED AT AN INCREDIBLE SPEED



Wetherspoon's customer Steve Hawkes has joined an elite group of people who can claim to have visited all of the company's pubs.

However, what is most remarkable, in Steve's case, is that he achieved his challenge within 18 months of setting out, although he says: "I wasn't really rushing. I'm sure it can be done much faster."

Steve revealed: "The whole venture came about as a result of a chance comment made by friends at The Three Hulats (Chapel Allerton).

"I had probably already visited around 30 Wetherspoon pubs over the years, before embarking on the challenge. I had just returned from Liverpool, where I chose to walk round all of the central Wetherspoon pubs to see the city.

"It was then when friends said: 'Why not do the lot?'

"Not being one to duck a challenge, I set off and completed them all, finishing back at The Three Hulats in under 18 months."

During that time, Steve travelled 20,390 miles, mostly by car, some via public transport and 622 miles on foot.

He also stayed at 21 Wetherspoon hotels, which he "highly recommends".

Steve, 72, lives in Richmond, Surrey, where his nearest Wetherspoon is The Kings Tun (Kingston upon Thames).

He explained: "I ran a business for 45 years, had recently retired and love travelling. I have a travel background, as both of my parents were travel journalists.

"So, with a bit of planning, I thought it could be done."

Armed with a vast floor-to-ceiling UK map on his office wall and the help of the Wetherspoon app and Google, he was able to work out

routes all over the UK, usually split into trips of up to six days, each covering around 50 pubs.

He added: "The trick is not to miss any out and not to do them twice. "The hardest ones were the airport venues which require airline tickets to visit them, because they are the wrong side of security.

"So, when I heard that a new pub had opened, called Star Light (Heathrow T4), I had a pleasant three days in Nice as my expensive reward."

Steve reviewed and noted observations about every venue, becoming increasingly aware of each building's former use and the quirky design features reflecting both location and history.

Steve said: "It's hard to choose a favourite. It really depends what time of year and time of day you visit, but I was especially interested in the design features, some with a lot of subtle humour and many in some incredible salvaged buildings."

Steve picked out Opera House (Tunbridge Wells) "obviously", George's Meeting House (Exeter) for its "subtle mixture of listed and modern", Keavan's Port (Dublin) for being "impressive, with a complete church enclosed under a glazed atrium at the rear", The Foley Arms Hotel (Great Malvern) for "the best views" and The Prince of Wales (Cardiff) for "the inspired retention of its original theatre features".

Steve concluded: "I would like to thank not only all of the Wetherspoon staff and customers who kindly took the time to speak to me and help me with my trip, but also Mr Tim Martin for developing such a vast and varied empire which is waiting for us to explore.

"It was hard work and such great fun... and you can have the occasional pint in the process."

HIGH-FLYING PUBS PUT THE HIGH IN HYGIENE

Average rating of 4.99 out of 5, scored at 747 pubs, puts Wetherspoon above comparable operators

Once again, Wetherspoon has scored highly in the food hygiene rating league table (www.scoresonthedoors.org), as at March 2024.

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

The company's pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales have an average food hygiene rating of 4.99 across 747 rated pubs, with 737 of those achieving the maximum-possible score of five.

The top two companies (see table opposite) have a rating of 5.00 each, but a combined number of only 58 premises.

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

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

Outlets with a rating of four are deemed to have 'good' hygiene standards, while three is 'generally satisfactory', two needs 'some improvement', a rating of one requires 'major improvement' and 0 requires 'urgent improvement'.

Wetherspoon was ahead of pub companies Young's, Sizzling Pub Co, Loungers and Cosy Club and was also rated higher than restaurant and sandwich chains, including PizzaExpress, KFC, McDonald's and Greggs – although all of those companies also scored highly.

Of our pubs, 747 currently have an FHRS rating, with 98.9 per cent of those achieving the highest-possible rating of five.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hygienic food-handling

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

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

Physical condition of the premises and facilities

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

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

Food safety management

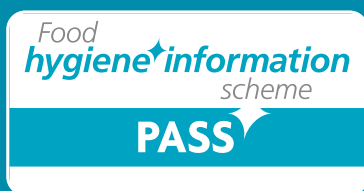
This ensures that suitable precautions are taken to keep food safe, including:

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

Did you know?

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

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



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

There are 57 Wetherspoon pubs in Scotland, all of which have been FHIS rated as 'pass'.

The only independent government scheme assessing food hygiene standards

FOOD HYGIENE RATING



VERY GOOD

	Total premises scored	Average premises score out of 5
The Ivy Collection	39	5.00
Walkabout	19	5.00
Wetherspoon	747	4.99
Turtle Bay	52	4.98
Giggling Squid	49	4.98
Nando's	420	4.97
Greggs	2018	4.96
McDonald's	1251	4.96
Wagamama	160	4.96
Miller & Carter	122	4.96
Slug & Lettuce	78	4.96
TGI Fridays	71	4.96
Nicholson's	68	4.96
Yates	28	4.96
O'Neill's	40	4.95
Be at One	40	4.95
Cosy Club	35	4.94
Starbucks	1079	4.93
Prezzo	105	4.93
Zizzi	127	4.92
Browns	24	4.92
Sizzling Pub Co	204	4.91
Côte	80	4.91
YO! Sushi	51	4.91
GBK	44	4.91
Carluccio's	32	4.90
Preť	433	4.89
Bill's	46	4.89
Costa Coffee	2460	4.87
KFC	948	4.87
Craft Union	522	4.87
PizzaExpress	340	4.85
Young's	221	4.84
Toby Carvery	138	4.83
Coffee#1	117	4.83
Pitcher & Piano	12	4.83
Papa Johns	476	4.82
Fuller's	175	4.80
German Doner Kebab	121	4.80
Subway	1953	4.79
Loungers	211	4.79
Vintage Inns	165	4.79
Harvester	145	4.79
Geronimo	33	4.79
Table Table	54	4.77
YO! To Go	270	4.76
BrewDog	48	4.75
Bella Italia	74	4.73
Shepherd Neame	240	4.71
Brewers fayre	126	4.71
Las Iguanas	47	4.70
Oakman Inns	40	4.70
The Breakfast Club	17	4.69
Café Rouge	22	4.67
Caffè Nero	578	4.59
Wadworth	143	4.53

Information in this table was sourced in March 2024 from www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk, listing 747 Wetherspoon pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales with an average food hygiene rating of 4.99. Please note that, where councils are yet to assess or submit their pub inspection, there may be a slight gap in the number of pubs, compared with that in our records. Businesses are rated from 0 to 5 which is displayed at their premises and online. The top score is 5.

A PATTERN OF SUCCESS AT THE LAST POST IN PAISLEY



Unlike the five-star Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, Scotland operates a slightly different system and rating.

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

There are 57 Wetherspoon pubs in Scotland, all of which have been FHIS rated as 'pass'.

To gain a 'pass' rating is difficult enough; however, to then maintain that highly coveted accolade requires consistently high standards.

Among the pubs achieving successive 'pass' ratings in Scotland is The Last Post (Paisley), with eight FHIS 'pass' ratings for its past eight consecutive inspections.

Opened in December 1998, The Last Post takes its name from the building's former use as Paisley's rather grand main post office, designed by WW Robertson and built in 1893.

Pub manager Michelle Quinn, pictured with kitchen shift leader Joe Rafferty, has worked for Wetherspoon for 13 years and took over at The Last Post two and a half years ago.

She heads up a team of 40 staff at the pub.

Stephen McCafferty has been the pub's kitchen manager for the past 10 years, running a kitchen team complement of 10 staff.

Michelle said: "We don't have a lot of staff turnover in the kitchen, with many of its team having worked with Stephen for several years now.

"That consistency helps a long way towards good practice, as the hygiene procedures have now become second nature.

"It's always essential to have a good routine, starting the day off properly and following the rules.

"If everyone does that, keeps on top of everything and training is done regularly, you shouldn't have any problems."

During Michelle's two-and-a-half-year stint, so far, as pub manager at The Last Post, the FHIS inspectors have made three visits, each resulting in a 'pass' rating.

Michelle continued: "The system is very similar to the inspections in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, with similar questions and points system categories.

"They check all hygiene records, as well as training processes, for the kitchen, as well as front of house.

"This encompasses all of the business's good practices, not just hygiene, and is a complete check of all procedures, including Challenge 25.

"Wetherspoon already has strict procedures in place, with the company's own in-house auditing processes, which go way above general standard practice. So, if you follow these, you can't go wrong.

"There is also great support from area managers to ensure that high standards are achieved and maintained."

Michelle concluded: "The FHIS pass is essential for us and also important to customers, who are definitely more than aware of the hygiene rating system."

FLYING THE FLAG FOR CZECH AND POLISH RAF PILOTS IN SOMERSET



Wetherspoon News ran a feature (in the spring 2022 edition) about the contribution, during World War II, of Polish RAF pilots in the Battle of Britain campaign.

That article, which detailed the history and information on display at The Greenwood Hotel (Northolt), near the RAF Northolt airfield, has inspired a similar tribute to the Czech and Polish RAF pilots who were based near Wellington, in Somerset.

Three plaques celebrating Czech and Polish pilots who fought for Britain have been unveiled at Wetherspoon's pub The Iron Duke (Wellington).

These pilots were stationed at RAF Culmhead, a former RAF base on the Blackdown Hills, near Churchstanton. They included the 302 and 306 squadrons, who piloted the iconic Spitfire planes. By 1942, the Polish airmen were replaced at the airfield by two Czech squads, 312 and 313.

Local military historian and Wellington Local History & Museum Society member Chris Penney, who led the initiative for the display, praised Wetherspoon for its work in putting up the artwork.

He told the Wellington Weekly News: "I was reading Wetherspoon's in-house magazine, where it reported on the unveiling of artwork at a pub near RAF Northolt to honour the Poles who helped to win the Battle of Britain.

"I wrote to the editor and asked whether we could put something up about the Poles who were also stationed here locally near Wellington – and he said yes.

"I was absolutely bowled over.

"All credit to Wetherspoon for its help in putting this together and to Tim Martin for highlighting this."

Chris Penney told Wetherspoon News: "The reproduction quality of the wartime photographs is superb. One illustration shows pilots at the Somerset RAF station having an English-language class.

"Britain was called 'the Island of Last Hope' by the many free Poles who made the dangerous journey to the UK from occupied Poland; they fought for their freedom and ours."

Artur Bildziuk, chairman of the Polish Airmen's Association in the UK, also told the Wellington Weekly News: "I am very pleased to see this artwork unveiled, because, in World War II, we were the fourth-largest contributor to the allied forces.

"They didn't get the recognition they deserved after the war.

"This display tells a great story, along with the story of the Czechs – we call them brothers in arms."

BARS AND STARS – COVETED TOP SCORE ACHIEVED IN FOOD MADE GOOD RATINGS

**Wetherspoon given highest-possible three-star award
by The Sustainable Restaurant Association**

Wetherspoon has achieved a highly coveted three-star Food Made Good Standard rating, from The Sustainable Restaurant Association (The SRA).

The highest-possible three-star rating, a third-party certification standard, 'signals to staff, suppliers and customers that Wetherspoon is a progressive business which understands that doing the right thing for people and the planet is core to operations', according to The SRA's report.

Wetherspoon scored 70 per cent, seen by the process as 'an incredible accomplishment'. The three-star award is valid for two years.

Pillars

The score is determined across three separate categories, known as pillars. These are sourcing (Wetherspoon scored 60 per cent), society (75 per cent) and environment (where the highest score of 79 per cent was achieved).

Since 2010, The SRA has set the standard for sustainable food and drinks businesses around the world, connecting businesses across the globe to accelerate change towards a hospitality sector which is socially progressive and environmentally restorative.

One of the ways in which it does this is through the world's largest sustainability certification, specifically designed for the hospitality sector – its Food Made Good Standard rating.

The standard is awarded to restaurants and other food and beverage businesses, around the world, which meet a set of rigorous, measurable criteria across the three main focus areas of sourcing, society and environment.

Holistic

Originally launched in 2010 and updated in 2023, the Food Made Good Standard takes a holistic view of what sustainability should mean for the hospitality sector.

It is about not just minimising food waste, carbon emissions or water use, but also implementing sustainable sourcing, designing menus which are good for both people and the planet, treating staff well, with compassion and dignity, and getting involved in the local community.

To achieve the standard, a business must score 50 per cent or higher during the rigorous and evidence-based evaluation process.

The business is then recognised via a star system, once referred to by The Sunday Times as 'the Michelin stars of sustainability.'

Michelle Morris, Wetherspoon's quality assurance manager, said:

"To achieve a three-star score on our evaluation, the highest-available award, is a huge achievement."

Footprint

"Our highlights include already completing a carbon footprint analysis and being ready to set reduction targets for the future.

"There's still room for improvement, notably within the 'sourcing' pillar, but this three-star score is an achievement to shout about."

Juliane Caillouette Noble, The SRA's managing director, said:

"Congratulations on obtaining a three-star score on your Food Made Good evaluation.

"This result is testament to the great work you're doing for people and the planet.

"We hope that it will also serve as an encouragement to keep working to make a positive impact."

The star ratings

One star (50–59 per cent) Highly commendable achievement – you are well on your way.

Two stars (60–69 per cent) No easy feat and impossible without clear dedication to sustainability – you should be very proud of your admirable efforts.

Three stars (70 per cent and more) An incredible accomplishment – your hard work and commitment to continuous improvement place you firmly in the top tier.

The framework

Built on a 10-point framework and by evaluating impact across three pillars (sourcing, society and environment), Food Made Good answers the question: What does good look like for a food-service business?

It assesses behaviour, measures action, celebrates progress and provides a roadmap towards further improvement.

Sourcing: Celebrate provenance; support farmers and fishers; more plants and better meat; source seafood sustainably

Society: Treat staff fairly; feed people well; support the community

Environment: Reduce your footprint; waste no food; reduce, reuse, recycle



The Sustainable Restaurant Association (The SRA)

The SRA was founded in 2008 by Simon Heppner, Giles Gibbons, Mark Sainsbury and Henry Dimbleby, with a vision of creating a clear intersection between the sustainable food movement and the hospitality industry.

With a group of 50 founding restaurants, The SRA set out to create a robust framework for what made a restaurant 'good', to clearly promote best practice across the industry and to inspire healthy competition to drive progressive action.

What started as a conversation among a few restaurants in London quickly grew to reach all corners of food service – from high end to high street, from street food staples to workplace and university canteens.

Raymond Blanc OBE, president of The SRA, said: "As chefs, we have huge power to influence what people eat – it is the single most effective action people can have on the planet.

"Now, for the very first time, with the Food Made Good Standard, we have a globally applicable definition of what a sustainable restaurant is and a way to assess it."

The SRA has led the way in accelerating change towards a hospitality sector which is socially progressive and environmentally restorative.

Wetherspoon's report's highlights

Sourcing

Pillar score: 60 per cent

At Wetherspoon, great care is paid to offering a diverse and accessible menu and ensuring that you work with suppliers which share your values.

Society

Pillar score: 75 per cent

Wetherspoon is clearly committed to having a positive impact on staff, diners and the wider community.

Wetherspoon's highest-scoring impact area in the 'society' pillar is 'treat staff fairly (83 per cent), reflecting the work being done to ensure that parents can have flexible working patterns and the training available to all staff.

Environment

Pillar score: 79 per cent

Wetherspoon has taken important steps to monitor and manage its use of natural resources to reduce its footprint, such as setting targets to manage and monitor electricity and gas use and conducting a carbon-footprint analysis of the menu.

Benefits of Food Made Good Standard

Action plan: Using the Food Made Good framework enables Wetherspoon to manage and prioritise its actions.

Businesses which have completed the standard receive a tailor-made report, providing a ready-made action plan for how to keep improving from here. This keeps momentum and encourages a process of continuous improvement.

Enhanced reputation: Accreditation shows that the business is committed to environmental and social responsibility, which can enhance reputation with customers, staff, investors and other stakeholders.

Access to a network: Achieving the standard makes you part of a global movement for change.

As part of the Food Made Good community, you can share, learn and collaborate with a network of like-minded professionals committed to creating a positive future.

Positive impact: By implementing sustainable practices, your business can have a positive impact on the environment and local communities, helping to create a more sustainable food system for our shared future.

BRINGING BREWERS HERE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD IN UNIQUE PROJECT

Launched in 2008, Wetherspoon's initiative has introduced hundreds of amazing ales to British pub-goers

Wetherspoon has a proud tradition of bringing brewers from overseas to feature their ales in the twice-yearly real-ale festivals.

It was in 2008 that the company first invited members of the international brewing community to come here to produce their beers – at one of 10 UK host breweries.

To date, the breweries have hosted 249 brewers, hailing from 147 breweries in 29 countries worldwide.

Among the 234 beers brewed so far is Hoptropolis IPA (6.0% ABV).

Tropical

This tropical IPA, from the US-based New Realm Brewing, was a huge hit at Wetherspoon's autumn 2023 real-ale festival.

New Realm's Mitch Steele, one of the two very first international brewers to arrive in 2008 (the other was Toshi Ishii from Yo-Ho Brewery), returns to produce Hoptropolis IPA, at Hook Norton Brewery again, for a special 4 July brew.

Hoptropolis IPA will be available as a guest ale at all Wetherspoon pubs to mark American Independence Day for 2024.

Established in 1849, family-owned Hook Norton Brewery, in Oxfordshire, handcrafts a wide range of award-winning ales from its iconic Victorian Tower brewery.

The beers are brewed using the original kit, open-fermented and, keeping traditions alive, still delivered to the pubs by shire horse and dray.

Before this latest visit, Mitch has made six previous trips to the UK to brew exclusively for Wetherspoon's real-ale festivals, representing Stone on four occasions and New Realm twice previously.

International

Wetherspoon was already importing foreign cask beers, particularly for the twice-yearly real-ale festivals, before the international brewing programme.

However, although this had proven popular, there were greater quality risks involved, through long-distance travel – and, with this venture, our support for the British brewing industry was slightly reduced.

So, it was decided to invite brewers worldwide to brew here instead, encouraging collaborations, forging friendships and sharing knowledge, throughout the global brewing community.

This has proven a more environmentally friendly solution and gives a better quality guarantee.

Collaboration

It has been a great way to support international brewers, enabling them to showcase their beers in the UK, while continuing to support the British brewing industry with the host brewery collaboration.

Several of the visiting brewers have gone on to start brewing cask ales in their home country, assisted by the knowledge and experience which they have gained while visiting the UK.

To complement this, the UK's host brewers have also often picked up some useful tips from the visiting brewers.

It also gives Wetherspoon's customers a chance to taste real ales, from around the globe, not usually available in the UK.



New Realm Hoptropolis IPA 6.0% ABV

New Realm Brewing, Georgia, USA. Est. 2016

Aroma: pineapple, stone fruit, tropical

Taste: fruity, light bitter, malty

The beer

Hoptropolis IPA is brewed in a style popular in southeast USA, packed with tropical fruit aromas and flavours, with a slightly lower bitterness level.

It is a rich and balanced IPA, brewed with American Azacca, Citra and Mosaic hops.

It has proven to be one of the most popular IPAs from New Realm.

The brewer



Mitch Steele is the brewmaster at New Realm Brewing.

He has been brewing professionally for over 35 years and, before joining New Realm in 2016, held brewmaster positions at Anheuser-Busch and Stone Brewing.

In 2012, Mitch published the book 'IPA: Brewing Techniques, Recipes and the Evolution of India Pale Ale' and was awarded, in 2014, the Brewers Association Russell Scherer award for innovation in craft beer.

Mitch has been brewing real ales for Wetherspoon since 2008.

He is a huge fan of real ale and laments the fact that there are very few places in the US doing them well.

The brewery

Started in 2016 by beer industry veterans Carey Falcone, Bob Powers and Mitch Steele, New Realm is an American craft brewery and distillery.

Its mission is to inspire moments of happiness through its beers, food, experiences and community involvement.

The company has a flagship brewery and restaurant in Atlanta (Georgia), a production brewery and restaurant in Virginia Beach (Virginia), a brewpub in Charleston (South Carolina) and a new brewery and taproom on the campus of Auburn University, where it supports the university's brewing science programme.

New Realm is a highly awarded brewery which, over the past few years, has been awarded two gold medals at the Great American Beer Festival and medals in the World Beer Cup, North American Brewers Awards and US Open Beer Championships.

In addition, it has brewed beers in partnership with the rock band Blackberry Smoke, Georgia Tech Athletics and Old Dominion University.



Mitch is pictured (second left) with the Hook Norton team at the brewery (September 2023)

MOON STILL SHINING BRIGHTLY AFTER QUARTER OF A CENTURY



Moon and Starfish (Clacton-on-Sea) has been serving the Essex coastal town community for more than a quarter of a century.

The pub opened in July 1997, on Marine Parade East, on the seafront opposite Clacton pier, in part of the former Royal Hotel building – a well-known local landmark for more than 130 years.

Pub manager Peter Campbell (pictured) is in his third spell at the pub, having first joined Wetherspoon in 2001 as a shift manager at Moon and Starfish.

A highly experienced manager, Peter has worked at Moon and Starfish (on and off) for 23 years and has helped to develop numerous Wetherspoon staff members, 10 of whom have gone on to manage their own pub.

Among those success stories is Peter's own son Harry, currently running The Drabbet Smock (Haverhill), who is one of the company's youngest pub managers at just 22.

Peter runs a team of 60 full- and part-time staff, all of whom are local people, with many working there for several years, including part-time floor associate Pat Sewell, who joined the team shortly after the pub first opened.

Peter said: "Pat is 84 now and has been part of the team here since March 1999.

"In fact, I believe that she worked in the building from way before it became Moon and Starfish."

Located at the popular seaside resort, the pub is naturally busier throughout the holidays and summer season.

However, once the visitors have gone home, the pub is a real community hub, with a group of loyal regular customers.

Peter continued: "The town is a lot quieter from late October until Mother's Day weekend – the time I always associate with the start of the season.

"Our now-regular Monday-night quiz evening, which launched in late February, is proving a popular event with regulars."

Peter said: "We have a fantastic loyal customer base and great links with our local Tending Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch, with many of the members among our regular customers."

Moon and Starfish is listed in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2024, the UK's best-selling beer and pub guide.

Local branch members chose the pub, following regular visits to check on the quality of the real ales on offer.

They also took account of customer service, décor and overall atmosphere.

A CAMRA spokesman said: "Moon and Starfish deserves its place in The Good Beer Guide 2024.

"It is our belief, if a licensee serves an excellent pint of real ale, that everything else in the pub, including customer service, quality of food and atmosphere, is likely to be of an equally high standard."

Peter reported: "As well as the three permanent Wetherspoon ales, Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot and Ruddles, we serve three guest ales during the winter months and up to six ever-changing guest ales in the busier summer season.

"Our real-ale-drinkers like a proper ale, especially the ruby-coloured beers.

Among the favourites ales are Ringwood Fortyniner (4.9% ABV), Fengate John Hudson Bitter (3.6% ABV) and Shepherd Neame Spitfire (4.2% ABV)."

Moon and Starfish also won acclaim, in the Loo of the Year Awards 2023, for the quality and standards of its toilets – receiving a highly coveted 'platinum' rating by inspectors.

PUBWATCHING: PARLIAMENT HOSTS WETHERSPOON-SPONSORED AWARDS

Once again, Wetherspoon was proud to sponsor the National Pubwatch of the Year awards.

The awards were held at the House of Lords.

Nottingham pubwatch and campaigner Figen Murray received their awards at the ceremony.

National Pubwatch aims to help to achieve a safe, secure and social drinking environment in all licensed premises throughout the UK.

It now supports more than 800 pubwatches across the UK.

Nottingham pubwatch was recognised for its strong partnerships, collaboration and working relationships with key stakeholders, both nationally and locally.

The pubwatch has been running for more than 30 years, with its focus on helping to make Nottingham city-centre licensed premises safer and more vibrant places for the public and visitors to enjoy.

Two other pubwatches, Dalston and Taunton, were highly commended.

Figen Murray was recognised at the awards with the 'award of merit', acknowledging the valuable contributions which many individuals have made to the safety of the night-time economy.

National Pubwatch chairman Steve Baker OBE said: "It has been an honour to celebrate the winners and finalists at this awards event.

"The National Pubwatch awards are so important in recognising the hard work of pubwatches, their members and individuals, in ensuring that we have a safe pub and licensed trade for customers and staff."

Wetherspoon's head of legal, Nigel Connor, added: "This year has again seen some fantastic entries, reflecting the strength of UK-wide pubwatches.

"Nottingham pubwatch is a worthy winner – and congratulations to everyone involved in the scheme.

"Wetherspoon is pleased to be able to help to recognise the work done by all pubwatch members, as well as the authorities which co-operate with them through our continued sponsorship of the awards."

Pictured (left to right) are Nottingham pubwatch committee member James Slater, Nottingham pubwatch chair Michele Somers, National Pubwatch chair Steve Baker OBE, Figen Murray, Lord Kennedy, Dalston Late Night Economy Forum co-chair Kerry Maisey, Dalston Late Night Economy Forum co-chair Dan Beaumont, Taunton pubwatch deputy chair Fiona Johnson, Taunton pubwatch chair Lee Thorn, Wetherspoon's head of legal Nigel Connor.



WETHERSPOON RECOGNISED AS 'DIVERSITY LEADER' BY FT



Wetherspoon has been recognised as an FT Diversity Leader in Europe.

The company is featured in the Financial Times 2024 list of companies championing workplace inclusion.

The list is compiled based on research assessing employees' perceptions of companies' success in promoting various aspects of diversity, such as gender balance, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and disability.

In addition to the survey's response, Statista searched through data in the public domain and carried out further research to investigate companies' commitment to establishing inclusivity and diversity in the workplace.

Wetherspoon's people director, Tom Ball, said: "We are delighted to be recognised as an FT Diversity Leader in Europe.

"The company is committed to ensuring that all employees have every opportunity to thrive in the pubs, hotels and at head office."

OLDHAM FAN COMPLETES GRAND TOUR OF WETHERSPOON HOTELS



Oldham Athletic supporter Peter McElhatton has completed a tour of all Wetherspoon hotels in the UK and Ireland.

Peter embarked on his mission as a follow-up to his previous achievement, in which he visited 923 of the company's pubs.

Peter's first hotel visit was The Bell Hotel (Aylesbury) in 2017. He completed his hotel marathon by staying at The Crown (Worcester).

Many of the hotel visits took in trips away to see Oldham Athletic games, while others involved rugby league matches featuring Oldham RLFC.

Peter said: "Visiting Wetherspoon's pubs was a great way to see the country, while following football and rugby and sometimes just for its own sake."

"But staying in hotels allowed me greater flexibility to stay in a place for a weekend and take in more of what the area had to offer."

He added: "I love travelling and meeting new people en route. It's great when you get chatting to the regulars in the pubs and hotels."

Peter was particularly impressed with Keavan's Port Hotel, Wetherspoon's 89-room hotel in Dublin, The Greenwood Hotel (Northolt) and The Angel Hotel (Whitby).



CAR BOOT DISCOVERY LIFTS CURTAIN ON PICTORIAL PAST OF WOODSEATS PALACE

You just never know what you're going to find at a car boot sale.

Pub customer Martyn Waller had a pleasant surprise when he found programmes for The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield) from its days as a cinema.

Martyn, a long-standing customer at the pub, popped along to a local car boot sale and was struck by a display of items which he knew felt familiar.

Martyn has given up the programmes, worth £50, in order to make a gift of them to the pub's manager Rick Brown.

Rick has had them framed and mounted inside for everyone to enjoy.

The images feature advertisements for the 1958 film *King Creole*, starring Elvis Presley, and *I Only Arsked*, a comedy starring future *Carry On* stars Charles Hawtrey and Bernard Bresslaw.

The cinema, which first opened its doors in 1911, closed in 1961 and became a supermarket. It opened as a Wetherspoon pub in 2001.

Rick, pictured (left) with Martyn, said: "We're extremely grateful to Martyn for his very generous gesture."

"The framed programmes are now on display in the pub for everyone to see."



READING

BACK OF BEYOND SAFELY GOES ABOVE AND BEYOND



The Back of Beyond (Reading) was recognised, at the 2023 annual Reading pubwatch conference, for its focus on safety issues.

This year's event and awards focused especially on caring for vulnerable guests and customers in the industry, including those with accessibility requirements, and the safety of women while interacting with venues.

Councillor Tony Page (the mayor of Reading) and Reading pubwatch secretary Bill Donne presented The Back of Beyond with its Best Bar None certificate.

Accreditation with the voluntary Best Bar None scheme highlights a venue's high standards in operating policy, training and safety of staff and customers.

Pub manager Rachel Jackson (pictured) said: "We are delighted to receive our Best Bar None accreditation, highlighting our total commitment to the safety and security of our staff and customers at The Back of Beyond."

Reading pubwatch's chair, Jerry Wilkinson, said: "Reading pubwatch has set the standard in making Reading a safer and more enjoyable night out for customers."

OAKHAM

CAPTAIN NOEL NEWTON MENTIONED IN DISPATCHES

Pub manager Cayley Stubbins and the team at The Captain Noel Newton (Oakham) were recognised for the quality of their real ale by members of the local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch.

Rutland CAMRA named the Wetherspoon pub among three shortlisted venues in its 'pub of the season' award for summer 2023.

Although Cayley's pub didn't claim the top prize, finishing runner-up for the summer season, making it to the shortlist was no mean feat.

The trio of top pubs shortlisted was selected using the 'scores' given by local and visiting CAMRA members for the quality of beer served – and it was a tightly contested process, with plenty of tough competition across the county.

Cayley (pictured) said: "Despite not winning the award, to be shortlisted is a great achievement for us. Rutland maybe a relatively small area, yet the competition is high.

"To be recognised among the top three pubs in the county is a real boost and shows that we are doing the right things at The Captain Noel Newton."

Rutland CAMRA reported: "Three excellent pubs made the shortlist, based on their beer scores for the July-September period, including The Captain Noel Newton ... a worthy runner-up."



TAKE A FRESH LOOK..

Customers can be assured of responsibly sourced local ingredients

If you think that Wetherspoon's menu is all about readymade pub grub, it is time to think again.

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

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

Take a fresh look at Wetherspoon's trusted suppliers and the ingredients which go in your favourite dishes.

Steaks

All of Wetherspoon's prime beef steaks (traceable from farm to fork) come from farms in the UK and Ireland, are matured for 28 days to ensure great flavour and texture, then seasoned by us in the kitchen with a steak-seasoning blend, before being freshly cooked to your liking.

All steaks are always fresh, never frozen, and are cooked to order from fresh, just how you like them, from pink to well done... or somewhere in between.

Foyle Food Group, a family-run business with more than 40 years' expertise in the beef industry, has been supplying Wetherspoon for

the past six years with beef steaks made from British and Irish beef.

Owned and run by the Acheson family since 1977, the company operates nine state-of-the-art facilities across the UK and Ireland, all of which are AA grade British Retail Consortium (BRC) approved.

Foyle has one of the strictest traceability systems in the industry, complying with legislative standards and sourcing from producers which are Red Tractor accredited or Bord Bia assured, so delivering the highest-quality beef steaks possible to Wetherspoon's pubs and customers.



Pizzas

All pizzas are made using fresh dough (not premade), which is proved for the optimum length of time, to ensure a perfect, soft and airy pizza base texture, with a crisp crust. The dough is also dusted in polenta and stretched in the pubs' kitchens.

Every pizza is handmade to order, hand topped with fresh, quality ingredients, freshly baked and hand finished.

Sours are used in the dough recipe to create Wetherspoon's unique sourdough, for a great

well-rounded flavour and that perfectly crisp base.

The mozzarella used is made from traditional ingredients.

The tomato sauce used is sourced from Italy for an authentic flavour, using 100 per cent Italian tomatoes.

Made by experts Cirio, with more than 160 years' Italian tomato-growing expertise in the Emilia-Romagna region, the tomato sauce which Wetherspoon uses is enriched with a blend of Mediterranean herbs – for an authentic taste.



Burgers

All of Wetherspoon's burgers are always fresh, never frozen – and cooked to order, from fresh.

Using a specific flat-top grill set to the ideal temperature and perfect cooking time, Wetherspoon's kitchen teams are experts in creating juicy, tasty burgers.

The beef burgers are all made using completely traceable, Red Tractor-certified, 100 per cent British or Irish beef, sourced from the UK and Ireland.

Dunbia, a division of Dawn Meats, has been supplying those beef burgers to Wetherspoon since 2007.

The burgers are made to a bespoke recipe, unique to Wetherspoon, so cannot be enjoyed anywhere else.

The patties are gently pressed to give a loose open texture, with a meaty bite, and are lightly seasoned with salt and black pepper to that unique recipe.

Dunbia is a leader in burger production, with a closed-loop supply chain, meaning that all of the British beef used in Wetherspoon's burgers comes from its dedicated farmer suppliers.

It is then processed through its own processing facilities and delivered directly to Wetherspoon.



Fish

Unlike many competitors, the raw fish fillets (cod – or haddock in Scotland) used at Wetherspoon are freshly battered by hand and cooked to golden crispy perfection by the pubs' kitchen teams.

First, the fish is dusted in flour, then soaked in Wetherspoon's own-recipe batter, before being fried to perfection. Little wonder that fish and chips continues to be the company's best-selling main dish.

All fish served at Wetherspoon's pubs carries the blue fish ecolabel – assuring you that the fish has been sustainably sourced.

Wetherspoon is the largest pub chain in the UK certified to use the blue Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) ecolabel, giving customers the assurance that the fish used is environmentally sustainable and fully traceable.

Wetherspoon serves fish which has been caught by fishermen in fisheries which have been certified by the MSC standard as sustainable.



BIG HAND AND LITTLE HAND CREATE SPECIAL YLVC CLOCK

Woodturners Peter and Andy Vines (pictured left to right) brought a timely gift to The Liquorice Gardens (Worksop) in the form of a Young Lives vs Cancer (YLvC) clock.

The clock was delivered to the pub by the father-and-son team who have been regulars at the pub for many years.

The clock is complete with YLVC badges representing the 12 hour-markers.

As well as raffling off the clock, the pair also sold badges around the pub and helped to raise £180 for the pub's chosen charity.

Andy said: "It's not the first time we have paired up to make a clock for the pub.

"We made a new one a little while back, when the old clock broke down."

Pub manager James Nott came up with the idea of using YLVC badges to mark the hours on the new timepiece.

He said: "I thought it would make it more appealing as a charity raffle prize.

"I am extremely grateful to Peter and Andy for all their skill and hard work in making the clock."

And the story doesn't stop there – Peter and Andy make all new pub staff starters a special wooden pen, featuring their favourite colour.

Pens and pencils made by the pair were also offered as a prize in the charity raffle.



WOO-HOO! CAN ANY LOO BEAT THIS VIEW?

Wetherspoon takes great pride in the restoration and preservation of historic buildings, as well as newer builds, providing comfortable surroundings and excellent facilities for customers.

Those facilities include quality and high-standard toilets, the majority of which have been awarded in the annual Loo of the Year Awards.

Across the UK and Ireland, Wetherspoon's toilets have been judged among the best away-from-home toilet facilities for décor and maintenance, cleanliness and accessibility, as well as overall management.

However, the awards' criteria have yet to include the 'best loo with a view'.

If it did, The Reeds Arms (Burnham-on-Sea) could possibly be eligible for an additional prize, according to Wetherspoon's founder and chairman Tim Martin.

On a visit to the Somerset pub, Tim (together with his submitted photographic evidence) confirmed: "The Reeds Arms must have one of the best views, from the loos, which a Wetherspoon pub can offer."

Tim's snapshot out of the window beyond the handbasins offers a great view of the pub's beautiful coastal location.

● **If anyone would like to challenge this view with a better one, get in touch: editor@jdwetherspoon.co.uk**



CARRICKFERGUS

CENTRAL BAR NAMED 'PUB OF THE YEAR' BY BEER FANS



The Central Bar (Carrickfergus) has been named 'pub of the year' by ale campaign group Beer from the Wood.

The award was granted to recognise not only the pub's commitment to quality ale, but also its customer service, staff's knowledge and attention to detail.

The Central Bar's pub manager, Michael Morgan, said: "It is an honour to receive this award – we really do try to offer a good range of beers and serve them consistently in good condition."

Shift manager Chelsea Cash (pictured with Michael) is also responsible for the pub's ale offer, which includes Greene King Abbot Ale, as well as Irish ales such as Whitewater's Maggie's Leap.

Mark Hutchinson is chairman of Beer from the Wood, which has been campaigning for ale quality in Northern Ireland pubs since 1963.

He said: "The Central Bar is one of our favourite watering holes.

"It has an ever-changing selection of quality cask ales – and we congratulate Michael and his team on their well-deserved award."

CHAIRMAN SWAPS SPOONS FOR SWORD AS HE BECOMES SIR TIM

Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, has been knighted in the New Year Honours List.

Mr Martin, 68, founded the business in 1979 with his first pub in Muswell Hill, north London.

Wetherspoon now has 815 pubs and 55 hotels across the UK and the Republic of Ireland, employing 42,000 staff.

The knighthood is for services to hospitality and culture.

The citation for the knighthood states: "He (Tim Martin) is committed to supporting local people, making pubs and hotels that are accessible and inclusive.

"He has worked with Mencap to provide placements for those with learning difficulties.

"He works to help repurpose high-street buildings, such as banks and theatres, helping retain the unique architectural identity and culture of high streets.

"He introduced an award-winning apprenticeship and training academy to help grow managers within the business.

"He is a supporter of the LauraLynn and Young Lives vs Cancer charities and the Royal British Legion's poppy appeal."

Mr Martin said: "Above all, Wetherspoon's success has been due to a team effort over 45 years.

"Very many thanks indeed to the customers, colleagues, suppliers, designers, contractors and others, present and departed, who have contributed to this honour."

NOW OPEN

Euston

THE CAPTAIN FLINDERS

Pub manager Sam Pugh is pictured outside The Captain Flinders.

The pub is located a short distance from Euston train station, in London.

It is named after the Royal Navy explorer who led the first circumnavigation (1801–03) of Australia – and is credited with giving the country its name. He was not the first to use the term, but his work and publications popularised it.

Archaeologists working at the Euston station redevelopment (at the London HS2 terminus) discovered the remains of Captain Matthew Flinders.

The bespoke carpet, fitted throughout the pub, draws its design inspiration from Euston station, with cable patterns, as well as hidden cats' faces to celebrate Trim, Captain Flinders' pet who accompanied him on his expeditions.

A traditional London pub tiled feature wall, made with ceramic tiled panels, includes artwork based on the route which the first train journeys took from Euston to Birmingham, incorporating imagery from other Wetherspoon pubs located along that route.

There is a small pavement-café-style outside seating area, at the front of the pub, to accommodate two dozen customers.

Sam Pugh said: "The pub is around a minute's walk from Euston station, so is perfectly located for travellers.

"The pub has proven very popular with local residents too."

34–38 Eversholt Street, Euston, London, NW1 1DA



Haven Holidays

THE FIVE STONES

Wetherspoon has opened its first pub at a leisure park.

The Five Stones has opened at Haven Primrose Valley Holiday Park, in Filey, North Yorkshire.

Haven is the first and only UK leisure park operator to enter into a commercial partnership with Wetherspoon.

The pub is managed by Andy Milner.

He said: "We're really excited to have opened the brand-new pub to our owners and holidaymakers."

Wetherspoon's commercial director, Michael Barron, added: "We are delighted to have opened a Wetherspoon pub at Primrose Valley Holiday Park.

"We are confident that owners and holidaymakers will welcome the pub and that it will be a great addition for the park."

The name of the pub has links with several Roman 'finds' unearthed in and around Filey.

In 1924, fragments of Roman pottery were discovered near what is now the main entrance to the park.

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Andy Milner, Wetherspoon's area manager Joe Argyle, Primrose Valley's general manager Elma John and Primrose Valley's head of food & beverage Aigars Lelitis.



Haven, Primrose Valley Holiday Park
Primrose Valley, Filey, North Yorkshire, YO14 9RF



LOO OF THE YEAR JUDGES KEEP PLUGGING OUR TOILETS



The Standing Order (Edinburgh)

Hundreds of Wetherspoon pubs have won acclaim for the quality and standard of their toilets – in the Loo of the Year Awards 2023.

In addition, the company won national awards, with some pubs also winning individual national awards.

The awards are aimed at highlighting and improving standards of away-from-home washrooms across the UK.

Inspectors for Loo of the Year Awards make unannounced visits to thousands of toilets at sites across the UK, in order to judge them.

All of the toilets are graded silver, gold, platinum, platinum plus or diamond, with unacceptable toilets not graded at all.

A diamond rating (the highest-possible rating) is awarded to those venues which offer 'the highest standards of cleaning and the provision of facilities to meet all users' needs'.

The toilets are judged against numerous criteria, including décor and maintenance, cleanliness, accessibility,

hand-washing and -drying equipment and overall management.

Wetherspoon's pubs and hotels received 11 diamond awards, 120 platinum plus awards, 554 platinum awards and 122 gold awards.

The company's operations director, Martin Geoghegan, said: "Staff at our pubs ensure, at all times, that the toilets are in excellent condition – and it is great that this has been recognised by inspectors.

"Offering customers clean and well-maintained toilets is of utmost importance to us."

The Loo of the Year's managing director, Becky Wall, said: "The Loo of the Year's gold grade is our fit-for-purpose benchmark, and it is always encouraging to see how the managers of Wetherspoon present their toilets and receive, seriously, the grades awarded to them.

"This is illustrated by the majority of Wetherspoon's pubs and hotels having received platinum, platinum plus and, some, the top diamond gradings.

"Congratulations."

Once again, Wetherspoon won the overall trophy for corporate provider entries.

It was also named in the 2023 Champions League Standards of Excellence.

This champions' league is for those organisations with eight or more entries, where five or more have been graded as diamond, platinum or platinum plus.

The company also triumphed in the market sector awards, being named as the leading provider of toilets in the 'pubs and wine bars' sector.

Wetherspoon was also named as the best provider of toilets for pubs and hotels in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Rose Salterne (Bideford), The Standing Order (Edinburgh) and Yr Hen Dderwen (Carmarthen) were named as winners in the 'pubs and wine bars' sector.

In the 'hotel' category, The Queen's Head Hotel (Tavistock), Jolly's Hotel (Broughty Ferry) and The George Hotel (Brecon) were named as the best providers of toilets.

In addition, two pubs, The Rawson Spring (Sheffield) and Yr Hen Dderwen (Carmarthen), were awarded in the accessible toilet entries category.



The Rose Salterne (Bideford)



Yr Hen Dderwen (Carmarthen)



Jolly's Hotel (Broughty Ferry)

BBC'S RORY SIGNS HIS BOOK AT PUB BESIDE CHILDHOOD HOME

Pub manager Ryan Way is pictured (right) with former BBC news correspondent Rory Cellan-Jones at The Fox on the Hill (Camberwell).

Ryan, who has since moved to The Watchman (New Malden) explained: "Rory agreed to come to The Fox on the Hill to do a book-signing and chat to local people at the pub.

"His book is about his childhood, growing up in the residential block of flats adjacent to the pub.

"Current residents attended the event, had the chance to meet him and have their books signed.

"It was a lovely event – and we were delighted to host Rory on his book tour."

Rory wrote: "It was a nostalgic trip back to the setting of Ruskin Park House, where I grew up.

"I met some lovely current residents and Ryan, manager of The Fox on the Hill.

"Thanks for the hospitality, Ryan."

Published by September Publishing, *Ruskin Park: Sylvia, Me and the BBC* is a moving memoir in search of the truth behind Rory's isolated childhood and absent father.

It is a compelling account of what Rory uncovered in the papers, letters and diaries, in a file labelled 'For Rory', by his mother, which he found after her passing.

It is a true family detective story and a touching tribute to his parents.



BIG CROWD BARRELS IN TO MEET BREWER ANDY

An estimated 150 people were present during a meet-the-brewer event at The Poste of Stone (Stone).

Ales from Uttoxeter Brewery, based just 17 miles away, were available – and brewer Andy Ockleton was on hand to answer questions about them.

Pale ales Ricky's Ox Dropper and Admiral Gardner, ordinary bitter Final Furlong and Uttoxeter's American IPA all sold well on the night.

The beers are not permanent fixtures at The Poste of Stone, but do feature regularly.

Shift manager Andrew Best, who organised the event, said: "It was a great night – and we are glad that so many people were able to attend."

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Becky Poulter, brewer Andy Ockleton and shift leader Alanah Spilsbury.



YOU SPOON, I SPOON, WE SPOON – PUB CHAIN NOW PART OF THE FABRIC

Wetherspoon's pubs have become part of British culture since first opening 45 years ago - as evidenced by numerous online and TV mentions

Since opening the company's first pub in 1979, over the past 45 years, Wetherspoon's pubs have become very much a part of everyday popular British culture.

The phrase 'going to the pub' or 'nipping to the local' has, for many people, evolved into 'going to Spoons', as an instantly recognisable and familiar term for their favourite local, whatever the actual name of their nearby Wetherspoon pub.

Not only has the company's name, together with its shortened version, found its way into everyday language, but Wetherspoon has become a hot topic in popular culture, particularly through social media, even though the company itself has no social media presence.

Facebook

In 2018, Wetherspoon customer Chris Illman created Facebook group 'Wetherspooons The Game', whose membership has gone from strength to strength, with almost 800,000 subscribers.

The premise of Hampshire-based Chris's game is that you post a picture of your group visiting a Wetherspoon pub, along with details of the pub's name and your table number.

Other members will then buy food/drinks, via the app, which are delivered to your table. The rule is that you pay back the favour in the future.

The game has been reported on in national newspapers, including the Daily Mirror, The Guardian, The Sun, the Daily Star and the Evening Standard, and also has been featured on both This Morning (ITV) and the Jeremy Vine show (BBC Radio 2).

This Morning sent a reporter and film crew to The Central Bar (Shepherd Bush) to feature the game on live television.

● [SpoonsTheGame.co.uk](https://www.spoons.thegame.co.uk)

TV and TikTok

One episode of the BBC's award-winning sitcom *Two Doors Down* included two of the show's characters talking about Wetherspoon.

One mentions that it is 'not her kind of place', to which the other responds with some of the favourable drinks prices, with the former conceding that she 'might pop in and see'!

The clip, posted by the BBC on TikTok and viewed 1.6 million times, had 101,200 likes, 12,600 shares and 580 comments.

The audio from the 'Wetherspoon' clip has since been reused more than 400 times, with numerous Instagram users miming the sketch and clocking up a total of 1.8 million views.

Wetherspoon and its pubs regularly get a mention on various television comedy panel shows and in stand-up comedy routines, in the knowledge that the name is familiar with so many people.



Chris Illman

Fundraising and fun

Chris also uses his Facebook game to support homeless people in various local communities, by visiting a prearranged Wetherspoon pub, encouraging members to buy a particular hot food item – which is then packaged and delivered by local charity volunteers to those in need.

In December 2023, Chris and his members, together with volunteers and the Wetherspoon teams at The Bright Helm (Brighton) and The John Jacques (Portsmouth), collectively bought, prepared and distributed 200 meals (sausages and mash), as well as 150 breakfast wraps and burgers, to the local homeless community.

Meanwhile, a not-so-edible Wetherspoon meal was spotted on display at Leicester Museums & Galleries' 'Open: The People's Exhibition'.

Entitled 'spoons breakfast', the ceramic artwork by Lauren Eling features bacon and egg on a floral plate and a pint of beer.

Whether for fun, familiarity or fundraising, Wetherspoon appears to be the latest buzzword.

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

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

The table¹ below shows the tax generated by the company in its financial years 2014–2023.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMPANY JUDGED TO BE TOP EMPLOYER FOR THE 19TH TIME



Wetherspoon has been recognised by the Top Employers Institute as a Top Employer United Kingdom 2024.

It is the 19th time that Wetherspoon has been certified by the Top Employers Institute – the

independent organisation behind the Top Employers accreditation.

To achieve Top Employer certification, participating organisations are assessed by the Top Employers Institute via a rigorous analysis of their people practices.

The HR Best Practices survey covers six HR domains, comprising 20 topics across the business and employee life cycle, including people strategy, work environment, talent acquisition, learning, well-being and diversity & inclusion.

The information is then validated and audited independently by the Top Employers Institute to ensure the integrity of the processes and data.

Wetherspoon's people director, Tom Ball, said: "We are extremely proud to be considered among the best employers in the United Kingdom, particularly as the recognition comes from an independent organisation which researches numerous companies.

"The company employs 42,000 staff across its pubs in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, as well as at its head office.

"Wetherspoon is committed to offering employees the best opportunities to succeed and grow within the company, including studying for qualifications and apprenticeships.

"This is evident in the number of employees progressing to more senior positions at Wetherspoon."

EDINBURGH

PLAYFAIR AND SQUARE – ALE AWARD IS WELL DESERVED



Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Nikki Irvine, bar associate Shannon Duncan and shift manager Shereen Kirkpatrick

Edinburgh & South-East Scotland Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch named a city-centre Wetherspoon pub among its 2023 annual award-winners.

The Playfair (Edinburgh) was voted 'real ale quality' award-winner for 2023.

Posting about the awards, the CAMRA branch wrote: "This award is based entirely on real-ale quality scores submitted by CAMRA's members since November 2022.

"Congratulations to all of the winners."

The Wetherspoon pub, located in Edinburgh's Omni Centre, an entertainment and dining venue, has been managed by Nikki Irvine since July 2021.

Nikki said: "This is the first time that The Playfair has received an award from our local CAMRA branch members – and we are delighted. We thank them all for their support.

Staff at the pub ensure that the real ales are kept and served in first-class condition, at all times.

The pub serves five real ales at all times, among them being the permanent ales Greene King Abbot Ale (5.0% ABV) and Belhaven 80 Shilling (3.9% ABV), as well as three ever-changing guest ales from local and regional Scottish breweries.

Among the popular Scottish brews are those from Stewart Brewing, Williams Bros Brewing Co, Harviestoun Brewery, Kelburn Brewing Co and Broughton Brewery.

BEST IDEA AS LYMESTONE LANDS AT POSTE OF STONE IN TAP TAKEOVER

A long-standing relationship between The Poste of Stone (Stone) and a local brewery came to fruition with a tap takeover event.

Award-winning Lymestone Brewery is located just half a mile from the pub, with its beers featuring regularly on the bar there.

The tap takeover was staged to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the foundation of Lymestone, owned by head brewer Ian Bradford.

Ian said: "We get on really well with the team at The Poste of Stone, so we were delighted to host the tap takeover."

The event was the idea of shift manager Andy Best.

He said: "We had a good range of Lymestone beers available, as we wanted to celebrate Lymestone's anniversary bash with them."

Lymestone's ales on tap at the event included pale ale Stone Faced, blond beer Ein Stein, golden IPA Foundation Stone, dark beer Stone The Crows and fruit beer Cherry Stone.

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Neil Ridgway, Lymestone owner Ian Bradford and shift manager Andy Best.



BRADFORD CITY FAN NEIL NOTCHES A MIGHTY SCORE

Neil Kitson has visited 778 Wetherspoon pubs – most of them since he retired from a career as a nurse at Bradford Royal Infirmary.

Bradford City supporter Neil started visiting the company's pubs, far and wide, while following his team away.

And it was this experience which deepened his interest in the pubs and his desire to visit even more of them.

He said: "The pubs were always very convenient to get to, served good food and drinks – and I liked the fact that they were welcoming to everyone."

These days, Neil combines his Wetherspoon visits with country walks with fellow ramblers' group members, such as a recent hike along the Cumbrian coast, followed by his customary tuna-filled jacket potato and a coffee at The Henry Bessemer (Workington).

Neil's first Wetherspoon visit was in 1999 to The Sir Norman Rae (Shipley), but he now has several others to go to near his West Yorkshire home.

Since then, he has broadened his scope to include all corners of England, from Kent to Cornwall and from Brighton to Carlisle.

Neil has also visited pubs in Scotland's Dalkeith, Edinburgh and Glasgow and pubs along the south coast of Wales, including one of his favourites of all – The Kings Head (Monmouth).

Neil said: "I like the former theatres, opera houses and churches. I want to visit more of those."



TEWKESBURY

JIMMY'S HARD WORK WINS GOLD FOR GLORIOUS GARDEN



Pub and hotel managers Linda and Stuart Coxshall are pictured with gardener Jimmy Booth (left) proudly showing off their Heart of England in Bloom gold award.

The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury), which the couple have run for almost 16 years, was recognised in the 'hospitality' category of the Britain in Bloom awards 2023.

Linda said: "We have previously won an award in this competition and are, yet again, proud to receive this recognition of the pub, as well as of our gardener Jimmy.

"A local resident, Jimmy has a long connection with The Royal Hop Pole, as he was a customer here 15 years ago as an 18-year-old 'jack the lad'!

"He has worked really hard to make a success of himself, runs his own business with a couple of employees and has a young family of his own.

"Jimmy, who has done so well, through sheer hard work, deserves this recognition – and it certainly adds an extra element to the award for us."

Linda concluded: "Jimmy has done a great job on our extensive gardens, which stretch right down to the River Avon, making regular visits to keep them looking their best."

Jimmy added: "I set up my business four years ago, after some very difficult times, and now it really keeps me fully focused.

"I get a real boost from working and thrive off it.

"Apart from my kids, it is the best thing I have ever done.

"Although I didn't plant the garden at The Royal Hop Pole, I work hard to maintain it, so this award is fantastic recognition and proves that hard work pays off."

Janet Gwinnett, judging The Royal Hop Pole for Heart of England in Bloom 2023, reported: "The entrance to this historic building, an ornate portico dating from 1921, is decorated with very colourful hanging baskets, which not only look impressive in situ, but also add to the appearance of the whole street.

"Either side of the portico, there are planters which add to the welcoming effect at the front door of the hotel.

"The garden is valued by the customers who enjoy the space throughout most of the year.

"The management team works hard to make the most of the garden, which is a real asset to the pub and hotel. Well done."



Shift manager Michelle Hart at The Edwin Waugh (Heywood)

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

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

83 per cent paid to pub staff

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 19 employees who have worked for the company for over 30 years, 603 for over 20 years, 3,727 for over 10 years and 10,848 for over five years.

Since 2006, the company has paid £520 million to its employees in respect of bonuses and free shares.

BONUSES AND SHARES

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

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

In the financial year ended July 2023, bonuses and free shares of £36 million were awarded (see table¹ below), with 88 per cent of employees receiving a bonus and/or shares in that period.

At the current time, 14,448 of our 42,000 employees have been awarded free shares in the company.

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

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

Since the share scheme was introduced, Wetherspoon has awarded 27.5 million shares to employees – approximately 22 per cent of all shares in existence today.

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

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

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

Financial year	Bonuses and free shares	Profit after tax (loss/profit after tax) ²	Bonus etc as % of profit
	£m	£m	
2023	36	28	129
2022	30	-25	-
2021	23	-147	-
2020	33	-39	-
2019	46	80	58
2018	43	84	51
2017	44	77	57
2016	33	57	58
2015	31	57	53
2014	29	59	50
2013	29	65	44
2012	24	57	42
2011	23	52	43
2010	23	51	44
2009	21	45	45
2008	16	36	45
2007	19	47	41
2006	17	40	41
Total	520	625	52.5³

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

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

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

³ Shares and bonus as a percentage of profit excludes 2020, 2021 and 2022.

FORKING OUT? JUST PAYIT™

COMING
SOON

New pay-by-bank-account solution, in use by 24 major banks, removes requirement for customers to provide card or bank details

Wetherspoon has teamed up with Payit™ by NatWest to offer customers a secure, simple and fast way to pay when using the Wetherspoon app to order food and drinks direct to their table.

When using the Wetherspoon app, which can be downloaded from the App Store and Google Play, simply choose your products, select the Payit button – which takes you to your bank account – and pay.

Payit is an award-winning NatWest-owned open-banking payments solution, offering an alternative way to collect and send payments online.

Thanks to its innovative technology, Payit removes any requirement for card or bank details, allowing customers to bypass the need for a debit or credit card.

Payit is a safe and secure service, backed by NatWest, open to all customers, and you don't need to bank with NatWest to use it.

There are 24 banks connected to the service, including the nine largest banks serving the UK and Ireland (AIB Group, Bank of Ireland, Barclays Bank, Danske Bank, HSBC Group, Lloyds Banking Group, Nationwide Building Society, Royal Bank of Scotland and Santander), enabling you to take advantage of the Payit service.

Wetherspoon's senior marketing manager, Rich Cripps said:

"Wetherspoon has always been at the forefront of innovative ideas and services, with the adoption of Payit being no exception.

"We are delighted to partner with Payit – to offer customers new technology payment options at our pubs."

It is **secure** – Payit protects consumers and businesses against fraud by avoiding the need to store and share account details.

It is **simple** – Done in a couple of clicks, Payit transactions can be made without the need to type in card details.

It is **fast** – Funds are transferred almost instantly using Payit.

It is **flexible** – With Payit, customers can choose which bank account to pay from, giving flexibility and control over finances.

How does it work?

Customers can pay, when using the Wetherspoon app, without handing over financial information or creating an account.

Instead, customers can make cardless payments from their selected bank, simply and securely, in a matter of seconds.

Customers don't have to bank with NatWest to use Payit.

A Payit button appears on the payments page, allowing you to select the bank from which you want to pay.

You are then redirected to your bank's mobile or online banking app to complete the payment.

The service uses open-banking technology, allowing you to make an instant, time-saving, hassle-free, secure payment.

Payit is set to be available, via the Wetherspoon app, from spring 2024.

Why not join the fast and growing way to pay?

As well as being a great way to order food and drinks and have them delivered straight to your table, the Wetherspoon app also allows you to:

- search for a pub.
- book a hotel, with guaranteed best rates*.
- save your favourite products for faster ordering.
- find your favourite ale.
- get notifications when ales become available.



THE RAILWAY • RAINHAM

PETE'S PUB PLAN PAYS OFF AS ROSIE TAKES REINS AT RAILWAY



Pub manager Rosie Leibo took over the reins at The Railway (Rainham) at the end of September 2023, stepping up to replace Peter Pethers – her boss of eight years.

Rosie joined the company in 2015 as a floor associate, a month before her 18th birthday, at The Summoner (Sittingbourne), now closed, taken on by pub manager Peter.

He has now moved on to become an area manager with the company, leaving The Railway in familiar and capable hands.

Rosie, who had spent the past year and a half as kitchen manager at the pub, said: "I didn't set out to become a pub manager, yet it was in Pete's plans, and he was always encouraging me with my career.

"I arrived at The Railway with Pete, from The Thomas Waghorn (Chatham), when it first opened in October 2019, and had already progressed to shift manager in three pubs with him.

"In the four years at The Railway, I have obviously got to know the pub really well and, before Pete's departure, had taken on a lot of the role's responsibilities and work."

Rosie added: "I think everyone, including the customers, are happy that I was able to become pub manager, rather than someone unknown coming in."

On Peter's last day, The Railway was presented with a Best Bar None accreditation certificate, highlighting the good practice, security and safety measures already in place – with which Rosie is now continuing.

Speaking about the accreditation, Rosie said: "It was something Pete was keen to achieve, to ensure that the pub stands out from competition, because no other pub in the area has been accredited.

"Our regular customers have asked about the certificate, on display in the pub, and they all think that it's a good thing.

"It also highlights our commitment to the safety and security of our team and customers at the pub."

Peter's new role as Wetherspoon area manager will encompass a completely different area.

However, his management legacy continues to influence things at The Railway.

Pictured (left to right) are area manager Peter Pethers and pub manager Rosie Leibo receiving their Best Bar None accreditation certificate from Kent Police's licensing officer PC Daniel Hunt.



LOCAL PUBS; LOCAL HISTORIES

Cardiff-based historian Dr Nathan Smith says that he and his fellow academics often struggle to get through to a mass audience – but Wetherspoon’s pubs’ truly local stories, told in words, images and objects, cut through in a remarkable way

Dr Nathan Smith, FLS, is a Cardiff-based curator and historian. His history research focuses on amateur science movements and how science works outside of universities and industry, with a particular focus on those who study and describe new fungal species. His recently published research article, ‘History in the pub: The historiography of J D Wetherspoon’, published in the history of science journal *Endeavour*, discusses how J D Wetherspoon uses history in its pubs and what this means for historians.

Where do you get your history from? It’s an important question.

The history we have informs how we see the world around us.

It can shape our politics, the purchases we make and the way we view our lives. It’s also difficult to tell a completely objective history – a fact which has long since been recognised: the phrase ‘history is written by the victors’ is among the most famous witticisms wrongly ascribed to Winston Churchill.

Explicitly, it suggests that ‘might makes right’ and that those in power use history as a way of communicating their politics.

But this isn’t the whole story. History, after all, is written by the historians – whose politics, viewpoints and biases rarely completely align with victorious powers.

This was something which Churchill definitely recognised – one of the quotes known to have come from Churchill is his belief that history would be kind to him because he intended to write it.

But what happens when no one reads histories?

Struggle

This is a question which plagues historians. It’s relatively well known that academic histories struggle to break through to the general public and that large amounts of interesting and exciting work are often read by only a handful of people – a state of affairs not helped by an increasingly formalised and restrictive writing style and the fact that a lot of research is hidden behind paywalls.

In the sector I work in, museums, we are faced with declining attendance numbers and the constant quest to make ourselves relevant, in an attempt to bring people back in.

It’s a Quixotic quest, yet also one with existential ramifications – austerity and substantial local budget cuts have left many museums in vulnerable positions and threatened with closure.

Indeed, many museums across the UK have already permanently shut their doors, with the primary impact felt, as always, by the local communities which they served.

This is all to say that where people get their history from is an important question to me and one which I think about perhaps a little more than I should.

And one time I was thinking about it in a Wetherspoon...

In this particular pub visit, I was drawn to the posters surrounding the walls – posters I had seen and read many times before in previous visits.

Covering biographies of prominent historical individuals, historical events and all manner of things, I was struck by how unusual it was and, perhaps, that Wetherspoon was telling its own distinct version of history.

I even went as far as to imagine it might be functioning as some form of museum itself.

Digging further, it became something bigger.

Unique

While I could find no one talking about the posters, several researchers had highlighted the unique carpets possessed by each pub, the distinct architecture of the buildings and, perhaps most interestingly, the name used by more than one pub: The Moon Under Water (an obscure George Orwell essay on the ideal pub).

The Wetherspoon website even has a pub history section: jdwetherspoon.com/pub-histories

Throughout, a key theme became apparent: a focus on the local. While some connections were stretched (and some even erroneous), as my research deepened, it became apparent that effort had been taken for each pub to showcase the most local histories, often down to the scale of the building itself.

The interplay between this emphasis on the immediate and the political positions adopted by the chain are obvious, but what caught me more was the difference between this historical perspective and the historical perspectives I frequently came across in academic settings.

Cosmopolitan

This is not to tar all historians with the same brush, but many are inherently cosmopolitan creatures.

Job insecurity leads many to travel from city to city and from country to country – and their histories reflect this, with their work often searching for universality or broader themes at the expense of being connected to place.

Even national societies (which have long been a bastion of local research) increasingly have an international focus.

Resultingly, local history is increasingly disconnected from other academic history disciplines – practised by different people, in different places, and told to different audiences.

This is where my research led me. J D Wetherspoon is among the largest pub operators in the UK, possessing over 800 pubs across the UK and Ireland.

Each of these attracts an audience on a Friday and Saturday night which puts most academic conferences to shame.

It is among the popular sources of history in the UK and yet there is little interaction with the chain from historians.

My article sought to highlight this and to encourage engagement with different historical narratives; to ask historians: where do you get your history from? And where does your audience get its?

● **To read George Orwell’s essay and discover how your local Wetherspoon pub compares, follow this link: www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/the-moon-under-water/**

● **To read my research article on Wetherspoon pubs and the histories which they tell, follow this link: tinyurl.com/muf73ze2**

GOOD TIMES ROLL AT THE WATCH MAKER

Fascinating origin story of Prescot pub earns it a berth in online pub histories series



At one time, there was a watch-making workshop at the back of every house in the street, where parts were made or watches assembled.

The Lancashire Watch Company itself closed down in 1911, with the Flat Iron House building later bought by Alfred Huckle, who established the Prescot Clock and Mechanism Co.

Operating

Operating on all three floors of the premises, the company reportedly produced 30,000–40,000 watches during 1911–14.

The watch trade eventually died out, in Prescot, in the 1920s.

A giant pocket watch, commissioned for Wetherspoon as a tribute to the watch-making industry, is displayed in the pub.

Framed photographs around the pub include the Prescot Fire Brigade of 1927, with its new Marris Gwynne motor fire engine, purchased in 1927 for £840 to replace the old steam engine.

Other sepia-tone images show the Prescot miners during the 1926 strike, as well as photos of local businesses, including Thomas Seddon's shop (at 29 St Helens Road), decorated for the 1910 coronation of George V, and James Lucas (in the same year) outside his hardware shop.

Window

Poet Edward Lear, who once lived and worked at nearby Knowsley Hall, is also remembered with a stained-glass window depicting The Owl and the Pussycat, as well as a colour print and the words of his rhyme, written at Knowsley Hall.

One of the more unusual items displayed in the pub (or in any pub, for that matter!), recalling local history, is a replica of a ducking stool.

Squire's Place, which once stood where the present car park is, was the site of the cuckstool pits, where people were punished.

The ducking stool was an implement used in the punishment of those who were considered to be nuisances in the community.

The offender would be tied to the device and ducked in the water, hence the term – ducking stool.

60–62 Eccleston Street, Prescot Merseyside, L34 5QL



Wetherspoon's online pub histories series, since its launch at the end of 2016, continues to prove a hugely popular source of historical information.

Initially showcasing a handful of our pubs in major UK city centres, including Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield, the website history catalogue has now grown to encompass more than 750 Wetherspoon pubs.

Wetherspoon takes immense pride in the restoration and refurbishment of some wonderful and, in several cases, unique buildings, to create our pubs – and our pub histories series has unearthed some interesting discoveries.

The online historical information, detailing the story of the pubs, includes numerous images of the artwork and old photographs on display, as well as photos of the interior, exterior and features of each building.

Spotlight

In this pub histories spotlight, a regular Wetherspoon News feature, we focus on The Watch Maker (Prescot).

First opened as a Wetherspoon pub in December 2011, The Watch Maker is situated near an iconic building known, owing to its unusual shape, as Flat Iron House and built in 1890 by Thomas Dennett.

It was once the Lancashire Watch Company's warehouse – and the pub remembers Prescot's once-famous watch-making past.

In 1795, it was said that 'the town produces the best in the world'.



RAMEN IS COMING IN NEW MENU CHOICES

Japanese-style broth featuring noodles, and oodles more, available soon

Wetherspoon's new-look menu is coming soon – and there will be plenty of new dishes to enjoy at your local pub.

The NEW ramen noodle bowl is among the meals added to the new-look menu and will offer customers another tasty and healthy choice.

This ramen noodle dish combines many fresh and healthy ingredients, including noodles, bean sprouts, shiitake mushrooms, spring onion, carrot, pak choi, bamboo shoots, red onion, sliced chillies and coriander, in a light broth.

Customers can add char-grilled chicken breast and/or a poached egg to the dish (for an extra cost).

The NEW ramen noodle bowl is available as part of Wetherspoon's meal deal, where the meal's price includes a drink* (either soft or alcoholic) from the drinks range, with more than 150 drinks to choose from.

Suitable for vegetarians and vegans, the ramen noodle bowl (without additional toppings) also weighs in at 466 Calories, so joins the menu range of under-500-Calorie dishes, making it a great low-Calorie and low-fat (5% fat or less) option.

Join the ramen revolution and try Spoon's new noodle dish.

Origins of ramen

Although a Japanese tradition, ramen's roots can be traced to China, where the culinary dish was known as 'la-mein', meaning 'pulled noodles'.

This meal, now enjoying worldwide popularity, has various regional and individual varieties, depending on the country where it is being served, in ramen shops and restaurants, and now at Wetherspoon's pubs.

Influential Japanese feudal lord Mito Mitsukuni was the first person to eat ramen, in Japan, as early as 1697.

Inspired by a Chinese noodle dish, ramen's popularity spread in Japan of the early 1900s, when the main ports opened for trading. A Chinatown sprang up in Kobe and Yokohama, where ramen was called chuka-soba (Chinese soba).

The Japanese adapted the more oily Chinese version of the dish to appeal more to the local tastes, where it was a highly popular street food up until the 1950s, before restaurants began to open.

Today, there are around 32,000 ramen restaurants in Japan, as well as ramen museums.



Did you know?

Slurping the noodles, when enjoying ramen in Japan, is considered a sign of appreciation for the chef.

Japanese astronaut Soichi Noguchi took specially designed instant 'space ramen' with him on his 2005 space mission to the International Space Station.

In Japan, there are hot spring spas offering ramen baths containing actual ramen broth, soy sauce and synthetic noodles, believed to be good for the skin.

SPLASH OUT ON RAFT OF CRAFT BEER IN ANY OF 12 REGIONS

Popular craft beer initiative expanded again, with new brews for the West Midlands, Scotland and Yorkshire

Wetherspoon's regional craft beer initiative continues to go from strength to strength and, as a result, has been expanded yet again.

Through popular demand, the range of bottled and canned craft beers has been added to, with new brews for the West Midlands and Scotland. Yorkshire has joined London with a choice of five fantastic brews (previously three), with the other regions' pubs offering a trio of tempting beers to choose from.

Wetherspoon has been supporting and championing breweries and microbreweries throughout the UK for more than 40 years, with a commitment to serving the best range of beers available.

The regional craft initiative, launched in autumn 2022, offers specific locally sourced craft beers served at Wetherspoon's pubs, based on 12 geographical regions across England, Scotland and Wales.

Wetherspoon's marketing executive, Jess Schofield, responsible for the regional craft project, said: "Our regional craft selection continues to prove popular, giving customers the opportunity to try something new, whether that be a new style, a new brewery or a new flavour.

"We have made a change to the range to ensure that we are always offering something new and exciting. If there is a beer from another region you'd like to see in your local, please let the pub team know."

Yorkshire



Kirkstall Judicious Juicy pale
4.8% ABV
440ml can

Juicy pale ale packed full of pink grapefruit, mango, pineapple, lychee, passion fruit and peach.



Brew York Lupu Lion American pale ale
5.0% ABV
440ml can

A juicy golden pale ale, with citrus notes and a resinous pine finish.

NEW



Wilde Child Brownie Hunter Stout
4.9% ABV
440ml can

This classic stout's addition of chocolate fudge brownie flavouring and lactose results in a rich, super-smooth dessert in a glass.

SIBA Brewery business of the year 2021

World Beer Awards 2023 winner "England's Best" in the stout and porter category



NEW

Northern Monk Faith IPA
5.0% ABV
440ml can

This pale ale is hazy deep yellow in colour, with light citrus and stone fruit notes, leading to a hoppy, refreshing finish.

SIBA Two-star 'great taste' award-winner 2021



NEW

Rooster's Tropical Assassin IPA
6.1% ABV
440ml can

Packed full of mandarin orange and mango flavours from Citra hops, this is further enhanced by the addition of tropical fruit juices.

Scotland



Fierce Fierce IPA
5.0% ABV*
440ml can

A crisp and refreshing IPA, packed full of citrus hop flavours.

Scottish brewery of the year 2021

*ABV may vary 5.0-5.2%, depending on available stock.



NEW

Loch Lomond Zoom Time IPA
4.5% ABV
440ml can

This is hazy, light and refreshing, with aromas of stone fruit and pineapple, leading to a citrus fruit explosion and a juicy, sweet finish.



NEW

Stewart New Relic IPA
5.6% ABV
440ml can

This pale-golden beer is a full-flavoured IPA, beautifully showcasing the stone fruit characteristics of the Mosaic hops.

West Midlands

NEW



Indian Juicy Mango IPA
5.5% ABV
440ml can
This is hazy-golden in colour, with a powerful fruity aroma and a full-bodied, refreshing fruity character throughout.



Byatt's HopLab Pale ale
4.4% ABV
440ml can
Packed with Centennial, Jester and Mosaic hops.



Oakham Citra T90 Unfiltered session IPA
4.6% ABV
440ml can
Brewed with powerful hop pellets. Left unfiltered and naturally cloudy for maximum flavour.

East Midlands



Blue Monkey Californian IPA West coast IPA
5.5% ABV
440ml can
Grapefruit, pine and resin notes, balanced by a gentle maltiness.



Oakham Citra T90 Unfiltered session IPA
4.6% ABV
440ml can
Brewed with powerful hop pellets. Left unfiltered and naturally cloudy for maximum flavour.



Brewster's IPA West coast IPA
6.0% ABV
440ml can
West coast IPA with a full hoppy flavour of citrus and pine notes.

Northeast



Great North Eastern Dunston Rocket DDH IPA
6.0% ABV
440ml can
A bright golden double-dry-hopped IPA.



Allendale Anvil IPA
5.5% ABV
440ml can
A pale beer with tropical grapefruit and mango flavours.



Kirkstall Judicious Juicy pale
4.8% ABV
440ml can
Juicy pale ale packed full of tropical grapefruit, mango, pineapple, lychee, passion fruit and peach.

Northwest



Weetwood Jester IPA Unfiltered
4.8% ABV
440ml can
Vibrant tropical fruit aromas and a refreshing citrus finish.



Seven Brothers Throw Away IPA
5.0% ABV
440ml can
Kellogg's cereal which didn't make the box – now in a can as a hoppy IPA.



Kirkby Lonsdale Devil's Bridge IPA
5.2% ABV
440ml can
IPA brewed with new-world hops, giving a citrus hit and a bitter end.

Wales



Tenby Son of a Beach Tropical pale
4.2% ABV
440ml can
A tropical APA, dry-hopped with Ekuano, Mosaic and Simcoe hops.



Glamorgan Dead Canary West coast IPA
5.0% ABV
440ml can
West coast IPA with a refreshing bitter finish.



Purple Moose High Hops Tropical IPA
5.4% ABV
440ml can
Full-bodied, refreshing, tropical IPA, with flavours of mango, grapefruit and lime.

Home Counties



Mad Squirrel Big Sea West coast IPA
5.5% ABV
440ml can
West coast IPA with citrus, big pine and big bitterness.



Windsor & Eton Caught by the Fuzz Peachy pale ale
5.0% ABV
440ml can
Sweet, soft and sharp pale ale, with peach undertones.



Siren Flex California pale ale
5.3% ABV
440ml can
California pale ale with tropical and piney notes.

REGIONAL CRAFT

London



**East London
Hopside Down
New Zealand pale**

5.0% ABV
440ml can
New Zealand pale ale with grapefruit, passion fruit, peach and pine notes.



**Wild Card
NEIPA
New England IPA**

5.4% ABV
440ml can
A traditional New England hazy ale, with flavours of grapefruit, pineapple and mango.



**By The Horns
Skydust
Hazy IPA**

5.5% ABV
440ml can
A hazy IPA with a balanced fruity blend of light tropical and citrus notes.



**Anspach & Hobday
The IPA
IPA**

6.0% ABV
440ml can
A resinous and fruit-forward IPA with British malt and American hops.



**Signature
Backstage IPA
IPA**

5.6% ABV
440ml can
IPA with tropical flavours of passion fruit, tangerine and berries.

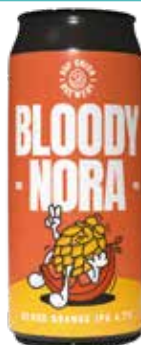
SIBA Southeast gold award-winner. Best canned IPA 2021

Southwest



**Powderkeg
Chequered Past
IPA**

4.7% ABV
440ml can
Brewed using a well-balanced blend of British hop varieties, this is a true British IPA.



**Hop Union
Bloody Nora
Hazy blood orange IPA**

4.7% ABV
440ml can
A, fruity, hazy, blood orange IPA, with tropical, stone fruit and citrus notes, and a touch of bitterness.



**Exmoor
Urban Fox
American red IPA**

6.2% ABV
440ml can
Robust American red IPA.

Southeast



**Cellar Head
Wonderland
New England IPA**

5.8% ABV
440ml can
Fruity New England IPA, heavily dry-hopped with Amarillo, Citra and Mosaic.

SIBA Two-star 'great taste' award-winner 2022



**Burning Sky
Arise
Pale ale**

4.4% ABV
440ml can
A sessionable pale ale, with peach, pine and resinous aromas.



**Siren
Flex
California pale ale**

5.3% ABV
440ml can
California pale ale with tropical and piney notes.

Anglia



**Nethergate Brewery
Growling Dog
Tropical IPA**

7.5% ABV
440ml can
Tropical IPA with mango, pineapple and papaya.



**Oakham
Citra T90
Unfiltered session IPA**

4.6% ABV
440ml can
Brewed with powerful hop pellets. Left unfiltered and naturally cloudy for maximum flavour.



**Bishop Nick
Cruz'd
West coast IPA**

6.2% ABV
440ml can
West coast IPA with notes of melon and pineapple, plus a citrus hit.

AGE NO BARRIER TO A BERTH IN A PUB TEAM

Wetherspoon has a proven track record for actively promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, throughout the company, with a workforce which truly reflects the pubs' customers.

The company has also been recognised, for 19 consecutive years (applications were paused in 2021 and 2022), by the Top Employers Institute as a 'Top Employer United Kingdom'.

Wetherspoon is committed to providing all of its employees with a safe, friendly and supportive workplace and to being a good company to work for.

Wetherspoon is an age-positive employer, with training and career development opportunities offered to all of those meeting the selection criteria, whether young or older – and everything in between.

Advocate

At the age of 68, founder and chairman Tim Martin has no plans to retire soon and is a great advocate of supporting people to continue working past the 'official' retirement age, if they choose to do so.

Tim said: "Many of our older employees, a huge asset to the company, work in a part-time role. It is up to businesses to make work attractive to those looking to retire."

Wetherspoon's recruitment and qualifications manager, Michelle Crooke, said: "We're proud of our hugely diverse work force, which includes offering employment opportunities to people of all ages.

"We know that it's been a difficult few years and that life has changed substantially for so many of us – we're able to offer secure employment and a warm welcome to all.

Experience

"Whether you have several years' hospitality experience or have never before pulled a pint or made a pizza, we offer everything from one short shift a week to a full-time career."

Wetherspoon's people director, Tom Ball, said: "We are committed to fostering an inclusive workplace environment and welcome and support employees of all ages.

"We recognise the contribution which each individual brings to the collective success of our pub teams – and every team member is afforded equal opportunities for professional growth and success."

● jdwwetherspooncareers.com

Shona Mooney

**Kitchen team leader
The Winter Seam (Castleford)**



Shona said: "I have worked for Wetherspoon for 14 years.

"I am 53 years of age and find that this job is great for job security, pay and the share scheme.

"The managers are really friendly and approachable.

"Chris Ashworth, the pub manager, is very supportive – and I love working for him.

"I think this is my favourite job I've ever had, and I don't plan on leaving any time soon."

Cathy Whelan

**Cleaner
The Moon and Sixpence (Hatch End)**



Cathy said: "I was recommended to the company by a friend, five years ago.

"I am 59 years old, live next door to the pub, so have no travelling, and my attendance record and timekeeping are good.

"I like that Wetherspoon offers good prices on food and drinks and welcomes families into its pubs.

"I also like that there are lots of opportunities for staff to progress, as well as great benefits.

"Thank you to Wetherspoon for having me.

"I hope to be here for many more years."

Bev Hurdley

**Cleaner
The Winter Seam (Castleford)**



Bev said: "I have worked for the company for 15 years and am coming up to 70 years of age.

"I started working in the kitchen, full time for seven years, and then suffered a stroke. Since then, I have been front of house.

"I am grateful to Wetherspoon for allowing me to carry on working and adapting to my needs.

"I love the friendliness of the managers and staff.

"I would recommend Wetherspoon to anyone, as it offers many opportunities to progress within the company.

"It also offers a share scheme, monthly bonuses and pay above the minimum wage."

**AUTUMN
BEER
FESTIVAL**

WED 9 – SUN 20 OCT



SILVER PENNY ALE TEAM PROVES TO BE REAL DEAL

Glass brimmeth over at Dublin hostelry which sold more pints than any other Wetherspoon pub during beer festival - despite real ale's underdog status in Ireland

Wetherspoon is proud of the quality of the real ales served in its pubs.

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

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

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

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

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

Listed

The Silver Penny (Dublin), which opened as a Wetherspoon pub in June 2019, is not listed in the guide, as CAMRA operates in the UK and Northern Ireland only.

However, during a recent Wetherspoon real-ale festival, a quite remarkable achievement has put the Dublin city-centre pub in the company spotlight.

Pub manager Steph Gorlach and her team at The Silver Penny finished top of the Wetherspoon league for the number of pints sold during the autumn real-ale festival 2023.

Company wide, more than 1.3 million pints were sold during the 12-day real-ale event, with The Silver Penny serving 6,130 pints of the various 25 festival ales.

This remarkable achievement in itself, for Steph and the team, is made even more exceptional by the fact that, traditionally, real ale in the Republic of Ireland isn't the usual drink of choice.

On the last Saturday of the festival, The Silver Penny, trailing behind reigning festival pub champion The Standing Order (Derby) by around 200 pints going into the weekend, sold the most pints of any Wetherspoon pub.

Top

Steph and her team served 708 pints of festival ale in one day – to finish top of the league and continue to top the company's weekly charts.

Steph (pictured) said: "In the run-up to the festival, we were drawing customers' attention to the real ales on offer and encouraging people to try them.

"We noticed which ales were selling quickest and which ones the regulars preferred. These include Abbot Ale, Jaipur, Dungarvan Copper Coast and Brehon Apollo IPA, to name just a few.

"We increased the weekly orders – and, it seemed, the more we had, the more we sold.

"We are now ordering around 10–12 casks of Abbot Ale and Jaipur every week, along with 20–25 guest ale barrels."

The range on offer in Ireland isn't as extensive as the guest ale list at UK pubs, since, historically, real ale isn't Ireland's go-to drink.

However, Steph, along with deputy manager and real-ale champion Andy Hayes, order their beers from East West Ales, as well as receiving direct deliveries from Dungarvan Brewing Company and Brehon Brewhouse.

Huge

Steph revealed: "The festival was such a huge hit because it offered so many new ales for customers to choose from.

"Last year, we also added to our stillage capacity, with eight serving solely Abbot Ale and Jaipur, leaving 16 for guest ales."

Steph continued: "Having a fully trained management team ensures that we have knowledgeable and capable staff on hand, at all times, which has been critical to our success.

"Team leaders and other staff members are required to inform us when an ale finishes, so that we can get a fresh one on tap, as soon as possible, to fulfil demand.

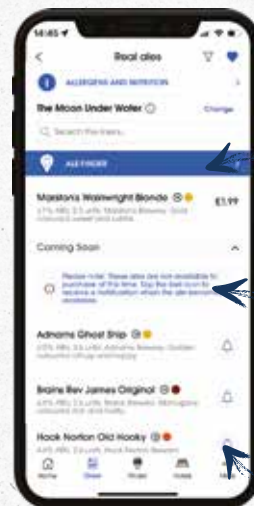
"Changing the ales as quickly as possible also really helps, as well as having the ales listed and regularly updated on the customer ordering app.

"We have two bars, but only four ale hand-pumps in the upstairs bar (12 downstairs).

"The app ensures that customers seated upstairs don't have to go to the downstairs bar for their favourite ale – we bring it to them."

Steph concluded: "We don't have a CAMRA branch here, or anything similar, although we do have Cask Marque, which we have passed on every visit."

Making the most of real ale on the app



Ales to the table?

Use the Wetherspoon app to order any available ale from your table. Download the Wetherspoon app or scan the QR code on your menu.



Ale-finder

Use the app's ale-finder function to check ales' availability across all Wetherspoon pubs. Ale-finder can be accessed through the home page and the real-ale menu.



Coming soon

Using the app, see which ales are due on next and set an alert to notify you when they are ready.

THE BROCKET ARMS • WIGAN

CHAMPION ROB KNOWS WHATSUP IN WIGAN



Wetherspoon employee Rob Hamlett has been selected to be a community champion for his local area.

Rob, who works as a part-time kitchen associate at The Brocket Arms (Wigan), was named in the role following the launch of Wigan Council's new WhatsUp Champion Project 2023.

WhatsUp champions are individuals based in a care setting who serve as advocates, are the voice for others and look out for their fellow residents.

The pilot project has been set up in partnership between Wigan Council and Thrive CIC, working with other groups, services and individuals across the borough, aiming to 'guard people to be safe'.

Thrive CIC is a disability service, supporting adults with learning difficulties in the community.

Rob, who has Down's syndrome, was initially helped to gain work at The Brocket Arms by Wigan Council Supported Employment Service, supporting people with a disability or long-term health condition to gain and sustain paid employment.

Rob has since been an independent employee for much of his 16 years' service at the pub and hotel.

Hotel manager Laura Quinn said: "When Rob is not at work (helping out in the hotel, as well as working in the pub's kitchen), he takes part in a council-run group where they sing, dance and perform.

"Rob was part of a performance showcasing this new project to local services, and we are all so proud that he has been picked as a champion for our area for the new WhatsUp Champion Project scheme."

Laura continued: "The initiative is aimed at all people, like Rob, who use the service – and the champions are chosen to support other individuals.

"In his role as champion, he is also there to help other service users to gain confidence in talking about any worries which they have, yet are not confident enough to talk to other people.

"Rob is there to help those people, who need it, to have a voice."

SPOON SUPERFANS ELAINE AND ADE SUPERSIZE TOTAL WITH QUICKFIRE 100



Two seasoned Wetherspoon superfans have added another 100 pubs to the total they have visited, inspired by their appearance in Wetherspoon News.

When we published their story in the summer/autumn 2023 edition, Elaine and Ade Hubszer had already been to 400 of the company's pubs.

Elaine said: "When we saw the article, we decided to do another 100, taking the total number of Wetherspoon pubs visited to 500."

To celebrate the achievement, the pair had T-shirts printed featuring the number 500 and their favourite ale – Phoenix Wobly Bob.

Elaine added: "I contacted Phoenix Brewery, which was delighted to help and also designed the T-shirt for us."

The latest 100-pub tour included pubs as far north as The Rohan Kanhai (Ashington, Northumberland) and as far south as The Man in Moon (Newport, Isle of Wight).

They are pictured with bar associate Saen Kazak at Hamilton Hall (Liverpool Street station, London).

BANNER PROCLAIMS PAIR'S 400-PUB ACHIEVEMENT



A couple having visited 400 Wetherspoon pubs over four years, Elaine and Ade Hubszer took their banner to their 400th pub, The Fox Duke (Millington), where they were welcomed by club leader Alan Taylor and barman Saen Kazak. The couple began their marathon tour in the English & Anchor (Chichester), where they were "sponsored" by the value-for-money offers Elaine said. "We have also seen The Milseds and Don Giovanni at Claver House (Loughborough). Elaine and Ade, who work in the health sector, are planning more visits. Elaine added: "We have only 100 more to go to visit Britain," the achievement and pose for photos with them." Elaine and Ade are the pair of Wobly Bob in their local, The George Inn (Sandwich), but try other local ales whenever they do.

ANDREA HOSTS BAKE SALE TO THANK MACMILLAN NURSES

Shift manager Andrea Brown staged a bake sale at The Admiral of the Humber (Hull) to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Staff made a variety of cakes, brownies and sweet slices for sale to customers – and a hamper of goodies was also raffled.

The event raised £170.

Andrea (pictured) said: "The customers really enjoyed it. "Macmillan's nurses do a wonderful job, and I can testify to that because they helped my dad."



COMMON SENSE FROM THE SUNDAY TIMES

Tim says: “My article on page four suggests that The Sunday Times and London Business School, in a series of 1970s newspaper articles, successfully identified the UK’s then economic ailments and proposed solutions, which were adopted, consciously or not, for the following 40 or so years by governments of all political persuasions.

The Sunday Times editorial of 3 March 2024, below, around 50 years later, correctly identifies key problems facing the economy today and proposes sensible policies. Bravo for the last sentence in the editorial: ‘For far too long, politicians of all stripes have taken the wealth-creating private sector for granted.’”

A BUDGET FOR BUSINESS IS HOW TO ESCAPE THE SPENDING TRAP

...Consider what it is to be the owner of a small or medium-sized business. Entrepreneurs have had to deal with the regulatory and political challenges of Brexit, the disruption of Covid lockdowns and a work from home culture that has devastated many town centres, the squeeze of inflation and now an economy that is in technical recession.

They have also had to face numerous poorly thought through government policies – for example, the introduction of an apprenticeship levy that is really just another payroll tax, the jettisoning of tax-free shopping for tourists from outside the EU, and windfall taxes on industries the UK supposedly wants to attract, such as renewable electricity generation. Whitehall constantly seems to come up with new rules, such as a proposed ban on charging for recycling, which would have the effect of making operators such as the electricals chain Currys stop offering the service. These newer frustrations are layered on top of older ones – a Tudor-era business rates system that is no longer fit for purpose and a planning system that has grown more dysfunctional as local authorities have experienced greater funding problems.

Then there is next month’s leap in the national living wage. The headline rate will go up by almost 10 per cent to £11.44 an hour from April 1. It is obviously a social good to give those on the lowest rung of the working ladder a generous push up after a period of prolonged pressure in the cost of living. But employers will have to grapple with a workforce phenomenon dubbed “compression”, where pay rises more quickly for junior staff than for their more senior colleagues, causing resentment among the latter. Inevitably, after the trials and tribulations of the past few years, bigger companies will be able to absorb these impacts more easily than smaller ones.

Our consumer affairs editor Louise Eccles has paid a visit to the 166-year-old brewer Timothy Taylor’s, whose chief executive, Tim Dewey, makes this point well. Timothy Taylor’s operates 19 pubs; its tap room and kitchen, Taylor’s on the Green in Keighley, West Yorkshire, will lose more than £100,000 this year, an extraordinary amount for a small firm to absorb. “It has the whole brewery behind it, but if that was being run by a husband and wife, they would be losing their living and closing it,” Dewey told us. “I sometime feel we’re successful despite the government, and certainly not with its assistance.”

Jeremy Hunt is thoughtful about how to help business, despite the straitened state of the public finances he inherited in October 2022. His £20 billion of tax cuts in November’s autumn statement included taking two percentage points off national insurance, and making permanent “full expensing”, which allows companies to deduct spending on IT equipment, plant or machinery from taxable profits. His opposite

number, Rachel Reeves, has said the right things about not raising headline rates of taxation.

But business is still only beginning to digest the potential implications of Labour’s promise to level up workers’ rights “in way that has not been attempted for decades”, including by banning zero-hour contracts and giving staff protection against unfair dismissal from day one.

The winner of the coming election will have very little money to play with – and in fact will have to either find new ways of raising revenues or cut public spending. The government’s present plans foresee spending increasing by 1 per cent a year overall from 2025, which would mean austerity-style straitjackets for “unprotected” departments such as the Home Office, justice and transport. The need to spend more on defence after Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine has not yet even been factored in.

Easing planning and getting more homes built is one way to stimulate growth. Pursuing regulatory harmony with the EU on financial services is another. At a time of financial strain, Britain must adopt a pro-business mindset to attract investment and realise that we cannot afford to put endless obstacles in entrepreneurs’ way. For far too long, politicians of all stripes have taken the wealth-creating private sector for granted.

The Sunday Times / 3 March 2024

Print credit: The Sunday Times / News Licensing

COMPANY ISSUES DOGGED DEFENCE OF NO-CANINE POLICY

Britain has a long-held and justifiable reputation as an animal-loving nation – and we appreciate that many of our customers are responsible pet owners.

However, Wetherspoon does not permit dogs or other animals in our pubs, hotels or in external areas which belong to, or are managed by, us.

This includes our beer gardens, car parks and outside pavement areas.

We understand that this exclusion is a difficult and sensitive issue for many customers, particularly dog owners wanting to enjoy a visit to the pub along with their furry four-legged family members.

We realise that this Wetherspoon policy may seem quite strict, yet our pubs are busy, often with families and children present – and we serve a lot of food.

Not everyone likes dogs present in dining areas and, with the best will in the world, even well-trained dogs can sometimes behave unpredictably... and accidents can and do happen.

We do, however, welcome assistance dogs.

Since it would be helpful for staff, we do suggest that any assistance dogs, if possible, should wear a recognisable leash/collar or harness and that their owners bring along suitable documentation (although not mandatory requirements).

Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, said: "Over the years, we have had numerous letters and e-mails asking us to change our no-dog policy.

"Of course, we understand and sympathise with dog owners, yet remain resolute on this highly emotive issue."

The Wetherspoon News 'Your Say' page has published several letters, in recent years, regarding our no-dog policy.

Here, with Tim's replies, are examples from 2014, 2018 and 2022.

2022

PAW TREATMENT FOR DOGGED CUSTOMERS?

Dear editor

Having recently retired from work, I became the proud 'parent' of a puppy dog.

She soon became an important part of my life and routine.

As a regular diner at Wetherspoon's pubs, I took puppy along with us, when my wife and I went to our local in Newcastle-under-Lyme, where we sat outside and ordered breakfast.

Imagine my surprise when the manager had to tell us that dogs are not allowed – inside or outside.

It's the first time in my life that I have been kicked out of a pub... and a Wetherspoon at that! LOL

So, this e-mail is not in anger... rules are rules... but I would like to remind Tim et al that the current trend in pubs, restaurants and shops is to go 'dog friendly'.

These venues have seen the growing attraction of such places and the profitability of dog access.

Therefore, I ask please to consider looking at your rule on allowing dogs.

I suggest that outside, at least, is a step forward which would be greatly appreciated by many of your customers. You could even be radical and offer pet membership – a small fee giving the pet access permission.

Having visited quite a few pet-friendly places, I have been assured that dogs messing the floor is not happening.

I hope that my thoughts above strike a chord with you, and I am certain that they will with many others, should a poll be taken.

Yours

Paul Lythgoe (via e-mail)

Tim replies: A tricky area, indeed – and a very emotive one. In our busy pubs, with high food sales, not everyone likes dogs present – and accidents can happen.

This is an area in which, to paraphrase the poet John Lydgate, later made more famous still by Abraham Lincoln: "You can't please all the people all the time."

WETHERSPOON > SPRING 2022

2014

JUSTICE FOR DOGS – THAT'S ALL I WANT

Dear Tim

As a family which always chooses Wetherspoon pubs first and fell walkers, we were delighted to learn about the opening of The Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, in Keswick. (editor's note: the pub opened on 30 September).

Our only concern was that it was not 'open for dogs'. We are now proud owners of Florrie (pictured), a 14-month-old collie, rescued from Ireland and we would like to take her in with us.

You may know that Keswick has been voted the most dog-friendly town in England (Kennel Club).

If you were to take a walk down its main street, you will see that most pubs and hotels encourage well-behaved dogs and their owners.

While I fully understand your general policy about allowing entry to registered assistance dogs only, would you consider having an area in the pub, where Florrie is allowed?

Yours, Jim Murray, Tyne & Wear

Tim replies: Another vexed issue. At my first pub in north London, I was persuaded to buy a Doberman, for security reasons. Before the poor dog died, I had walked the equivalent of from here to Australia, I calculated. He was useless as a guard dog, and I wanted my money back. He used to bark loudly, in panic, if another dog entered the premises – and pandemonium would often ensue. Whereas almost all dogs are well behaved, in reality, in busy pubs like ours, it's very difficult to prevent flare-ups of the nature I describe, which can be upsetting for some customers. In the end, we decided to go for 'guide dogs only'. I'm the first to admit that this policy is unfair, as far as Florrie is concerned.

WETHERSPOON > AUTUMN 2014



2018

WELL, I'LL BE DOG-GONE

Dear Tim

I've been a customer of Wetherspoon for many years. I recently visited your pub in Mold, Flintshire. We sat down to have a meal at lunch time, only to be informed by a staff member that no dogs are allowed in the outside seating area.

On this occasion, Wetherspoon lost three customers – and I'm sure that there will be many more in future. You have lost me for good, with this policy.

I spoke to the manager who informed me that it was Wetherspoon's policy. My reply was: "What 'idiot' made this policy; in this day and age, how can anyone in business turn business away?"

By the way, there was a pub just up the road which allowed dogs on the premises.

Regards

Mr B, North Wales (via e-mail)

Tim replies: Thank you for your letter.

The idiot you refer to was, indeed, my good self. This is an emotional area, but, since our first pub, it has been our policy not to allow dogs, except guide dogs. Whereas most dog owners can control their well-trained dogs, this is not invariably the case.

The original rule, unfair on some dogs, I admit, is even more sensible today, since our pubs sell large amounts of food and admit children.

Also, in my experience, guide dog owners aren't keen on other dogs being admitted.

Most big food retailers and restaurant companies allow only guide dogs.

In this area, you can't please all of the people all of the time.

WETHERSPOON > AUTUMN 2018

Tim says: "In Wetherspoon's experience, once something is published widely in the press and on social media, even if it's false, it is very difficult to correct – as the song says: 'The lie becomes the truth.'

Even so, the Independent newspaper breaks all records in publishing a correction, below, on the same issue for the FIFTH time..."

THE DAILY MIRROR, DAILY RECORD AND INDEPENDENT CORRECT FALSE CLAIMS ABOUT WETHERSPOON



INDEPENDENT

In articles dated 29 December and 30 December 2023, the Daily Mirror and Daily Record made inaccurate statements concerning Wetherspoon. Wetherspoon wrote to Reach plc, the publisher of both newspapers, which published a correction (please see 1 below).

Incorrect statements also appeared in the Independent on 28 December 2023, which has published a correction too (please see 2 below). This is the FIFTH correction published on this issue by the Independent since 2020.



1) Correction from the Daily Mirror and Daily Record (5 January 2024):

"A previous version of this (Daily Mirror) article reported that during the pandemic, (Wetherspoon chairman) Tim Martin 'suggested his 40,000 staff should go get jobs in supermarkets amid uncertainty, and said he wouldn't pay staff that weren't working during the lockdown'. This is incorrect. In fact, Mr Martin had said that if staff were offered a job in a supermarket, he would understand if they wanted to take it. We have also been asked to clarify that Mr Martin did not tell staff they would not be paid, and that all Wetherspoon staff were paid during the lockdown. We are happy to clarify this and apologise for the error."



2) Correction from the Independent (10 January 2024):

"This article was amended on 10 January 2024. It previously said that Mr Martin had suggested his 40,000 staff should go to work at Tesco amid pandemic uncertainty, but this was inaccurate. In fact, Mr Martin had said that if staff were offered a job in a supermarket, he would understand if they wanted to take it."

"Wetherspoon has also asked that we clarify that all its staff were paid by Wetherspoon up until the point of pub closures, after which staff received furlough pay on an uninterrupted basis, without any delay to payment. We are happy to do so."

J D Wetherspoon plc

wetherspoon

THE FRIAR PENKETH • WARRINGTON

BID TO GET ON BID BOARD BRINGS SUCCESS FOR JESS



Pub manager Jess Bowman has run The Friar Penketh (Warrington) since July 2022, her first pub as pub manager.

Although a town-centre pub, The Friar Penketh is a true community pub, where Jess actively encourages local charity fundraising to help out wherever possible, as well as community-led events for regular customers.

Alongside her Wetherspoon pub-manager responsibilities, Jess has also successfully applied to become a board member of the Warrington business improvement district (BID).

Jess, 25, said: "Already a BID member, the pub received an e-mail looking for people who would be interested in applying for the board."

"I have never before worked in a pub which was involved in BID, so thought that it was a great opportunity to be part of the town and help to make a difference."

"The general perception of a big chain like Wetherspoon is that we wouldn't want to get involved locally – that couldn't be further from the truth."

Warrington BID is a defined geographical area in Warrington's town centre.

In this area, businesses collectively invest in, and enhance, Warrington as a welcoming place to work, shop, study, live and spend leisure time.

Recently voted in for a second five-year term, Warrington BID funds and delivers added-value projects and services in the town centre, excluding services which the council or other public bodies have a statutory duty to provide.

These projects, managed and guided by the BID manager, the BID executive board and importantly the town-centre business community, include training and events.

Jess concluded: "Although early days for me, at the moment, it will be great to get involved in the town's decision-making, together with having a say in where BID money is spent and how we can make Warrington an even better place."

CAPTAIN FLINDERS MADE SHIPSHAPE WITH HELP FROM AUTHOR RUTH



Retired GP and author Ruth Taylor was on hand to assist Wetherspoon's architects with information about Captain Flinders – for the opening of the pub of the same name, near Euston (London) train station.

Ruth had researched the story of Captain Flinders extensively for her book – *The Cat and the Captain*. She is pictured at the official opening of the pub, with her book and a life-size replica of Trim, Flinders' ship's cat, where a sign-written quote from her book is included in the pub's interior design.

Ruth's book, published in 2020, retells the tale of Matthew Flinders and his loyal feline friend, Trim, bringing back to life the more-than-200-year-old story of the famous navigator and his cat – for a younger audience.

Ruth explained: "My day job was as a GP, while my holiday job was as a ship's doctor. While writing a memoir of my experiences on board ship, I was in Greenwich's National Maritime Museum's archive library, researching the history of quarantine – there wasn't anything.

"I deduced that the original job of sanitising ships must have fallen to cats, who, from time immemorial, were taken on board to kill mice and rats which had inevitably found their way into sacks of food.

"I asked the archivist for information. Flinders' original tribute piece 'A Biographical Tribute to the Memory of Trim' – an elegy to his beloved cat, was placed in my ungloved hands. My heart missed a beat.

"Surely, this wasn't the very Matthew Flinders who circumnavigated Australia and gave it its name; the man who inspired the massive Flinders Street railway station, in Melbourne, where I grew up."

Ruth, who was born in Bournemouth before emigrating with her family to Australia at the age of two, added: "Flinders' hand-written account of his pet cat, dated 1806, determined its own destiny.

"As a cat lover, the story miaowed at me to reveal itself to a new generation."

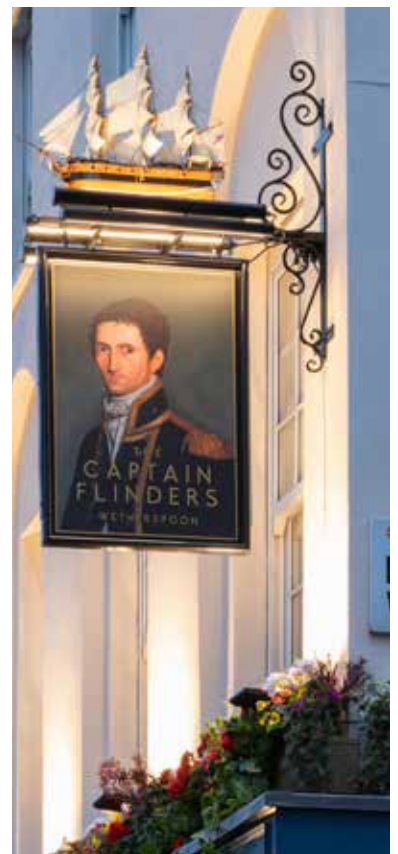
Ruth said: "I was a little surprised, but delighted, to hear from friends about the proposed pub name, as Matthew Flinders is not as well known in the UK as he is in Australia.

"The pub is located in a very fine 19th-century terrace, and I love the signage outside, showing Flinders' famous (and only) portrait. More lovely is the representation of his ship, HMS Investigator, on top of the sign, looking like it is moored there."

Ruth concluded: "I was thrilled to see the quote from my book on the wall inside the pub and fascinated to see copies displayed of the original drawings of the ship's deck plan and profile, which I had never seen before."

During Euston station's redevelopment as the London HS2 terminus, archaeologists in Saint James' Gardens uncovered Captain Matthew Flinders' remains. They were able to identify him by the lead breastplate on top of the coffin.

Captain Flinders' final resting place will be at the Church of St Mary and the Holy Rood, in Donington, near Spalding, in Lincolnshire. He will be reinterred on 13 July 2024, with full Royal Navy honours, at the church where he was baptised and where many of his family members are also buried.



● **The Cat and the Captain, by Ruth Taylor, published by Little Steps Publishing (August 2020), is available from bookshops and from the publisher, priced at £8.99: <https://tinyurl.com/4m2yvyk9>**

MIA LAUNCHES MOON MISSION

Eight-year-old Mia Boyce led the way as staff at The Moon & Stars (Penge) kickstarted area manager Steve Meeke's £3,000 fundraising challenge for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Mia, daughter of kitchen manager Charlie Boyce, helped to raise £935 in advance of Steve's participation in May's 430km Bristol-to-Amsterdam Cycle Challenge.

The team members cycled 160km on static bikes, in a joint effort.

The pub's manager, Clare Wragge, said: "Mia was brilliant. She was very keen to join in and inspired others to have a go."

Steve also joined in the cycling and said: "It was a good effort all round and a great warm-up for me as I prepared for the Amsterdam challenge."

Pictured (left to right) are Mia Boyce, shift leader (and Clare's sister) Lisa Wragge, shift manager Gemma Stratford and Steve Meeke.



FREE ALE WINS FRIENDS IN CARDIFF

Glamorgan Brewery's Jo Plow treated customers to free ale samples and a talk at The Gatekeeper (Cardiff).

She was invited by shift manager Bryn Reed, the pub's real-ale champion and CAMRA's local liaison officer for young people.

Customers enjoyed samples of Ffresh Pale Ale, Jemima's Pitchfork and Cwrw Gorblas, an ale named after a Welsh village where the company first brewed ale.

Shift manager Cerys Brokenshaw said: "They loved it and were very keen to find out from Jo about the brewing process and the brewery's future plans."

Jo is pictured (left) with (left to right) shift managers Cerys Brokenshaw, Bryn Reed and Hayden Smith.

Following the event, the pub was named in the publication from the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) – The Good Beer Guide 2024.



PENKETH STAFF SAY SAD FAREWELL TO THEIR BELOVED COLLEAGUE ISSY

Family, colleagues and friends at the funeral of beloved bar associate Isabella 'Issy' Thompson donated £500 to Young Lives vs Cancer, in honour of her enthusiastic charity fundraising at The Friar Penketh (Warrington).

Issy (pictured), who was 66, had worked at The Friar Penketh for seven years.

Eight colleagues travelled to Scotland to attend the funeral and stand alongside Issy's friends and family and her partner Kev.

The pub's manager, Jess Bowman, said: "Issy was known for bringing us 'Wig Wednesdays'.

"She would arrive in a multicoloured wig and raffle hampers and take round the collection buckets – she always wanted to be at the forefront of every charity event.

"She was always laughing and joking, always so happy and bubbly and was like a mum to many of the staff, always looking out for the team.

"Issy is sorely missed – a lovely lady who was always talking about her four grandchildren, Ava, Priya, Paisley and Lottie, as well as her son Peter and his wife Julie."



NEW MALDEN

WATCHMAN WOWS CAMRA AFTER LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS



The Watchman (New Malden) has been voted ‘pub of the year’ 2023 (joint winner) by members of its local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch.

The Kingston & Leatherhead branch’s ‘pub of the year’ selection process is tied in with its CAMRA Good Beer Guide entry selection.

Any pub on the shortlist for entry in The Good Beer Guide can be considered by the members as a candidate for ‘pub of the year’.

One pub is selected for the Surrey section of the branch area (boroughs of Epsom and Ewell, part of Mole Valley and Elmbridge) and one for the Greater London part (Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames).

Kingston & Leatherhead CAMRA said: “The pub of the year is judged to be the best pub over the last year in all aspects, including beer range, beer quality, ambiance, sympathy with CAMRA’s aims and value for money.

“We are delighted to announce that the joint winners for Kingston & Leatherhead branch, in 2023, are The Watchman (New Malden) and The Jolly Coopers (Epsom).”

Liam Clark, shift manager at The Watchman for the past two years, said: “This is the first time that the pub has been voted a winner by the branch and we are all over the moon.”

He continued: “We have had a couple of new pub managers, with a wealth of Wetherspoon experience, including current pub manager Ryan Way, who was previously at The Fox on the Hill (Camberwell) and is a real-ale fan himself, which has helped.

“Credit also goes to pub manager Mark Brewis, who is now at The Wibbas Down Inn (Wimbledon).”

Liam said: “We have gone ‘back to basics’, focusing on the quality and choice of our ales, as well as listening to customers and knowing what they want to drink.

“We have a good relationship with our local CAMRA members and share their knowledge of breweries and ales by talking to them.”

The pub has 14 hand-pumps, serving eight real ales at all times, including five ever-changing guest ales.

Liam concluded: “We always have one LocAle, among them ales from Wimbledon Brewery, Twickenham Brewery (Naked Ladies (4.4% ABV) is popular) and Surrey Hills Brewery (particularly Ranmore, at 3.8% ABV).”

Pictured (left to right) are shift leader and ale champion Ryan Beresford, CAMRA member Rod Arnold, Kingston & Leatherhead CAMRA branch chairman Richard Russell, shift manager Liam Clark and Kingston & Leatherhead CAMRA branch treasurer Allan Marshall.

LOANHEAD BREWER MAKES A SPLASH AT THE PADDLE STEAMER

Real ale fans at The Paddle Steamer (Largs) enjoyed a meet-the-brewer event, with the visit of Stewart Brewing.

Shift manager and cellar champion Lee Mitchell is pictured (right) with Michael Lakomy from the Loanhead-based brewery.

Stewart Brewing's business development manager, Michael, gave a talk about the brewing process and the history of Stewart Brewing, with customers able to sample some of its various beers.

Among the ales on offer, with a try-before-you-buy option, were cask ale Pentland IPA (3.9% ABV), golden ale Edinburgh Gold (4.8% ABV) and superior stout Cauld Reekie (6.2% ABV).

Pub manager Ryan Gallacher said: "It was great to have Michael visiting the pub, as Stewart Brewing's ales are popular with customers. The event was a huge success."



BREWERS HIT THE BULLSEYE AT SOCIETY ROOM'S DARTS NIGHT



The team at The Society Room (Glasgow) took the opportunity to invite several local Scottish suppliers to a charity darts evening – for staff to learn and to help to raise money for charity.

Drygate Brewing Co and Stewart Brewing, together with gin distillers Caorunn and Glaswegin, donated raffle prizes and hosted a tasting session.

Pictured (left to right) at the event, which raised £723 for Young Lives vs Cancer, are David Benjamin from Drygate, Rachel Murray from Caorunn and shift manager Nathan McGowan, who organised the evening.

Nathan said: "A huge thankyou to the breweries and distilleries which helped us by donating raffle prizes – and to those who attended the evening.

"I believe that everyone had a great night and look forward to next year's event."

David Benjamin, business development manager at Drygate, offered beer-tasting samples, as well as information for the staff to learn more about Drygate's products.

David also donated a very generous amount to the raffles, with goody bags, two cases of beer and two £30 vouchers for Drygate Brewery restaurant/bar.

Rachel Murray, representing Caorunn, is a business development manager from International Beverage, which offered gin-tasting and donated a generous amount to the raffles, with goody bags and a bottle of gin.

Stewart Brewing's business development manager, Michael Lakomy (not pictured), also attended with beer samples and donated two tickets for a free Stewart Brewing brewery tour, while Glaswegin sent a hamper for the raffle, with gin and branded merchandise.

David Benjamin from Drygate Brewery added: "It was great to be invited along, by Nathan, to the annual darts competition at The Society Room, bringing the Glasgow Wetherspoon teams together to raise money for such a worthy cause – Young Lives vs Cancer.

"It was a lot of fun chatting to all of the people from the different Glasgow pubs. It was a belter of a night, and what a turn-out. I can't wait for the next one."

EVERY WINE'S A WINNER BABY, THAT'S THE TRUTH

A closer look at three red, white and rosé wines which spring from terroir in the New World



White

Villa Maria Private Bin Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc

(New Zealand) 12.5% ABV

Grape: sauvignon blanc

The wine

This is the sauvignon blanc which put Villa Maria on the world map.

A blend of Marlborough's valleys, both Wairau and Awatere, this wine showcases exceptional balance and consistency in every vintage.

The room-filling aromatics and strikingly crisp character of this wine are why it is so popular and such a memorable experience.

At Villa Maria, they prioritise ripeness in their sauvignon blanc wines, often picking later than other wineries to ensure maximum fruit flavour to balance the powerful natural acidity of this varietal.

Myriad flavours are dominated by fresh passion fruit and citrus, retained in all their glory by the gentle pressing techniques (less juice from the grape, yet more flavour) and selected yeast strains.

Dry, refreshing and fruity, this aromatic and refreshing sauvignon blanc is made for the great moments.



Rosé

Villa Maria Blush Sauvignon

(New Zealand) 12.5% ABV

Taste: floral, passion fruit and delicate red berries

Grape: sauvignon blanc, merlot

The wine

A fresh twist on everyone's Kiwi favourite, this attractively pale pink wine has been crafted to deliver a glass of crisp aromatic refreshment which is easy to love.

The sauvignon reveals vibrant aromas of passion fruit and fresh herbs, with a splash of merlot adding floral blossom and delicate red berry notes.

The cool climate of New Zealand's wine-growing regions provides freshness and natural acidity.

The winery

With more than 60 years' wine-making, Villa Maria's six-decade journey at the forefront of New Zealand's wine industry has shaped the company as it stands today.

The extensive portfolio is one of the most geographically and stylistically diverse and highly awarded range of premium wines by any New Zealand producer, fuelling popularity and success across the globe.

Throughout the 1960s, Villa Maria was a one-man band. In 1961, at just 21 years of age, Sir George Fistonich leased five acres of land from his father in Mangere, Auckland, starting with just an acre of vines.

The first wine under the name Villa Maria, in 1962, was made with grapes harvested from this block.

Today, Villa Maria is globally recognised and known for its bold, expressive and exceptional New Zealand wines.



The winemaker

Dave Roper - senior winemaker

Dave Roper began his career in wine at Villa Maria in 2002 as a cellar hand.

His flair for wine-making was apparent from the outset. Having developed his skills and knowledge across all of Villa Maria's wines, he was promoted to senior Auckland winemaker in 2015.

During his career, he has worked vintages in Oregon and Washington State and, over the last 10 years, has judged at various wine shows and competitions in New Zealand.

Dave believes that wine-making requires a strong appreciation of art, along with an understanding of science.

International recognition of Dave's talents came in 2022, when the Private Bin Sauvignon Blanc was awarded 90 points by renowned wine critic James Suckling.

Wetherspoon's pubs continue to offer an extensive selection of great wines, with a range of white, rosé and red, as well as sparkling wine, carefully sourced from around the world.

With numerous varied tastes and styles, there is something to suit every wine-drinker.

Not only are the wines great tasting, but they also offer exceptional value for money.

With Wetherspoon's wine prices very close to those of the supermarkets, why stay at home when you can enjoy great value for money at your local Wetherspoon?

Many of the wine choices are available as part of the drinks range served with selected Wetherspoon meals, while other wines are served to just enjoy from the drinks menu.

Here, we feature three wines – one red, one white and one rosé, which are available as part of the drinks range served with selected Wetherspoon meals.



Red

Barossa Ink by Grant Burge
(Australia) 14.5% ABV

Taste: vibrant, opulent, with rich berry flavours

Grape: sourced from across the Barossa, Australia's premium Shiraz-growing region

The wine

Ink by name and ink by nature, created when Grant Burge set out to make the most vibrant wine possible.

This is an intensely dark wine, with decadent rich berry flavours, balanced with hints of mocha and dark chocolate, from ageing in oak.

It is popular with those new to wine, as well as knowledgeable wine-lovers looking to try something a little different and indulgent.

The winery



Barossa Ink is part of the Grant Burge family, whose story is one of the past, the present and the future.

The Burge family planted its roots in the 1800s in the Barossa Valley, inspiring five generations of devoted vignerons.

After years of working on the family's vineyard, Meshach Burge, the eldest son decided that it was time to branch out from the family business, away from viticulture and into the world of agriculture.

Meshach could not shake his innate love of grape-growing, wine and wine-making.

In 1865, he installed fermenting tanks in one of his sheds, intending to create wines which he could share with his friends and family. Out of his generosity came what is, today, the Grant Burge brand.

The Barossa is world famous for its premium wines. The diversity of the terroir and the region's levels, combined with its Mediterranean climate, provides the perfect environment to make ultra-premium wines.

The winemaker

Craig Stansborough – group premium winemaker

Craig Stansborough joined Grant Burge Wines in 1993, as cellar manager, and was soon promoted to assistant winemaker in 1994, winemaker the following year and senior winemaker in 1997.

His meteoric rise in the company is due to his enormous talents, leadership, inquisitive mind and his unrelenting passion for wine-making.

Born in Gawler, on the edge of the Barossa Valley, Craig grew up with the wine industry around him.

He started in 1983 as a cellar hand with B Seppelt & Son, first at Château Tanunda and then later at Seppeltsfield, before joining Grant Burge Wines.

Craig counts Grant Burge among his top mentors throughout his wine-making career, having started working with him from his first steps on the winery.

He has since found his place in various other local, pioneering wineries, where their figureheads were also of invaluable, life-influencing experience.



SPOONS FANATIC PETER CROSSES 500TH THRESHOLD

Self-confessed Wetherspoon fanatic Peter Dobson has reached another significant milestone in his bid to visit every Wetherspoon pub.

He completed his 500th visit at The North Western (Liverpool Lime Street), where he is pictured in his bespoke T-shirt declaring: Eat. Sleep. Spoons. Repeat.


Peter's adventure began in October 2019 at The Eight Bells (Dover) and he has since travelled the length and breadth of the UK in his ambitious attempt to record every visit on his YouTube channel 'Visiting Every Wetherspoon'.

First featured in Wetherspoon News (spring 2020), we have tracked his progress ever since.

Peter completed 200 by April 2021 at The Angel Vaults Inn (Hitchin), had clocked up 300 at The Saxon Crown (Corby) in December 2021 and celebrated 400 in September 2022 at The Velvet Coaster (Blackpool).

Peter said: "Thank you yet again to all the lovely Wetherspoon staff members and customers I have encountered along the way who continue to support me in my crazy challenge."



 <p>visiting every Wetherspoon</p> <p>SUBSCRIBE!</p>	<p>Scan the QR code</p>  <p>LIKE AND SHARE!</p>
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CAMRA MEMBERS ROLL IN TO THE POTTERS WHEEL

Thirty members of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) met to enjoy their Christmas dinner at The Potters Wheel (Swansea).

The Swansea branch members enjoyed turkey and all of the trimmings, washed down with Welsh ales including Rhymney's Export, Gower Gold and Gower Power.

The group was hosted by pub manager Jamie Philpin and his staff, for the ninth year.

Jamie (pictured front right) said: "The branch members meet here regularly – and we are glad that they chose us as their informal Christmas party venue, yet again.

"They all seemed to have a terrific time and some mentioned that it was the best one yet."

The Potters Wheel is listed in CAMRA's 2024 edition of The Good Beer Guide.



AVERAGE JOE SEES HIS BEVERAGE FLOW

Apprentice brewer Joe Baker was the man behind one of the successful festival real ales enjoyed by Wetherspoon's customers during the autumn 12-day bi-annual event.

Joe, 27, took up his apprenticeship at St Austell Brewery in 2021, part of which saw him design his own beer called Average Joe! (4.5% ABV).

A sweet, amber ale, with floral and berry flavours, complemented by malty, caramel and biscuity tones, Average Joe! has certainly received more than an average reception.

With 140 barrels of the beer produced for the Wetherspoon festival by Joe and the St Austell team, it was Joe's biggest brew to date – at such an early stage in his brewing career.

Joe (pictured) said: "I came up with the recipe design at the start of my apprenticeship and, on finding out that my beer would be sold in Wetherspoon's pubs up and down the country, I was really excited.

"My uni friends around Guildford were able to try it as well, which was great."



MUD CANNOT STOP HALESOWEN HEROES

Bar associates Alex Westwood (left) and Megan Polanski, who work at The William Shenstone (Halesowen), raised £456.60 for Cancer Research by competing in its Race for Life.

The event, taking about an hour to complete, involves slippery and muddy obstacles.

Shift manager Natasha Harris said: "We are very proud of Alex and Megan and grateful to all of the customers who backed them with donations online and in the pub."



ELK SQUAD GOES WILD IN FYLDE



The team at The Poulton Elk (Poulton-le-Fylde) marked the 10th birthday of the pub towards the end of 2023.

The pub was decorated with balloons and decorations for the occasion, organised by duty manager Katie Hain, and regular customers enjoyed celebration cupcakes.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Eden Lee, shift leader Lewie Deery and bar associate Maddie Osbourne.

Pub manager Matt Jones joined Wetherspoon in 2007. He moved to The Poulton Elk when it first opened, as duty manager, and stepped up to pub manager in summer 2016.

Matt said: "It was a great opportunity to thank our many loyal customers for their support over the past decade and to celebrate the birthday in style."

The Poulton Elk opened on the site of a former bar, in a building which was once a telephone exchange.

JOHN AND JANET CELEBRATE THEIR 65TH ANNIVERSARY BACK WHERE THINGS BEGAN



Pub regular John Thornton and his wife Janet held their wedding reception at the family room of The Saracens Head Inn (Daventry) on 27 September 1958.

Now aged 86 and 85, respectively, the couple returned to the same room in the same pub to celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary.

The pub, a landmark in the Northamptonshire town, opened as a Wetherspoon in 2003.

Janet suggested the idea – and daughter Karen took a hand in proceedings.

She made arrangements with pub manager Nick Hopewell to put a tablecloth, table flowers and bunting in the room, with the bunting reading ‘Happy 65th anniversary’.

Karen said: “It was a lovely surprise for my parents to see the room decked out the way it was – and they had a lovely nostalgic time.

“The table was near the same lovely old fireplace as back in the day.

“My dad enjoyed a few pints of his favourite, Abbot Ale, and mum a glass of rosé.

“There were eight of us, all family and friends, and we are grateful to the staff for facilitating this and making it such a special occasion.”

John, a retired Ford employee, enjoys a visit to the pub on a Thursday evening.

He and Janet, who used to do the accounts for a high-street stationery shop, were both born and bred in Daventry.

WIDE SLICES OF CAKE CELEBRATE LONG SERVICE AT THE NARROWS

The Narrows (Abingdon-on-Thames) opened as a Wetherspoon pub in October 2013, housed in the Oxfordshire town’s former post office building.

Pub manager Luca Germini, who has run the pub for the past three years, is pictured (front right) with staff and customers celebrating 10 years of serving the local community.

Regular customers enjoyed cakes to mark the day.

Also celebrating a milestone were four staff members, each of whom was presented with a certificate for five years’ service.

The quartet have all worked for the company, at The Narrows, for the past five years.

Pictured holding their certificates (left to right) are shift leader Tom Marshall, cleaner Janet Downes and shift leader Heidi Sumner.

Shift leader Jade Barrett is not pictured.

Luca said: “Congratulations to Tom, Janet, Jade and Heidi on their long-service awards and thank you to our regular customers for their continued support and custom.”



ROOM AT THE TOP AS WHICH? PRAISES HOTELS

Wetherspoon has been praised for the quality of its hotels in the annual survey of hotels by consumer champion Which?.

More than 5,000 people took part in the survey to rate their experiences at hotel chains across the UK.

The hotels were scored (out of five stars) across 10 categories.

These included customer service, value-for-money, cleanliness, bed comfort and how well the description matched reality.

The overall customer experience was calculated combining overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend.

Wetherspoon operates 55 hotels at its pubs in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The company had a customer score of 73 per cent.

The survey stated: "Respondents reported that they paid £84 a night, on average. It is among the cheaper options in the survey – and scored four stars for value-for-money.

"It scored three stars for bed comfort, cleanliness, customer service and how well the description matched reality."

Rory Boland, editor of Which? Travel, said: "With prices at many hotels rising further this year, finding good-value, budget accommodation is increasingly difficult.

"For those looking for a reasonably priced stay, there are big differences between the best and worst chains, with the likes of Premier Inn and Wetherspoon distinguishing themselves from the pack."

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, added: "We are proud of the fact that the company's hotels were rated so highly in the Which? survey.

"We believe that our hotels offer excellent value-for-money accommodation, with the added bonus of having the pub on your doorstep."

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ALES FROM AITHER ARE HITS AT RITZ



A new relationship between a pub and a brewery has started at Ritz (Lincoln).

Pub manager Ashley Clayton invited newly founded brewery Aither, based in Mansfield, to host a meet-the-brewer night at the pub.

New pale ales Artimus and Equinox were showcased to customers, alongside blond beer Sirius.

The evening also attracted members of the Lincoln branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) – again at Ashley's invitation.

Ashley said: "It was a good night, and the fact that Aither is a new brewery with new ales added to the interest."

Aither (which means 'from the heavens') may be new, yet it is not without pedigree: for 10 years, founder Scott Lawrence was head brewer at Lincolnshire brewer Bateman's. He was on hand on the night to answer questions and talk to customers.

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Jamie Metcalfe and brewer Scott Lawrence from Aither Brewery.

BREAKFAST TATTOO MAKES MANAGER A TASTY FELLA

As tattoos go, pub manager Ian Harvey's is pretty unusual.

Ian, who runs The Bellwether (Wednesbury), has a tattoo on his right calf of a Wetherspoon traditional breakfast.

Wednesbury customers (like many others from the West Midlands) ask for 'breakfasses', rather than breakfasts, so Ian's tattoo is captioned with the words 'two breakfasses please', alongside images of the dish, comprising fried egg, bacon, sausage, baked beans, two hash browns and a slice of toast.

Ian said: "I got so used to hearing the phrase that it kind of became tattooed on my mind. Now, I've had it tattooed on my leg."

Ian had the tattoo as a fundraising challenge and raised £545 in aid of Young Lives vs Cancer.

Local tattooist Leo Hardwick, of Neon Demons, designed and completed the work after boss Arron Blackham offered a reduced price.

Ian is pictured with shift leader Kressida Bishop, who organised fundraising raffles, football cards and collections as part of the challenge.



KIRKINTILLOCH

ALE FANS NEVER SUFFER AT ALL-CONQUERING KIRKY PUFFER



The team at The Kirky Puffer (Kirkintilloch) is celebrating a hat trick of successive awards, having been named Dunbartonshire 'pub of the year' for 2023.

The Kirky Puffer, with pub manager John McKenna at the helm, was again voted the winner by the Glasgow & West of Scotland Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch.

The branch's annual 'pub of the year' competition names four pubs, one for each of the areas covered by the branch, being Argyll, Dunbartonshire, Lanarkshire and Glasgow.

The Kirky Puffer has now won the award for Dunbartonshire for four of the past five years (2019–23), with no award given in 2020.

Pub manager John, also the CAMRA branch chairman, is pictured (right) with team leader and cellar champion Chris Brown (left) and CAMRA deputy chairman Rog Harrison presenting the certificate.

The presentation took place at the start of the branch meeting held at the pub.

John said: "We are thrilled to win this award for the third consecutive year, highlighting our dedication at The Kirky Puffer to real ale."

"We appreciate the support of the branch members and thank them for that."

Rog Harrison added: "Our congratulations go to John and his team for consistently providing us with top-quality ales."

The Kirky Puffer serves six real ales at all times, including four ever-changing guest beers, among them ales from Scottish breweries Harviestoun and Stewart Brewing.

HIGH PRAISE FOR AIRPORT PUBS AT BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS

Wetherspoon has been recognised at the prestigious 2023 British Travel Awards (BTAs), voted for by the British public.

It was voted 'best airport retailer for food & beverages'.

A record 1.66 million public votes were received in the travel industry's annual awards. These set the nation's benchmark for leisure travel experiences and services, as chosen by UK travelling consumers.

The BTAs remain the largest consumer-voted awards in the UK.

The awards' categories (which totalled 76) included two new ones for 2023, encompassing airport retailing.

BTAs' director of events and partnerships, Lorraine Barnes Burton, said: "This year was a record in the 15-year history of the British Travel Awards, with more than one and a half million votes."

Wetherspoon's airport pubs are The Beehive, The Flying Horse and The Red Lion (all Gatwick), The Crown Rivers and Star Light (both

Heathrow), The Windmill (Stansted), Wetherspoon (Birmingham) and The Sir Walter Scott (Edinburgh).

Wetherspoon's regional manager responsible for all airport pubs, Barry Brewster, said: "This is a fantastic accolade."

"I am delighted for all of those pubs' teams who have been recognised by this impartial public vote."

"There are numerous restaurants and bars at the airports, with competition tough."

"We always do the job to the best of our ability – and to be recognised like this is unbelievable."

"I would like to thank everyone for their hard work, because what we do is a true team effort, with everyone contributing to this achievement."

THE COURT LEET • ORMSKIRK

LONG-SERVING LISA HOLDS COURT AT THE COURT LEET



Pub manager Lisa Newton is pictured receiving her long-service award certificate, as well as Champagne and flowers, from general manager Will Fotheringham and area manager Mike Morrissey (right).

Lisa has been pub manager at The Court Leet (Ormskirk) since 2016 and, apart from maternity leave to have her daughter in 2017, has worked for the company for 20 years.

Lisa said: "I can't believe that it's been 20 years. I have literally grown up within the business, while working for Wetherspoon."

Lisa's Wetherspoon career began in September 2003 in her hometown of Lincoln, when she joined the team at The Square Sail as a part-time bar associate.

She recalled: "I was also working at another local pub in Lincoln, so had two part-time jobs.

"My manager at The Square Sail said, if I took on a permanent role with Wetherspoon, that I could progress.

"I had always planned to make the pub industry my career, so joined Wetherspoon and was promoted to team leader within six weeks."

Lisa continued to progress, following a move to Manchester, with a brief stint at The Seven Stars and a spell at The Ford Madox Brown, both in Manchester, stepping up to shift manager.

Lisa took on her first pub as manager in 2012, at The Art Picture House (Bury), where she spent four years before arriving at The Court Leet.

Lisa said: "We are a real community pub, the busiest in town, with a great regular customer base, a gorgeous beer garden and a lot of fundraising to support Young Lives vs Cancer.

"Staff progression has also been good here, with some people going on to manage their own pubs and a couple taking on head-office roles.

"Wetherspoon has always been a fast-moving company, in a good way, always improving. It's good to be at the top."

THE WOODSEATS PALACE • WOODSEATS, SHEFFIELD

WOODSEATS NATIVE KAY IS A FIXTURE AT THE PALACE



Floor associate Kay Slater has worked at The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats, Sheffield) for two decades.

However, her association with the building, as well as the area, goes back more than 70 years.

Kay was born in Woodseats, in a house opposite the pub where she now works, and has lived in the Sheffield suburb all her life.

Her grandparents were once stewards of the Woodseats Working Men's Club, located behind the Wetherspoon pub, which was once a cinema.

Kay recalls: "My older brother and sister used to take me to the Woodseats Palace when I was about four or five years old – to watch the Saturday afternoon matinee.

"I remember the black-and-white cowboy pictures and the shows during the interval, with a magician and yo-yo tricks."

Kay added: "The cinema closed and became a Fine Fare supermarket.

"I remember it opening in the early 1960s and the PG Tips chimpanzee (a real one... not someone dressed in a costume) officially opening it."

Kay, 73, who first joined the team as a cleaner, still lives only a short walk from the pub.

Kay said: "My son Robert was working in the pub's kitchen then and suggested that I apply for a cleaning job. I did – and have never looked back."

Kay spent eight years on the cleaning team before switching to work as a floor associate, where she meets, greets and chats to customers (most known to her), as well as serving meals and keeping the customer area clean and tidy.

Kay explained: "I used to run a club and didn't want to work at the bar again.

"The pub manager wanted me to stay, so I chose the floor associate role and now work three mornings a week."

Kay's former neighbour and long-time friend, Debbie Murray, joined her on the cleaning team 18 years ago, at Kay's suggestion, and is now a bar team leader at the pub.

However, Debbie isn't the only familiar face as a work colleague.

Kay said: "Robert's son, my grandson, Brandon (26), is a kitchen associate at the pub and is doing really well, gaining in confidence all the time.

"Pub manager Ricky (Brown) has been so helpful, and Brandon absolutely loves his job."

Kay's granddaughters, Kayleigh (kitchen) and Shannon (bar), also previously worked part time at the pub, as students, but have both gone on to other careers.

Kay said: "When I lost my husband eight years ago, everyone at Wetherspoon was so kind. I had also cared for him during his illness and was able to be flexible with my work shifts. They really looked after me too."

She added: "When I'm not at work, I regularly pop in and spend my wages in the pub. Debbie and I can often be found chatting at our table."

Kay concluded: "The job keeps me going. It always feels like a home from home and like another family.

"I absolutely love it. I really don't know what I would do without it."

TRUSTED SUPPLIERS KNOW THEIR ONIONS – AND LETTUCES, CUCUMBERS AND TOMATOES

Wetherspoon is committed and dedicated to providing its customers with the very best-quality and value-for-money food and drinks served in its pubs.

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

Among those long-standing associations is a more-than-15-year partnership with Fresh Direct, one of the UK's biggest suppliers of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Kim Jenner, senior national account manager for Fresh Direct, said: "Our experience in sourcing the best of British and global produce for more than 50 years has made us the UK's number-one fresh produce supplier in the food industry.

"Our chefs support Wetherspoon to develop fresh ideas, providing some of the freshest produce directly from the field to your plate.

"From the whole to the freshly prepared, our specialist team is committed to deliver excellent year-round service."

Wetherspoon's food-development manager, Sarah Shaw, said: "We are proud of our numerous long-standing supplier partnerships.

"Working with numerous suppliers and producers, for many successive years, helps to ensure the consistent supply of fresh, top-quality produce which we require and which our customers have come to expect from us."

Fresh Direct works with suppliers across the UK, and further afield, to source and deliver high-quality, fresh produce to Wetherspoon.

This approach supplies locally and globally sourced fresh produce across Great Britain, bringing the best of each season's produce to J D Wetherspoon's menus.

Here, we turn the supplier spotlight on three producers which grow and supply the fresh ingredients for Wetherspoon's salads.

Bryan's Salads

Location: Lancashire

Produce supplied: prepped leaves

The story: Founded in 1959, Bryan's Salads is now a fourth-generation family business, with 10 staff members with more than 15 years' service.

It predominantly specialises in washed, ready-to-eat sliced lettuce and salad leaves (including Batavia, spinach, bull's blood and red Salanova® for Wetherspoon).

From planting to harvesting, it takes approximately 6–12 weeks and, throughout the summer months, the majority of lettuce is grown within a one-mile radius of the site.

The product can be harvested and delivered to Wetherspoon's central depot at Daventry on the same day as processing, ensuring that there are no fresher leaves available.

Environmental outlook: Bryan's Salads keeps pesticide and fertiliser use to a minimum to protect the environment, while ensuring that its products are of the highest standard.



Driscoll's

Locations: Kent and Staffordshire

Produce supplied: strawberries and blueberries

The story: Driscoll's began in the early 1900s and grew into the global brand it is today, providing the freshest, best-quality berries on the market, from multiple locations all over Britain.

Since 2020, Driscoll's has supplied fresh strawberries and blueberries to Wetherspoon's pubs.

Sustainable practice: Driscoll's is on a journey to reduce single-use plastic, through using new punnets made from recyclable paper packaging. The new paper packs use around 90 per cent less plastic, compared with previous plastic packaging.

This represents a plastic saving for customers totalling 47.5 tonnes per year, which, based on the current rate of sale, is 5.3 tonnes per year for Wetherspoon alone.

Agrosol Export

Location: Almería, Spain

Produce supplied: cucumbers and tomatoes

The story: Established in 2008, Agrosol Export is a produce company rooted in Almería.

With a rich history dating from the 1950s, the company's story started with a young boy who relocated from La Rábita to Roquetas de Mar (Almería).

The company thrives on the collective efforts of numerous families dedicated to cultivating top-tier fruits and vegetables.

It grows and supplies fresh cucumbers to Fresh Direct, which are then delivered to Wetherspoon's pubs, as well as loose round tomatoes, one of four varieties grown which go into making Wetherspoon's fresh salads.

Sustainable practice: Agrosol is a sustainability-focused company which prioritises natural pollination and follows the *three Rs rule* for waste management.

It strives for 'zero waste' by implementing waste *reduction*, water and waste *reuse* and *recycling* plastics. The company has also established two thermal energy and CO₂ supply plants, resulting in significant energy-savings across 30 hectares of land.



NEW LOOK

Cardiff

THE PRINCE OF WALES

The Prince of Wales (Cardiff) has undergone a major refurbishment and expansion project.

Wetherspoon has invested almost £1.9 million to undertake the work, which included expansion of the ground-floor customer area, as well as full refurbishment and redecoration throughout the pub.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in July 1999, has been extended, following the acquisition of adjacent premises, and knocked through into them.

This has increased the customer area by 1,600ft² to a new total of 9,200ft².

The pub has been fully refurbished, including its timber flooring, and newly redecorated throughout, including a new bespoke carpet fitted.

A pavement café-style outdoor area, wrapping around the premises, has been added to the pub, providing outdoor seating for 96 customers.

The kitchen and staff rooms have also been upgraded.

Pub manager Andy Greenhill has managed the pub since January 2017. He is pictured (front, second left) with his entire team.

He said: "Wetherspoon's commitment to the pub is evident in this major project.

"My team and I, as well as our regular customers, are thrilled with the new-look and larger pub."

81-83 St Mary Street, Cardiff, CF10 1FA



Barnsley

THE JOSEPH BRAMAH

Pub manager Ben Dixon is pictured at the new-look pub The Joseph Bramah (Barnsley).

The pub has been fully redecorated throughout, including a new colour scheme and finishes, new carpet, refurbished booth seating and new access lift for customers with disabilities.

Extra tables have been added in the garden.

Ben, who has managed the pub since 2009, said: "The Joseph Bramah is at the heart of the community.

"The pub's new look has been well received by customers – and we look forward to serving them for many years to come."

Ten new jobs were created as a result of the redevelopment project.

15 Market Hill, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2PX



Elephant and Castle

THE ROCKINGHAM ARMS

Pub manager Charbel Mikhael is pictured (left) with shift manager Joshua Pulford at the new-look pub in Elephant and Castle – The Rockingham Arms.

A total of £1.5 million has been invested in the pub's new look. The work has included a full internal refit of the pub and full redecoration throughout, as well as a new extended outside area at the front of the premises, providing seating for 86 customers.

The building first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in November 2000.

It has undergone a complete refurbishment to its customer area, as well as some behind-the-scenes upgrades.

The pub has been refitted with a revised layout in its customer area and also fully redecorated throughout.

A new open-gantry food area has been added and, on the bar, a new full drink-dispensing system has been installed.

New signage has also been installed in the building and new staff facilities created.

Charbel said: "I am delighted with the new-look pub.

"I am also proud that 35 new jobs have been created for local people."

119 Newington Causeway, Elephant and Castle, London, SE1 6BN



Walsall

ST. MATTHEW'S HALL

Pub manager Kan Wall is pictured at his new-look pub, St. Matthew's Hall (Walsall).

Having first opened in July 2011, the pub has undergone an extensive refurbishment and redecoration project – to include its garden.

This includes new carpet, furniture and lighting, as well as redecoration throughout the pub.

New festoon lighting has been added in the side garden.

Kan, who has managed St. Matthew's Hall since September 2023, said: "The pub and garden look superb – and customers are very happy with all of the work which has been undertaken to give them an even better pub in which to socialise."

Lichfield Street, Walsall, West Midlands, WS1 1SX



NEW LOOK

Wakefield

THE SIX CHIMMNEYS

Cllr Josie Pritchard, the mayor of Wakefield, is pictured with pub manager Laura Mason and Joe Sunderland, acting as consort for the occasion, at The Six Chimneys, in the West Yorkshire town.

The pub had been closed for five months for a £3-million expansion and refurbishment project. The redevelopment work has included expansion into two adjoining properties, with a new extension and extended beer garden.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in November 1999, has undergone a complete refurbishment to the customer area, as well as upgrades to the bar, kitchen, toilets and staff facilities.

It has more than doubled in size, with an additional 4,000 square feet of customer space added.

There is a new kitchen at ground-floor level, complete with open gantry.

The pub has been fully refurbished and redecorated throughout, including a new colour scheme and finish, a new bar, new bespoke carpet, new lighting and furniture, as well as a new rooflight.

New folding sliding doors open out from the extension into the extended, larger and improved beer garden.

Pub manager Laura Mason said: "The investment highlights Wetherspoon's commitment to the pub, its staff and customers, as well as to Wakefield itself.

"I am delighted that we have also been able to create 40 new jobs in the town."

**41-43 Kirkgate, Wakefield
West Yorkshire, WF1 1HX**



Victoria station

WETHERSPOONS

Pub manager Dan Wonders is pictured at the newly expanded and refurbished pub in London's Victoria station.

The pub, Wetherspoons, which first opened in December 1992, is located on the station concourse, on the first floor above WHSmith.

The company has spent £1.3 million extending the pub into the former Yo! Sushi premises, adding almost 1,800 square feet to the customer area.

This has created an additional 68 full- and part-time jobs.

The pub has undergone a complete refurbishment in its existing customer area, including a new bespoke carpet, along with upgrades to the bar, kitchen, toilets and staff facilities.

The pub's manager, Dan Wonders, said: "The pub is well established at Victoria station – and I am confident that customers will welcome the bigger space and new look."

**Victoria station concourse (1st floor above WHSmith)
Victoria, London, SW1V 1JT**



Hemel Hempstead

THE FULL HOUSE

The Full House (Hemel Hempstead) has undergone an extensive refurbishment project, including a new beer garden.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in July 1998, is managed by Steph Robinson, currently on maternity leave.

It has undergone a complete refurbishment to the customer area, as well as some behind-the-scenes upgrades.

The work has included full redecoration throughout, as well as the addition of a new entrance lobby to the pub and a new beer garden at the rear of the premises, with seating for 50 customers.

The internal entrance lobby has been altered and the central seating and large column decorations have been removed to increase the customer area and improve the furniture layout.

The pub has been fully redecorated throughout, including a new colour scheme and finishes. A new bespoke carpet has also been installed, together with new internal artwork.

Steph said: "The Full House plays an important part in the town's social scene."

"Our customers have welcomed the new-look pub and are happy that it now features a beer garden."

Pictured (left to right) are team leader Jessica Wesley, shift leader Ross Gardiner and shift manager/holding pub manager Sian Wardle.

128 Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire, HP1 1EZ



Uxbridge

THE GOOD YARN

Pub manager Mensah Richardson is pictured in his new-look pub, The Good Yarn (Uxbridge).

The pub first opened in December 1994, in the former Pearson's menswear shop, on High Street.

Its interior has been completely redecorated throughout, with a new brighter colour scheme.

The wood panelling on the front of the bar has been revarnished and some new lighting fixtures installed.

Dining furniture has also been refurbished and reupholstered.

New flooring has been fitted behind the bar and new drinks dispense equipment fitted.

Mensah said: "The Good Yarn is a well-established, great community pub – and our regulars are pleased with their upgraded surroundings."

132 High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1JX



NEW LOOK

Skegness

THE RED LION

Pub manager Abbey Gibb is pictured (centre) at her new-look pub – The Red Lion (Skegness).

Wetherspoon spent £1.3 million redeveloping the pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in July 1997.

The redevelopment work has included expansion into an adjoining property, the former betting shop's premises, adding almost 600 square feet to the ground-floor customer area.

The pub has undergone a complete refurbishment to the customer area, as well as upgrades to the bar, kitchen, toilets and staff facilities.

It has a new colour scheme and finishes, new bar and bespoke carpet, as well as new lighting and furniture.

Abbey, who has managed the pub since 2014, said: "The pub is at the heart of the community. Customers are thrilled with its new look."

2-4 Roman Bank, Lumley Road Skegness, Lincolnshire, PE25 2RU



Pictured (left to right) are shift leader Jade Ogden, bar associate Samantha Clayton, pub manager Abbey Gibb, customer and local businessman Gary Starr and bar associate David Bell



Maidstone

THE MUGGLETON INN

Pub manager Tim Heathfield is pictured at his new-look pub – The Muggleton Inn (Maidstone).

The company spent £1.5 million refurbishing and renovating the Kent pub, which Tim has managed for four years.

Fully redecorated throughout, including new carpet and new lighting, the pub has also benefited from work which included a garden redesign, doubling the outside space from nine tables to 20.

A new roof, new air-conditioning, bar equipment, open food gantry and staff facilities have also been installed.

Tim said: "The work has completely transformed the pub, making it much brighter, with original windows reinstalled."

"We have also doubled the team from 40 to 80 full- and part-time staff."

8-9 High Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1HJ



WAGON WHEELS OUT A 10TH BIRTHDAY CAKE FOR CUSTOMERS



Pub manager Peter Bryan and his team celebrated the 10th birthday of The Wagon & Horses (Sheffield) by throwing a party for customers.

Customers and staff enjoyed a cake baked to mark the occasion.

The party also featured a bake sale, raising £70 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Kitchen manager Sam Drakeford is the longest-serving staff member, having worked at the pub since its opening day.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Jack Bailey, deputy manager Elliot Couldwell, pub manager Peter Bryan, bar associate Thea Smith, team leader Caitlin Tynan and bar associate Danielle Whittington.

BLUE BELL BAKERS ROLLING IN DOUGH

A spectacular bake sale at The Blue Bell Inn (Scunthorpe) raised £388 split between Young Lives vs Cancer and Macmillan Cancer Support.

Staff were baking all week to provide scones, cupcakes, brownies, flans, a gin & lemon cake and a host of other goodies for sale to customers.

Chief among the bakers was shift manager Paula Buck, who said: "We really pulled out all the stops."

A tombola and a raffle boosted the charities' coffers, with prizes including a voucher for a meal for two, wine and chocolate.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Katy Ellis and shift manager Paula Buck.



STANDING ORDER POSSE GOES WILD IN EAST MIDLANDS

The Standing Order (Derby) chose a cowboy theme to celebrate its beer festival.

Among the beers on offer were Yazoo Dos Perros and New Realm Hoptropolis IPA, both based in the USA.

Shift leader Abby Daynton, who came up with the Wild West theme, said: "I did my best to persuade colleagues to join in – and they were really enthusiastic."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Jessica Marcos, shift manager Connor Sullivan, pub manager Tom Parfitt (lying on the table), bar associate Alex Sherratt and shift managers Bethh Mosley and Holly Harrison.



CAKE CAPER PROVES TO BE SWEET WAY TO RAISE CASH

Bar associate Joshua Groves organised a cake and coffee morning at The Linford Arms (Cannock).

The event raised £202 for Macmillan Cancer Support, with money raised from the sale of cakes made by colleagues and from sweetie bags, as well as a giant unicorn Teddy sale.

Joshua (pictured far right), with bar associates Faz Edwards and Carol Pearson and shift manager Kate Hooley (left to right), also took part in Go Sober for October, raising an additional £45 for Macmillan Cancer Support.



CORNISH BREWERY IS 'DEVON SENT'

Redruth-based Keltek Cornish Brewery finds that pubs beyond the border sell more of its ales than watering holes in its home county

Brewery's name: Keltek Cornish Brewery, Redruth, Cornwall

Head brewer Josh Walker (left) with account manager James Cawte



Family-owned-and-run Keltek Cornish Brewery was founded in 1997 by Stuart Heath.

Today, head brewer Stuart has long since retired, but his son Will continues at the Redruth-based brewing business as CEO. However, it is another family name behind the day-to-day running of the eight-strong Keltek team, with managing director Stewart Cawte at the helm, his son James as account manager and daughter Teona as office manager.

Stewart joined the business in October 2021.

Although he had had no brewing industry background, his more than 20 years' knowledge and experience in running successful logistic companies have seen Keltek's profile and business grow over the past two years.

Awards

Stewart said: "The second half of 2023 was particularly successful for Keltek, with awards, rebranding and further investment in machinery to expand capacity."

Five gold awards from Taste of the West have included the 'champion beer 2023' title, for Keltek's strong ale Beheaded (7.5% ABV), a firm favourite with Wetherspoon's customers in southwest pubs, particularly in Devon.

National

Keltek enjoyed a national listing with Wetherspoon during July–September 2023, with its award-winning amber-coloured premium bitter Keltek King (5.1% ABV) (European Beer Awards 2022 gold award), made using Cascade and Perle hops, for a beer with a floral aroma and toffee-apple hints.

Stewart reported: "That very first listing was on the back of a cheeky comment to David Aucutt, of East West Ales, asking what we had to do to get on the list!"

"The original order of 500 barrels was eventually 625, as our beer went to Spoons pubs across the UK – and we enjoyed that national exposure.

"We ploughed the profits from that straight back into the business, with the investment of a brand-new 1,000-cask-capacity chiller, meaning that opportunity with Wetherspoon helped the brewery hugely."

Stewart continued: "We usually use wholesale companies to distribute to clients across the UK, but also deliver directly to pubs in the southwest.

"For some reason, bizarrely, Wetherspoon's pubs in Devon, including Torquay, Paignton, Teignmouth and especially Plymouth (The Union Rooms is one of our biggest advocates), sell more for us than the pubs closer to home in Cornwall.

Exposure

"We have hosted tasting sessions and built up a relationship locally, which is all positive for us, but, as with everything, it is all about education and brand exposure."

Keltek (which means 'Celtic' in the Cornish language) is self-sustainable, with solar panels generating power and its own borehole supplying the required water.

The brewery also actively supports and gives back to its local community, through various sponsorship partnerships, including those with Redruth Football Club, the Cornish Seal Sanctuary and, in November 2023, the Best Bar None Plymouth awards.

Stewart concluded: "The brewery may have been around since 1997, yet the last two years have seemed almost like a phenomenal 'restart'.

"Business growth has increased steadily – and not many can say that in this industry, in the southwest and in these times."

TEAM LIVING THE DREAM AT THE WINTER SEAM

Pub manager Chris Ashworth and his team at The Winter Seam (Castleford) celebrated the 20th anniversary of their pub in style. Shift manager Katy Walker, who works at The Glass Blower (Castleford), made a special cake for the occasion, with regular customer John Fawley enjoying the honour of cutting it.

Chris, who took over as pub manager in February 2014, said: "John walked through the doors on the first day the pub opened and has been a regular customer ever since."



"It was only fitting that he should be the one to cut the birthday cake."

A display area with birthday balloons was set up in the pub – and numerous regular customers popped in to join the celebrations.

Among the long-serving staff members (more than 10 years) at the pub are kitchen manager Jonny Wheelhouse (17 years at the pub, 23 with the company), shift manager Lauren Richardson (13 years), kitchen shift leader Josh Brooks (12 years), team leader Stacey Stevens (10 years), kitchen team leaders Shona Mooney and Rachel Barker (each 13 years), kitchen associate Caz Horton (10 years) and cleaners Bev Hurdley (14 years), Bev Cox (13 years), Sarah Mawson (11 years) and Phil Fry (10 years).

The pub, which opened two decades ago in the Xscape retail/entertainment complex, takes its name from the winter coal seam worked during 1930s–69 at Glasshoughton Colliery and Coking Works – which once stood on the site.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Tiegan Whitworth, shift manager Loz Richardson, cleaner Sam Allen, customer John Fawley, team leader Stacey Stevens and shift manager Karl Drew

ART BY CHARLOTTE IS STAR LOT AT POOLE PUB

The first-ever Christmas fair at The Quay (Poole) has been described as a massive success by its organisers, raising £580 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The event, months in the planning, attracted more than a dozen businesses and charities, selling a range of goodies, including wax-made Advent calendars, handmade acrylic necklaces and gift boxes of hand soap.

But star of the show was painter and bar associate Charlotte Triplow, who sold several of her works on the day.

The fair was the brainchild of kitchen manager Emma Cox, whose hard work made the event possible.

She had help from colleagues, including shift manager Stephanie Tobin.

Stephanie said: "The fair was a massive success."

Stephanie is pictured (crouching, left) holding a box of Chuckling Goat soaps, with (left to right) bar associates Charlotte Triplow and Ellen Painter, with (standing) kitchen manager Emma Cox, with stall-holders looking on.



NO WOBBLY LEGS AT THE NORTH WESTERN AS LIVERPOOL HERO BRUCE DROPS IN



The North Western (Liverpool) is the most recent Wetherspoon pub to serve a familiar face at the bar.

Shift leader Cath Meadows is pictured with former Liverpool goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar, who dropped in to the pub, near Lime Street station, in the city where he was once a footballing hero. Grobbelaar played for Liverpool during 1981–94, helping it to win the European Cup, with his now-famous

'wobbly legs antics', during the penalty shoot-out in the 1984 final against AS Roma.

Now a popular after-dinner speaker, South African-born Grobbelaar's stories and anecdotes are as colourful and characterful as the man himself.

Pub manager Christian Greenlee said: "It was great to see him in our pub – and he was only too happy to have his photo taken with Cath."

The Commercial Rooms (Bristol)



Well done folks!
£600
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Kitchen manager Steph Thorndyke ran the Bath half marathon, raising £600. Steph (pictured), who works at The Commercial Rooms (Bristol), completed the 13-mile course in under two hours. She said: "It was great to take part – and I was very pleased with my time. I'm glad to have raised so much money for our chosen charity." Pub manager Ben Grainger added: "We are all so proud of Steph."

The Barker's Brewery (Huyton)



Well done folks!
£200
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Cupcakes decorated by pub staff with the Young Lives vs Cancer logo were sold at a coffee morning at The Barker's Brewery (Huyton). The event also featured bingo, a mini quiz and a raffle. A total of £200 was raised. The pub's charity champion, shift leader Debs Fisher (pictured), who organised the morning, said: "It was the first time I've organised, or even attended, a coffee morning of any kind." "People enjoyed it – and I'm grateful for their contribution to our chosen charity."

The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew)



Well done folks!
£329
...raised for our
chosen charity.

A bake sale at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew) raised £329. Staff made cakes and cupcakes for customers to purchase. The fundraising total had already been given a boost by pub manager Donna Walker who took part in the Great Scottish Run, Glasgow's annual half marathon. Pictured (left to right) are shift leaders Chloe Johnston and Molly Scoular and kitchen associate Mairi Combe, who all brought in some baking for the sale.

The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield)



Well done folks!
£377
...raised for our
chosen charity.

There was standing room only at a charity 'race night' at The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield). More than 100 people took part amid an excited atmosphere, with participants vying to win bottles of wine and boxes of chocolates. Groups of eight bought tables at £20 each, but more than 30 people had to stand during the event, owing to its popularity. As part of the admission, each table was given a bottle of Prosecco and a tray of nibbles. The event was run by shift manager Hayley Martin. She said: "The pub was packed – and everyone had a hugely enjoyable time." "We were delighted to raise £377." Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Hayley Martin, floor associate Kay Slater and pub manager Rick Brown, with shift manager Sophia Salvati (seated).

The Glass Blower (Castleford)



Well done folks!
£475
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Hardy walkers Sarah Heppinstall and Katy Walker (pictured left to right) hiked 21 miles along the East Riding of Yorkshire coast, raising £475. Pub manager Sarah and shift manager Katy, of The Glass Blower (Castleford), took just six hours to complete the journey amid frequently challenging terrain. Sarah said: "It was harder than I thought it was going to be." "At times, we had to walk quite close to the cliff edge." The trek took place from Bridlington to Filey, along new stretches of The King Charles III Coastal Path, a project aiming to provide managed walkways around 2,700 miles of Britain's coastline. Sarah added: "We would both like to thank those customers who gave so generously and supported us."



The Society Rooms (Stalybridge)

Well done folks!
£50
...raised for our
chosen charity.

'Spoonsfest' at The Society Rooms (Stalybridge) is where the Wetherspoon's real-ale festival met Oktoberfest.

Invented by shift manager Rachael Wren and named by shift manager Corrina Bates, the event saw the team wear traditional dresses and lederhosen.

Beers were sold in dimpled glasses, a little smaller than those used at the famous Munich event, in accordance with UK weights and measures legislation.

Glasses, T-shirts and bottles of ale were raffled during the event, raising £50.

Corrina said: "It was great fun – and customers appreciated the effort put in to create a great atmosphere."

Pictured (left to right) are shift leader Elizabeth Cole and shift managers Johnny Nicoll and Corrina Bates.



The James Watt (Greenock)

Well done folks!
£80
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Seven pool players from The James Watt (Greenock) raised £80 at local venue Bullseye Hall.

The league event was won by cleaner Jamie Wilson, who is a very keen player.

The idea came from a brainstorming session led by shift leader Amanda McLellan.

She said: "It was a lot of fun – and we are grateful to Bullseye Hall which offered the venue to us free."

Spectators each paid £1 to watch the charity event, with donations received on the night and at the pub.

The other competitors were cleaner Gus Jannetts, shift leader Corinne McQuillan, bar associates Scott McIntosh and Sharleen Strachan and shift leaders Ben Bell and Amanda McLellan.



Yr Hen Dderwen (Carmarthen)

Well done folks!
£405
...raised for our
chosen charity.

A community darts tournament organised by Wetherspoon staff members Kristian Rees (left) and Jensen Clarke (right) raised £405.

The tournament, featuring all of the local Afan Valley Darts League teams, took place at Port Talbot's Seaside Social and Labour Club.

Shift manager Kristian and pub manager Jensen work at Yr Hen Dderwen (Carmarthen) and represent the pub in the league.

The money was raised via ticket sales for raffles during the day.

Kristian said: "It was an absolute pleasure to raise a nice sum of money for our wonderful charity."

"We are very grateful to everyone who participated and contributed from both the pub and the local Port Talbot community."



The Scribbling Mill (Leeds)

Well done folks!
£634
...raised for our
chosen charity.

A ghostly apparition in the form of a nun (aka shift manager Joanna Bacon) overlooks a host of spooky characters at The Scribbling Mill (Leeds), where a Halloween event raised £254.

The total topped up the £380 already raised at a Disney-themed day some weeks beforehand, featuring a themed quiz.

Both events were organised by shift manager Ellie Swaine.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Madi Ramsden, team leader Emma Rankin, bar associate Emmalee Taylor, kitchen associate Kaye Mamwell, shift manager Joanna Bacon (back – in nun's outfit); (knelt down, front, left to right) bar team leader Annalise Rafferty, kitchen shift leader Josh McBride, bar associate Blake Howgate, shift manager Jack Periot-Mccann; (knelt down, front, left to right) bar associate Blessing Makanjera and bar associate Aiden Cowie.



The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards)

Customer Gary Aston dressed as Santa as staff sold raffle tickets at The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards).

A Christmas hamper, £150 in Wetherspoon gift vouchers and £150 in Tesco vouchers were raffled, raising £320.

The pub's manager, Alice Treasure (pictured with Santa, aka Gary Aston), said: "We are thrilled to have raised so much money. It was a good day – and Gary did a great job as Santa."

Well done folks!
£320
...raised for our
chosen charity.

The Barker's Brewery (Huyton)

Well done folks!
£720
...raised for our chosen charity.



A festive family fun-day with a Christmas grotto was held at The Barker's Brewery (Huyton).

Children visited Santa in his Christmas grotto and received presents, donated by staff and customers.

Customers played bingo, Irish bingo, 'Play Your Cards Right' – hi/low game and took part in a raffle, raising £720.

Pictured (left to right) are duty manager Pamela Rustage, shift leader Debs Fisher and bar associate Julie Graham, with some of the raffle prizes.

Well done folks!
£87
...raised for our chosen charity.



A charity quiz, themed along the lines of Marvel characters, attracted more than 30 people to The Barker's Brewery (Huyton).

Participants paid £5 each to enter, with proceeds divided between the prize fund and Young Lives vs Cancer.

Shift leader Debs Fisher organised the event, saying: "People loved it – and everyone was asking when the next quiz will be."

Pictured at the quiz (left to right) are bar associate Olivia Kilgallon, shift leader Debs Fisher and bar associate Chloe Sweeney.

The Scribbling Mill (Leeds)

Well done folks!
£357
...raised for our chosen charity.



The Scribbling Mill (Leeds) celebrated its first birthday with a charity event, raising £357.

The event featured face-painting, a bake sale and a tombola with prizes including alcohol and chocolates.

Shift manager Ellie Swaine organised the event.

She said: "It was a great success. It was nice to be able to do something for our loyal customers who have supported us all throughout our first year."

Pictured (left to right) are team leaders Emma Rankin and Lauren Dixon, bar associate Molly Micklethwaite, shift manager Autumn Devereux and bar associate Naomi Courtney.

The Kentish Drovers (Peckham)

Well done folks!
£165
...raised for our chosen charity.



'Trick or treat' cakes were offered to customers as part of a Halloween charity fundraiser at The Kentish Drovers (Peckham).

The fun pick-a-cake offered a blind choice between a delicious chocolate 'treat' and a disgusting black mayonnaise 'trick'.

Staff dressed in scary outfits for the fundraiser, which included a lucky dip with gift bags.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Laylah Silver, team leaders Rachel Castles and Mark Mullin, shift leader Jordan Gales, pub manager John Calveley and bar associate Charley Herbert.

The event raised £165.

The Liquorice Gardens (Worksop)



In a Halloween charity fundraiser at The Liquorice Gardens (Worksop), youngsters soaked pub staff.

Kitchen manager Kate Nott and colleagues volunteered to have wet sponges thrown at them.

Other events on the night, raising £750, included a Halloween-themed spooky quiz.

Pictured (left to right) are kitchen manager Kate Nott, shift leader Aron Briscombe (in stocks) and shift managers Laura Jepson, Alex Payne, Courtney Bowmer and Roy Shillito.

The Isambard Kingdom Brunel (Portsmouth)



Tickets to see Portsmouth FC and a football signed by all of the players were raffled at The Isambard Kingdom Brunel (Portsmouth).

The football club donated the ball, while club sponsor Portsmouth University assisted with the tickets as the pub looked to achieve its goal of raising £1,000 over Christmas.

A festive addition to the line-up of prizes arrived in the form of Colin the Caterpillar – a cake among the donations made by the local Marks & Spencer store.

Pub manager Tez Merry said: "Christmas is a time for charity, as well as fun, and we're delighted to have reached our goal of raising £1,000.

"We'd like to thank those who donated such amazing prizes."

Pictured (left to right) are team leader Nathan Rowland, shift managers Carla Giddings, Jake Ashton and Michelle Cronshaw, pub manager Tez Merry and bar associate Mox Jiggings Duque.

Well done folks!
£1,615
...raised for our
chosen charity.

The Carrick Stone (Cumbernauld)



Parachutist and pub deputy manager Sara Cairney proudly displays her certificate, having successfully completed a 10,000ft drop over St Andrews, raising £1,615.

The St Andrews base is about an hour's drive from The Carrick Stone (Cumbernauld), where Sara works.

Sara said: "I was pretty chilled when I jumped from the aeroplane. The instructor had told me all about sights to look for on the way down – and my mind was focused on that.

"It was amazing – beautiful views of mountains, places where I've walked and the sea. I'd definitely do it again."

The Scribbling Mill (Leeds)



Staff at The Scribbling Mill (Leeds) rode 100 miles on a static bike to help in raising £450.

Cakes and other goodies made by staff, along with a Big Fat Quiz of 2023 and tombola, also contributed to the total.

Shift manager Thomas Mitchell said: "We all took turns throughout the day and got fit, while raising money for charity.

"The quiz was themed along memories of 2023 and was a big hit with customers."

Thomas is pictured (left) with bar associate Blessing Makanjera and team leader Alex Conlon.

Baxter's Court (Hackney)



Well done folks!
£300
...raised for our chosen charity.

Generous pub regular Nick Brandstatter donated a Christmas hamper to be raffled at Baxter's Court (Hackney).

Nick, a retired market trader and wholesaler, used contacts developed over decades to source quality festive products for the hamper, including mulled wine, cakes, wines and chocolates.

Staff sold tickets to customers, raising £300.

Nick has also put together hampers for Valentine's Day and Easter raffles.

Pub manager Roy Bigg said: "Nick does an amazing job with the hampers and it really does help us to bring the money in for our charity."

Roy is pictured with team leaders Ana Moura and Maria Moreno, showing off Nick's Christmas hamper.

The Scribbling Mill (Leeds)



Well done folks!
£519
...raised for our chosen charity.

Kitchen associate Kaye Mamwell braved the shave at The Scribbling Mill (Leeds), raising £519.

Kaye's long locks may have taken decades to grow, yet took only minutes to fall from her head as neighbouring barber Chris Gleu from 'Gentlemen's Corner' wielded the scissors.

She said: "It's a new look for me, but I'm glad to have raised so much for our chosen charity."

Kaye is pictured (before) with shift managers Joanna Bacon (left) and Ellie Swaine and (after) with barber Chris.



The Liquorice Gardens (Workshop)



Well done folks!
£1,200
...raised for our chosen charity.

The Sir Nigel Gresley (Swadlincote)

Male staff at The Sir Nigel Gresley (Swadlincote) agreed to wear dresses to work – if charity champion Rene Kernan could beat an £800 festive fundraising target.

Bar associate Rene got to work early in December with charity raffles and collections and quickly beat the target.

And the great sports that they are, the men came to work on Christmas Eve in a variety of dresses and outfits, helping the final total raised to get to £1,200.

Pub manager Rob Winterton said: "The staff were happy to oblige – and we had a really good laugh and lots of compliments on our outfits."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Rene Kernan, pub manager Rob Winterton, shift leaders Ben Hawkins and Brandon Shirley, shift manager Emma Jones (kneeling), bar associate Tegan Harrison, shift manager Georgia Quinn, team leader Josh Jarvis, bar associate Dylan Beardmore and floor associate Kieran Woodward.

Well done folks!
£787
...raised for our chosen charity.

A coach trip to York helped The Liquorice Gardens (Workshop) to raise £787.

Forty customers boarded the coach for a day out to go Christmas shopping and to see the sights, including the Jorvik Centre and the old city walls.

Sales from tickets went towards the charity's total, boosted by coach company Maxfields Travel which donated £400 to the charity, as well as a £50 travel voucher to be raffled on the way back from York.

In addition, Steve Baker, a regular at the pub who works as a Maxfields Travel driver, donated a £20 Wetherspoon voucher, while coach driver Jim Rodgers handed over the £45 collected for him by customers on the day to Wetherspoon's charity too.

The trip was organised by shift manager Courtney Bowmer and Steve Baker.

Courtney said: "A massive thankyou to Maxfields Travel, especially Benjamin, Peter and Sharon Maxfield and, of course, Steve.

"As well as raising funds for charity, everyone had a lovely Christmas trip to York."

The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield)



Well done folks!
£500
...raised for our chosen charity.

Keen boxers Jake Dunn (left) and Zane Bradley staged a charity fight at a local gym, raising £500.

Shift leader Jake and team leader Zane put on their gloves in front of an audience of 50 at the UIS Gym, opposite where they work – The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield).

Jake said: “We had been meaning to do this for some time, as we both like to box and we thought that we could raise money for our chosen charity.

“We are both grateful to the gym for hosting it and to everyone who turned up to watch.”

The Punch Bowl (York)



Well done folks!
£380
...raised for our chosen charity.

A Christmas charity day at The Punch Bowl (York) raised £200.

A cake sale took centre stage, featuring cake slices, gingerbread men and cupcakes.

A hamper full of festive goodies was raffled, while sales of Christmas cards and pin badges all helped towards the fundraising total.

Events were also held on the day for children, including colouring sessions.

Pub shift manager Rachel Southwell is pictured running the cake stall.

Rachel also organised a Halloween-themed bake sale, which raised £180.

The Rawson Spring (Sheffield)



Well done folks!
£1,500
...raised for our chosen charity.

Rival clubs Sheffield Wednesday and Sheffield United came together at Christmas to donate match tickets for a raffle at The Rawson Spring (Sheffield). The tickets were among the prizes to be won at the raffle during a Christmas fayre at the pub.

This saw the pub’s garden bar festooned with festive decorations as customers were treated to a bake sale and a tombola. The event raised £1,500.

Pub manager Josh Bell said: “We were amazed how well it went, despite a downpour which meant that we had to move everyone inside at one point.

“We are very grateful to both football clubs and to everyone else who donated prizes, as well as to customers who supported the event.”

Pictured (left to right) are team leaders Victoria Buttery, Laura Shippam and Cody Speight.

The Scarsdale Hundred (Beighton)



Well done folks!
£520
...raised for our chosen charity.

The Woodhouse Prize Band arrived amid an atmosphere of Christmas spirit at The Scarsdale Hundred (Beighton).

The band, which celebrated its 170th anniversary in 2023, played festive favourites as customers sang along.

As the music entertained the audience, staff staged a cocktail session, with £70 raised, in addition to the £450 raised during the Christmas period.

Pub manager Emma Walker said: “It was a really enjoyable evening and lovely to have the brass band here.”

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Asha Stenson, cornet player Leah Reynolds, conductor Andrew Mills, shift manager Daniel Moyes and flugelhorn player Jo Wild.

LARGS

LARGS MAGICIANS ARE A TRICKY BUNCH



Magicians amuse customers with a variety of magic tricks at The Paddle Steamer (Largs) each Tuesday from 11am.

The group has been meeting since the pub opened in 2016.

Pub manager Ryan Gallacher said: "People pass by their table and watch them do tricks with cards and other magic props.

"They are a great bunch. They come in and have coffees or a brunch or lunch – and occasionally an ale or a glass of wine."

He added: "I've never asked them how they do their tricks, because I'm pretty sure what the answer would be!"

Pictured (left to right, back row) are magicians Brian Jeffrey, Tommy Templeton, Bill Wishart, Phil Simpson and Charlie Young, with (left to right, front row) Harry Tunstead, David Ennes, Charlie Hughes and Douglas Hendry.

MALTBY

INNOVATIVE IDEA AS PUB PUTS MARKET IN CAR PARK

The Queens Hotel (Maltby) has launched its own monthly village market – in its car park.

The first event at the pub was run in co-operation with Maltby Council and is officially supported by local East Ward councillors.

Four stalls opened for business, including one selling Halloween masks and lanterns, a local business called Likkle More Seasonings, a council-run stall and another selling crafted ornaments.

The pub's manager, Beth Burns, said: "This was just the first of what we hope will become a monthly village market, with fruit and veg stalls and everything else you'd expect to see in a market."

The market is held on the first Saturday of every month.

The launch of the market marked '100 years of the Queen's' as the hotel celebrated its centenary in March 2023.

Pictured (left to right) are Beth Burns, Rotherham Borough Council Neighbourhood co-ordinator Claire Moseley, Likkle More Seasonings stall-holder Raegan Macintosh and shift manager Logan Wall.



CATHERINE WHEEL - AND CHRISTIAN - STILL GOING STRONG AFTER 21 YEARS

Kitchen associate Christian Smith took centre stage as The Catherine Wheel (Henley-on-Thames) celebrated its 21st anniversary.

Christian (pictured) joined the pub on day one and has worked there ever since it opened in November 2002.

Christian, now 43, said: "I think that I will retire here, too."

"I like the job, the people and I'm glad I've helped to see it through to 'adulthood'."

At the coming-of-age party, the number 21 featured prominently.

The pub has a hotel attached – and the first person to arrive to stay that night had £21 discounted from the room bill.

In addition, the person staying in room 121 was awarded a free breakfast.

Over in the pub, Christian was on hand to offer customers a glass of complimentary Prosecco and a cupcake.



THIRSK'S THIRST FOR GIN BRINGS CASH ROLLING IN

The Three Tuns (Thirsk) celebrated its 15th birthday with a raffle of a gin hamper donated by its longest-serving staff member – Sally Balotta.

Sally joined the pub as a bar associate when it opened in 2008 and is now a team leader.

She said: "I thought that it would be a good way to mark the occasion and knew that it would be a popular raffle prize."

The pub was decorated with balloons and bunting for the raffle which, together with a birthday bake sale, raised £230 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Sally was not the only person on the night to have worked at the pub in 2008 – former colleague Dawn Tull travelled from Ripon, where she now works as a shift manager at The Unicorn Hotel.

Dawn is pictured (far left) with (left to right) shift manager Daniel Mair, team leaders Sally Balotta and Tracey Donnelly and pub manager Tom Brumpton.



CAROL SINGERS BRING SMILES TO THE LORD OF THE ISLES

A group of carol singers formed from customers of The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew) raised £250 for Erskine Hospital.

Pub manager Donna Walker invited the group's members to sing at the pub after discovering that they sing regularly at Renfrew North Church.

She said: "They told me that they'd like to sing at the pub and, of course, I said 'yes'."

"They were brilliant. Lots of other customers joined in – and we have invited the group back to perform at Easter."

Customer and singer Valerie Wallace is pictured (front, blue top) with fellow singers.





The Moon Under Water (Enfield) Bar associate Chloe Nicole Dawson (right) and shift leader Samantha Hamilton

POPPIES APLENTY AT PUBS IN BRITAIN

Wetherspoon's staff and customers supported the Royal British Legion's (RBL) annual poppy appeal during the month-long period of remembrance.

As they do every year, Wetherspoon's pubs across England, Scotland and Wales displayed poppies, each having a collection box on the bar, as well as one at Wetherspoon's head office in Watford.

Many of the pubs also, once again, created their own poppy displays to mark remembrance and show their support to the armed forces community.

The red poppy is a symbol of remembrance and hope. For the first time this year, customers could wear the new plastic-free poppy, made entirely from paper.

The armed forces make sacrifices every day, so that we can enjoy our freedoms and way of life, so wearing or displaying a poppy shows the armed forces community that its service is appreciated.

Wetherspoon's operations director, Martin Geoghegan, said: "We are proud to support the Royal British Legion's annual poppy appeal, every year, in the knowledge that every poppy sold helps the life of many serving and ex-serving personnel and their families.

"Once again, thank you to all of our staff and customers who continue to help us in our support of the Royal British Legion's appeal."

The Royal British Legion's head of corporate partnerships, Ben France, said: "We would like to thank Wetherspoon's pubs for their continued support in helping RBL to bring the poppy appeal to communities around the UK.

"The donations raised make it possible for us to provide much-needed help and support to the many thousands of service personnel, veterans and their families who call on us in their hour of need."



The Quayside (Newcastle) Bar associates Sam Robinson (left) and Christopher James Dalziel with the new-look plastic-free poppies

The Henry Bell (Helensburgh) Regular customers Alan and Marilyn McAnally support The Scottish Poppy Appeal, buying their poppies from bar associate Lynn Marland (centre)



The Bell Hanger (Chepstow) Pub manager Paul Hendry (centre) sells poppies to customers Jeremy Edwards and Maxine Ward

CAMBERLEY

OLDER CHAPS GATHER AT THE CLAUDE DU VALL CLUB



A group of older gentlemen gets together for breakfast once a week at The Claude du Vall (Camberley).

The Camberley Men's Breakfast Club's members enjoy tea, coffee, a full English and a good catch-up.

Pub manager Paul Read said: "There used to be just two of them, yet it has grown to more than 20."

Ranging in age from 70 to 92, members hail from a range of career backgrounds, including some military veterans, yet all share one thing in common – a desire to get out and meet socially.

Group founder John Platt, 84, said: "A lot of older people miss the social life which they once had.

"Our group helps them to rediscover that simple pleasure."

As well as meeting at 9am on Thursdays, the group has expanded its scope and is often involved in local charitable projects.

John is pictured with bar associate Ahmet Ergin at the weekly breakfast get-together.

MEXBOROUGH

OLD MARKET HALL STAFF SHINE BRIGHT AS THEIR TOWN TURNS ON THE LIGHTS

Staff at The Old Market Hall (Mexborough) got in the Christmas spirit as 2,000 people gathered in the South Yorkshire town for the annual switching-on of the Christmas lights.

Pub manager Matt Fearn and his team wrapped presents for local children, before joining the crowds for the switch-on.

Matt sits on the committee which organised the festive light display, and the pub marks the spot where the event takes place.

He said: "It's a great event each year and went very well. It was lovely to see that so many people came out."

As well as gifts, children were treated to 23 stalls, selling candy floss and homemade presents and running tombolas.

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Matt Fearn, bar associate Jade Goddard and team leader Craig Edwardson.



WEDNESBURY

BELLWETHER GANG GIVES GAMES AND TOYS TO GIRLS AND BOYS

Staff and customers at The Bellwether (Wednesbury) donated dolls, Teddy bears and board games to be given to children in local hospitals at Christmas.

The event was organised by pub manager Ian Harvey as part of a local charity project called Santa's A Gangster.

A trolley was left in the pub in which customers could leave presents,

while posters on the pub's inside walls advertised the initiative.

Ian said: "We were inundated with gifts and were pleased to be part of this effort – which takes place all over the area at Christmas time."

Santa's A Gangster is run by staff at VolksMagic, a local motor workshop dedicated to restoring VW cars.



The Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren (Nottingham) Team leader Sonya Gardner serves a pint to customer Derek Charles Kinnear

BARGAINS AT THE BAR DURING JANUARY SALE

Wetherspoon's customers, once again, enjoyed a January sale at the company's pubs across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

The drinks featured in the sale were draught beers and ciders (Doom Bar, Bud Light, Worthington's, Stowford Press Apple Cider and Budweiser, spirits (Au Vodka (four flavours) and Sidemen XIX Vodka (mixed berry), classic cocktails (Espresso Martini, Strawberry Daiquiri and Tommy's Margarita), Corona seltzers (raspberry & lemon and guava & lime) and a range of soft drinks (Diet Pepsi, Pepsi Max, R. White's lemonade, Pepsi Max cherry) and Lavazza coffee (with free refills, as well as tea and hot chocolate).

Low-alcohol and alcohol-free drinks were also included in the sale. They were Erdinger, BrewDog Punk AF, Heineken 0.0, Beck's Blue, Stella Artois, Adnams Ghost Ship and Kopparberg Strawberry & Lime.

Customers were also able to enjoy savings on food, with offers on a small breakfast (fried egg, bacon, sausage, baked beans and toast), a range of small plates, including halloumi-style fries, chicken wings and nachos, and a choice of burgers: American burger, classic beef burger and crunchy chicken strip burger (all served with chips) and skinny beef burger (served with a side salad).

Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, said: "Department stores and shops hold their sales in January, so it is the perfect time to have a sale in the pubs too."

"The range of food and drinks on sale was aimed at suiting a wide variety of tastes – and, this year, we included our biggest selection of low-alcohol and alcohol-free drinks."

"The January sale always proves popular with customers – and, as always, staff at the pubs served them responsibly."



The Wild Boar (Houghton-le-Spring) Duty manager Gez Burrows serves customer Ken James



The Castle Hotel (Ruthin) Team leader Laney Jackson-Wyatt (left) serves customers Roger Williams and his mum Liz Williams



The Gold Cape (Mold) Customers Rhona and Graham Cartwright



The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards) Customers Tajudeen Alabi (left) and Billy James



The New YearField (Livingston) Customers Robert and Morag Taylor



The Sedge Lynn (Chorlton-cum-Hardy) Customers Liz Mayne (left) and Claire Latham



Woodrow Wilson (Carlisle) Team leader Ben Cassidy serves a pint to customers Geoff Lorimer (left) and Tommy Todhunter



The Wallace Hartley (Colne) Customer Claire Lamont



The Dragon Inn (Birmingham) Bar associate Nathan Clitheroe serves customers Charity Hill (left) and Kerry Bond



The White Lady (Corstorphine) Customers Stevie Johnston (left) and Abbie Phillips

CARLISLE

WOODROW WILSON - TOP OF THE POPPIES



The Royal British Legion (RBL) poppy appeal presented a certificate to Woodrow Wilson (Carlisle) to thank staff and customers for raising an amazing £5,000 in five years.

Such certificates are given only to those organisations which have collected a large amount of money over a long period.

The £5,000 was collected through poppy sales, year-round donations and sales of enamel poppy badges.

The pub's manager, Daryl Morrison, praised pub regular Robbie Reid-Sinclair, one of the main people involved in the fundraising.

Daryl said: "Robbie is a regular who has frequented the pub since it opened 25 years ago and is 'part of the fabric of the building'.

"He regularly encourages collections, empties and maintains the box and has been a real engine behind this fundraising effort."

Robbie is also welfare officer of The Ton Class Minesweepers' Association.

Margaret Wadsworth, chairwoman of the RBL's Carlisle and Stanwix branch, said: "Woodrow Wilson has one of our all-year-round collecting boxes on its bar.

"It is emptied every couple of weeks and usually contains £25-30, sometimes more.

"These totals, together with the amounts raised during the poppy appeal fortnight each year, raised more than £5,000 from May 2018 until the end of September 2023.

"This is an amazing achievement, especially as it coincided with pandemic lockdowns, meaning that the pub was closed for periods of time.

"I would like to congratulate and thank the staff of Woodrow Wilson and its customers for their support and generosity."

Margaret is pictured presenting the certificate to pub manager Daryl Morrison with Robbie.

MALTBY

QUEENS HOTEL HELPS KEEP MALTBY COOL ON BONFIRE NIGHT

The Queens Hotel (Maltby) teamed up with the local council to put on a special event aimed at local young people around Bonfire Night.

Maltby After Dark was attended by councillors and officers of Maltby Town Council, as well as representatives from Rotherham United Football Club, the armed forces and the fire service.

The pub's manager, Beth Burns, said: "We hosted a barbecue and offered soft drinks to the young people who attended the event.

"For young people, there is little to do locally - with the time around Bonfire Night often resulting in antisocial behaviour.

"But, thanks to this event, we had none this year - and the young people who attended thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

"We are grateful to the council, Rotherham United, the army cadets and the fire brigade for attending."

Pictured tending the barbecue (left to right) are pub manager Beth Burns and kitchen manager Sarah Steer, as council and army representatives look on.



BRIDLINGTON

RINGMASTERS SANDY AND SAM BRING CIRCUS TO BRIDLINGTON



The team at The Prior John (Bridlington) transformed the pub into a fabulous carnival, all in aid of a local charity's fundraising initiative.

In and around the Yorkshire seaside resort of Bridlington, 33 pubs took part in a town-wide 'mega fancy-dress party', collecting funds for Cash for Kids – a grant-giving charity, helping those children who need it most, across Yorkshire, north Derbyshire and north Lincolnshire.

All of the Wetherspoon staff dressed in carnival and circus fancy-dress attire for the day, decorated the pub in the carnival-themed idea and set up side shows and games to raise funds for the charity.

Activities included 'find the joker', balloon darts, ring toss, 'guess how many sweets in the jar' and 'guess the name of the Teddy', as well as sweet cones and homemade cakes and lollies for sale.

Shift leader and organiser Sam Harriman, along with pub manager Sandy Cook, said: "Unfortunately, the weather was not on our side, but staff worked hard and the customers were generous."

"We managed to collect £615 for charity and were highly praised for our efforts by the town event's organisers."

Pictured in carnival mood and attire are bar associates Nicole Cunningham (left) and Bailey Neal, as well as (left to right) team leader Jay Webster, pub manager Sandy Cook, team leader Dan Semons and shift manager Paul Harrison.

LIVERPOOL

NAVIGATOR FOLK FIND WAY TO SPREAD JOY

Staff members at The Navigator (Liverpool) once again supported their local community in the run-up to Christmas.

Shift leader Becky Doherty organised a 'chocolate appeal', in aid of the local food bank charity, an initiative which she has been supporting for the past two years.

Becky explained: "We raised £150 in cash donations and also had donations of chocolates too from staff members and amazing customers at the pub."

"The charity we have been working with again is Aid to All, which provides Christmas packs to families who are struggling during the festive season."

Help from the charity includes Christmas dinner for families, toys for the youngsters and chocolate sweet treats and selection boxes for the families.

Becky added: "The charity had more than 300 applications this year, significantly higher than last year, which highlights how many people are struggling."

"A huge thankyou to our wonderful customers for their continued support, helping us to help others once again."

Aid To All is a non-profit organisation in the Liverpool area, aiming to help families and individuals who need support.

PUTNEY

AWARD FOR CHARLOTTE AFTER FIVE AWESOME YEARS AT PUTNEY PUB



Kitchen associate Charlotte Newland is pictured receiving her five-year service award certificate from pub manager Nikolay Petrov (right) at The Rocket (Putney).

Area manager James Copley is also pictured, alongside shift manager Courtney Ward.

Nikolay, who has managed The Rocket since April 2023, said: "Charlotte is a good addition to our kitchen team – and her five years at the pub are a great achievement."

"She is always very helpful and positive and enjoys being part of the team, with a regular routine. She is a popular staff member."

Kitchen manager Esan Cummings stepped up in the summer of 2023 to head the kitchen team – and Charlotte, who has learning difficulties, is a part-time member.

Initially a pot-washer, Charlotte is now receiving training on the cook line and getting plenty of help and support from colleagues.

Area manager James Copley added: "Congratulations to Charlotte on her well-deserved five-year award."

THE CROWN • BERKHAMSTED

CROWN PROVES TO BE A GOOD FIT FOR KING SIMON



Simon Adamson is pictured (centre, wearing red) surrounded by friends and colleagues as he celebrated 25 years' service with Wetherspoon.

Simon, who has been pub manager at The Crown (Berkhamsted) since 2005, started his Wetherspoon career in 1998 as a shift manager at The Cross Keys (St Albans) (now closed).

Within a couple of months, he joined the team at The White House (Luton), when it newly opened in November 1998, before moving to The Regal (Cambridge) six weeks after that pub also newly opened.

Simon recalled: "I'd been working for another pub company, yet was having a terrible time, when I saw the recruitment adverts for Wetherspoon offering better conditions.

"It was exciting times with the company – expansion was really cranking up and there were so many opportunities.

"The White House was a prestigious opening outside of London, and I enjoyed the challenge."

Simon took on his role as pub manager in January 2001 at the newly opened pub The Wheatsheaf Inn (Wisbech), where he stayed for a couple of years, before several further moves, prior to arriving at The Crown.

He admitted: "The fact that I have been at The Crown since 2005 speaks volumes. I have a great team here.

"We work hard and, at the same time, have a fantastic time.

"Seeing staff progress through the ranks, from part-time 16-year-olds to being ready for their own pubs, is a great reward.

"We look after them. It is such a great pub here, and they very rarely want to move on."

Simon, who turned 50 at the end of March, continued: "The company looks after its staff well.

"The pay is fair, bonuses are fantastic, we listen to people regarding rotas and that all pays dividends in the end.

"The pub manager role has its challenges, as you have the ultimate responsibility for every single aspect of the business.

"I think I'm a fairly laid-back kind of guy and always say 'you must take things on the chin and keep moving forward'.

"You could never say that the job is boring.

"Every day is a different day, and I wouldn't still be here if I didn't love what I do."

SANDFORD HOUSE • HUNTINGDON

HANNAH AND FOUR OF HER CHILDREN FIND SUCCESS AT SANDFORD HOUSE



Pictured (left to right) are Beth, Finley, Hannah, Hope and Ethan

Wetherspoon's customers (of a certain age) may remember a 1970s American television family drama series called *The Waltons*.

Staff and customers at Sandford House (Huntingdon) have their very own 'family affair' in the kitchen at the Cambridgeshire pub – known as *The Watsons*.

Part-time kitchen associate and mum Hannah Watson joined the team when the pub first opened (July 2016) and, over time, has been joined by four of her seven children.

Kitchen associate Beth (aged 24) and kitchen team leader Hope (22) both started working in the kitchen at the pub and hotel, at the age of 16, just after completing their GCSEs.

They now work with their brothers, kitchen associate Ethan (19), who was 17 when he joined the team after his college studies, and the newest recruit Finley (16).

Hannah said: "I have always told them, if they want their own money, that they have to earn it. As soon as they were old enough, they have all done exactly that."

Hope's twin brother Callum is the only sibling of working age not with Wetherspoon, while younger brothers Theo (14) and Noah (12) are both still at school.

Even Hannah's mum, Giselle Bent, worked at the pub as a cleaner, before her retirement, alongside her son, Hannah's brother Adam Godman, until he moved away.

Hannah continued: "Hope is currently on maternity leave, but both she and Beth, as well as Ethan, absolutely love their job."

"Finley wants to go on to university to study forensic science, but I'm sure that he will still work at the pub during holidays."

She added: "Beth and I don't work the same shifts, as we juggle our jobs with sharing childcare for her two-year-old son."

"These days, I always work the early shift."

"I am very comfortable working at the pub. It really is like a huge family."

"The whole team works well together – and many of us have been together for a long time."

Kitchen manager Gareth Walsh and kitchen shift leader Abi Skinner have also been at Sandford House since it first opened.

Beth described working with her family as 'challenging at first', but added: "I love it now. It's the best thing – and we are all family here... all the staff."

"We all know one another really well – and that helps to build a good team."

Hannah concluded: "We all know what we are doing and work well together."

"We're a well-oiled machine."

HOW TO KEEP PUBS SAFE? WATCH WHAT PUBWATCHERS DO

Conscientious Wetherspoon pub managers put safety first by signing up to 538 separate pubwatch schemes

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

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

As at April 2024, Wetherspoon's pubs were confirmed to be participating in up to 538 local pubwatch schemes, across the UK.

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

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

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

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

The basic principle involved in a pubwatch is that the licensees of the premises involved agree on how to deal with customers who cause or threaten damage, disorder or violence and/or use or deal in drugs on their premises.

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

Having agreed on this approach, the premises then publicise it and stick to it.

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

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

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

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

Here, we highlight three pubs and their pubwatch schemes – at varying stages of establishment and involvement.



Pub manager Lily Capillo (J.J. Moon's, Wembley)

The Moon Under Water (Enfield)

Pub manager Stuart Marden (pictured) has worked for Wetherspoon for almost 29 years, the last six of which as manager in Enfield, north London.

He has been involved with the already-established Enfield pubwatch, as co-chair, for the past three years, meeting up twice a year with his fellow pubwatch members.

Stuart said: "We don't meet as often as I would like (quarterly would be more ideal), but we keep in touch regularly through a Facebook group.

"The camaraderie among us all is good and, when we do meet, we chat about our problems and experiences – which are often the same or similar issues.

"The local council is helpful, and our licensing team is very supportive.

"The network is there – and younger people, newly taking on pubs and licensed premises, are able to draw from others' experience."

Stuart concluded: "Pubwatch enables us all to track certain individuals to identify troublesome customers, who, when barred from one venue, are barred from all."



The Bank House (Cheltenham)

Shift manager Jack Ryder has been The Bank House's representative at the Cheltenham pubwatch meetings, which convene every two months on the first Tuesday, for the past two years.

Jack, who started as a bar associate six years ago, reported: "Cheltenham pubwatch was established in 2006 and currently includes 66 venues, from the town centre and suburbs of Cheltenham.

"Council representatives, police licensing officers and the council night-safe co-ordinator attend each meeting. It is a real collective, and every agency is helpful and supportive, including Cheltenham business improvement district (BID) and the volunteer street pastor group Cheltenham Guardians."

Jack (pictured) continued: "We have two pubwatch communications channels. Supported by Cheltenham Borough Council and part of the night-safe scheme, the alpha radio link gives pubs, clubs and door staff a direct line to one another.

"Cheltenham Safe, an online application accessed via computer or smartphone, enables us to see CCTV, as well as to access images of known problem people, including details about the reasons for banning orders.

"This helps us to be prepared for any potential danger or issues.

"We review banning orders at every meeting, share information and all pull together to help to make Cheltenham the safe night-time destination it is (Purple Flag status for eight years)."

The Joseph Morton (Louth)

Pub manager Emma Smith has been the catalyst in the launch of a brand-new pubwatch scheme in Louth, of which she is now the chair.

A Wetherspoon pub manager for 15 years, the last three in her second spell at The Joseph Morton, Emma has been helped by the company's security group.

Emma, pictured with Ben Nuttel (from neighbourhood police team), said: "As we are an established national pub group, with a pub in the town, others were looking to share knowledge and experience with us – and Wetherspoon's security group was really helpful in the set-up, with its experience and expertise.

"The pub has been open here for more than 12 years – yet there has never been a pubwatch

in Louth before, but we have now been up and running since August 2023."

Emma, who was involved with a pubwatch at previous pubs in Grimsby and Lincoln, continued: "Every other month, we have meetings with the 12 member venues, sharing issues and concerns, as well as encouraging others to join.

"The police licensing officer or representative attends every meeting, and it's good to all be working together.

"We can communicate quickly, through WhatsApp and the pubwatch e-mail, and it's having a positive impact on the town.

"We are already seeing results – and staff feel safer with more support."



SCUNTHORPE

8 SAIL'S ALES RIDE THE WAVES AT THE BLUE BELL INN



Shift manager Paula Buck treated Campaign for Real Ale members to beers from local 8 Sail Brewery at The Blue Bell Inn (Scunthorpe).

CAMRA representatives from both Grimsby and Scunthorpe branches were also offered food and some information about the pub, the brewery and its beers.

The pub stocks 8 Sail's Victoria Porter and its amber ale Windmill Bitter.

Paula said: "I hadn't met some of the CAMRA people before, so it was good to meet them and find out what they wanted from us.

"We also gave them some food with the beers, so everyone went away happy!"

Customers also took part in a raffle for a copy of The Good Beer Guide 2024, published by CAMRA. The raffle raised £47 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pictured (left to right) are chair of Grimsby CAMRA Kevin Donovan, bar associate Tatiana Cristina, Paula Buck and chair of Scunthorpe CAMRA Mark Elsome.

BLETCHLEY

VETERANS LINE UP TO SALUTE SERGEANT MAJOR SANTA CLAUS

Around 100 UK veterans were treated to a wonderful Christmas time at Captain Ridley's Shooting Party (Bletchley).

The event, put on by Milton Keynes Veterans' Breakfast Club, which meets there every Saturday, is held at the pub annually.

Veterans of all three armed forces exchanged stories over drinks and a meal and caught up with old friends and colleagues.

Highlights included former Sgt Major Dave Scott, dressed as Santa, asking veterans, sitting on his knee, what they wanted for Christmas.

They were also treated to an interactive performance by the Buckingham Royal British Legion brass band, members of which handed out percussion instruments to the audience to join in.

The pub's manager, Gemma Hamilton, said: "We have been hosting this event now for seven years and it has always been an immense pleasure."

The Veterans' Breakfast Club is led by Lt Col Simon Wilkinson.

He said: "All of the pub staff really go out of their way to help us at this event, as well as throughout the year.

"The Christmas event is always thoroughly enjoyable and great fun."

Council officers, MPs, caseworkers and health workers also attended.

Pictured (kneeling, front) are pub manager Gemma Hamilton (left) and team leader Tracy Lineker, with veterans, council staff and others.



CAPTAIN RIDLEY'S SHOOTING PARTY • BLETCHLEY

PARTY AT PARTY HOUSE AS PAULINE PASSES MILESTONE

Shift leader Pauline Smith is pictured (left) with colleagues receiving her 20-year long-service certificate from pub manager Gemma Hamilton at Captain Ridley's Shooting Party (Bletchley).

Pauline has worked at the pub for the past five years, having started her Wetherspoon career at The Secklow Hundred (Milton Keynes) (now closed).

Pauline recalled: "I started as an associate and, within three weeks, was then promoted to what was (back then) supervisor (now called a team leader).

"I spent about 10 years at that pub before moving to Wetherspoons (Milton Keynes), where I spent two years.

"I then worked for three years at the Lloyds No.1 bar The David Garrick (Milton Keynes) (now closed) in the theatre district, before returning to Wetherspoons for three years.

"When I moved house to Bletchley, five years ago, I transferred to Captain Ridley's Shooting Party, to be closer to home."

Pauline, who has remained as a shift leader, despite numerous opportunities of promotion, revealed: "I like my role, even though most of my managers have said that I could have had my own pub.

"I had a young family when I started, so didn't look to progress further.

"However, I pretty much work as a manager and I love my job.

"There have been many changes in the past two decades.

"The job moves with the times, and my Wetherspoon colleagues have been my second family for 20 years of my life."

Pauline concluded: "I'm a morning person, so have always worked the morning shift.

"In this job, you leave your problems at the front door, put a smile on your face and get on with the day.

"The team (aka the 'A team'), who are all great, can't get over how happy I am so early in the morning."



THE ADMIRAL OF THE HUMBER • HULL

SONS HELP NIGEL TO CELEBRATE 25 YEARS



Night shift leader Nigel Hillary is pictured (centre) with his sons Ryan (left) and Nathan, celebrating his 25th anniversary with Wetherspoon. Nigel, who works in the hotel at The Admiral of the Humber (Hull), was living in Carlisle when he applied for a job with the company in 1998.

He recalled: "I was made redundant from my previous job two weeks before I was getting married, so I really needed to get a job as soon as possible.

"I had previously worked in hotels and, following a successful application and interview, said I would work anywhere.

"I joined the company as a shift manager at Heathrow's terminal 2.

"I was used to moving around with work, so was happy to move again."

Nigel spent just a few months at the airport pub before returning north, when, in February 2000, the now-closed pub The Zachariah Pearson (Hull) was newly opening.

Nigel, 53, explained: "My wife is from Hull, so we decided to move there.

"I spent 14 months at The Zachariah Pearson before working in all the Hull pubs, at least twice, as the town went from no Wetherspoon pubs to four... in the space of about 18 months."

The pubs included Lloyds No.1 Bar (now closed), The Three John Scotts and The Admiral of the Humber, where Nigel now works.

He also helped with new openings and preopening training at pubs across the country, including at Beverley, Driffield, Gatwick, Watford, Newcastle and Llandudno returning to The Admiral of the Humber in June 2017, as night shift leader, when the hotel first opened there.

Both of his sons, Ryan (20) and Nathan (17), started work at The Admiral of the Humber, although Nathan, a kitchen associate, has since moved to The Three John Scotts. Ryan, currently studying maths at the University of York, is a team leader at The Postern Gate (York).

Nigel said: "As students, they both wanted a job and their own money, so joined Wetherspoon. They have grown up knowing the company, so it was an obvious choice."

Nigel, meanwhile, is happy in his role at The Admiral of the Humber, working the 10pm – 6am shift in the hotel.

He added: "There is always enough to do – and the job keeps me going.

"I didn't think when I joined, all those years ago, that I would have stayed so long, but I am thankful to the company for giving me all the working and training opportunities, which I have enjoyed."

The Admiral of the Humber's pub manager, Katie Younger, said: "Congratulations to Nigel on his remarkable 25 years' service with the company.

"He is a hard-working, reliable and great team member at the pub."

UNITED HERO BUTT HITS BACK OF THE NET AT BISHOP BLAIZE



Former Manchester United and England midfielder footballer Nicky Butt was the star of a special dinner at The Bishop Blaize (Stretford, Manchester).

The pub is the closest to the famous Stretford end of United's Old Trafford stadium and attracts large crowds of supporters – especially on match days.

The former player and current co-owner of Salford City FC spent time with customers and participated in a formal Q&A session, speaking about his past and present career.

An audience of 100, including superfan Sukie Sidhu, who runs a popular supporters' Facebook group, attended the ticket-only event, raising £300 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The pub's manager, Ben Plunkett, said: "When the supporters' club contacted us to ask whether we could host the event, we were, of course, only too pleased.

"Nicky was very friendly, happy to mingle with customers and talk about his playing career and current role."

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Ben Plunkett, Nicky Butt and Sukie Sidhu.

CUSHIONS AND CAKES FIT FOR A PRESIDENT AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Pub regulars, stall-holders and staff came together to put on a Christmas fayre at The White House (Leicester).

Stalls featuring handmade cushions, Christmas wreaths and decorations, nail design, confectionery and cakes attracted strong interest from customers.

The fayre also featured carol singers and a visit from Santa on his sleigh.

The pub raffled a Christmas hamper as well, raising £245 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Shift manager Louise Gregory, who organised the event with help from colleagues, said: "We have a good relationship with the local community and were delighted to work closely with local business people and artists to showcase their products."

Pictured (left to right) are stall-holder Katie Spooner sharing cakes with youngsters George and Poppy Swanton.



TAVISTOCK

LOTS OF YARN FOR PUB'S KNITTERS AND CHATTERS



A weekly community group, which has been meeting at its local Wetherspoon pub for six years, continues to flourish and raise funds for charity.

The Queen's Head Hotel (Tavistock), managed by Jo and Trevor Huckle since it opened in July 2015, is the venue for the knitters and chatters group.

Organised by volunteer Tavistock Street Pastor Jo Wright, the informative pop-in group meets every Wednesday morning (10am until noon) at the pub.

Pub manager Jo Huckle (pictured second right) said: "The number ranges from four to more than a dozen, all local people, some being young mums with small children and others pensioners.

"It's a lovely community group and one we enjoy hosting."

Jo continued: "They come in every week, set up 'camp' and make dolls, mittens, keyrings and seasonal items, which they sell for charities, including Macmillan Cancer Support and Young Lives vs Cancer.

"We have a basket on the bar with the charity items for sale – and they also have a larger sale, in the pub, twice a year."

Group organiser Jo Wright (pictured far right) told the Tavistock Times Gazette newspaper: "Anyone can just pop along and be guaranteed I'll be here with my regulars for a warm welcome, to simply have a chat, a drink and, if they want to, knit or crochet for our collection.

"If you can't knit, then we can teach you."

MALTBY

QUEENS HOTEL BREAKFAST FUELS ROTHERHAM RAMBLERS

A group of walkers gathers each week for breakfast at The Queens Hotel (Maltby) before setting off on a day's walking.

Members of The Rotherham Rambling Club arrive early for a healthy, yet hearty breakfast to gear themselves up for walks in the beautiful South Yorkshire countryside and the Peak District National Park.

The group was formed in 1979 and has been using The Queens Hotel as a starting point for more than a year now.

The pub's manager, Beth Burns, said: "The pub is a good point for the club members to begin a variety of routes. We are always happy to see them."

● **To find out more about the group and its walks, visit: www.rotherhamramblingclub.co.uk**



PICTURE OF JOY AS CHOIR SINGS CAROLS

More than 300 people enjoyed St Joseph's RC School Choir singing carols at The Picture House (Colwyn Bay).

The annual event always attracts a large crowd.

Customers, many being the choristers' parents, joined in the singing.

Pub manager Sam Stafford (pictured with the choir) said: "It is a lovely event to host at the pub.

"It gets everyone in the Christmas spirit."



ORIGINAL SIX STILL GOING STRONG AS PEN COB TURNS 10

Six team members who have worked at Pen Cob (Pwllheli) since the day it opened were on hand to celebrate its 10th anniversary.

Manager Jonathan Jarvis first opened the pub's doors on 17 December 2013, along with duty managers Jon Lyon and Abi Evans, shift leaders Zoe Benedikti and Gareth Hayden and bar associate Charlotte Griggs.

Jonathan said: "I'm really proud that we've been able to keep so many of the team together. It really helps in a community pub like this."

Current team members also joined in the fun as the pub began its second decade.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Emma Roberts, pub manager Jonathan Jarvis and shift leader Caitlin Craddock holding the 10th birthday cake.

FURZE WREN POPPY WREATH LAID ON WAR GRAVE BY GARY

Pub customer Gary Freeman has honoured his great uncle's war grave with a poppy wreath given to him by The Furze Wren (Bexleyheath).

Gary told pub manager Danny Murphy of his intention to visit Antwerp, where his relative Harry Dewberry, a lance corporal, died in 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge.

Shift manager Jason Batty gave Gary the wreath which had been on display at the pub during Armistice and Remembrance Day commemorations.

While researching his family history, Gary had only just discovered the location of Harry's grave.

He said: "It was very generous of Danny and the team at The Furze Wren – and I put the wreath on the grave in Antwerp."

Danny said: "Gary is a regular here, so when he told me of his planned visit, I thought that it would be nice to give him the wreath to take to Antwerp."

Gary sent in this picture of his great uncle's grave decorated with the poppy wreath.



DERBY

CUSTOMERS IN DERBY SPILL BEANS TO ZENA



As part of the Derbyshire Voices project, journalist Zena Hawley interviewed customers at The Standing Order (Derby).

The initiative from local news website Derbyshire Live (part of the city's daily newspaper, Derby Telegraph) seeks to discover the issues of greatest importance to local people, so that it can better represent them in its content.

Customers queued up to be interviewed, chatting among themselves as they did so.

Deputy manager Parisa Darling said: "We were happy to play host to this event, and customers seemed keen to be involved."

The Standing Order was one of several venues chosen by Zena and her team.

Parisa added: "We are a central location which attracts a broad spectrum of local people, so I'm sure that Zena obtained a good range of opinions."

Zena (pictured left with customers Paul and Annabella Warrington) said: "It was great that Wetherspoon was able to facilitate access to The Standing Order so that we could get out and meet the public in such a popular location.

"Some of the stories we picked up about events or issues were assigned to reporters and made the news."

STALYBRIDGE

HALLOWEEN BINGO BUNCH SPOOKED BY SCARY STAFF

A Halloween bingo event attracted 80 people at The Society Rooms (Stalybridge).

The pub holds a regular bingo night on the last Tuesday of each month, with customers paying £1 each to enter - for a chance to win confectionery or alcohol.

Shift manager Johnny Nicoll said: "As it was a Halloween bingo event, a lot

of staff dressed up for the occasion, as well as almost all of the customers, with a prize given for the best costume."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associates Sam Connolly and Jenya Roderiques, shift manager Johnny Nicoll, bar associate Chloe Jackson and shift leader Elizabeth Cole.



THE KEEL ROW • NEWCASTLE

DALE SIZZLES IN THE KITCHEN, AFTER BEING THROWN IN AT THE DEEP END



When Dale Royal took on a part-time temporary Christmas bar job at Wetherspoons (Metrocentre, Gateshead) in 1998, he never dreamed that it would be the start of a long career.

The then graphic design student stayed on after the Christmas season, as the pub was looking for permanent bar staff – and has never looked back.

In December 2023, Newcastle-born Dale celebrated 25 years with the company at his current pub, The Keel Row (Newcastle), where he has worked as a kitchen manager for more than five years.

Dale is pictured (centre) with his pub manager Karen Lane and area manager John Hudson.

Dale, 44, recalled: “Not long after deciding to stay on, I was asked whether I would like to be cross-trained... to be able to work on the bar and in the kitchen.

“I remember my first shift in the kitchen – a couple of staff members had left, and I was really thrown in at the deep end.

“I was offered a pay increase and promotion to team leader, to remain on the kitchen team, which I accepted, working my way up in the kitchen and, when I finished university, going full time.”

Dale moved on to The Quayside (Newcastle) as a kitchen team leader, running the kitchen for a year or so, before being promoted to kitchen manager.

That was more than 20 years ago.

He also had spells at several other Wetherspoon pubs in Newcastle, including Union Rooms (now closed) and The Mile Castle.

Dale admitted: “When I started with the company, I didn’t have a plan.

“I was really getting through university and seeing where things went.

“When the opportunity came up, going full time with Wetherspoon really made my decision for me.

“There was no real formal training, like there is now – it really was learning on the job.

“I still remember those early days at the Metrocentre and realise how many changes and improvements I have seen in the past 25 years.

“Then, the company was more bar orientated, but now food is a huge part of the business.”

He added: “The job is always challenging. It is hard work to hit and maintain the high standards expected, but you have to give it your best.”

Dale concluded: “It is a good job – and I don’t see myself working anywhere else.”

THE GLASS BLOWER • CASTLEFORD

LONG-SERVING GARETH HAPPY TO BE WITH GLASS BLOWER 'FAMILY'



Towards the end of 2023, shift leader Gareth Brookes celebrated 20 years' service with Wetherspoon.

He'd started as a 22-year-old bar associate at the newly opened venue The Winter Seam (Castleford), which had launched in November 2003 as a Lloyds No.1 bar.

Gareth, born and bred in Castleford, recalled: "I had worked at bars in the town centre and thought that I would apply for the new Wetherspoon, the first pub at Xscape, to give it a go.

"I had some experience, although at spit-and-sawdust pubs and nightclubs, so this was a completely different environment."

Gareth spent two years at The Winter Seam, progressing to team leader and working with pub manager Sarah Heppinstall for the first time.

He moved to The Glass Blower (Castleford), where he soon stepped up to the role of shift leader. He's spent the past 18 years at the pub.

Gareth continued: "I have been here a long time and have been working with Sarah again, for the past 10 years, when she took over here.

"Sarah is one of the best managers to have been at the pub, turning it around into the success it is today, which is lovely."

Other long-serving members of the team at The Glass Blower include bar associate Chelsea Mathery and cleaner Brian Chipchase (15 years each) and shift manager Katy Walker (seven years).

Gareth, 42, said: "We are a really close-knit team and work well together, a happy little household (at work) and one big work family.

"It is lovely working here."

DARWEN

ORIGINAL FOUR FILL PEWS AS OLD CHAPEL TURNS 10

Four staff members who have worked at The Old Chapel (Darwen) from its first day were among those celebrating the pub's 10th birthday.

Pub manager Warren Hughes, kitchen team leader Joshua Tabiner, shift manager Tammy Byrom and kitchen shift leader Amy Walsh enjoyed drinks and cake during the celebrations.

Warren said: "We invited former staff to join us and had a lovely time remembering the past 10 years together."

Pictured (left to right) are kitchen shift leader Amy Walsh, auditor Mike Johnson, pub manager Warren Hughes, area manager Karl Marsland, shift manager Tammy Byrom and kitchen team leader Joshua Tabiner.



BARNSTAPLE

PERFORMER MERLIN JUGGLES TV ROLES WITH WATER GATE WORK

Merlin Cadogan, a door staff member at The Water Gate (Barnstaple), is a well-known local character.

When he isn't keeping customers safe at The Water Gate, he is a professional performer.

He found fame when he reached the semi-final stage of Britain's Got Talent 2009.

His audition saw him escape from a padlocked chain and juggle fire 'underwater', while wearing a diving helmet filled with water.

Merlin joined the team at the

Wetherspoon pub in November 2023 and is regularly recognised by customers and locals. He also works as an entertainer at a holiday park in the southwest.

Merlin has many skills, yet specialises in juggling and wizardry, incorporating comedy, balancing, unicycling and escapology into his shows.

Shift manager Russell Wallwork said: "Merlin started with us in November, as a regular member of the weekend door team, and is recognised by so many customers every night."



RENFREW

TAG TREE BRINGS SMILES AT THE LORD OF THE ISLES

Fundraising activities at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew) supported Young Lives vs Cancer, as well as local charities.

Shift manager Kirsten Knox organised a 'gift tag appeal' for local charities, including Renfrewshire Women's Aid, in Paisley, giving help and support to women suffering from domestic abuse.

Gift tags were put on the pub's Christmas tree, requesting certain items to be purchased.

Generous customers were able to select a tag to buy an item and bring it for donation to the charity.

Kirsten (pictured) said: "We always do something like this at Christmas - and I thought that this would be a different way of doing it this year."

Pub manager Donna Walker said: "We have been overwhelmed by customers' generosity - thanks to everyone."

"As well as the gift tag donations, we raised £467 for Young Lives vs Cancer with a Christmas hamper, bringing our December total for the charity to £1,100."



The Bridge House (Belfast) Bar associate Gina Bain serves customer Rachel Rose

BEYOND BBQ STACK MEAL GIVES VEGANUARY SOME VA-VA-VOOM

Wetherspoon's pubs served a new burger, for a limited period, to celebrate Veganuary, throughout January.

Customers could order the Beyond BBQ stack meal, featuring a Beyond Meat® plant-based patty, BBQ sauce, onion rings, iceberg lettuce, tomato and red onion, served in a vegan brioche bun, with chips.

Veganuary (which ran from Monday 1 to Wednesday 31 January, inclusive) encouraged people to try vegan food throughout January.

Wetherspoon's marketing executive, James Vaughan, said: "The limited-edition Beyond BBQ stack burger proved popular with vegans and those trying a vegan burger for the first time."

Wetherspoon's pubs serve a range of vegan dishes at all times.



The Company Row (Consett) Pub manager Shelley Hobbs serves customers Kenneth Riches and Melanie Carling



The J. P. Joule (Sale) Customers Lizzie Ginn and Tony Hayes Turner are served by shift manager Jack Withey



The Playfair (Edinburgh) Customers Katie Russell (left) and Niamh Devitt



The Sussex (Rhyl) Pub manager Chelsea Cahill serves customers Martin and Tracy Maley

PECKHAM

MAYOR AND SANTA LIGHT UP NIGHT IN PECKHAM



The local community was in festive spirits at the beginning of December for the turning-on of the seasonal lights in Peckham.

Mayor of Southwark Michael Situ is pictured behind the bar at The Kentish Drovers (Peckham), with pub manager John Calveley (right) and shift leader Jordan Gales.

Pub manager John Calveley said: "The local community and schools, together with Southwark's mayor, attended the annual event, with festive drinks, mince pies and Christmas carols sung by Mountview College.

"We also had a visit from Santa, who came in the pub to spread festive joy.

"Many of our customers enjoyed the wonderful atmosphere and some laughs along the way."

Michael Situ added: "Peckham was blown into full festive mood with the thunderous countdown to the Christmas lights switch-on.

"Thanks to the organisers, the excellent music and to the businesses and residents for a joyous occasion."

ABERDARE

MALE VOICE CHOIR GIVES GIFT OF SONG AT CHRISTMAS

A special Christmas celebration led by a choir was enjoyed by customers at Yr Ieuan Ap Iago (Aberdare).

The Cwmdare Voices male voice choir, based locally and conducted by Mike Thomas MBE, formed the centrepiece of an event which also gave children the chance to meet Santa and his elves (pictured).

Preparation for the occasion took two months. It was organised by kitchen manager Stephanie Morse and shift manager Lucy Mooney, who were praised by pub manager Jack Daniels for their "incredible hard work".

Shift manager Rebecca Betenson said: "The event brought our community together – and I could not be more proud."

As well as meeting Santa, who gave each of them a present, children were treated to face-painting and a Teddy bear stall, as well as arts and crafts activities.

A raffle and cake sale helped to push the fundraising total up to £1,025 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Choir conductor Mike Thomas is well known to pub staff as a customer. He received his MBE in 2023 for working with choirs across the valleys.



BEIGHTON

HUNDRED CUSTOMERS WARM TO HOT CHOCOLATE AND CURRY

Festive hot chocolate, mulled cider and Thai curry kept customers warm at a Christmas market at The Scarsdale Hundred (Beighton).

Local residents provided the goodies which were sold to raise £380 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

For the event, a special 'Scarsdale market' was created by team leader Katie Oliver, while kitchen shift leader Oliver Williams stepped forward to don the Santa outfit for the day.

Pub manager Emma Walker said: "This was our first attempt at a Christmas market – and we'll definitely look to do it again."

Santa (Oliver Williams) is pictured with 'elf' bar associates Charlotte Barlow and Georgia Fox (right).



TOM, 92, FULL OF BEANS AS HE FINDS USE FOR COFFEE GROUNDS



Ninety-two-year-old Tom Atter regularly takes a bag of used coffee grounds from The Tollemache Inn (Grantham).

He uses them to feed his allotment vegetables, which he then gives away to local people to help with the cost-of-living crisis.

Shift manager Roxie Ball happily allows Tom to take the waste coffee grounds, as he always puts some coins in the pub's charity box to support Young Lives vs Cancer.

To mark his 92nd birthday, Tom put £92 in the charity box.

Tom, pictured with team leader Charlie Gray, also collects milk bottles and takes them to the local crematorium to be used to water flowers there.

Roxie said: "Tom is one of our most-loved regulars and deserves to be recognised for the selfless things he does for others."

CHAMPION ALEX ENSURES FULL HOUSE STAYS FULL OF ALE

A 'full house' of regional craft beers, as well as locally sourced craft beers, is available at The Full House (Hemel Hempstead) – thanks to shift manager Alex Baker.

Alex, the pub's real-ale champion, has ensured that every craft beer on the Wetherspoon guest beer list is always on offer at the town-centre pub.

Alex, who has worked at the pub since January 2015, said: "Our customers love their craft beers – and we are delighted to serve them as wide a range as possible."

The locally sourced craft beers on offer include Raven King from Tring Brewery, \$umo from Hemel Hempstead brewery Mad Squirrel and King Street Knights from Watford's Pope's Yard brewery.

Tasting notes, beer menus and adverts on pub tables are all deployed to tempt traditional ale drinkers and others towards the new range.

Alex said: "The craft beers have proven very popular."

"It's good to be able to offer customers something new and different."

The Full House is listed in the publication from the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) – The Good Beer Guide 2024.



Pictured (left to right) are shift leader Ross Gardiner, shift manager Alex Baker, shift leader Livija Zacharova and shift manager Jordan Molloy

FACEBOOK PAGE HELPS APP USERS TO GIVE AND TAKE FREEBIES



A Facebook page where participants post in return for free drinks and food has (perhaps not surprisingly) attracted 109,000 members in just two years.

The 'Wetherspoons Game and Giveaway' page was set up in July 2021 by brothers Matthew Cox (pictured left with shift leader Jack Bowkett at The Commercial Rooms, Bristol) and Dave Gorwill.

People posting to the site leave selfies, details of the pub they are in and their table number.

Other members then send them drinks and food through the Wetherspoon app.

It is expected that recipients then buy someone else a drink or food menu item in the same way, at some future date.

There are rules – if you're with children, you can ask for soft drinks only and anyone persistently accepting drinks and not giving back is barred.

The site also has a charitable role – people send in crisps, biscuits and snacks to Matthew, who then gives them away to homeless people or to shelters.

Matthew is based in Bristol – where several pubs, including The W. G. Grace and The Commercial Rooms, have facilitated homeless give-aways outside their premises.

Matthew said: "People can also get gift cards through the page.

"The whole thing has taken off faster than we had expected.

"We have to respond quickly to posts, while customers are still at the tables they posted from – so we usually do within five minutes."

Although the founding brothers are based in Bristol, the page attracts posts evenly from all over the UK and Ireland.

● **Wetherspoons Game and Giveaway is not connected, in any way, to the original Facebook group Wetherspoons The Game – featured on page 31**

SWAN PUB BECOMES GAMES CLUB

Bar associate Dominic Jones has been expanding his Hobby Club at The Old Swan (Uttoxeter).

Dominic set up the club with Pokémon and a few card and board games two years ago, when he was a customer at the pub.

But he has since joined the staff and been able to expand the range of games available for customers to enjoy, including Dungeons & Dragons and Warhammer.

The club runs on Mondays and Tuesdays from 5pm and has become so popular that BBC Radio Stoke ran a news feature about it.

Dominic (pictured) said: "I've always been interested in games as hobbies – and a pub like The Old Swan is the perfect place to enjoy them and meet like-minded people while doing so."





The Golden Acorn (Glenrothes) Customers Graeme Allan and Pauline Brown

FEW TIM'ROUS BEASTIES AROUND AS PUB-GOERS BRAVE BURNS' WEEK

Wetherspoon's pubs across England, Scotland and Wales celebrated the life and poetry of the Scottish poet Robert Burns by hosting a seven-day celebration.

Customers were able to enjoy some traditional Scottish food and drinks to mark the annual occasion, including on Burns' Night itself (Thursday 25 January).

The pubs served Scottish haggis, neeps and tatties, as well as a Caledonian burger (two 3oz beef patties, with haggis and a whisky sauce, served with chips and six onion rings).

Both meals were available with a choice of soft or alcoholic drink included in the price.

A small Scottish haggis, neeps and tatties meal was also available, for those who wanted a lighter meal or have a smaller appetite.

Among the drinks choices for the Burns event meal deals was a selection of Scottish drinks for customers to enjoy.

These included Nessie's Monster Mash (4.1% ABV) from Cairngorm Brewery, a predominantly malty, lightly hopped beer, served especially for the event, as well as Scottish gins, whiskies and beer.

They included two Scottish single-malt whiskies, Glenmorangie and Glenfiddich, as well as The Famous Grouse and Bell's whisky, Scotland's BrewDog Elvis Juice and Hazy Jane craft beers, along with Scottish gins Hendrick's Gin and Edinburgh Gin Rhubarb & Ginger liqueur.



The Esquire House (Annisland, Glasgow) Mum and daughter, customers Rosalind Crone (left) and Alison Baldie



The Kirky Puffer (Kirkintilloch) Life-long friends, customers Anne Kennedy (left) and Josephine Gilbey



The Horseshoe (Wombwell) Customers Simon Brewin (left) and Harry Jones



The Spinning Mule (Bolton) Team leader Matthew Drake

COSHAM

THE FIRST POST HAS THE ANSWER AFTER QUIZ LEFT IN A QUANDARY

The team at The First Post (Cosham) has 'fostered' a local pub quiz master, following the closure of his usual pub quiz venue.

Wetherspoon's pub manager Emma Carrodus, who runs The First Post near Portsmouth, was keen to help James Newcombe to continue his much-loved community pub quiz event.

Emma said: "We know how much the quiz means to James. So, when his regular venue, the Manor House, closed unexpectedly quickly, we contacted him to offer an 'adopted home'.

"The First Post and the Manor House share a lot of mutual customers, and we were aware how important the quiz is, especially to James, as well as to the local regular quiz-goers.

"We know that there are plans for the local community members, themselves, to take on the Manor House, but, in the meantime, we have offered James a pub quiz 'home' at The First Post for as long as he needs and wants it."

James, pictured with shift manager Ellen Martin, hosted his first quiz at The First Post in the run-up to Christmas and it will run at 7.30pm every Monday for the foreseeable future.



BOLSOVER

PRESENTS AT PILLAR AS SANTA SLEIGHS IN



Staff at The Pillar of Rock (Bolsover) enjoyed meeting Santa as the Rotary Club Christmas Sleigh arrived outside the pub.

Children were given presents as festive music played in the background.

A collection raised £200 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Bolsover Rotary Club meets each week at the pub and hosts dinners and awards there.

The pub's manager, Jo Lowe, was given advance warning of Santa's visit.

Jo said: "The Rotary Club is an important aspect of the town and it was great that its members chose the pub as a stopping point for the sleigh."

Pictured (left to right) with Santa are bar associate Keeley Clayton-Poole, team leader Janet Straker and bar associate Danielle Barker.

SHEFFIELD

BAND FAN RICK STRIKES ANOTHER BLOW FOR BRASS

Every year since 2011, pub manager Rick Brown has organised a Christmas brass band event at the Wetherspoon pubs where he has worked – and the tradition continued in December 2023.

At Rick's invitation, Woodhouse Prize Band played festive favourites to customers at The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield).

Customers joined in and generously donated £353 to Young Lives vs Cancer as the collection buckets went round the pub.

Rick organised his first brass band event at The Wagon & Horses (Chapelton) and then followed up at The Queens Hotel (Maltby) and The Scarsdale Hundred (Beighton) before moving to The Woodseats Palace.

He said: "I've always found that the brass band's music sparks off the Christmas spirit and gets people in the festive mood."

Pictured (left to right) are team leader Zane Bradley, pub manager Rick Brown and bar associate Ed Pleasant, with members of Woodhouse Prize Band.



MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS

CANDLES AND CAKES IN GREAT DEMAND AS PUBS CELEBRATE NOTABLE BIRTHDAYS

From 1 November 2023 until the end of March 2024, numerous Wetherspoon pubs celebrated a significant birthday of 25 years or more.

This silver anniversary was marked by 22 pubs, clocking up an impressive 550 years serving their respective communities since 1998 and 1999.

During November, 25-year celebrations were held at The Lord Keeper of the Great Seal (Oadby), The Edwin Waugh (Heywood), The Godfrey Morgan (Newport) and The White House (Luton).

Throughout December, there were 25-year celebrations held at 10 pubs. They were The First Post (Cosham), The Holland Tringham (Streatham), The Humphrey Bean (Tonbridge), The Admiral Byng (Potters Bar), The Brocket Arms (Wigan), The Clifton (Sedgley), The Rodboro Buildings (Guildford), The Last Post (Paisley), The Elihu Yale (Wrexham) and The Golden Acorn (Glenrothes).

The Whiffler (Norwich) turned 25 in January, while February saw The Tim Bobbin (Urmston) and The Greyhound (Bridport) both reach their silver anniversary.

During March, five pubs marking 25 years were The Lord Arthur Lee (Fareham), The Three Hulats (Chapel Allerton), The Dolphin & Anchor (Chichester), S. Fowler & Co. (Ryde, Isle of Wight) and The Picture House (Colwyn Bay).

Another long-serving pub during this birthday period included J.J. Moon's (Kingsbury), marking 35 years since first opening.

J.J. Moon's (Ruislip Manor), The Moon Under Water (Colindale), J.J. Moon's (Wembley) and J.J. Moon's (Tooting) all turned 33, while Hamilton Hall (Liverpool Street station, London), The New Fairlop Oak (Fairlop) and The George (Wanstead) marked 32 years.

Pubs turning 31 were The Whispering Moon (Wallington), Wetherspoons (Victoria Station, London), The George (Croydon), The Beehive (Brixton) and The Village Inn (Rayners Lane).

Five pubs marked three decades since opening, clocking up a combined 150 years' service for their local community.

Celebrating 30 years were The Fox on the Hill (Camberwell), The Moon on the Hill (Sutton), The Bell Hotel (Norwich), The Red Lion & Pineapple (Acton) and The Elms (Leigh-on-Sea).

The Edwin Waugh (Heywood)

First opening as a Wetherspoon in November 1998, this pub is named after the dialect poet Edwin Waugh, described as the 'Burns of Lancashire', who lived in nearby Manchester.

Pictured celebrating the 25th birthday at the pub, managed by Siobhan Higgins since August 2021, are (left to right) shift manager Sonny Nelson, bar associate Molly Khan and kitchen manager Craig Dodgson.

Craig has worked for the company for 16 years, as has kitchen team leader Alice Mabo, while kitchen team leader Orsolya Plascsevics has been with Wetherspoon for 11 years.

Front-of-house long-serving staff members include shift manager Dani Jones (20 years), bar associate Stevie Jay (15 years), shift manager Michelle Hart (nine years), bar shift leaders Lola Kelly (eight years) and Kelly Wellings (seven years) and shift manager James Shields (seven years).



25 YEARS



The Holland Tringham (Streatham)

A 25th anniversary charity bake sale at The Holland Tringham raised £202 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pictured with the celebration cakes (left to right) are shift managers Penny Chapman and Holly Hawkins-Lucraft, with kitchen manager Sam Brandon.

Among the long-serving staff members in the kitchen with Sam (nine years) are kitchen shift leader Austin Bristow (eight years) and kitchen associate Justyna Magiera (nine years).

Penny has worked at the pub for 10 years, along with fellow long-serving shift managers Simon Johnson (16 years) and Tony Bango (11 years).

Other long-serving staff members, at front of house, are bar shift leader Darren Vincent (seven years) and bar team leaders Marzena Baran (16 years), Richard Pennell (15 years), Danica Defoe (10 years) and Elisabete Da-Silva (seven years).

Pub manager Reka Szigeti, who has worked for Wetherspoon for 19 years, took over at the pub in September 2022.



The Humphrey Bean (Tonbridge)

Customers at The Humphrey Bean could enjoy a slice of birthday cake for a charity donation, collecting £42 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pictured with the cake are shift leader Joshua Pope (left) and team leader Phoebe Salter.

The Wetherspoon pub opened in December 1998, in the former post office building, and is named after the landlord of the 'We Three Loggerheads' pub which had previously stood on the site.

Isabel Warner became pub manager in November 2019, having joined as a kitchen associate in March 2000.

The longest-serving staff member is bar associate Hana Winter, who has been at the pub since it first opened.

Kitchen managers Harry Bowles and Dave Sutton joined in November 2009 and March 2012, respectively.

Long-serving staff members in their team are kitchen team leaders Michal Sierocki (since November 2005) and Karo Owczarek (since July 2006).



The Brocket Arms (Wigan)

The Brocket Arms was built by brewers Peter Walker Ltd and was officially opened on 10 October 1957 by the brewery's chairman, Lord Brocket.

It became a Wetherspoon pub and 28-bedroom hotel 25 years ago, when it opened in December 1998.

Pictured outside The Brocket Arms, marking the 25th birthday with a cake, are (left to right) hotel team leader Karen Garner, hotel manager Laura Quinn and kitchen associate Hannah Awodumila.

Since 2016, the pub has been managed by Tom Quinn, who started with Wetherspoon in 2007 and has been a pub manager for 12 years.

More than 20 members of Tom's staff have worked for Wetherspoon for five years or more.

The Admiral Byng (Potters Bar)

This pub, which first opened in December 1998, is named after the admiral who had a house built in 1754 at Wrotham Park, near Potters Bar, and was shot (on government orders) as a scapegoat for the failure of the Minorca campaign.

Pictured marking the 25th birthday at the pub are team leader Lorna Evans (left) and shift manager Hannah Millard.

Pub manager Marisa Biss, who has worked for Wetherspoon since May 2012, arrived at the pub in July 2023, joining pub manager Roberta Zujevaite, who took over in February 2020 and has been with the company since September 2017.

Kitchen manager Lauren Dobson has been with Wetherspoon since September 2016, while the longest-serving staff member is kitchen associate Jane Storey, who joined the team in November 2015.



The Clifton (Sedgley)

This Wetherspoon pub, which first opened in December 1998, is housed in the former Clifton cinema. The Sedgley Clifton, with seating for more than 1,000, opened in May 1937 and was one of the supercinemas dubbed a 'picture palace'.

Pub manager Rachel Donet has been with the company since August 2011. She has worked at The Clifton on several occasions and took over as pub manager in May 2023.

Shift leader River Perry is pictured outside the pub with birthday balloons, marking the 25th birthday.

She has been with the company since August 2016.

Other long-serving staff members include team leader Sarah Foster, who has worked for Wetherspoon since March 2010 and joined The Clifton in March 2012.

Team leader Molly Hartill started with the company in December 2018.

MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS

25 YEARS



The Elihu Yale (Wrexham)

This pub first opened as a Wetherspoon in December 1998 in a building which had previously been The Majestic cinema and furniture store Cantors.

It is named after the founder of Yale University, who is buried in Wrexham churchyard.

Pub manager Andrew Hodgson has worked for Wetherspoon for 20 years and took over as pub manager at The Elihu Yale in June 2010.

He was also a customer on the opening day at the pub.

Andrew is pictured (centre) with long-standing customer Iain Robinson and kitchen associate Sharon Griffiths, who has also worked at the pub for 20 years.

Among the other long-serving team members are Calan Jones (14 years), Jona Devitt (18 years), Adam Samuels (14 years), Anna Rose (12 years), Hayley Jones (18 years) and Gaynor Spurdle (10 years).

The Whiffler (Norwich)

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in January 1999, is named after the ceremonial character whose job, originally, was to beat a path through the crowd for the lord mayor and his entourage – and to protect them from harm.

Celebrating the 25th birthday are (left to right) shift leader Debbie MacKay, team leader Samantha Dunn, shift manager Katie Savage (back), kitchen associate Julie Crooks (front) and kitchen team leader Sara Jeckell.

There are numerous long-serving staff members at the pub, but Sara has been at The Whiffler the longest, having joined the team in September 2000.

Samantha (since November 2005), Julie (since November 2006) and shift manager Megan Rendells (since October 2010) are among the others, while pub manager Alex Bye, who took over in May 2023, has been with the company since May 2014.



25 YEARS

25 YEARS



The Last Post (Paisley)

Pub manager Michelle Quinn is pictured with shift manager Stephen Downie, celebrating 25 years' service with cake and balloons – at The Last Post.

First opening as a Wetherspoon in December 1998, this pub takes its name from the building's former use as Paisley's main post office.

The original post office premises was designed by WW Robertson and built in 1893, with an extension added to the main building in 1912.

Michelle, who has been with the company since February 2011, took over as pub manager in September 2021.

Among her long-serving staff members are kitchen manager Stephen McCafferty (nine years), shift manager Scott Muirhead (10 years) and cleaner Derek Robertson (14 years).

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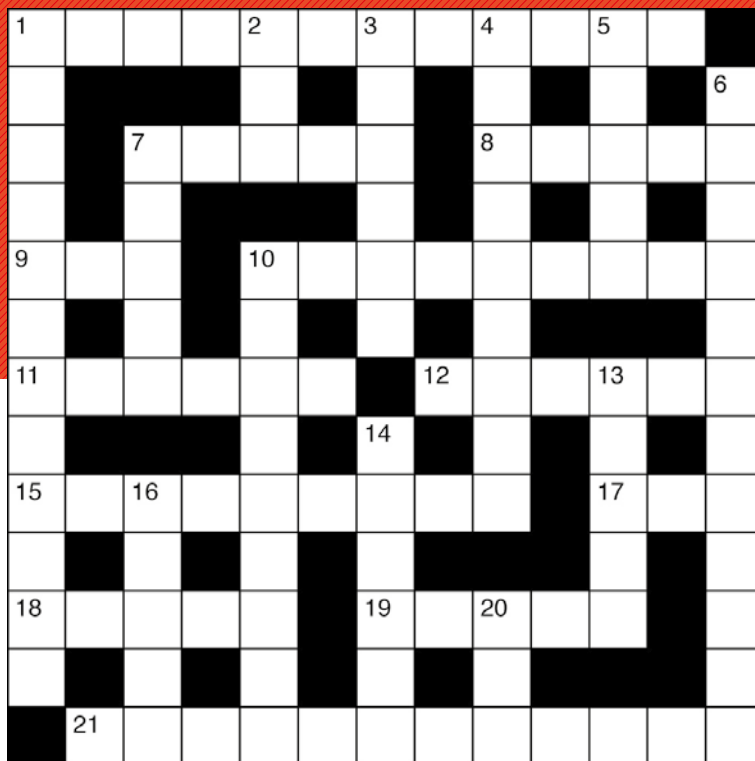
The first four correctly completed crosswords to be pulled out of the hat will win each of those entrants a Wetherspoon gift card worth £30.

Closing date for entries: 1 July 2024

Post to:

Wetherspoon News Magazine Competition
PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

4 x £30 PRIZES TO BE WON



Across

- 1. Aromatic shrubby wormwood also called old man or lad's love (12)
- 7. Strong synthetic polymer originated by the Du Pont firm in 1938 (5)
- 8. Hawaiian word for hello or goodbye (5)
- 9. 1981 comedy film by Blake Edwards featuring Julie Andrews (1,1,1)
- 10. Alex, 1973 Wimbledon tennis men's singles runner-up (9)

- 11. Prince Consort of Queen Victoria of Great Britain and Ireland (6)
- 12. European principality which includes the resort Monte Carlo (6)
- 15. Cold dish of meat or poultry which is boned, cooked, stuffed then pressed into shape and glazed (9)
- 17. Fifth sign of the zodiac (3)
- 18. Wading bird similar to the heron (5)
- 19. Forename of dramatist Chekhov (5)
- 21. Mozart opera whose subtitle is The School for Lovers (4,3,5)

Down

- 1. "The --- Banner", U.S. national anthem (4-8)
- 2. In Norse mythology, the goddess of the dead (3)
- 3. Miss Stecher, 1972 Olympic women's 100m and 200m champion (6)
- 4. Horny elastic material, also called baleen, used in stiffening corsets (9)
- 5. Milton, Prime Minister of Uganda 1962-66 (5)
- 6. 1953 Ian Fleming novel (6,6)
- 7. Name formerly given to a European who made a fortune in the Orient (5)

- 10. Filippo, Italian poet and artist who founded the futurist movement (9)
- 13. Gracie, American comedienne who was Mrs George Burns (5)
- 14. Large broad insect, common in warm regions, the male of which produces a high-pitched drone (6)
- 16. Musical adjective indicating that a piece should be performed slowly and broadly (5)
- 20. Small Old World songbird of the family Paridae (3)

SOLUTIONS

(Winter/spring 2023/24 issue)

Across: 4 G string; 8 Icarus; 9 Homburg; 10 Dennis; 11 Landau; 12 Air on the; 18 Peter Pan; 20 Sartre; 21 Uranus; 22 Ecuador; 23 Lille; 24 Coulob

Down: 1 Birdman; 2 Cannery; 3 Durian; 5 Smollett; 6 Rubens; 7 Norman; 13 Tapeworm; 14 Spindle; 15 Aniseed; 16 Sancho; 17 St. Paul; 19 Earwig

The winter/spring 2023/24 crossword winners were:

★ AD, Barlborough ★ KF, Ilkley ★ SM, Dorchester ★ VH, Consett



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 1/7/24. Proof of dispatch is not proof of receipt. The winners will be the first correctly answered entries drawn. Where multiple prizes are offered, the winners will be the first relevant number of correct entries drawn. The judge's decision is final; no correspondence will be entered into. One entry per household. The winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative available. The promoter reserves the right to cancel or amend this promotion, owing to events arising beyond its control. The promoter is not responsible for any third-party acts or omissions. Once the competition has been drawn all entry slips and information provided therein will be securely destroyed and shall not be retained by J D Wetherspoon plc or its affiliates.

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Nik Antona is national chairman of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

Cheers

RAIN, RAIN EVERYWHERE, BUT SOME PUBS LEFT HIGH AND DRY

January can be a very hard month for the licensed trade, says CAMRA's national chairman Nik Antona

At the time of writing, we've just emerged from a dark and gloomy January which was wet for many, yet dry for some.

The impact on pubs of Dry January cannot be understated, since, although the market and the appetite for low- and no-alcohol drinks is growing year on year, there are those who simply don't visit the pub at all while abstaining from alcohol.

This sharp decrease in footfall, for establishments which have just enjoyed the Christmas rush, can be incredibly damaging, making January one of the hardest months for pubs and clubs across the UK.

Months like Dry January and Sober October can be a great way to reflect on the amount we may be drinking, yet their impact on the beer and pub trade is yet to be fully investigated.

At CAMRA, we hear anecdotes, at first hand, of the UK's pubs and clubs struggling to keep the lights on – but quantifiable evidence is needed to work out just how damaging abstinence months can be, without the proper support from local and national governments.

SUPPORT

As UK-wide venues continue to support their communities by opening their doors as 'warm banks', they, themselves, struggle to deal with inflated energy costs, sometimes having to take the difficult decision to cut their opening hours or reduce staff numbers to stay viable.

It's not just the pubs which suffer, however.

We're all the poorer for pub closures, in every sense of the word.

Pubs inject an average of £80k into their local economies each year, but with the British Institute of Innkeeping (BII) reporting that only one in four pubs is currently profitable, we can expect local economies to take a serious financial hit.

Communities will also feel the social impact. Research which CAMRA commissioned from Oxford University found that people who have a 'local' feel more connected to their communities, rate themselves as significantly happier and report having more close friends.



We're all the poorer for pub closures, in every sense of the word



There is so much to celebrate about the amazing things our pubs do.

Every year, pubs across the land raise more than £100 million for charity, but, since the COVID-19 pandemic, it is pubs which now need support from local communities.

EXPAND

Pubs are having to expand their repertoire to attract footfall which was once freely flowing through the front doors.

Our locals are having to become more than a pub: offering social get-togethers like book clubs, painting soirées and food festivals.

Some pubs have even ventured into providing services which might have disappeared from their community, such as grocery shops or posts offices.

Although the days of lockdowns are in the past, the knock-on effect has been palpable and is still being felt.

Those struggles, coupled with months of high energy prices and a cost-of-living crisis, have meant that pubs have had to work harder to keep their lights on – with regular punters less inclined to spend their hard-earned cash down the pub.

COMMUNITY

For those pub-goers whose community and social life centre around the pub, it has been a very isolating time.

Approximately eight per cent of the UK population experiences chronic loneliness, that's around four million people who are in need of a lifeline in the form of community spirit.

This is why CAMRA-organised socials, meetings and festivals have become a lifeline for many.

Sometimes, just being invited on a brewery tour or a pub crawl with like-minded beer-lovers can change someone's day for the better.

I know, for a lot of volunteers like me, that a CAMRA membership is like being part of a family, looking forward to the beer festivals and branch meetings across the land as the very foundation of a social circle.

If you can't find any events near you or feel inspired to host at your local, there are hundreds of fantastic ideas online to attract a whole host of punters.

Bring an armful of boardgames to your local and have a tournament, get the daubers out and organise a bingo night or perhaps have an open-mic evening or good-old karaoke.

There are plenty of ways to coax out friends and family for a jolly – and your local pub will thank you for it.

Let's give back to our locals this year, supporting them through what could be another tough year for hospitality.

● **To join CAMRA, or to give a gift membership to a friend or loved-one, visit: join.camra.org.uk**



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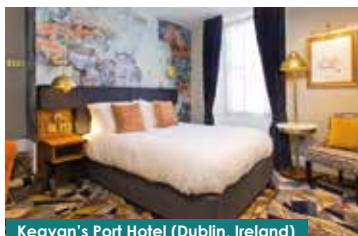
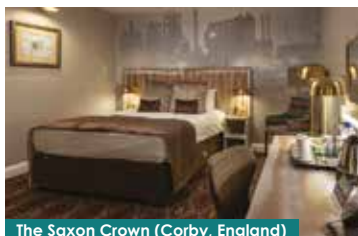
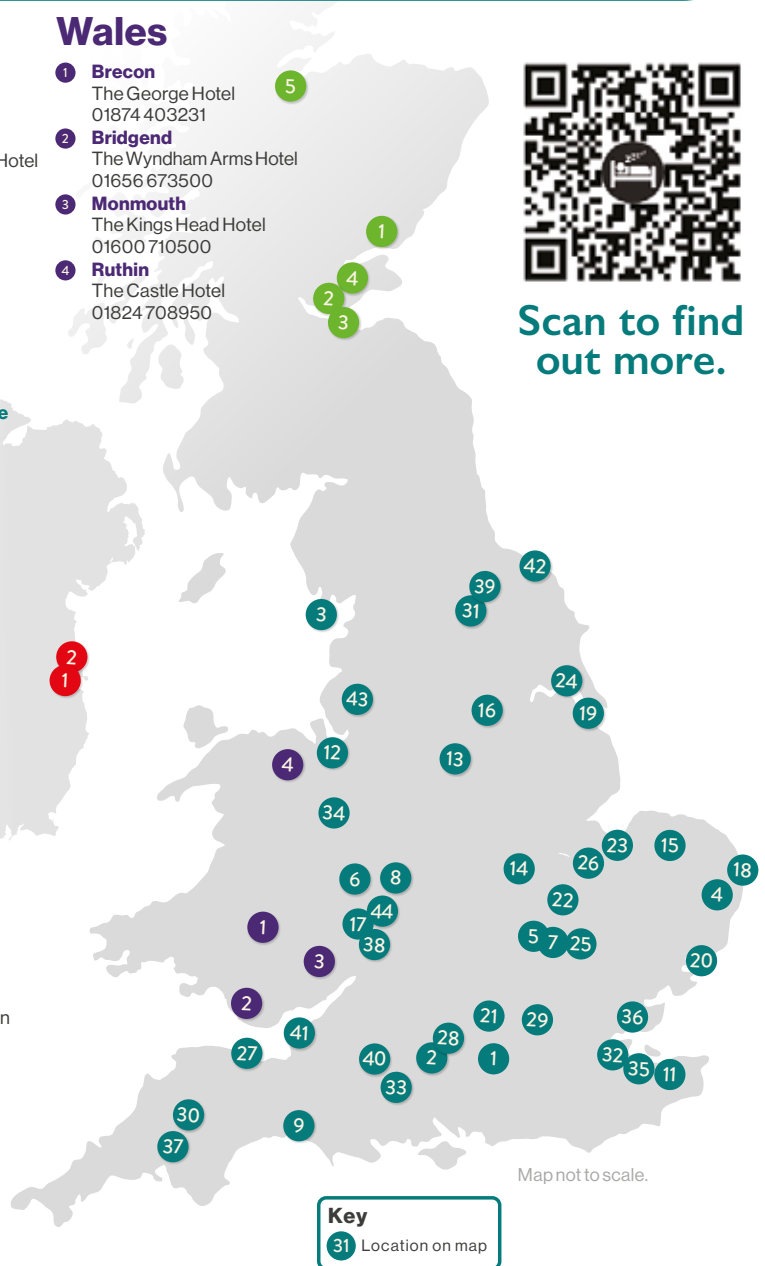
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