

YOUR FREE MAGAZINE | SUMMER/AUTUMN 2023

WETHERSPOON NEWS

UK EDITION

READ BY
2 MILLION
CUSTOMERS

ALWAYS LOOK ON THE BRIGHT
Cider
LIFE

NEW

NEW

Thatchers available in southwest England

REGIONAL CRAFT BEERS pages 50-52

Wetherspoon now working with 34 breweries to bring you regional craft beers

FOOD HYGIENE RATING pages 28-29

Average rating of 4.99 out of 5, scored at 762 pubs, puts Wetherspoon above comparable operators

TAX EQUALITY DAY page 40

On Thursday 14 September, Wetherspoon's pubs are to cut the price of all food and drinks by 7.5 per cent

BONUSES AND FREE SHARES SCHEME pages 46-47

£484 million in free shares and bonuses paid to employees since 2006 - 83 per cent paid to pub staff

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All festival ales available to order on the app.



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

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

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

All J D Wetherspoon food and drinks in this magazine are subject to local licensing restrictions and availability at participating free houses.

Photography is for guidance only.

J D Wetherspoon plc reserves the right to withdraw/change offers (without notice) at any time. See main menus and customer information screen for allergen information, symbol explanations and additional details of our terms and conditions.

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Unsocial media users too quick to quash any contrarian views

Shutting down debate on vital subjects does the country a huge disservice

Adopting the philosophy of the late Sam Walton, the founder of the giant American supermarket chain Walmart, and Julian Richer, founder of the much smaller Richer Sounds – Wetherspoon believes that, in general, employees (and the public) know best.

That statement isn't idle virtue-signalling.

Pub managers and pub teams travel to Wetherspoon's head office every week, on a rotational basis, and participate in all main decisions, big and small.

Our strong belief is that the collective intelligence of the public, in our case distilled through the views of our pub teams, is far greater than any single individual, however well qualified.

Indeed, this magazine has lamented the dire consequences of the transfer of responsibility, during the pandemic, under emergency legislation, from parliament (650 MPs) to 10 Downing Street (in effect to the 'quad' – four ministers).

An ancient king had the same notion when he invented, or acquiesced in the creation of, the jury system for legal cases.

Facts

Yes, a judge and barristers know the law, but if you actually need a decision based on a complex set of facts, then far better, in many circumstances, to ask a jury, representing the public, to decide.

And that, in a nutshell, is why democracy works so well.

Despite the apparent chaos of the almost permanent clash of ideas, in the media, in parliament and elsewhere, any table of the most prosperous countries, or those with most personal freedoms, is almost entirely composed of democracies.

Yet, in the modern world, the exchange of ideas and the encouragement of contrarian views, the lifeblood of progress in almost every field of endeavour, is threatened by fear of vilification or retribution on social media – which is often followed by retribution in the mainstream media itself.

The Sunday Times columnist Matthew Syed (see opposite page) calls these trials by social media a "...terrifying ... tectonic shift..." in which people do not get a "chance to put [their] side of the story".

Syed correctly says that this undermines "the presumption of innocence" and amounts to "mob justice on Twitter".

Syed says that the allegations in the case he analyses seem "credible", but that people "should not be condemned on the basis of allegations alone" and that "reputation should not be unjustly confiscated".

Professor Irene Tracey, vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford, has made a similar point (see article on page 54) in an interview with a student newspaper:

"It's very difficult for the generation that is active on social media compared to my day ... because there was more ease in having debate ... and disagreement.



Indeed, Wetherspoon was, itself, the subject of a trial by social media, abetted by the mainstream media



"It's very hard for students to do that now, without fear of being isolated or persecuted." However, online vilification is not restricted to the younger generation.

MPs, often the subject of vile tirades on social media, sometimes try to ingratiate themselves with the mob to intimidate their opponents.

Opinion

Neil O'Brien MP was instrumental in the trolling of opponents of the government's lockdown policies during the pandemic (see page 57), especially respected academics who bravely questioned the received opinion at the time.

No doubt, O'Brien's objectives of curtailing debate on a vital subject were, at least in part, achieved, yet at what cost to the country?

Indeed, Wetherspoon was, itself, the subject of a trial by social media, abetted by the mainstream media, when two senior MPs

concocted an entirely fictional story (see our magazine online entitled Does Truth Matter?) that the company agreed to pay its staff only after I had appeared in front of a parliamentary business committee chaired by one of the MPs in question (see also the report on pages 55 and 56).

By burnishing their own credentials with the mob, the MPs clearly hoped that it would go easy on them, but these Faustian pacts, as time will surely tell, don't work.

Truth

The big problem is that good solutions are founded on the truth – and, in order to find out what's true, you need a vigorous debate.

There is no point, for example, in silencing critics of the government's lockdown policy if the critics are subsequently proven to be correct – half a trillion will have been spent on a failed project, for which there are likely zero health benefits.

So, here we are, in a brave new world, where debate is curtailed, students and academics are frightened to speak out and mob rule, of a sort, holds sway.

Is it the case, as WB Yeats once said, that "the best lack all conviction and the worst are filled with passionate intensity"?

Not entirely.

The late revered sports writer Hugh McIlvanney once referred to the glittering flawless diamond of boxer Mohammed Ali's nerve...

Whereas many people running large organisations lack Ali's courage, and cave in to the mob, many brave individuals are still prepared to stick their head above the parapet by speaking out.

To them, we all owe a debt of gratitude.

Tim Martin
Chairman

Tim says: “Sunday Times writer Matthew Syed, in this thoughtful article, accepts that ‘the public is highly intelligent when individuals form independent opinions, which are then aggregated through mechanisms such as ... ballot boxes’, yet is troubled by the apparent gullibility of the public in its reverence for the ‘mass illusion’ of celebrity culture.

In fact, high intelligence and gullibility are probably two sides of human nature.

People are capable of forming an intelligent opinion as a jury member in a trial, when presented with all of the evidence, but the social side of human nature is interested in gossip, relationships, ‘celebrities’ and all manner of frivolities.

A main issue in the modern world, as Mr Syed indicates, is the injustice of trial by social media and the consequent incitement to hatred and stifling of debate – factors which, unfortunately, are sometimes abetted by the mainstream media as well.”

WHEN CELEBRITY CULTURE IS EXPOSED AS THE SHAM IT IS, WE SHOULD APPLAUD

Phillip Schofield’s downfall pulls back the curtain on an industry that is little more than a mass illusion

“You take the red pill . . . and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes.” So says Morpheus to the computer hacker played by Keanu Reeves in the film *The Matrix* and the scene jumped into my mind watching the *Alice in Wonderland* coverage of Phillip Schofield, Holly Willoughby and the simulation known as *This Morning*.

This is an affair that has, I think it’s fair to say, roused strong opinions. Some are troubled by Schofield’s abuse of power, others even more so at the pile-on he has endured since the scandal broke — as one friend put it: “Leave the guy alone.” But I wonder if this is a moment to step back to ponder a deeper question, not about Schofield or even *This Morning*, but about us. In particular, I’m talking about the gullibility of the public when it comes to the industry known as celebrity culture, our willingness to be trapped in our own kind of *Matrix*.

Take a step back for a moment. Forty years ago, it was common for the actor Larry Hagman to receive insults on the street because viewers believed that he was — I mean, really was — JR Ewing, the nasty piece of work he played in the soap opera *Dallas*. In other words, millions of people were unable to distinguish between illusion and reality. In some ways, this is perhaps understandable. Television was a relatively new technology and people were still getting their heads around it.

Today, though, we see a similar kind of illusion. Think of megawatt-smile TV presenters, the royal family, icons such as David Beckham. These stars are, in a sense, invented. They are mediated to the public through a filter of scripted conversations and choreographed interviews; coached in what they say and do; their personas conected by a phalanx of media relations consultants. And yet millions of people believe — I mean, really believe — that these carefully airbrushed public images are synonymous with who these people are in real life. It is a kind of vast hallucination.

I remember sports fans weeping when they found out that Tiger Woods — their hero — didn’t live up to the image of a loving family man his agents at IMG had spent years constructing via soft focus photoshoots with his wife and children and manicured interviews with compliant journalists. How could he have been such a fraud, they wondered? How could he have duped us? What few reflected upon was their own complicity, the way they had swallowed the mythology sold to them by marketeers. Middle America wanted this rising star to be a wholesome icon — and so this is what they got.

This, I’d suggest, is why the Schofield story has become so hideously big. It isn’t because his crime is huge (as far as I am aware, no crime has been committed) or even because of sympathy for the young man he is said to have exploited. No, this is ultimately about us (at least, those still trapped in the *Matrix*). People in their millions seem dumbfounded that the man with the Colgate grin, who for 20 years made love to the camera from the *This Morning* sofa, turned out to be, well, different. They are shocked that public image and private reality diverged: that the loving family man was a cheat; that the cuddly, silver-haired uncle may have been a bully.

And this poses, to my mind, profound questions about the suggestibility of the public. Taking a step back for a moment, there has always been a healthy debate about the purported intelligence of what Aristotle called

the demos. Is the public wise or stupid, intelligent or gullible? What is perhaps most fascinating is that an argument can be made on either side. Social scientists will tell you that public opinion is, in fact, highly intelligent when individuals form independent opinions, which are then aggregated through mechanisms such as market prices and (with caveats) ballot boxes. This is a point that has been made by everyone from Hayek to Mill and Friedman to Popper.

But there is another side to public opinion we would do well to remember: we can be stunningly stupid when duped by a shared illusion. Terms such as groupthink or (to use Marxist terminology) false consciousness hint at my point. The reason is that illusions can take on a life of their own; crowd dynamics reinforce them, reify them, driving us all deeper into the fantasy. Our brains are such exquisite sense-making machines that once the illusion has been endorsed, we will do almost anything to keep it alive. It becomes a gigantic form of confirmation bias.

Doesn’t this ultimately capture the grotesque and infantilising illusion of celebrity culture? Doesn’t it explain how it’s possible for the Kardashians to sell billions in merchandise through “celebrity endorsement”; how the royals come to be loved — no, adored — by millions on the basis of little slivers of choreographed access; that there is now an industry of “influencers”, mini-celebrities who curate online personalities to ensnare consumers on behalf of corporate clients? Doesn’t it explain how reality television sustains its appeal despite the lie in the title? If I was being arch, I would suggest that celebrity culture is the 21st century’s new religion. Where once we had priests to curate the central (and lucrative) illusion, now we have advertisers and PR consultants who “shape the story”. They give us heroes (and occasionally villains), parables, morality tales and gossip. And perhaps the most remarkable thing is how desperate people are to believe. When Schofield’s public image turned out to be somewhat fictitious, it was as if the fourth wall had been shattered; like Cypher, people wanted to be plugged back into the *Matrix*.

But isn’t it worth cutting through the nonsense from time to time? Isn’t it worth reminding ourselves that it’s all a game? Isn’t it worth remembering that daytime shows are fronted by character actors and screened by broadcasters who will do almost anything to sustain the illusion, even to the point of allegedly leaving an impressionable young man vulnerable to one of its stars, just as the BBC (albeit in more sinister circumstances) vacated its responsibility over Jimmy Savile?

I find the whole thing troubling, not just because high-profile figures so often get away with it (think of the dozens who will have behaved awfully without being caught) but what it says about human dupability. The older I get, the more I see the perils of mass illusions, the way we become trapped in mental cages whose bars we don’t perceive. This, though, is perhaps the subject of a future column. For the time being, let me suggest that a test of our maturity as a society is whether we can finally wake up and see celebrity culture for what it is. Pure, unadulterated bullshit.

By Matthew Syed

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YOUR SAY

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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

LIKE A DOG WITH A BONE

Dear editor

I think it's time you brought back allowing dogs in your pubs and beer gardens.

I have found myself walking hours and hours to reach one of your pubs, only to be turned away, as I had my dog in the beer garden.

I had also been on vacation in Yorkshire, where all dogs are allowed in the pubs.

It's time to get with the times – and many single people eat and drink alone or come for breakfast in your pubs, who have only dogs for company.

I ask you to reconsider allowing dogs in your pubs again.

Ms Julie Martinez (via e-mail)

Tim replies: Jimi Hendrix had a worldwide hit with a song which contained the lyrics: "Move over, Rover, and let Jimi take over."

People speculated for years about these words' meaning. It transpired, if memory serves me well, that a member of Jimi's band came from Dover (or was it Folkestone?) – and the band members had gone for a walk in the freezing British winter.

When they got back to the house belonging to a band member's mum, there was a dog lying in front of the fire. Jimi (no doubt used to superior American central heating), who wanted to warm up after the walk, had the inspiration for a song containing the above words.

I know that's irrelevant, but I thought that it was a story worth repeating.

Regarding your legitimate query, I can do no better than refer you to the letters and my replies on this issue in the last decade, which can be found on page 42.

There are arguments for and against allowing dogs in pubs, but we feel that, in our pubs, it just wouldn't work.

Sorry to be the bearer of negative tidings.

Jimi Hendrix and bass player Noel Redding



PHOTO CREDIT: PHOTO BY HOWARD PAPERBORN VIA GETTY IMAGES

DON'T HOUND US OUT

Dear editor

I love dogs. I love watching well-behaved dogs in the open air and from a distance – not in catering establishments.

My wife and I are regular visitors to Wetherspoon's pubs and, knowing that they all have a no-dogs policy, we never take the trouble to find any other dining place.

If that policy is ever changed, we would have to find somewhere else to go.

As other contributors point out, there is a huge selection of places into which dog-owners can take their pets, but we, on the other hand, will never use those other places.

Please Wetherspoon, continue with your current policy.

You never know... you might be attracting a silent majority of customers who share my views.

Mr Michael Rimmington, Northumberland (via e-mail)

Tim replies: You have eloquently put 'the case for the defence'.

Not everyone will agree with you, but, after a long debate, Wetherspoon does.

VEGAN DESSERTS, WHERE ART THOU?

Dear Tim

Please, please, please can you add some vegan options to your desserts menu?

It would be really easy to do and would mean that both your dairy-free and vegan markets would be catered for.

Pleeeaaassee...

Kate Lancaster (via e-mail)

Tim replies: Thanks for your suggestion – which seems reasonable to me. We have 20 vegan meals on the menu, and I will ask the groovy catering team to consider a vegan dessert in addition.

ZERO INTEREST

Dear editor

I think that your pubs are brilliant, but one criticism is – when are you going to get 0% lager on draught?

Recently, I went into a village pub which was the first pub in the UK serving 0% draught Estrella.

Surely, there must be a market out there for it. If not, I will have to continue with the bottles.

From a happy punter who you could make happier.

Mr Darren Boswell (via e-mail)

Tim replies: Interesting suggestion. As you will note from your local pub, all of the taps are 'spoken for' in almost all of our pubs.

So, to comply with your wish, we would have to remove a beer which actually contains alcohol. I can't see a way around this issue, but we have, as you will be aware, recently increased the range of non-alcoholic bottled beers.

So, hopefully, this will alleviate the angst among our alcohol-free pint-drinkers.

'SIR TIM' TOPS MY HONOURS LIST

Dear Tim

Very few people can understand why certain individuals are 'ennobled' every year and why, often, fewer still have even heard of the recipients.

There is a strong suspicion of favouritism and political bribery.

Can't be long before Liz Truss becomes honourable, rather than dishonourable!

There are, however, a few exceptions to this general rule – and a certain Tim Martin is one of them!

Your truly amazing achievements and determination, even throughout these challenging economic times, to offer great value for money in interesting, clean and comfortable surroundings, clearly deserve the gratitude of the nation and a seat in the House of Lords (if you have the time to waste, which I doubt!).

Arise Sir/Lord Tim and keep up the good work! Pity there aren't a few more like you who are prepared to run the country.

You could start the ball rolling by naming one of your new pubs The Lord Wetherspoon!! It would be a worthy companion to The Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, in Keswick.

Congratulations and sincere thanks to you.

Jonathan Ward, Lake District (via e-mail)

Tim replies: Many thanks indeed for your comments.

I'm not sure that everyone in the country would agree, but c'est la vie.

Thirty years ago, we went for a licence in Whitehall, near Trafalgar Square, seeking permission to convert a former Barclays Bank into a pub.

Licensing hearings, which I attended myself as a witness, were usually held in magistrates' courts.

However, I was informed by our legal team that this pub licence application would be heard in Buckingham Palace, because licensing applications near the palace were, from ancient times, held by the Board of Green Cloth.

I assumed that this court-like body would be in an office building near Buckingham Palace.

However, on the morning of the application, in the company of our barrister and solicitor, the taxi pulled up outside the front gates of Buckingham Palace itself.

We were ushered in through hordes of tourists taking photographs. The hearing was held in a 'living room' along the main corridor of the palace.

To my amazement, as we waited outside the 'living room' for our licensing application to be heard, Queen Elizabeth walked by, escorted by a couple of guardsman carrying swords.

Not realising the circumstances beforehand, and having a similar sense of humour as yours, I created a brochure in which I had named the pub after my fictional self – The Lord Moon of the Mall.

The licensing hearing was chaired, from memory, by a senior royal household member.

Luckily, he also had a sense of humour and granted the licence application.

We ran the pub for 25 years, until recently, when the lease came to an end.

The freehold of the building was owned by the McMullen's Brewery, so the pub reverted to that brewery and still trades to this day.

As the cockneys say – stone the crows.

Note from editor: The Board of Green Cloth's licensing responsibilities were ended by the Licensing Act (2003), which transferred responsibility for the relevant premises to Westminster City Council. Shame...



SILLY TO MISS CHILLI?

Dear Mr Martin

Before the pandemic, your pub menus used to include a side order of chilli to accompany burgers.

To me, this was a combination made in heaven, yet is sadly no longer available.

Please consider reinstating this – and thereby making a loyal customer very happy!

Sincerely, Paul Evans (via e-mail)

Tim replies: Your letter made me think of a scene, many years ago, from the TV programme Spitting Image. A famous royal family member, of Greek origin, was working in a late-night kebab shop. He said to a customer: "You like chilli in a kebab, innit?" Unlikely scenario, yet funny. Yes, will speak to the catering folks and consider your request.

SOS FROM THE CANAL

Dear editor

I have two comments.

Firstly, I didn't see any customer letters in the latest Wetherspoon News. Please bring them back.

Secondly, as a canal boat owner, I move all over the canal system.

It would be very helpful if Wetherspoon put out a map showing the location of all of its pubs close to the canals or put out a booklet listing those pubs.

Nice to get in for a large breakfast at a Wetherspoon pub.

Thanks, Phil Jones (via e-mail)

Tim replies: I envy you travelling around the country by canal.

When I read your letter, I thought of trying it myself, but getting to Blackpool (where I made some calls, just before we went to press) from our HQ in Watford would have taken slightly longer than the train, so I had to give it a miss...

In all seriousness, I'll look into the idea of producing a map showing our pubs in close proximity to canals, although this might well be better achieved by regular canal users, who will understand the logistics better.

PS Regarding bringing back the letters in Wetherspoon News, your wish is my command.



AWARDS

DERBY

THE STANDING ORDER IS A DERBY WINNER



The Standing Order (Derby) has won recognition for its £1.7-million redevelopment project.

The pub, which opened in October 1995, was named winner in the 'restoration category' of the George Larkin Brighter City of Derby Awards.

The annual awards are presented by Derby Civic Society, a voluntary organisation which encourages the highest standards of building design, in both new builds and restoration projects.

The society invites nominations for both the best restoration and new-build projects in the city, completed within the previous calendar year.

The society's judging panel visits and awards certificates to the winners, as well as to the architects.

The pub underwent a 16-week expansion and refurbishment project, extending it into the adjoining Joseph Wright House.

It resulted in an additional 2,000 square feet of customer space and a new garden, providing an additional 3,570 square feet of outdoor space.

As part of the project, the pub's interior was fully refurbished, including the large decorative ceiling of the former banking hall, ensuring the structure of the grade II listed Palazzo-style building for future generations.

The judges commented: "Joseph Wright House was built in about 1906 and has latterly been used as an estate agency.

"Iron Gate (the location of The Standing Order) has seen a significant decline in recent years, in common with many other retail areas, and this property was at risk of remaining derelict.

"The property has been carefully and successfully incorporated into The Standing Order next door, keeping many original features, yet ensuring a continuity of theme with the existing pub – which was a former bank building."

The pub's manager, Tom Parfitt, said: "We are delighted that the judges selected The Standing Order for the award.

"The pub is an important part of the city's social scene.

"The investment into the project highlights Wetherspoon's commitment to the pub, its staff and customers, as well as to Derby itself.

"The expansion and redevelopment of the pub also created an additional 50 new jobs, which is very positive."

Shift manager Vicky Warden is pictured with the award.

The project's design and delivery were the responsibility of JH Architects.

GAINSBOROUGH

FORKBEARD FOLK TOAST THEIR DOUBLE SUCCESS



Pub manager Amanda Fretwell (right) and shift manager Laura Murray proudly show off not one but two awards.

Amanda's pub, The Sweyn Forkbeard (Gainsborough), has been named 'pub of the season' winter 2022/23 and 'pub of the year' 2022/23 by members of the Gainsborough Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch.

Branch members Pat Stewart, Roy Stewart, Karl Thomson and Henry Spencer attended a special presentation evening at the pub.

Amanda, who is also set (in November 2023) to celebrate 10 years as pub manager at The Sweyn Forkbeard, said: "We're thrilled to win two awards in just one month and thank the CAMRA members for their support.

"The whole team has worked really hard, including shift manager and cellar champion Hollie Forrest, and this recognition means so much to us all.

"We have a great rapport with the branch, as well as healthy local competition which keeps us on our toes."

Gainsborough CAMRA's chairman, Scott Young, said: "The awards given to Amanda and her team at The Sweyn Forkbeard are certainly well deserved.

"They always have an ever-changing selection of guest ales – always in good condition.

"They also try to source ales suggested by customers, especially local ales.

"It's fantastic to win one award, but to win two within a few months, especially 'pub of the year', goes to show the excellent and consistent job which they are doing."

The Sweyn Forkbeard has 10 hand-pumps serving Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles, as well as three ever-changing guest ales during weekdays – and between four and five at weekends. Among the popular ales are those from Milestone Brewing Co, Pheasantry Brewery, Shadow Bridge Brewery and Thornbridge Brewery.

RHYME AND REASON FROM FRASER, BARD OF THE BAR

As well as being a Wetherspoon enthusiast, customer Fraser Kelly is also a keen poet.

Regularly putting pen to paper to express his thoughts and loves, Fraser got in touch with his latest poem, *An Ode to Spoons*, to share his appreciation for the company's pubs.

Living in Millport, on the island of Great Cumbrae, on the west coast of Scotland, Fraser has to take a ferry (eight-minute crossing) to his nearest local Wetherspoon pub – The Paddle Steamer (Largs).

He said: "I've been a friend of Wetherspoon for more than 30 years and simply love what you do.

"My favourite pub is The Counting House, on George Square, Glasgow. It is a beautiful old bank building which retains memorabilia from that era. It is a very special place, with a tremendous atmosphere.

"My local, The Paddle Steamer, in Largs, is a newer design, with a roaring fire in the centre and fabulous panoramic views across the Firth of Clyde. It is a stone's throw from the CalMac ferry terminal, where I catch my ride back to Cumbrae.

"It was here that I was inspired to write a few lines, extolling the virtues of Wetherspoon – a business which, to my mind, has played a huge role in preserving the art of ale-brewing in the UK and introducing it to a new generation of drinkers."

Fraser's poem tells the rest of his story...



An Ode to Spoons

'Twas a fine old day in '91 when I entered Hamilton Hall,
Surprises me to this very day that I left the place at all.
Three decades on, I thank the Lord for a truly national treasure,
For food and ale, fabulous friends and years of simple pleasure!

I've trekked this land from top to toe, climbed mountains bold and tall,
In every town I've looked for rest, there's been one place to call!
Google Maps on the mobile phone – 'Wetherspoons near me',
Results are in, I've won again, a face alight with glee!

Far across these sparkling isles, from Oban down to Reading,
The address found, quickening gait, I know exactly where I'm heading.
Dumfries, Inverness, auld St John's Toun of Perth,
Burnley, Cardiff, The Boro, I soon find my perfect berth.

Paddle Steamer in Largs when I'm waiting for my ferry,
Counting House in Glasgow with my laddies young and merry,
Hope Tap in Reading, how many great nights in there?
Do you get the feeling, my dear friends, this is my love affair?

A 'Wetherspoon Free House' shouts the signage outside,
A huge smile on my face as I plunge deep inside!
"I'm home again," my heartfelt cry, as I settle at my table,
Another chapter opens in this truly brilliant fable!

Morning time, just out of bed, I know the routine well,
This sanctuary with its open arms, that warming breakfast smell.
A fry-up hale and hearty, bacon, sausages and beans,
Weary lad on a Sunday morn knows exactly what that means.

A menu with its classic fare, something there for all,
I'm never disappointed, they're always on the ball.
Fried fish so crisp my dreams can hear the crunch,
Buttermilk chicken makes a tasty, succulent lunch.

Small plates just perfect with a loved-one sharing,
Or a feast for myself when I'm feeling more daring!

Burgers stacked high, a cascade of onion rings,
I wait with expectation for what each new menu brings!

Families sit together showing wee ones how it's done,
Youngsters with their cocktail jugs sharing loving fun.
The old lad in the corner sharing warmth and company,
The honest man with his pint of ale who looks a lot like me.

The ale, the ale where would I be without?
Spoons has kept this craft alive, of that there is no doubt.
Abbot always hits the spot with its warming, fruity malt,
Doom Bar, a lighter drop, it's hard to find a fault.

I love the cast of thousands, new ales around the clock,
Sometimes, I see what's on the bar and shiver with the shock.
Exmoor Beast, dark and bold, all bite and raking claw,
Schiehallion cask lager, a beer we Scots call 'braw'.

Stouts and porters, rich and black, deep and wonderful,
IPAs with their golden hue, sharp bite and flavour full,
Good old English bitter, the bedrock of a nation,
Countless beers from lands afar with craft and imagination.

I love them all!

Some there are who sneer and scorn,
But I bless the day this business was born.
Icons are crafted with the finest of care,
Good honest skills, pure genius and flair!

In a world where compassion and caring feel rare,
You've built a business that's competitive and fair.
Great values and value all rolled into one,
I'm next visit planning before this one is done.

We are the people! We love what you do,
We'll keep coming back if it's OK with you!
So, please carry on with non-conformist attitude,
I give you my thanks and eternal gratitude!

CASTLE DENIZENS DELIGHTED TO HOST ESTHER'S BIRTHDAY BASH

Staff at The Rochester Castle (Stoke Newington) were delighted when Esther Noon chose the pub as the venue for a family meal for her 18th birthday.

Pub staff put up birthday balloons and a banner for Esther, who has autism and has been a regular at the pub for a few years, where she enjoys a chicken wrap and a soft drink.

Pub manager Nathan Flynn said: "When Esther visits the pub, she likes to sit in the same seat at the same table. That routine is important to her – and we understand that.

"Because of this, Esther has found the confidence to visit the pub by herself."

To celebrate her birthday, Esther was accompanied by family members, including her father Tom.

He said: "The Rochester Castle is a fine pub. People feel safe here, whoever they are. It's a diverse place, which is great.

"I told the manager in advance that we would be coming to the pub to celebrate Esther's 18th birthday – and the staff gave her a great welcome and really took care of all of us."

Pictured, thoroughly enjoying their day, are Esther's mother Maxine Daniels, Esther, her brother Daniel and her dad Tom.



BY GEORGE: JEANNE, 98, WONDERS WHETHER SHE IS WETHERSPOON'S OLDEST REGULAR



When Jeanne Crow read in Wetherspoon News about a fellow customer celebrating her 92nd birthday at one of the company's pubs, she quite rightly pointed out: "She isn't as old as I am!"

Jeanne (centre), who will be 98 years young at the beginning of August, joked that she should be featured in the magazine too.

Her daughter-in-law, Sue Crow, got in touch to tell us about her husband Keith's mum and her regular visits to The George Hotel (Hailsham).

Jeanne makes the 10- to 15-minute walk from her home to the pub, sometimes via the shops, every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday (unless it's raining) to have a cuppa with her good friends Anne (right) (81) and Jo Jo (left) (80).

Sue said: "She makes her own way there from her flat, with her trusty wheeler, and the regulars think she's marvellous.

"I would imagine that Jeanne is one of Wetherspoon's oldest customers." Jeanne reported: "I have been going regularly to The George Hotel for about eight years.

"I know everyone, and the staff are always friendly and helpful.

"There used to be eight or 10 of us, meeting up for a morning cuppa, but some have since moved into a home or died. We are down to three of us now.

"We spend an hour or so together, having a laugh and enjoying one another's company.

"I have a cup of tea or hot chocolate before we go our separate ways, until the next time."

BY GEORGE - THE YEARS DO FLY BY



Pub manager Sarah Heppinstall decided to celebrate her 10th anniversary as pub manager at The Glass Blower (Castleford) by throwing a birthday party for her favourite customer – 90-year-old George Stringer.

To help to celebrate George's big day, she ordered in one of his favourite beers, Theakston Old Peculier. Duty manager Katy Walker also baked him a cake.

Sarah said: "George is a lovely guy – he pops in about four times a week for a few ales and he likes to chat to us all.

"I thought that it would be lovely to celebrate my work anniversary and his birthday together."

Sarah has worked for Wetherspoon for 21 years (July 2023).

She first worked at The Horseshoe (Wombwell), joining as a bar associate in 2002.

The Glass Blower was Sarah's first pub as manager, taking on the role in 2013.

She added: "It's a lovely community pub, and we were nominated for the Wetherspoon 'national pub of the year' award in 2018, having won in our region."

Shift leader Gareth Brookes, who also had a hand in the celebrations, said: "Sarah and George get on very well – they are both lovely people.

"It was a pleasure to help in arranging this joint celebration for them."

● **Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Sarah Heppinstall, duty manager Katy Walker and nonagenarian George Stringer**



KILLING OFF AN URBAN MYTH

The ludicrous fairytale that Wetherspoon sells beer which is close to its sell-by date has never appeared in print, but was seen on a website called Quora, posted by a 'Brian Martin'.

Wetherspoon wrote to Quora and Google, asking them to remove the offending article.

Had the Quora/Google allegation appeared in a newspaper (it never has), there would have been grounds for legal action for defamation.

Giant companies like Google, very controversially, claim not to be 'publishers' and that legal action can be taken against only those making the defamatory post.

Fair play to the journalist, in the article below, who has accurately reported our comments.

By the way, the lowest-priced beer which Wetherspoon sells is normally Ruddles Bitter, brewed by Greene King – brewer of Abbot Ale, IPA, Speckled Hen and other famous beers.

The lowest-priced lager is Bud Light, brewed by Budweiser Brewing Group – the world's largest brewer, which also brews Corona, Stella Artois and many other brands.

Wetherspoon has five- to 10-year contracts with its main beer suppliers which, unsurprisingly, do not allow for 'short-dated beer'.

Indeed, also unsurprisingly, neither Greene King/Budweiser nor their competitors have ever offered Wetherspoon short-dated beer. Sorry to disappoint the conspiracy theorists.

WHY WETHERSPOONS IS SO CHEAP COMPARED TO OTHER LONDON PUBS

The chain's popularity is mainly due to its prices - here's how it keeps them so low

Pubs are arguably the lifeblood of British people's social lives, and since popular chain Wetherspoons opened its doors in 1979 it has taken pub culture to another level.

Wetherspoons has over 870 venues operating across the UK, with more than 100 in London alone.

Whatever draws people to the pub, one clear reason sticks out - and that is the prices.

According to the Mirror, the cheapest pint you can get from the low-cost tavern was £1.89 at The Turls Green pub in Bradford in 2019.

In contrast, according to The Good Pub Guide, the average cost of a pint in London was £4.44 in 2020.

So what makes Wetherspoons so cheap?

People have speculated on user internet forums such as Quora that the reason the pub is able to charge such low prices is because it buys stock that is close to its sell-by date.

However, this is a rumour that Wetherspoons strongly refutes.

A spokesperson for the company said: "The urban myth that Wetherspoon buys out-of-date or short-dated beer, or any other products, is ludicrous.

"Wetherspoon has been trading with most of its beer, wine and spirit suppliers, like Greene King, Marston's, AB InBev, Diageo and Heineken, or their predecessors, and other smaller brewers since opening its first pub in 1979.

"The idea that any of these companies would risk their reputation by permitting Wetherspoon, or any other customer, to sell short-dated beer is preposterous."

Wetherspoon chairman Tim Martin said: "Wetherspoon has more pubs in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide than any other company.

"Wetherspoon's beer is also independently assessed by Cask Marque, which has been inspecting Wetherspoon pubs since 1999, visiting each pub at least twice a year.

"The assessors test temperature, appearance, aroma and taste. Every Wetherspoon pub has passed the Cask Marque assessment.

"Wetherspoon is also the top pub company for hygiene standards, with an average of 4.97 out of a maximum of 5 in the local-authority-run'scores-on-the-doors' scheme.

"Some people believe in conspiracy theories, however, as anyone with genuine knowledge of the pub trade knows, this one is complete nonsense."

The spokesperson for the chain went on to explain how opening hours play a part in the pub chain being able to sell at such a cheap price, and that they were able to sell at competitive prices by "accepting a lower operating margin than most companies."

They said: "Wetherspoon also opens for longer hours than most pubs (eg the pubs open for breakfast) and sell food for prolonged periods – normally until 11pm.

"High sales of a wide range of products and long-term relationships with suppliers are some of the key factors."

By Melissa Sigodo
MyLondon / 3 July 2021

Print credit: MyLondon

AWARDS

GLENROTHES • KIRKCALDY • DUNFERMLINE

THREE OUT OF FIFE AIN'T BAD



Three Wetherspoon pub managers are pictured proudly showing off their Best Bar None (BBN) awards.

Left to right, Jonny Stewart (The Golden Acorn, Glenrothes), Craig Matheson (The Robert Nairn, Kirkcaldy) and Stephen Nesbitt (The Guildhall & Linen Exchange, Dunfermline) have all achieved a gold accreditation in the BBN Fife 2022 awards.

Best Bar None promotes the responsible management and operation of alcohol-licensed premises and rewards best practice.

Wetherspoon's area manager Sarah Kyle-Playford said: "Congratulations to all three pubs on their excellent achievement.

"Best Bar None accreditation is a recognised and important aspect of our commitment to best practice and the safety of our staff and customers.

"These gold awards highlight that work achieved by the management teams and staff at The Golden Acorn, The Robert Nairn and The Guildhall & Linen Exchange.

"I'm proud of my managers and their teams for ensuring that their pubs are operating in a responsible manner.

"With the pubs all being awarded the gold accreditation, this has been recognised by the local authorities."

Jonny Stewart said: "It is a great achievement for all three Fife pubs to receive a gold award – and we are delighted."

Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK have a great working relationship with Best Bar None – a national initiative, accreditation and award scheme for licensed premises.

The scheme, piloted in Manchester city centre in 2003 and supported by the Home Office, has grown as more local authorities, in different regions, towns and cities across the UK, operate Best Bar None schemes.

BRIDGEND

FROM CLEANER TO MANAGER - LISA SWEEPS ALL BEFORE HER



Hotel manager Lisa Driscoll has been recognised for her 20 years' service to her local community.

Lisa, who works at The Wyndham Arms Hotel (Bridgend), received a special award from Bridgend Town Council for her 'dedicated service to The Wyndham and Bridgend town'.

Lisa joined the team at The Wyndham Arms Hotel as a housekeeper in December 2002, when the hotel first opened in her local town of Bridgend.

Originally from Cardiff, Lisa moved to Bridgend around 30 years ago and had gained previous hotel experience as a housekeeper.

Her initial role at the pub, which had already opened in April 1999, also included cleaning.

She worked her way up the career ladder and became a full-time hotel manager in 2011 and is also involved in other new hotel openings, helping to train new Wetherspoon hotel staff and pass on her knowledge and experience.

Lisa said: "During training, I like to tell new staff about how I started as a cleaner and am now the hotel manager."

"I am proof that, if you work hard and give loyalty and commitment, you receive the rewards for it, although I was completely surprised to be told about this award."

"I am thrilled. It is an honour – and the recognition is very much appreciated."

"None of this would have been possible without the support of my team members, who are truly amazing. I'm also blessed to have such a fantastic area manager and pub manager."

Lisa is pictured receiving a special plaque, presented by the mayor of Bridgend, Cllr Tim Wood, together with a bouquet of flowers from Wetherspoon's area manager, Victoria Walker (right), on behalf of Bridgend Town Council.

The pub manager at The Wyndham Arms Hotel, Danielle Phillips (left), is also pictured.

At the presentation event, at The Wyndham Arms Hotel, Cllr Tim Wood said: "It is a pleasure to make a special presentation to a resident of Bridgend who has dedicated the past 20 years to serving her employers Wetherspoon and has been at the forefront of helping Bridgend Town Council to promote major annual events."

"Lisa has excelled in her ability to manage and oversee the major hotel in our town of Bridgend, which has done an enormous amount to put Bridgend on the tourism map, with guests returning time and time again."

"The Wyndham Arms Hotel offers a terrific focal point for our town community, with town council members regularly frequenting the pub for relaxation after our very hectic monthly council meetings."

Cllr Wood concluded: "To Lisa and all of the terrifically dedicated Wyndham staff, who offer such a benefit to the life of our town, it is my great pleasure to make this presentation on behalf of our town residents."

Pub manager Danielle Phillips said: "The whole team and I are extremely proud of Lisa."

"She deserves this award from Bridgend Town Council."

Wetherspoon's area manager, Victoria Walker, added: "This award for Lisa is absolutely fantastic and fully deserved, for her commitment to not only the company, with her 20 years' service, but also the town."

"Her positivity and enthusiasm for her job and Bridgend know no bounds."

"Thank you, Lisa, for your hard work at The Wyndham Arms Hotel, as well as at the company's many hotels across the UK and Ireland, where you continue to share your passion for Wetherspoon."

THE SWATTERS CARR • MIDDLESBROUGH

ORLAGH SHINES BRIGHT AT THE SWATTERS CARR



Floor associate Orlagh O'Byrne has worked at The Swatters Carr (Middlesbrough) for the past six years.

Orlagh was just 17 when she joined pub manager Lee Rankin's team at the pub where she still enjoys regular visits, as a customer, with her parents Lynn and Terry.

Orlagh, who has Down's syndrome, works a two-hour shift every Sunday lunchtime at the pub, serving food, clearing and cleaning tables and meeting and greeting customers.

With the help of dad Terry, Orlagh signed up for the staff 'share options' scheme, where a percentage of her wages goes directly into buying Wetherspoon shares.

Her mum Lynn said: "Orlagh has been buying shares for the past four years, as a future investment, with a few pounds left over to spend on herself.

"This job was her first, and only, placement – and we are so grateful to Wetherspoon for giving her the opportunity of paid employment.

"It is difficult for anyone with a disability to be accepted in the workplace.

"By working at the pub, Orlagh raises awareness for those with disabilities, proving that they can work and be valuable community members.

"Everyone at the pub is so lovely. All of the staff are so supportive of her, and the regular customers seem to enjoy seeing her there.

"She loves working at the pub and, as a result, has grown in confidence and independence."

Lynn concluded: "A big thankyou to Wetherspoon for supporting people with disabilities in the workplace and for being a fabulous company to work for."

WOBBLER A WINNER ON WILD NIGHT IN WINTON

The Winton Wobbler is the name of a new ale launched to celebrate the 15th anniversary of The Parkstone and Heatherlands (Bournemouth).

During a day of events to mark the anniversary, Dorset Brewery unveiled the beer which it brewed for the occasion, including raffles, a quiz and a competition to name the new ale.

The pub's manager, Vicky Bayley, said: "We held a competition to name the 15th anniversary ale... and The Winton Wobbler was picked as the best name."

Staff from Dorset Brewery mingled with regulars to discuss the new beer and others from its range.

Customers were also able to 'Crack The Safe' – attempting to win £100 cash by choosing the correct safe-cracking numerical combination.

The event raised £340 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associates Rebecca Selleck and Chan Dover, shift leader Katie Corbin, kitchen associate Jamie Yeo, shift leader Jordan Northover, team leader Nicola Yates, duty manager Darren Francis and bar associate Max Hanham.



SUBMARINERS SHIP OUT TO WALES TO HONOUR WAR HERO



A team of Royal Navy submariners travelled down from Scotland to The John Wallace Linton (Newport) to honour the Victoria Cross winner who gave the pub its name.

Warrant officer Mark Harris arranged for the staff and students from the Royal Navy's basic submarine course to link up with local representatives from the Royal Navy Association, Submariners Association and local Sea Cadets, to make a 40-strong contingent.

They took part in a special memorial service to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the naval hero's 1943 death.

After the service, held a stone's throw from the pub, the group arrived at The John Wallace Linton to enjoy an evening with food, drinks and dit-spinning (story-telling in naval speak).

The arrival of lots of uniformed personnel sparked interest from the busy Friday evening trade – and a few more armed forces veterans came to chat and spend the evening there.

Mark said: "The team from the Submarine Training School feels connected to Cdr John Wallace Linton, as our teaching and accommodation block is named after him.

"It was an absolute bargain to find out that there was also a Wetherspoon pub named after him, in Newport, just 10 miles from my childhood home town of Pontypool.

"There have always been links between HMS Turbulent (his old submarine) and Newport, but, now that HMS Turbulent has been decommissioned, we were keen to do something to maintain the link between the Submarine Service and the great man.

"The event at the pub was a great success. The staff were excellent and we would like to thank them for their outstanding service.

"We ordered lots of small plates several hours in advance – and everything arrived on time, hot... and it kept coming, as did the drinks."

The pub's manager, Zak Parry, added: "We were delighted to host the event.

"Mark and I discussed it in advance. I cordoned off an area for the group near the information board featuring John Wallace Linton.

"The evening went really well – and we have a lot of current and former navy personnel who come to the pub who enjoyed the evening too."

ALE INSPECTORS FIND THE BEST CELLARS



Independent experts from Cask Marque will now assess pubs' cellars, as well as individual beers, during their twice-yearly unannounced visits

Wetherspoon's staff are committed to serving customers the perfect pint of real ale, on every occasion.

With millions of pints of real ale served across its pubs annually, this is no small feat.

As well as in-house training, covering all aspects of keeping and serving first-class beer, Wetherspoon also works alongside organisations like independent real-ale quality assessor Cask Marque – to gauge the quality of the real ale being served.

Cask Marque has been inspecting Wetherspoon's pubs since 1999.

Until January 2023, on its unannounced twice-yearly visits, Cask Marque would check up to six cask beers from the bar – for temperature, appearance, aroma and taste.

Cask Marque has 60 assessors on the road – these are trained brewers or senior technical services personnel, making 20,000 pub visits per year.

From January 2023, it has been a requirement for all Cask Marque pubs to have their cellars star rated.

To pass an assessment, a pub is required to achieve a beer and cellar hygiene rating of four stars (good) or five stars (excellent).

The assessment covers recommended best practice for the cellar as laid down by the industry and includes:

- temperatures – the cellar and in the glass
- stock rotation and sell-by dates
- gas storage for health and safety purposes
- line-cleaning
- cellar hygiene
- ice machines and gas washing machines – hygiene
- quality of beer in the glass

All Wetherspoon pubs have been in the process of being assessed since June 2023 and, according to Cask Marque, the company has some of the best beer quality scores of any managed pub group.

Cask Marque is confident that Wetherspoon's pubs will achieve a high star rating.

Once assessed, those pubs achieving a five-star pass rate will receive a window sticker to display, with their star rating also appearing on the CaskFinder app – which is used to seek Cask Marque pubs.

All Cask Marque pubs in future will be subject to an annual cellar inspection.

Cask Marque's director, Paul Nunny, commented: "This is an important development to improve and maintain beers' quality.

"By the end of 2023, we will have inspected and star rated more than 8,000 pubs, with Wetherspoon being the first pub group to have all of its cellars assessed.

"The scheme is not dissimilar to the recognised food hygiene rating, as the cellar plays the same role for beer as the kitchen does for food – and very much relates to health and hygiene standards."



Shift manager Chelsea Elliott with the Cask Marque plaque displayed outside John The Clerk of Cramlington (Cramlington)

About Cask Marque

Cask Marque was formed in 1998 to address the void in beer quality control, caused partly by the 1990 'beer orders' which forced breweries to sell their pubs, or vice versa, and thus often their interest in the quality itself, resulting in a major concern for the industry.

Having reached its 25th anniversary, Cask Marque remains a non-profit-making organisation, with a board comprising representatives from large and small breweries, pub companies and trade bodies – all engaged in continuing to improve the quality of beer.

ROSHEEN STILL KEEN AFTER 25 HAPPY YEARS



Kitchen shift leader Rosheen Buchanan has marked 25 years with Wetherspoon.

Rosheen works at The Barker's Brewery (Huyton).

The pub is her former local, although, back in 1998 when Rosheen started her Wetherspoon career, it was known as The Rose & Crown and owned by another company.

So, Rosheen jumped at the chance to transfer to the pub, when it reopened in January 2011 as The Barker's Brewery.

There was some luck involved in her move, because general manager Ged Murphy was visiting the pub where she was working at the time when news came through that the company had bought The Rose & Crown.

Rosheen said: "We had just been chatting about pubs in Huyton – and I mentioned that I knew The Rose & Crown and that Wetherspoon had tried to buy it once.

"Ged received a call just moments later to say that the deal had gone through, so I asked for a transfer, there and then, from The Richard John Blackler (Liverpool), where I had been working.

"I have been at The Barker's Brewery ever since."

Rosheen joined Wetherspoon originally with her husband Chris – and the couple managed pubs in Huyton and Heywood.

When Chris retired for health reasons, Rosheen decided to revert from pub manager to kitchen shift leader – at the same time taking up a course in cake decoration.

She said: "I thoroughly enjoy working for Wetherspoon and also enjoy the cake decoration too.

"It comes in very handy when the pub is hosting charity events."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Julie Graham, area manager Mike Morrissey (presenting kitchen shift leader Rosheen Buchanan with her long-service award) and duty manager Pamela Rustage.

BIRTHDAY BONANZA AT THE SOCIETY ROOMS

Customers at The Society Rooms (Stalybridge) enjoyed free food and drinks as the pub celebrated its 20th birthday.

Staff served canapé-style burgers and pizzas, as well as a choice of drinks (in shot glasses).

Customers also enjoyed a free cake decorated with the words 'Happy 20th Birthday The Society Rooms'.

Kitchen manager Nik Earnshaw said: "We wanted to do something to thank our loyal customers for their support over the years.

"It was also a good opportunity to tempt customers with some lovely food, Lukas craft ale and cherry and raspberry seltzers."

The Society Rooms, today managed by Liza Braddock, opened its doors in March 2003.

Nik is one of the longest-serving staff members (11 years), while shift leader Jane Feeney has worked at the pub for 12 years.

The pub also boasts a mother-and-daughter team – team leader Beth Fulham and her mum Lisa Fulham.

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Lisa Fulham, pub manager Liza Braddock and Lisa's daughter and team leader Beth Fulham.



TWINS ON A ROLL, AFTER BEING FLOORED BY CARPET DESIGNS

Wetherspoon's pubs' carpets have been in the news again, thanks to Instagrammers James and Matthew Dyer.

The 26-year-old twin brothers, from Rotherham, are 'collecting' Wetherspoon's carpets by visiting every pub to take a photo and document it on their Instagram account: @Wetherspoons_Carpet

National newspapers, including The Sun, Daily Mail and Daily Star Sunday, have reported the story of their hobby.

James, an assistant product manager, said: "We knew about the different carpets and thought that it would be a fun way to keep track, via Instagram, of the places we go to. It has since got a bit out of hand."

The hobby started in 2017 as a joke between the brothers, when they travelled to football matches and found a Wetherspoon pub as the best place to meet up.

The quest now fills their spare time, with more than 480 pubs already in the proverbial (carpet) bag.

Matthew, a railway company timetable planner, added: "The main reason we go to Wetherspoon now is because of the carpets, although the great-value food and drinks are an added bonus.

"We also like some of the old buildings' architecture, with Opera House (Tunbridge Wells) probably being one of our favourites, so far, although The Lord Wilson (Huddersfield) has great memories for me from my university days there."

Other fans of Wetherspoon's carpets have included Kit Caless, who published a book, *Spoon's Carpets – An Appreciation*, which is an ongoing project from 2015 (wetherspoonscarpets.tumblr.com), as well as another photographic collection of the company's floor-coverings on the Wetherspoon's Carpets website (wetherspoonscarpets.co.uk).



James (left) and Matthew are pictured at Goodman's Field, London

SERIOUS ISSUE PUT IN SPOTLIGHT IN KENT

Wetherspoon's pubs across Kent have been working in collaboration with Mountain Healthcare to raise awareness of support available to anyone who has experienced sexual assault.

A partner of NHS England and the police, Mountain Healthcare is the largest provider of sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) – which offer free, confidential healthcare and compassionate support to the public 24/7/365.

The local Kent team, at Beech House SARC, provides awareness and prevention training, across the county, to organisations and support services alike.

Peter Ruffle, Kent SARC male outreach worker, attended 23 Wetherspoon pubs across Kent, speaking to shift managers about the services which SARCs provide.

To help to raise awareness among Wetherspoon's staff and customers, posters advertising the Kent SARC have been placed in the male, female and accessible toilets, as well as on news boards at the pubs.

The posters feature a QR code which customers can scan, allowing them to view

the website at a time when they feel safe to do so.

Peter Ruffle (right), pictured with shift manager Alfie Verrill at The Leading Light (Faversham), said: "Wetherspoon is a market-leading company which offers a safe environment for all.

"There is a correlation between alcohol and people putting themselves in vulnerable positions – and Wetherspoon is setting the standard on raising awareness of available healthcare and mental health support to its customers."

Wetherspoon's area manager for Kent, Mark Powell, said: "Wetherspoon places a very high priority on all aspects of the safety and security of staff and customers.

"Services like those provided by SARCs offer essential support for those in need – and we are only too happy, with this initiative, to help in raising awareness."

● **To access your local SARC service, call the Mountain Healthcare support line: 0330 223 0099**

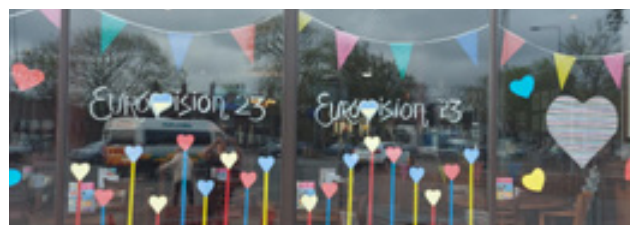


BALLOONS AND BUNTING MAKE EUROVISION GO WITH BOOM BANG-A-BANG IN LIVERPOOL

The Navigator (Liverpool) was decked out with balloons and bunting for the Eurovision Song Contest – to mark the city's role as host of the annual event.

Shift leader Becky Doherty said: "It was such a tremendous time for the city – and we wanted to show our support for the event."

The pub also held a collection, raising £150 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



SAFE IN OUR HANDS – WETHERSPOON SPONSORING NATIONAL PUBWATCH ONCE AGAIN



Wetherspoon is once again sponsoring the National Pubwatch awards, recognising the work of schemes and their efforts to provide safe drinking environments.

Finalists will get to attend a prestigious awards dinner in the House of Lords on 17 October 2023.

National Pubwatch chair Steve Baker OBE said: “These awards promote good practice and recognise those pubwatches and publicans working hard to provide safe and responsible drinking environments.

“This national award is a fantastic opportunity to promote the work of a local pubwatch scheme, receive recognition at a national level and celebrate these achievements at a prestigious event.”

Wetherspoon’s legal director, Nigel Connor, added: “Pubwatches work because of the fantastic day-to-day efforts of their many members, yet it is still important to recognise those schemes and individuals which specifically go the extra mile and provide an example to others.

“The National Pubwatch awards help to do that – and Wetherspoon is pleased to support them for the fourth successive year.”

The 2022 winner was Reading pubwatch, recognised for the range of new initiatives launched, including a new standard operating procedure for licensed premises, a drink-spiking awareness campaign, increased security searches and anti-terrorist seminar-running.

The pubwatch was also rewarded for its robust banning system which has had over 100 offenders banned for a period of three months through to five years.

Honorary secretary of Reading pubwatch Bill Donne said: “We were honoured to have won the prestigious National Pubwatch of the Year award in 2022, against stiff competition.

“To receive the award at the House of Lords was such a highlight.

“You need tenacity and resilience to run a successful pubwatch – and that is how Reading has lasted for 20 years.

“The win has given members a real boost that the partnership (spearheaded with organisations such as the council, police, BIDs, street pastors, fire and rescue and the security industry authority) is really proving successful in creating a safe late-night economy.”

LEAH ON SONG AT THE HOPE TAP

Self-declared ‘underdog’ Leah Tolksdorf is a rising musical star who works as a bar associate at The Hope Tap (Reading). Indeed, Underdog is the name of her newly released 11-track album, recorded at Abbey Road studios, where The Beatles recorded so many of their songs.

She said: “I am an underdog and underrated and so that’s why I chose the name for the album.”

Leah started working for Wetherspoon as a bar associate at The Giddy Bridge (Southampton) while studying at the University of Southampton.

She graduated as a music student in 2022, but has been releasing songs for the past three years.

Colleagues at The Giddy Bridge were impressed with Leah’s ability to juggle her gigs and recording work with full-time studying.

The Hope Tap’s shift manager, Bobby Davies, said:

“We are all very proud of Leah – we don’t know how she does it all, to be honest.

“She is very good at her job here and is great with customers too.

“We all wish her well with her music.”

Leah said: “My managers at the Wetherspoon pubs where I have worked have been very flexible with my work arrangements and very keen to encourage my music.”

The Hope Tap attracts a lot of students from the town’s university. This offers Leah plenty of opportunities to chat to customers about her music.

She said: “I don’t overdo it, but, if it comes up, I’m happy to talk about my music.”

Leah has played gigs up and down the country, including Reading venues such as The Biscuit Factory, where she was the headline act – and she also performed at the prestigious Readipop Festival (July).

She describes her music as “vibey, neo-soul”, with lyrics promoting strong, independent womanhood, influenced by Amy Winehouse and Lily Allen.

● **To find out more about Leah’s music (plus links to her work on TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, Soundcloud and Spotify), visit: www.leahtolksdorf.com**



WINE CHOICE WIDENS WITH NEW ADDITIONS

Treat yourself to new offerings from Australia, France, Italy, New Zealand, Romania and Spain

Customers can now enjoy three NEW wine choices, as part of the drinks range available with selected Wetherspoon meals.

The three NEW choices join Coldwater Creek pinot grigio, Chardonnay, rosé and merlot, along with a great selection of other alcoholic and soft drinks, as part of the drinks range available with selected Wetherspoon meals.

They are the white wine Villa Maria Private Bin Sauvignon Blanc (12.5% ABV), the rosé wine Villa Maria Blush Sauvignon (12.5% ABV), both from New Zealand, and the red wine Grant Burge Barossa Ink Shiraz (14.5% ABV) from Barossa Valley, South Australia.

Wetherspoon's wine menu is offering a further selection of NEW wines, as part of the ever-growing range of wines.

There are two new whites, two new rosés and a new red now being served.

NEW Bolla Pinot Grigio delle Venezie DOC (12% ABV) from Italy and NEW Cune White Rioja (13% ABV) from Spain are both available by the bottle (750ml).

Philosophy

Since 1883, expertise and a respect for tradition have been the pillars of Bolla's wine-making philosophy.

This long history has led to the Bolla winery being recognised as an ambassador, the world over, of Italian taste.

The grapes harvested for Bolla Pinot Grigio are sourced from hillside vineyards located in northeast Italy's Delle Venezie area.

Rioja produces not only red wines, but also excellent white wines – as is proven by this superb example of a white Rioja. Cune White Rioja (unoaked) has aromas of apple and pears.

In 1879, two brothers, Eusabio and Raimundo Real de Asua, founded the winery CVNE in the heart of Haro.

It's still run by one of their direct descendants.

Range

NEW Bolla Pinot Grigio Blush Venezia DOC (11.5% ABV) from Italy and NEW The Pale by Sacha Lichine (12.5% ABV) from Provence, France, each a rosé wine, are also available in a bottle (750ml), while NEW Villa Maria Blush Sauvignon (12.5% ABV) from New Zealand is

served by the glass (125ml, 175ml and 250ml), as well as the bottle (750ml) – and is also available as part of the drinks range with selected Wetherspoon meals.

Bolla Pinot Grigio Blush Venezia DOC is floral, with lingering notes of summer fruits.

The Pale is crafted with grapes from the Vin de Pays du Var region of Provence. This is a classic Mediterranean rosé... with a twist.

It is deliciously dry and refreshing, with bright red-fruit flavours and a clean, crisp finish.

Villa Maria Blush Sauvignon is a fresh twist on a Kiwi favourite.

A delicate, pale pink wine, this is blushing from a splash of merlot from the Hawkes Bay region and bursting with fresh grapefruit and berry flavours.

Bottle

NEW Grant Burge Barossa Ink Shiraz (14.5% ABV) from Barossa Valley, South Australia, is served by the glass (125ml, 175ml and 250ml) and bottle (750ml) – and is also available as part of the drinks range with selected Wetherspoon meals.

NEW Zana Pinot Noir (12.5% ABV), from Romania, and Trivento Reserve Malbec (14% ABV), from Argentina, are available in a bottle (750ml).

Zana Pinot Noir, packed full of raspberry and black cherry fruit character, is produced by Cramele Recas.

It is made with grapes grown on the Dealul Uberland vineyard, an estate located on the far western fringes of the Romanian region of Transylvania/Banat, near Timisoara.

Fifth-generation winemaker Grant Burge is the name behind one of Australia's most respected and innovative producers. Grant Burge Barossa Ink Shiraz, an intensely dark blockbuster, is sourced from grapes grown across the Barossa.

Its decadent rich berry flavours pack an immediate punch, balanced by hints of dark chocolate, blackberries, cherries and sweet oak spice.

For something with a little fizz, try the ever-popular Italian Teresa Rizzi Prosecco (11% ABV) or the sparkling rosé (11.5% ABV). The rosé is available in a 200ml bottle, with the Prosecco as a 200ml and 750ml bottle. Broadwood's Folly, a fine, dry English sparkling wine (12% ABV) from the award-winning Denbies wine estate in Surrey, is available by the bottle (750ml).

Concha y Toro Coldwater Creek wine on draught is available by the glass (125ml, 175ml and 250ml). Concha y Toro, which produces Wetherspoon's draught wine, began in 1883 with its founder, Don Melchor, dreaming about creating 'the best wines'. Today, Concha y Toro is one of the most-admired wine producers in the world.

Its various multiaward-winning wines and brands are enjoyed by consumers around the world, in more than 140 countries.

Coldwater Creek wines hail from Chile's Valle Central wine region, where the iconic Andes Mountains provide a natural barrier, protecting vineyards from the elements.

This unique geography, combined with the warm climate and cooling breezes, creates perfect wine-producing conditions.



Tasting notes

Chardonnay (12% ABV): This zesty Chardonnay, light golden in colour, has aromas of peach and citrus and flavours of pineapple and tropical fruit.

Pinot grigio (12% ABV): This fresh, crisp pinot grigio has green apple and pear flavours.

Rosé (11.5% ABV): This delightful fruity rosé is made from the premium grape variety cabernet sauvignon.

The strawberry and cherry aromas are followed by a lovely balance of red fruit flavours and a refreshing crispness.



Merlot (12% ABV): Bright red in the glass, with a lovely aroma of raspberry and cherry, this is smooth and easy drinking, with red plum flavours and a hint of spice.



NEW Villa Maria Blush Sauvignon



Villa Maria Private Bin Sauvignon Blanc



NEW Cune White Rioja



NEW Bolla Pinot Grigio



NEW The Pale by Sacha Lichine



Trivento Reserve Malbec



NEW Grant Burge Barossa Ink Shiraz



NEW Zana Pinot Noir



NEW Bolla Pinot Grigio Blush



Broadwood's Folly



Teresa Rizzi Prosecco DOC



Teresa Rizzi Sparkling Rosé

CITY LAUDS LIVING COLOUR AT THE LIBERTY BOUNDS



The Liberty Bounds (City of London), located opposite the Tower of London on Tower Hill, has been recognised for its floral displays.

The pub has been awarded the Edmund and Annie Hart Trophy by the Flowers in the City campaign, in acknowledgement for its 'outstanding display in the City of London Winter Colour Competition 2022/23'.

For the winter competition, there are only four awards handed out to premises in the City of London.

The Flowers in the City campaign, a bi-annual initiative, is run by the Worshipful Company of Gardeners, one of the ancient City Livery Companies.

Pub manager Jason Blower said: "The team at Floralscapes does a superb job with our displays. Our flower walls and window boxes, which are themed for special occasions, are something to be proud of."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Alana Mentessi, Floralscapes Nurseries' founder Jonathan Snape and shift manager Lenny Keeble.

PALACE GANG GRABS LITTER TO MAKE SHEFFIELD SHINE

Community litter-picking was the order of the day as pub staff swelled the ranks of a local group to tidy up a playground and park near The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield).

Pub manager Ricky Brown led the team, having contacted the Friends of Woodseats Playground to offer support.

The pub paid for litter-pickers, plastic bags and large gloves, with staff spending two hours cleaning up the park during a Sunday lunchtime.

Altogether, 12 bags of rubbish were collected on the day.

Ricky said: "The Woodseats Palace is at the heart of the community, and I thought that getting involved in the litter-pick would be a great way to give back to Woodseats."

Ricky is pictured (left to right) with team leaders Leanne Day and Iona Robertson and deputy manager Sophia Salvati.



THE CORN EXCHANGE • BURY ST EDMUNDS

CRAIG IN HIS ELEMENT RUNNING 'POSHEST' PUB



Pub manager Craig Uttley is celebrating his 20th anniversary with Wetherspoon.

Darlington-born Craig, who runs The Corn Exchange (Bury St Edmunds), started with the company as an 18-year-old part-time bar associate, juggling the role with a full-time job at McDonald's.

Craig recalled: "A friend and colleague at McDonald's left to work at The Tanners Hall (Darlington), so I applied for a part-time role there too.

"It was mad with two jobs, working at the pub every Friday and Saturday night, but I loved it and soon joined full time."

Craig progressed through the ranks at The Tanners Hall to become a shift manager, embarking on management training and helping out at pubs in Stockton, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool, gaining valuable experience along the way.

In August 2006, he moved to The William Stead (Darlington), then a new opening, where he spent a year, before further moves to The Ralph Fitz Randal (Richmond) and the newly opened The Stanley Jefferson (Bishop Auckland).

In February 2008, Craig took on his first pub as pub manager at The Ivy Wall (Spalding) and reported: "I had two fantastic years at The Ivy Wall, before being approached by the area manager to move again to The Standing Order (Stevenage)."

He had another two-year stint there, before moving, in May 2012, to the newly opened pub The Corn Exchange, where he has remained ever since.

Craig admitted: "I love it here. The town is very relaxed and, after 11 years, I am more than settled. If someone else ran the pub, I would feel cheated.

"It's a beautiful building, not too shabby, and reported in some national daily newspapers as the 'poshest Wetherspoon pub'.

"When I sit with a cuppa at 6.30am, and the sun is coming in through the glass roof, I think to myself that I've not done too badly."

Craig also met his partner at the pub, shift manager Sara Birdseye, while Sara's mum, shift leader Tina Warren, is also part of an experienced and established team at The Corn Exchange.

Among them are Emily Davis, who joined as a 16-year-old floor associate in October 2016 and is now a shift manager.

Shift manager Ellie Neilson also started, in March 2016, as a floor associate, aged 16, as did shift leader Jade Burgis, in November 2019.

Ciara Bruce was a 17-year-old floor associate in April 2018 and is now a shift leader.

Shift manager David Kennedy transferred to the pub in 2015, then as a bar associate, while kitchen manager Ellen Bright has been with the company for 22 years, having joined The Corn Exchange team on day one.

Kitchen shift leader Luke Smith arrived in February 2018, as a kitchen associate.

Craig said: "Wetherspoon is a good company to work for – and I fully enjoy my job.

"Like everything, there are challenges, yet we keep reinventing and bringing in new ideas."

SHEFFIELD

PUBWATCH TRIO STEELED FOR ACTION IN SHEFFIELD



Pictured (left to right) are pub managers Peter Bryan (The Wagon & Horses, Chapeltown), Beth Burns (The Queens Hotel, Maltby) and Rick Brown (The Woodseats Palace, Woodseats)

Wetherspoon always aims to offer its staff and customers the best possible pub experience.

Whether as a work place or a socialising space, a safe environment is of paramount importance to everyone.

Wetherspoon's pub managers and staff work closely with their local police forces and pubwatch groups, making every effort possible to ensure that the safety of staff and customers is placed as a high priority.

Wetherspoon's pubs are actively involved, across the UK, in 537 local pubwatch schemes.

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

At three pubs in and around Sheffield, three pub managers are actively involved in their respective pubwatch groups.

Pub manager Peter Bryan, who has run The Wagon & Horses (Chapeltown) since October 2021, has been chair of Chapeltown pubwatch since March 2023.

The group, which covers the S35 postcode area and includes around 20 venues, communicates via a WhatsApp group and is supported by an excellent hands-on local police licensing officer.

Peter said: "As chair, my main role is to ensure that everyone is communicating and that, when it comes to where we stand with issues and antisocial behaviour, we are all on the same page."

"If someone disrupts in one pub, they could do the same in another.

"No single pub wants to be known for a 'barring culture', so we must ensure that we all stand firm together.

"A zero-tolerance, united front helps to create a positive environment for everyone so this is a real community effort.

"The Wagon & Horses is an open space for everyone – and we must do everything we can to keep it as a safe environment."

Pub manager Beth Burns has run The Queens Hotel (Maltby) for the past four years.

The pub has always been part of a small (currently a seven-venue membership) pubwatch scheme.

Beth was voted as vice-chair a year ago and is helping to bring the local pubs together to tackle ongoing issues.

Beth said: "We're a real community pub and work hard to support many local community projects, as well as taking part in various charity fundraising efforts.

"Pubwatch has brought several local venues closer, as we try to work together for the community, although we do need more people on board.

"If we all work together, we can actively do something positive.

"With additional police support and continued communications, the pubwatch scheme will help to bring about change for the better."

Rick Brown took over as pub manager at The Woodseats Palace (Woodseats) in October 2022, when previous pub manager Josh Bell moved to The Rawson Spring (Sheffield).

Rick also took on the role of chair of the local pubwatch scheme (Sheffield postcode S8), also previously held by Josh.

Sheffield-born Rick, who has worked for Wetherspoon for eight years, reported: "Our S8 pubwatch scheme, established for several years, is a big group with around 28 venues.

"I took over as chair in November 2022, after Josh moved, and one of the first things I did was to visit the other venues.

"I wanted to find out what the main issues are, what we are all up against and draw up an action plan.

"It is all about assisting one another, helping out and sharing door staff when needed and, basically, to have one another's back.

"It is bringing us closer together as a community."

Logistically, The Woodseats Palace is in a great position, located on a busy main road and, quite literally, across the road from the police station.

Rick concluded: "Police officers often come to the pub for lunch breaks, which helps to build a good relationship.

"Working together through pubwatch, sending a collective message to any potential troublemakers, will help everyone."

STEVE POUNDS THE PAVEMENT AS HE STRIVES TO VISIT EVERY PUB



Former medic Steve Jones is half way to achieving his ambition of visiting every Wetherspoon pub – having visited 430 in the last three years alone.

His amazing feat, achieved despite several lockdowns over the period, has involved meticulous planning and support from family and friends.

Steve is a regular at The Parchment Makers (Havant) and has visited all of Wetherspoon's pubs in Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Essex, Hampshire, Kent, London and Surrey, sometimes visiting as many as 10 pubs a day.

He said: "I do almost all of it by train and on foot. I use the Wetherspoon app to plan my visits – and it records where I have been."

When Steve, 66, retired from the NHS in late 2020, after more than 40 years' service, he was given an Apple Watch, which he uses to record the distance walked among the pubs.

He said: "I walked 29 miles in Bristol, over two days, visiting pubs. It keeps me fit."

Steve starts a typical touring day with porridge, toast and coffee at the first pub. On his last visit of the day, he will have a pint of Efes lager with a mixed grill.

He added: "I don't really drink alcohol at the pubs, except to reward myself at the end of a good day out."

What motivates Steve is discovering the pub's history and architecture, plus sharing experiences with his friends in person and via social media.

One such friend, Emma Terracciano, got in touch with Wetherspoon News to tell us of Steve's feats.

Emma said: "Steve and I catch up frequently. He shows me the photos he's taken and tells me where he's been.

"I'm really interested in the buildings' history. Some pubs are former prisons, opera houses, theatres, Woolworths... you name it."

Steve concluded: "It's also such a good way to see Britain.

"I'm so often surprised at the beautiful places, scenery and towns which I find on my journeys.

"My favourite pub so far is Opera House (Tunbridge Wells) – which still stages an annual opera.

"I also have great memories of the prematch build-up at Hamilton Hall (Liverpool Street station) on my way to watch West Ham United."

THERE'S NO STOPPING CAROL ONCE SHE STARTS SKIPPING

Shift leader Carol Lynskey completed 100 skips a day for a month, raising £54 for Cancer Research.

Carol, who works at The Tremeneheere (Penzance), completed the challenge in honour of her late grandmother, Shirley Hall.

She said: "I had this feeling that I just wanted to do something to fight back against cancer.

"I looked on the page of challenges on the Cancer Research website – and the skipping one jumped out at me."

Carol completed a total of 2,800 skips during the 28-day month.

Shortly afterwards, the pub raised £100 for Young Lives vs Cancer through a bake sale held on its 20th birthday.

HIGH-FLYING PUBS PUT THE HIGH IN HYGIENE

Average rating of 4.99 out of 5, scored at 762 pubs, puts Wetherspoon above comparable operators

Wetherspoon has, once again, scored highly in the latest food hygiene rating league table (www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk), as at 8 June 2023.

Among the biggest pub chains, Wetherspoon's pubs consistently top 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.

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 such as Hungry Horse and Nicholson's and was also rated higher than restaurant and sandwich chains, including PizzaExpress, Nando's, McDonald's and Greggs – although all of those companies also scored highly.

Of our pubs, 762 currently have an FHRS rating, with 99.08 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 only independent government scheme assessing food hygiene standards

| | Total premises scored | Average premises score out of 5 |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Giggling Squid | 49 | 5.00 |
| Walkabout | 21 | 5.00 |
| Wetherspoon | 762 | 4.99 |
| TGI Fridays | 71 | 4.99 |
| Aldi | 755 | 4.98 |
| Prezzo | 126 | 4.98 |
| The Ivy Collection | 40 | 4.98 |
| Slug & Lettuce | 72 | 4.97 |
| Greggs | 1814 | 4.96 |
| McDonald's | 1197 | 4.96 |
| Lidl | 643 | 4.96 |
| Nando's | 416 | 4.96 |
| Wagamama | 155 | 4.96 |
| Miller & Carter | 114 | 4.96 |
| ASK | 65 | 4.95 |
| GBK | 34 | 4.94 |
| Be At One | 33 | 4.94 |
| O'Neill's | 33 | 4.94 |
| Yates | 32 | 4.94 |
| Starbucks | 987 | 4.93 |
| Pitcher & Piano | 15 | 4.93 |
| PizzaExpress | 329 | 4.91 |
| Sizzling Pub Co | 175 | 4.91 |
| Coffee#1 | 103 | 4.91 |
| Nicholson's | 67 | 4.91 |
| Turtle Bay | 44 | 4.91 |
| Hungry Horse | 243 | 4.90 |
| Zizzi | 126 | 4.90 |
| All Bar One | 48 | 4.90 |
| Table Table | 42 | 4.90 |
| Costa Coffee | 2336 | 4.89 |
| Craft Union | 406 | 4.89 |
| Chef & Brewer | 131 | 4.89 |
| Geronimo | 33 | 4.88 |
| Browns | 24 | 4.88 |
| Burger King | 427 | 4.87 |
| KFC | 893 | 4.86 |
| Vintage Inns | 145 | 4.86 |
| Giraffe | 15 | 4.85 |
| Asda | 517 | 4.84 |
| BrewDog | 42 | 4.83 |
| Papa Johns | 434 | 4.82 |
| Bella Italia | 73 | 4.82 |
| Byron | 17 | 4.82 |
| Young's | 122 | 4.81 |
| Brewers Fayre | 124 | 4.80 |
| Côte | 82 | 4.80 |
| Bill's | 51 | 4.80 |
| Oakman Inns | 36 | 4.80 |
| Toby Carvery | 141 | 4.79 |
| Subway | 1349 | 4.77 |
| Harvester | 155 | 4.77 |
| Las Iguanas | 43 | 4.77 |
| Breakfast Club | 13 | 4.77 |
| YO! Sushi | 51 | 4.76 |
| German Doner Kebab | 117 | 4.75 |
| Loungers/Cosy Club | 197 | 4.74 |
| Carluccio's | 26 | 4.72 |
| Beefeater | 121 | 4.70 |
| Caffè Nero | 549 | 4.66 |
| Café Rouge | 29 | 4.52 |

Information in this table was sourced on 8 June 2023 from www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk, listing 762 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.

FIVE-STAR RATINGS KEEP ROLLING IN AT THE RED LION



Kitchen manager Nathan Grant

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

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

Among our pubs achieving a continuous maximum rating of five for the last seven consecutive inspections is The Red Lion (Thetford).

The Red Lion, housed in a grade II listed premises on Market Place and described as a two-storey building of 'cut flint', originally built in 1837, was first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in July 2012.

Pub manager Katie Pearce has been at the helm for the past five and a half years, while kitchen manager Nathan Grant has run the kitchen team (currently numbering 15) for the past nine years.

The pub staff of 53, including 15 kitchen staff members and a team of four cleaners, are well versed and trained in all aspects of keeping the pub clean, tidy and in tip-top five-star condition.

Shift manager Amy Leeder, who has worked at The Red Lion for eight years, revealed: "There is no secret or special process to achieve and maintain a five-star rating. It is just a way of work life.

"The whole team is initially trained in all aspects of the pub cleanliness régime, and we all continue to teach and learn on the job.

"There are six varying kitchen checks throughout the day, every few hours, where a manager goes into the kitchen and inspects its cleanliness, rubbish disposal, food preparation and many other areas."

The Red Lion has also achieved successive Loo of the Year platinum awards, for the standards of its toilets.

Amy said: "Our toilets are checked for cleanliness every hour – and customers are always saying how clean they are.

"If the toilets aren't clean in a premises, that will tell you a lot about everything else."

Amy reveals that pub manager Katie is a stickler for cleanliness throughout the pub, including the cellar, bar area, glass shelves, glass-washing facilities and fridges as well as in-house procedures.

The area manager inspects every week, while the company auditor visits monthly to ensure that standards are being maintained.

Katie added: "If we stay on top of things, then there is never an excuse.

"You just can't afford to cut any corners, especially when it comes to serving food and drinks. It's so very important for the health and hygiene of staff and customers.

"Plus – customers are more aware than ever, especially since the pandemic, of the standards which they expect."

THE WIBBAS DOWN INN • WIMBLEDON

INGA CONTROLS THE CROWDS – AT THE BAR AND ON THE BEAT



When Inga Lekstutyte finishes her shift at The Wibbas Down Inn (Wimbledon), she takes on a different role – as a special constable. Deputy manager Inga was looking to help her community during lockdown and applied for the voluntary police role in 2021. However, it wasn't until May 2022 that her application was completed and she was sent out on the beat.

She said: "It is challenging, but really interesting and extremely rewarding work and teaches you so much about how to deal with people, especially when they are being difficult."

"The skills I have learned working for Wetherspoon over the past eight years have definitely helped me in my police role – and vice versa."

"It's all about staying calm in situations."

Her work supporting full-time officers has seen her police the funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth II – and she was also part of the police operation during the coronation of King Charles III.

Inga has also attended football matches at Wimbledon FC and rugby matches at Twickenham and is involved with community support and neighbourhood policing.

She added: "The pub's customers often give me a 'double-take', when they see me in uniform on the beat."

Inga has also persuaded police colleagues to use the pub while off duty. She has even persuaded fellow special constable Zach Suriyataneg-Griffith to take a job in the pub as a bar associate.

"So, now, we have two special constables behind the bar," said a proud Inga.

She also thanked colleagues, including pub manager Andy Balastegui, for their support and for providing her with the necessary flexibility to carry out both of her roles.

NEW MALDEN

WATCHMAN ON LOOK-OUT FOR GLORY IN THE GOOD BEER GUIDE

The Watchman (New Malden) has been named as joint 'pub of the year' by the local branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

CAMRA members narrowed down the field of entries to three pubs – which were then judged on criteria, including ale quality, cleanliness, atmosphere and the standard of service.

The pub's manager, Mark Brewis, said: "We are delighted to have been picked by our local CAMRA branch as the joint 'pub of the year'."

"It is our ambition to be listed in The Good Beer Guide – and we hope that this will stand us in good stead for that."

Kingston and Leatherhead CAMRA branch chairman Richard Russell said: "The Watchman offers a great range of ales, consistently in good condition, with friendly and knowledgeable staff who are happy to engage with customers and introduce new beers."

"Our congratulations go to Mark and his colleagues."

The Watchman will now go forward for a London-wide round of judging as the capital's ale-drinkers decide on their regional pub of the year.



Pictured (left to right) are team leader Julia Nowinska, pub manager Mark Brewis and shift manager Monika Tamulaityte

GRIMSBY

A YEAR OF FIRSTS FOR YARBOROUGH HOTEL



The Yarborough Hotel (Grimsby) has been named as 'best pub' by local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch members.

Not only did pub manager Dani Love's pub achieve first place in the 'town pub of the year' 2023 category, voted for by Grimsby & North East Lincolnshire CAMRA, but it also achieved 'overall winner' in their 'pub of the year' 2023 competition.

Dani said: "We are thrilled to have won first place in the CAMRA award for 'best town pub', as well as achieving 'best overall pub' in our area."

"As far as I'm aware, first place has never been awarded at this pub, so this is a very exciting time for us."

"We are honoured to accept this award ahead of a lot of real-ale competition in our area."

Branch chair Kevin Donovan said: "Congratulations – to not only our 'town pub of the year', but also our 'overall winner'."

Kevin is pictured (left) at a special presentation evening at the pub, alongside (left to right) shift leader and ale champion Michael Evans, pub manager Dani, branch treasurer Andy Hamilton and vice chair Mark Long.

Ale champion Michael, who has worked at the pub for the past seven years, said: "We are delighted with the awards, presented in recognition of the range and quality of our real ales."

"It is a big deal and a good sign that we are going in the right direction."

Michael, who is also a CAMRA member, added: "We have a good relationship with our local CAMRA members, hosting meetings here every three months."

The Yarborough Hotel serves up to a dozen ever-changing guest beers, including the hugely popular Triple XB (XXXB) from Batemans Brewery, as well as real ales from Rooster's Brewing Co, Oakham Ales and Rudgate Brewery.

LEFT-OVER LEVY WILL ASSIST CARE APPRENTICES

Wetherspoon has invested approximately £650,000 of its unused apprenticeship levy to five care and education providers: Bright Horizons, Cera, Choice Care, Thera Trust and Young Lives vs Cancer.

The apprenticeship levy was introduced in 2017 by the UK Government for employers paying a wage bill of more than £3 million per year.

Employers meeting this criterion, like J D Wetherspoon, pay 0.5% of their monthly payroll as a levy tax.

The levy is then used to invest in apprenticeship training for employees.

An apprenticeship levy transfer is when a levy-paying business chooses to transfer up to 25% of levy funds (calculated from the previous tax year) to another business or charity to support its apprenticeship requirements.

More than £200,000 of the total funds available to transfer have been committed to healthcare provider Cera.

The company has awarded Cera the money to spend on frontline apprenticeships.

The money will cover the cost of recruiting, training and deploying 68 adult care apprentices to achieve their diploma in care – between level 2 (adult care worker) and level 5 (leader in adult care).

Cera's chief people officer, Annabel Nash, said: "All of us at Cera are delighted to receive such a significant investment from Wetherspoon as part of the apprenticeship levy.

"Being selected as the recipient for this generous investment is testament to Wetherspoon's understanding of just how important funding is for the health and care sector.

"The money will go a long way in growing the talent pool and attracting new recruits to a rewarding, life-long career in care."

Wetherspoon's recruitment and qualifications manager, Michelle Crooke, added: "Our levy transfer pledges enable all of our chosen partners to offer apprenticeship provision which may not otherwise have been an option.

"This helps to extend their knowledge and skills to continue the fantastic work which they do in supporting those with whom they work.

"We are delighted to be able to transfer a proportion of our apprenticeship levy to Cera.

"We recognise the importance of being able to provide health and social care to people in their own homes and are proud to be able to support apprenticeships and career development opportunities."

PARTY HATS DONNED AT THE HAT AND FEATHERS

Colleagues past and present joined customers for a birthday breakfast to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the opening of The Hat and Feathers (Seaham).

Former colleagues, who keep in touch with the pub family, often join in on staff nights out.

Pub manager Kirstie Wilkinson said: "We thought that this would be a great way to celebrate the pub's 10th birthday as we are a proud community pub – and our people are one big family.

"We hosted a bake sale on our birthday, with goodies cooked by several team members, which raised £102 for Young Lives vs Cancer."

Two of the current team, shift leader Amy Robinson and kitchen shift leader Shane Lambert, have worked at the pub from day one, while bar associates Julie and Claudia Teasdale are mother and daughter, respectively.

Pictured (left to right) are Amy Robinson, Claudia Teasdale, Shane Lambert, Kirstie Wilkinson (cutting the cake) and Julie Teasdale (front), with shift manager Jordan Haynes and bar associate David Clarke.



MARJORIE AND HALF MOON INN – LOVE AT FIRST BITE



A year ago, Marjorie Guerra-Martin had never even set foot in a Wetherspoon pub.

Now, the former teacher is not only a fan, but a regular customer at her local, The Half Moon Inn (Billingham).

Marjorie, 74, said: "I didn't know Wetherspoon and was a little reluctant when my son-in-law Adam suggested that we go.

"Now, I am a regular and absolutely love it, love it, love it."

Adam Clarkson confirmed: "Marjorie was hesitant, but, since being introduced to the joy of Wetherspoon, she has become one of the company's biggest fans.

"She rarely goes anywhere else now."

Marjorie continued: "I am a bit picky, if I'm honest, and have worked in hotel management and catering, so know about the industry.

"At The Half Moon Inn, the food is always so fresh, the service is so good, the orange juice is to die for and the atmosphere so friendly.

"I feel very comfortable there.

"The scampi is amazing, the chips are the best – and I love the all-day brunch too."

Marjorie concluded: "We now go for birthdays, anniversaries and on Sundays, with all the family.

"I always laugh with my grandson, saying it's as cheap as chips, especially with the drinks included – it's a family joke and I love it."

A WELCOME HOTEL GUEST - ANDREW, THE FREQUENT FLYER



Andrew Ford calls Wetherspoon home, quite literally, for seven days every month.

Andrew, a character as colourful as his clothes, enjoys life as a regular guest at various Wetherspoon hotels around the country.

Originally from Leeds, the former railway worker, bus driver and even art model now lives as a guest with various religious communities, as well as staying at 26 (so far) Wetherspoon hotels.

Andrew, 68, explained simply: "I just adore them."

He continued: "I have always been a customer at the pubs and have probably visited between 500 and 600, although I never make a note."

"However, I picked up the Wetherspoon News magazine one day, read about the hotels and thought that I would try one."

Andrew calls Turvey Abbey near Bedford his 'base' and names several other abbeys and convents among the unusual places where he regularly stays as a paying guest.

He also lists The Greenwood Hotel (Northolt), The Hatchet Inn (Newbury), The Swan Hotel (Leighton Buzzard), The Queen's Head

Hotel (Tavistock), The Foley Arms Hotel (Great Malvern) and The Catherine Wheel (Henley-on-Thames) among his frequent hotel visits.

Andrew is reluctant to pick a favourite, but describes The Kings Head Hotel (Monmouth) and The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury) as 'out of this world'.

He added: "Every hotel is so different. The facilities are great, design and architecture are beautiful and I get such a buzz from looking forward to my visits and then staying there."

"It is such a lovely feeling that I don't like leaving – and spend the next two or three days getting over it."

Andrew concluded: "I just want to thank everyone for providing such wonderful accommodation – from Tim Martin (whom I once met on platform nine at Euston station) to the pubs' staff, hotels' housekeeping, and everyone who makes me feel so at home."

"I don't think that I will be able to visit them all, through financial restrictions, but the ones I do go to are first class. I just love them."

wetherspoon **hotels**

In England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales

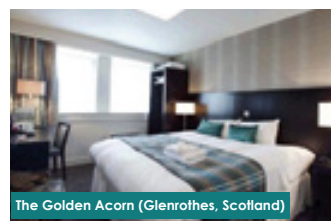
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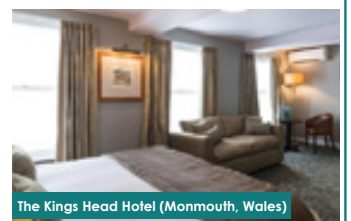
The Saxon Crown (Corby, England)



Keavan's Port Hotel (Dublin, Ireland)



The Golden Acorn (Glenrothes, Scotland)



The Kings Head Hotel (Monmouth, Wales)

A DRASTIC SHIFT IN HAIRSTYLE FOR SHIFT LEADER AMBERLEY

Brave Amberley Walker had her head shaved to raise money for a charity which was set up after a colleague's family member was killed in a stabbing.

Shift leader Amberley underwent the shaving at the pub where she works – The Ford Madox Brown (Manchester).

It was carried out by shift manager Jake Winterburn.

Jake also organised a raffle, with prizes kindly donated by customers and local businesses, which added to the fundraising total.

Mero's World gained £500 from the head shave – a charity which raises funds to purchase publicly accessible bleed-control kits containing life-saving tourniquets and dressings to stem bleeding, following a stabbing incident, until the emergency services arrive.

Amberley said: "I was pleased to raise so much money for a very worthwhile cause."



SPOON FANS FIND LOVE IN THEIR 70s

A couple in their 70s got engaged in The Sir Nigel Gresley (Swadlincote) just five months after their first meeting in another Wetherspoon pub.

Adrian Stebbeds and Lynda Bird met in September 2022 at The Red Lion (Skegness) while on holiday.

Adrian, 73, was caravanning nearby with friends, while Lynda was staying in a hotel with her sister.

The couple got chatting over evening meals at The Red Lion and kept in touch, occasionally meeting up for dinner at The Sir Nigel Gresley.

Then, in February 2023, Lynda accepted Adrian's proposal of marriage.

Adrian, who lives in Norwich, said: "At our age, neither of us wanted to waste any time."

"Wetherspoon has been a big part of our life – and now it's part of our story."

Both Adrian and Lynda are Wetherspoon enthusiasts, with Adrian enjoying a pint of Ruddles Best and Lynda a glass of Chardonnay.

The Sir Nigel Gresley's manager, Rob Winterton, added: "It's a great story and they make a lovely couple. Everyone here wishes them all the best for a happy future."

● **Lynda and Adrian are pictured outside The Sir Nigel Gresley**



BIG CALVES PUSH JIM AROUND BRITISH COAST

Wetherspoon customer Jim McIlwain is attempting a 3,500-mile coastal walk around England, Scotland and Wales to raise money for the charity Suicide Prevention.

Jim, himself homeless, sold his car to fund the walk and is stopping to refuel at Wetherspoon's pubs along the way, before his nights of wild camping in his tent.

He headed south and west from Weston-super-Mare, starting with Somerset and Devon, then all the way round to Cumbria, where he breakfasted at The Bransty Arch (Whitehaven), via the coast of England and Scotland.

Jim said: "Apart from the company, I can enjoy unlimited coffees, warm up and dry off, while resting with a bite to eat."

Jim is walking around 10–15 miles each day as he continues along the Cumbrian coast before heading into Lancashire, Merseyside and Wales.

"I hope to be back in Weston by Christmas," said Jim.

He added: "It has been a huge learning curve. Temperatures have plummeted to as low as -5°C, with the terrain often hard going.

"I am determined and keep going. It's much easier now that it's summer – and my calves are twice as big."

His favourite Wetherspoon spot was the rooftop of The Admiral Collingwood (Ilfracombe) which affords views of the North Devon coast.

Jim has raised more than £4,500 so far.

● His webpage is <https://tinyurl.com/ydmkvuxz>

HOTEL SUPERFANS AIMING TO TASTE ALL 57 VARIETIES

A family group of Wetherspoon superfans has visited 14 of the company's hotels – and aims, over time, to stay at all 57.

Helen McGovern, her husband Paddy, her brother Andrew Welch and his wife Karen stayed most recently at The Castle Hotel (Ruthin).

Helen, who worked as a secretary for a hospital close to her home in Chester, said: "We are all retired now and are not all in the best of health, so we want to do what we can, while we still can."

She added: "We have never been disappointed – we think that the hotels are excellent value for money and the staff are all kind and courteous.

"It's a great way to see our own country. We have such lovely places to visit here. You don't have to go abroad.

"We plan our trips over a drink or two at our local, The Bull and Stirrup Hotel (Chester)."

Among the hotels visited are George Hotel (Bewdley), The Briar Rose (Birmingham), The Portland Hotel (Chesterfield), The Kings Head Hotel (Monmouth), The Red Lion (Doncaster), The Unicorn Hotel (Ripon), The Shrewsbury Hotel (Shrewsbury), The Three Tuns (Thirsk), The Brocket Arms (Wigan), The Crown (Worcester) and The Yarborough Hotel (Grimsby).

Helen added: "We use the hotels as a base and enjoy local events during our stays, including horseracing at Ripon."



Pictured (left to right) are Paddy and Helen McGovern, with Karen and Andy Welch at The Bull and Stirrup Hotel (Chester)

AN GEATA ARUNDEL DELIVERS SUGAR HIGH ON FIRST BIRTHDAY

An Geata Arundel (Waterford) celebrated its first anniversary with a charity bake sale.

The sale raised €300 for Wetherspoon's nominated charity, LauraLynn Ireland's children's hospice.

Delicacies, including choco marshmallow bites, krispie cakes and cream-and-jam doughnuts, were sold for €3 each and came with a free coffee.

Children were treated on the day to a face-painting session.

Shift manager Lorraine McDonagh said: "We are really pleased to have celebrated our first year here in Waterford.

"We would like to thank everyone who came to help us to raise money for LauraLynn children's hospice."

Pictured are team leader Kimberley Fitzpatrick (left) and duty manager Sophie Charles running the cake stall on the day.





EARLY DOORS, THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Our array of breakfast options provides something for every palate

Start your day the Wetherspoon way, with a huge range of breakfast options to choose from.

Wetherspoon's pubs serve great-quality ingredients from UK and Irish suppliers, offering exceptional value and choice.

The breakfast menu is served from 8am until 12 noon, seven days a week, with a range of tea, coffee and hot chocolate drinks, including free refills[☐], all day every day.

Fruit

The breakfast menu includes traditional breakfast dishes, from a full-cooked breakfast to porridge and fresh fruit (apple, banana, blueberries and strawberries), as well as a breakfast muffin deal, Benedict range and American-style pancakes.

Tuck in to a traditional breakfast of fried egg, bacon, sausage, baked beans, two hash browns, tomato and a slice of toast – or the large breakfast with two fried eggs, bacon, two sausages, baked beans, three hash browns, mushroom, tomato and two slices of toast. A small breakfast meal is also available.

The American breakfast (with small version too) offers two fried eggs, two hash browns, maple-cured bacon, two sausages, four pancakes and maple-flavour syrup.

The vegetarian breakfast (including large and small versions) offers two fried eggs, two Quorn vegan sausages, baked beans, three hash browns, mushroom and tomato, with a slice of toast.

Vegan

Wetherspoon's vegan breakfast includes two Quorn vegan sausages, baked beans, two hash browns, mushroom, tomato and a slice of toast, with vegan spread.

The freedom breakfast (formerly the gluten-free breakfast, whose ingredients do not contain gluten or dairy) includes two fried eggs, bacon, baked beans, mushroom and tomato.

There are three Benedict dishes, all served with two poached eggs, on a toasted English muffin, with Hollandaise sauce and rocket – with a different choice of main ingredient.

The eggs Benedict is served with Wiltshire cured ham, while the vegetarian mushroom Benedict is completed with two flat mushrooms and the miner's Benedict is served with black pudding.

Muffin

There are six breakfast muffins to choose from – egg & bacon muffin, egg & sausage muffin, breakfast muffin, egg & cheese muffin, egg & Quorn sausage muffin and smashed avocado muffin.

Select a fried egg, bacon & American-style cheese combo, in an English muffin; replace the bacon for sausage or, in our breakfast muffin, enjoy both bacon and sausage, with fried egg and American-style cheese.

For a vegetarian option, the egg & cheese muffin combines a fried egg with American-style cheese, in an English muffin; Quorn sausage replaces the meat version, while guacamole, pico di gallo and rocket are combined for the smashed avocado muffin.

All breakfast muffin deal choices are under 500 kcal each, use only 100 per cent free-range eggs and include tea, coffee or hot chocolate (including free refills[☐]) as part of the value-for-money deals.

Enjoy breakfast at Wetherspoon.



LOCO KEEPS UP A HEAD OF STEAM

The London & County, in Eastbourne, is in The Good Beer Guide for 10th consecutive year, thanks to its first-class refreshments

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 Campaign for Real Ale's (CAMRA) publication The Good Beer Guide.

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

Score

Local CAMRA branch members judge and score pubs for considered inclusion in the guide. In 2023's 50th edition, there are 200 Wetherspoon pubs listed.

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

The London & County (Eastbourne), which opened as a Wetherspoon pub in December 2009, has now been listed (2023 guide, published 2022) in the guide for 10 consecutive years.

To mark the achievement, pub manager Val Cheang was presented, earlier this year, with a special certificate by local South East Sussex CAMRA branch members.

Best

Val (pictured), who has managed the pub since 2009, said:

"My team works hard to ensure that the ale served at The London & County is the best quality we can offer."

Val first joined Wetherspoon in 2004 as a bar associate at The Village Inn (Gatwick) (now closed), and was deputy manager at The Flying Horse (Gatwick) before becoming pub manager at The London & County.

The real-ale selection at The London & County includes Wetherspoon's core choices of Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles, in addition to a selection of four ever-changing guest ales.

Among the guest beers, Val stocks a good variety of styles and always at least one locally brewed ale.

Porter

He reveals: "Porters are very popular with the regulars – and our three go-to guest ales are Hurst Brewery's Watchtower (5.5% ABV) and Wantsum Brewery's Black Pig (4.8% ABV), each a porter, as well as Pale Face (5.2% ABV), an American pale ale from Firebird Brewing Company."

Val continued: "We always listen to our real-ale regulars if they have any suggestions or favourites – and we make the quarterly guest ale list available for information. If there is enough interest in a particular beer, then we will order it."

He added: "We have hosted tap takeovers in the past and, during the last beer festival, set up a 'direct dispense', with the two local porters being served from the barrel, in addition to the festival ales on offer.

"We have a lot of local real-ale competition, including our close Wetherspoon neighbour Cornfield Garage, but we are clearly doing something right to be included in The Good Beer Guide for the past decade."

What The Good Beer Guide 2023 says:

THE LONDON & COUNTY

Arranged over two floors, each with a bar; the upstairs can be hired for functions.

This Wetherspoon Lloyds No.1 bar occupies the former London & County Bank, located in the town centre close to bus stops and the railway station.

Varying guest beers are on offer, including at least one LocAle.

Food is served all day. Muted TV screens display news, and music is played in the evening, with a DJ on Friday/Saturday, when a smart-casual dress code applies.

● 46 Terminus Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 3LX

What CAMRA says:

South East Sussex CAMRA branch's chairman, Peter Adams, said: "Congratulations to The London & County on reaching 10 consecutive years in The Good Beer Guide. Many pubs in the guide do not make it to this milestone."

He added: "The 'LoCo' was the first Wetherspoon in the South East Sussex Branch area to get in the guide – and is now the first to reach the consecutive 10-year milestone.

"That achievement is a tribute to manager Val Cheang who has been in charge of the pub throughout and takes much of the credit for the repeated Good Beer Guide listings.

"Val and his team also host some of our CAMRA events, in particular last year's welcome to the National Members' Weekend, in which CAMRA members from all over the country rated the pub's beers very highly."

A DAY TO SAVOUR

AS PRICES ARE CUT BY 7.5 PER CENT

THU 14 SEPT
TAX EQUALITY DAY

ALL PRICES REDUCED BY 7.5%

Promoting the benefit of a permanent VAT reduction in the hospitality industry.
ONE DAY ONLY

Wetherspoon's chairman, Tim Martin, said:
 "The biggest threat to the hospitality industry is the vast disparity in tax treatment among pubs, restaurants and supermarkets."
 "Pubs have been under fantastic pressure for decades, because of the tax disadvantages which they have with supermarkets."
 "It doesn't make sense for the hospitality industry to subsidise supermarkets."

BE FAIR TO PUBS
 Equal tax for pubs and supermarkets

wetherspoon



On Thursday 14 September, Wetherspoon's pubs are to cut the price of all food and drinks by 7.5 per cent – to highlight the benefit of a permanent VAT reduction in the hospitality industry.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Customers coming to Wetherspoon's pubs on Thursday 14 September will find the price of their food and drinks to be lower than normal.

"We urge the chancellor to create tax equality between pubs and supermarkets."

● **Shift leader Aaron Chaplin serves Alex Reedy at Castle in the Air, Manchester**

U2 FINALLY FINDS WHAT IT'S LOOKING FOR

Wetherspoon's Curry Club® is enjoyed by millions of customers each year.

And we can now add Bono and The Edge, from U2, to that number.

Celebrity and pop music newsletter Popbitch reported the news under the headline 'Even international rock stars can't resist the lure of Curry Club'.

The article stated: "Late last Thursday, Bono and The Edge were spotted walking around Shepherd's Bush, trying to find The Central Bar.

"They weren't having much luck, and the person they stopped to ask for directions didn't recognise the name either.

"It wasn't until The Edge explained that it was the local Wetherspoon they were after that the punter twigged the place and told them to head up to the first floor of the shopping centre.

"There, they took a table at the window, where no one appeared to recognise them. The Edge did the ordering."

The pub's manager, Dan Corley, said: "The staff were unaware at the time that Bono and The Edge were in here.

"However, when we later looked at the pub's CCTV, we could see that they had been there, sitting in the corner."

BANNER PROCLAIMS PAIR'S 400-PUB ACHIEVEMENT



A couple, having visited 400 Wetherspoon pubs over four years, had a banner printed to mark the achievement.

Elaine and Ade Hubszer took their banner to their 400th pub, The Iron Duke (Wellington), where they were welcomed by shift leader Alex Taylor and kitchen manager Fran Williams.

The couple began their marathon tour at The Dolphin & Anchor (Chichester), where they were "amazed" by the value-for-money offers and the range of ales.

Elaine said: "We were staying at a local hotel and were so impressed with The Dolphin & Anchor that we decided, when on one of our trips, to visit other Wetherspoon pubs.

"We picked up a copy of Wetherspoon News and read about the hotels, so started staying in them. We have stayed in 16 so far."

Elaine and Ade like a pint of Wobbly Bob in their local, The George Inn (Sandbach), but try other local ales wherever they go.

Elaine likes a curry, while Ade often plumps for a pizza or a five-bean chilli.

One of their favourites is the three-room hotel in Sittingbourne, The Golden Hope, a former police station, where customers can enjoy a drink in the old cells.

Elaine added: "We have also seen The Mikado and Don Giovanni at Opera House (Tunbridge Wells)."

Elaine and Ade, who work in the health sector, are planning more trips.

Elaine added: "We love it – it's such a great way to visit Britain."

Alex said: "We were only too pleased to congratulate the couple on the achievement and pose for a photo with them."

Pictured (left to right) are Elaine Hubszer, shift leader Alex Taylor, kitchen manager Fran Williams and Ade Hubszer.

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).

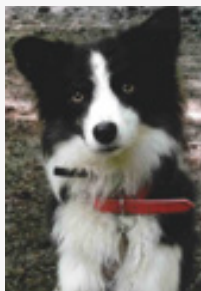
If you were to take a walk down its main street, you will see that most pubs and hotels encourage well-behaved dogs and their owners.

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

THE TREMENHEERE • PENZANCE

NO QUIBBLING BETWEEN SIBLING STAFF MEMBERS JAMIE AND JADE



Siblings Jade and Jamie Hooper have completed their second spell working together at The Tremeneheere (Penzance).

Jade, now 26, followed Jamie, now 30, into the pub when she was just 17.

Jade joined as a floor associate in 2014, when Jamie was already a kitchen associate, having joined the pub in 2011.

Jade is in her second spell at the pub, having left in 2018 to join a local family-run fine-dining hotel and restaurant business, where Jamie was, by then, also working.

Jade, a shift leader, said: "It seemed like I was following him around.

"I've always found working with my brother easy – we both have similar standards and are very professional at work."

Returning to Wetherspoon, Jamie's career took him to The Coinage Hall (Helston), The Hain Line (St Ives) and The Green Parrot (Perranporth) – then back to join his sister at The Tremeneheere in June 2022, working as a shift manager.

He has since moved to The Chevalier Inn (Exeter) as a shift manager.

Jamie said: "I want to continue to develop my career with Wetherspoon – and becoming a shift manager is a step in the right direction to my ultimate aim of becoming a pub manager with the company."

Jade, who has a four-year-old daughter, Ava, added: "I have still found it possible to achieve promotions and to balance that with life at home – and it helped that Jamie did the rota!"

The pub's manager, Bobby Platt, described Jade and Jamie as huge assets.

He said: "It's not every brother and sister who could work together so well, but they certainly do."

WETHERSPOON, ITS CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYEES HAVE PAID £5.8 BILLION OF TAX TO THE GOVERNMENT IN THE LAST 10 YEARS

In Wetherspoon's 2022 financial year (12 months to July 2022), it generated £662.7 million in tax – about £1 in every £1,000 of ALL UK government taxes. The average tax generated per pub in 2022 was £780,000.

The table* below shows the tax generated by the company in its financial years 2013–2022.

During this period, taxes amounted to about 37 per cent of every pound which went 'over the bar', net of VAT – about 20 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 2013–2022 | 2022 £m | 2021 £m | 2020 £m | 2019 £m | 2018 £m | 2017 £m | 2016 £m | 2015 £m | 2014 £m | 2013 £m | 2013–2022 £m |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| VAT | 287.7 | 93.8 | 244.3 | 357.9 | 332.8 | 323.4 | 311.7 | 294.4 | 275.1 | 253.0 | 2,774.1 |
| Alcohol duty | 156.6 | 70.6 | 124.2 | 174.4 | 175.9 | 167.2 | 164.4 | 161.4 | 157 | 144.4 | 1,496.1 |
| PAYE and NIC | 141.9 | 101.5 | 106.6 | 121.4 | 109.2 | 96.2 | 95.1 | 84.8 | 78.4 | 70.2 | 1,005.3 |
| Business rates | 50.3 | 1.5 | 39.5 | 57.3 | 55.6 | 53.0 | 50.2 | 48.7 | 44.9 | 46.4 | 447.4 |
| Corporation tax | 1.5 | – | 21.5 | 19.9 | 26.1 | 20.7 | 19.9 | 15.3 | 18.1 | 18.4 | 161.7 |
| Corporation tax credit (historic capital allowances) | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | -2.0 | – | – | -2 |
| Fruit/slot machine duty | 12.8 | 4.3 | 9.0 | 11.6 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 11.0 | 11.2 | 11.3 | 7.2 | 99.4 |
| Climate change levies | 9.7 | 7.9 | 6.1 | 10.4 | 9.2 | 9.7 | 8.7 | 6.4 | 6.3 | 4.3 | 81.8 |
| Stamp duty | 2.7 | 1.8 | 4.9 | 3.7 | 1.2 | 5.1 | 2.6 | 1.8 | 2.1 | 1.0 | 26.9 |
| Sugar tax | 2.9 | 1.3 | 2.0 | 2.9 | 0.8 | – | – | – | – | – | 9.9 |
| Fuel duty | 1.9 | 1.1 | 1.7 | 2.2 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.9 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 20.2 |
| Carbon tax | – | – | – | 1.9 | 3.0 | 3.4 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 2.7 | 2.6 | 20.9 |
| Premise licence and TV licences | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 1.6 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 8.2 |
| Landfill tax | – | – | – | – | 1.7 | 2.5 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 1.3 | 11.4 |
| 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 | 662.7 | 37.0 | 436.7 | 764.4 | 728.8 | 694.6 | 672.3 | 632.4 | 600.2 | 551.5 | 5,784.1 |
| TAX PER PUB | 0.78 | 43 | 528 | 871 | 825 | 768 | 705 | 673 | 662 | 632 | 6.49 |
| TAX AS % OF NET SALES | 38.1% | 4.8 | 34.6 | 42.0 | 43.0 | 41.8 | 42.1 | 41.8 | 42.6 | 43.1 | 37.4% |
| LOSS/PROFIT AFTER TAX | -24.9 | -146.5 | -38.5 | 79.6 | 83.6 | 76.9 | 56.9 | 57.5 | 58.9 | 65.2 | 268.7 |

*Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2013–2022

ALLOA

JOY FOR SARAH AS CAMRA DECLARES BOBBING JOHN FOREMOST IN FORTH



Pub manager Sarah Hill is understandably delighted with the latest certificate to be displayed in her pub.

The Bobbing John (Alloa) has been named as the 2023 winner of Forth Valley Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)'s 'pub of the year north' award.

Sarah, pictured with branch membership secretary Garry McPhee, said: "This is a great achievement for us and great news for the whole team."

"I have been at the pub for more than seven years – and this is the first time the pub has won this award."

Forth Valley CAMRA's secretary, Wendy Ross, said: "The Bobbing John was chosen thanks to its beer scores, throughout the year, from CAMRA's members."

"As well as having friendly staff, it offers a good selection of local and other Scottish real ales, competitively priced."

She added: "We often use The Bobbing John as the venue for planning our annual Alloa Real-Ale Festival, the 30th one of which will be held this year on 10–11 November."

"The staff always reserve a nice, quieter area of the pub for our meetings."

Sarah, who has worked for Wetherspoon for nine years, started at The Crossed Peels (Stirling), taking over as pub manager at The Bobbing John in 2019.

She concluded: "We have a good relationship with our local CAMRA members, who regularly hold meetings here at the pub."

The Bobbing John serves five real ales at all times, including Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Belhaven 80 Shilling, as well as two ever-changing guest ales.

Among the popular real-ale guests from local breweries are Stewart Brewing Jack Back (3.7% ABV), Williams Bros Joker IPA (5.0% ABV) and Hybrid Brewing Street Legal (4.7% ABV).



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.

£484 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 16 employees who have worked for the company for over 30 years, 562 for over 20 years, 3,581 for over 10 years and 10,313 for over five years.

Since 2006, the company has paid £484 million to its employees in respect of bonuses and free shares.

BONUSES AND SHARES

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

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

In the financial year ended July 2022, bonuses and free shares of £30 million were awarded (see table[^] below), with 79 per cent of employees receiving a bonus and/or shares in that period.

At the current time, 14,278 of our 42,833 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 25.9 million shares to employees – approximately 19.9 per cent of all shares in existence today.

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

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

Wetherspoon: Bonuses and free shares v profits, 2006–22

| Financial year | Bonuses and free shares | Profit after tax (loss/profit after tax)* | Bonus etc as % of profit |
|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | £m | £m | |
| 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 | 484 | 596 | 49.3** |

[^]Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2006–22

*Profit after tax from 2020 is post-IFRS 16 accounting.

**Shares and bonus as a percentage of profit excludes 2020 onwards.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

WORD IS OUT ABOUT BILINGUAL SIGNS IN CELTIC NATIONS' PUBS



Irish language, also known as Gaelic or Erse (in Irish 'Gaeilge'), a member of the Goidelic group of Celtic languages, is spoken in Ireland.

At the last census, 40 per cent of the population (almost 1.8 million people) reported as being able to speak the Irish language, although a lesser percentage speaks Irish daily.

Wetherspoon's pubs in the Republic of Ireland celebrate the Irish language with Irish-language signage displayed in pubs across the country.

The signage throughout the pubs is bilingual, displaying both Irish and English, and indicates directions to various areas and facilities in each building.

Keavan's Port (Dublin) was chosen by Glór na nGael as the venue for filming a business video featuring some of the Irish-language signage on display.

Glór na nGael offers support, help and recognition to businesses which already use, or would like to incorporate, the Irish language as part of their business.

Glór na nGael's Frainc Mac Coinnaithe said: "We are running a scheme to promote the use of the Irish language in business and were keen to speak to large companies with businesses in Ireland which are using the language, including Wetherspoon.

"We hope that these videos will encourage traders and groups to use more Irish on signs and in services.

"They will show that the approach taken by one business may work for other businesses and that good practice has already been laid down."

Wetherspoon's area manager – Republic of Ireland, Dan Foster, pictured (right) with Frainc, was on hand to answer questions and explain Wetherspoon's decision to use bilingual signage in its pubs.

Dan said: "When Wetherspoon opens its pubs in towns and cities which also use a language other than English, it is important that the pubs recognise and respect the local community and its native-language-speaking residents.

"Wherever possible, the pubs will display bilingual signage, which can be seen in Wetherspoon's pubs across Cornwall, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

"This is an integral part of our commitment to the various communities where our pubs are located, while celebrating the traditions, history and diversity of the local area."

One Wetherspoon pub in the Republic of Ireland also has an Irish-language name. An Geata Arundel (Waterford), meaning 'The Arundel Gate', takes its name from the nearby gate, long-since demolished, in Waterford's ancient city wall.

WORCESTER

VETERANS FIND A NEW BASE AT THE CROWN

The local Armed Forces & Veterans' Breakfast Club has started regular meetings at The Crown (Worcester).

The group, which attracts up to 60 serving or ex-military personnel at its monthly meeting, moved to The Crown from The Postal Order (now closed).

Shift manager Matt Adams invited the group to come with him when he transferred from The Postal Order to The Crown.

He said: "The group had been meeting there for seven years and I have come to know them very well, so I thought that they would like to start meeting at The Crown."

The group meets on the first Saturday of each month for breakfast and coffee, with some staying on afterwards for a few ales.

The mayor of Worcester, Adrian Gregson, attended the launch meeting at The Crown to welcome the group.

Matt said: "They are a cheerful bunch. There is always a good atmosphere, with members always willing to help comrades in need."

Pictured (front row, left to right) are the mayor of Worcester, Adrian Gregson, and club organiser Graham Greenberg, with other group members, including chief organiser Dave Carney (back row, furthest right).

● Further details of the club can be found here: www.afvbc.net



OLD CHAPEL PROVES TO BE ANSWER TO CATH'S PRAYERS



Every Monday, for the past two years, The Old Chapel (Darwen) has been playing host to a weekly women's friends group.

Cath Orford (pictured front centre) didn't know anyone when she moved to Darwen in 2018 and wanted to make friends.

She joined a local walking group and met group co-founder Kath Kay (middle row, far right).

However, by the autumn, when the nights started to draw in, Cath began to look for other alternatives to walking during the winter evenings.

Cath recalled: "The walking was great for mental health and being out in nature, but it wasn't going to be practical during the winter.

"I didn't want to meet in a hall or room, as that wouldn't generate the right atmosphere.

"So, as I was already a customer at The Old Chapel, I thought I would ask whether the pub could accommodate us.

"It is such a gorgeous building, the staff have been absolutely brilliant and we spend a couple of hours together (some stay longer) every Monday (including bank holidays) from 7pm.

"They put the tables together for us, bring jugs of water and have even put a notice on the community board advertising us."

The age range of Darwen Ladies 'Stronger Together' is over 18, although most are aged between 30 and 70.

There is a WhatsApp group chat and, along with the weekly Monday get-togethers, the ladies arrange meals out for birthdays and occasions, trips to a comedy club and occasional crafting sessions.

The last two Christmas meals for the group have also been enjoyed at The Old Chapel.

Cath said: "The group is all about friendship, helping and being there for one another.

"We chat together, share daft stories and laughter, as well as problems and issues. It is all about caring and sharing.

"I have got way more out of it than I have put in, since taking the plunge to set it up in June 2021 – and Wetherspoon has been brilliant."

Pub manager Warren Hughes said: "It is a pleasure to have the group in the pub.

"They have been coming in for a while – and the numbers have grown over time.

"It is great that we can offer them a place where they know they feel welcome and are safe.

"We try our best to help in the community, in any way we can."

● For information, visit: www.facebook.com/groups/darwenladiesstrongertogether

GREENOCK

JAMES WATT TEAM SCRAMBLES TO GIVE PUPILS AN EASTER TREAT

Children from All Saints Primary School, Greenock, were treated to an Easter morning of breakfast and activities at The James Watt.

Funds from the pub's weekly bonus ball event provided the children with a free breakfast before they turned their attention to painting, decorating cupcakes and an Easter-themed colouring-in session.

Shift manager Julie Alexander came up with the idea with partner Kevin Hoodless, who works at the school.

She said: "The children had a great time – and we were delighted to be able to provide them with a free breakfast – and an Easter egg each to take home, thanks to the generosity of customers and colleagues."

CRAFTY EXPANSION

Wetherspoon now working with 34 breweries to bring you regional craft beers, having introduced 17 new breweries this August

Wetherspoon's regional craft beer initiative has been extended by popular demand.

The range of bottled and canned craft beers has been added to, as well as the participating regions.

Launched in autumn 2022, these locally sourced craft beers, served at Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK (based on geographical location), help to support their respective local independent breweries and microbreweries.

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.

This summer, the company has increased the regional craft range in London from three to five beers. The Midlands has also been split into east and west, creating a dozen regional craft regions (previously 11) across England, Scotland and Wales.

Among the NEW beers are Backstage IPA, winner of SIBA southeast's gold award for best canned IPA 2021, Cellarhead Wonderland, two-star 'great taste' award-winner 2022, and beers from two award-winning breweries Brew York (SIBA brewery business of the year 2022) and Fierce (Scottish brewery of the year 2021).

Wetherspoon's marketing executive, Jess Schofield, who is responsible for the regional craft project, said: "The introduction of the locally sourced craft beer has proven very popular since its launch.

"We are now running the initiative across 12 regions, instead of the initial 11 – and working with 34 independent breweries, 17 of which are new to us this summer.

"This increased range highlights our continued commitment to support local and regional breweries and microbreweries, as well as to provide customers with the best craft beer available in their region."

London

NEW



**East London
Hopside Down
New Zealand pale**

5.0% ABV
440ml can

New Zealand pale ale with grapefruit, passion fruit, peach and pine notes.

NEW



**Wild Card
NEIPA
New England IPA**

5.4% ABV
440ml can

A traditional New England hazy ale, with flavours of grapefruit, pineapple and mango.

NEW



**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.

NEW



**Anspach & Hobday
The IPA
IPA**

6.0% ABV
440ml can

A resinous and fruit-forward IPA with British malt and American hops.

NEW



**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**

Home Counties



**Mad Squirrel
Big Sea
West coast IPA**

5.5% ABV
440ml can

Big citrus, big pine and big bitterness come in waves throughout this west coast IPA.



**Windsor & Eton
Caught by the Fuzz
Peachy pale ale**

5.0% ABV
440ml can

This peachy pale ale is sweet, soft and sharp, with peach undertones.



**Siren
Flex
California pale ale**

5.3% ABV
440ml can

A crisp, clean and refreshing California pale ale, with a hop combination bringing sticky, tropical and piney notes.

Southwest



NEW

**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 soft, fruity, hazy, blood-orange IPA, with tropical, stone fruit and citrus notes, plenty of body and a touch of bitterness.



**Exmoor
Urban Fox
American red IPA**

6.2% ABV
440ml can

A robust American red IPA, brewed with crystal and Munich malts to give it a distinctive red hue.

Southeast



NEW

**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



NEW

**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

A crisp, clean and refreshing California pale ale, with a hop combination bringing sticky, tropical and piney notes.

Anglia



**Nethergate Brewery
Growling Dog
Tropical IPA**

7.5% ABV
440ml can

A tropical IPA with a smack of mango, pineapple and papaya – for a full, tropical taste, with a hoppy bitter finish.



**Oakham
Citra T90
Unfiltered session IPA**

4.6% ABV
440ml can

An unfiltered session IPA, exploding with hop character and left unfiltered and naturally cloudy for maximum flavour.



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

6.2% ABV
440ml can

A well-balanced west coast IPA, serving up refreshing notes of melon and pineapple, with a long, hoppy finish.

Northeast



NEW

**Great North Eastern
Dunston Rocket
DDH IPA**

6.0% ABV
440ml can

A bright golden double-dry-hopped IPA.



NEW

**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

A tropical and hazy juicy pale ale, packed full of pink grapefruit, mango, pineapple, lychee, passion fruit and peach flavours.

Northwest



NEW

**Weetwood
Jester IPA
IPA**

4.8% ABV
440ml can

With vibrant tropical fruit aromas and a refreshing citrus finish.



**Seven Brothers
Throw Away IPA
IPA**

5.0% ABV
440ml can

A partnership with Kellogg's, using cereal which didn't make the box, now in a can as a hoppy IPA.



**Kirkby Lonsdale
Devil's Bridge IPA
IPA**

5.2% ABV
440ml can

Brewed with New World hops, giving a citrus hit with a bitter finish.

REGIONAL CRAFT

West Midlands



NEW

**Backyard
3 States
West coast IPA**

5.7% ABV
440ml can

Aromatic, with pine and citrus notes.



NEW

**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

An unfiltered session IPA, exploding with hop character and left unfiltered and naturally cloudy for maximum flavour.

East Midlands



NEW

**Blue Monkey
Californian IPA
West coast IPA**

5.5% ABV
440ml can

With grapefruit, pine and resin, plus a gentle maltiness.



**Oakham
Citra T90
Unfiltered session IPA**

4.6% ABV
440ml can

An unfiltered session IPA, exploding with hop character and left unfiltered and naturally cloudy for maximum flavour.



**Brewster's
IPA
West coast IPA**

6.0% ABV
440ml can

Traditional brewing meets the Pacific northwest in this full, hoppy-flavoured west coast IPA.

Yorkshire



NEW

**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.



**Kirkstall
Judicious
Juicy pale**

4.8% ABV
440ml can

A tropical and hazy juicy pale ale, packed full of pink grapefruit, mango, pineapple, lychee, passion fruit and peach flavours.



NEW

**Rooster's
Baby-Faced Assassin
IPA**

6.1% ABV

Now in 440ml can

Brewed with 100 per cent Citra hops, creating aromas of mango, apricot, grapefruit and mandarin orange – for a lasting tropical fruit bitterness to this IPA.

SIBA
Brewery business of the year
2021

Wales



NEW

**Tenby
Son of a Beach
Tropical pale**

4.2% ABV
440ml can

Tropical-hopped APA, dry-hopped with Equanot, Mosaic and Simcoe.



**Glamorgan
Dead Canary
West coast IPA**

5.0% ABV
440ml can

A well-hopped amber-coloured west coast IPA, with a properly refreshing bitter finish.



**Purple Moose
High Hops
Tropical IPA**

5.4% ABV
440ml can

A full-bodied and refreshing hazy tropical IPA, with flavours of mango, grapefruit and lime.

Scotland



NEW

**Fierce
Fierce IPA
IPA**

5.2% ABV
440ml can

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



**Williams Bros
Tin Man
Tropical IPA**

5.5% ABV
500ml can

A tribal tropical IPA, pale and powerful, with heavy-hitting tropical notes, brewed with fruity hops and sweet Vienna malt.



**Innis & Gunn
Mangoes on the Run
IPA**

5.0% ABV
440ml can

An IPA with a light, fresh and tropical flavour and silky-smooth finish, along with bitter fruity hops and sweet, fresh mangoes.

Scottish brewery
of the year 2021

THE THRILL OF DISCOVERY



HERE'S TO THE SEEKERS



Tim says: “On pages 54–57, we publish a few articles referred to in Tim’s Viewpoint (page 4).

This page (page 54) features comments from the vice-chancellor of Oxford University, Professor Irene Tracey, who says that students, but also academics and university staff, are reluctant ‘to engage in debate ... around difficult issues’, through fear of ‘being isolated or persecuted’ on social media. ‘Freedom of speech is what we stand for,’ concludes the professor. Bravo, Professor Tracey!

On pages 55–56, we reproduce the truly astonishing history of two senior MPs colluding in, or failing to correct, an entirely fictitious story which they published on Twitter, in which the chairman of Wetherspoon (me) appeared in front of a parliamentary committee, chaired by one of those MPs, and reversed a decision not to pay Wetherspoon’s employees. These allegations have absolutely no basis in truth and appear to be a bizarre attempt to (a) ‘big up’ one of the MPs and (b) incite online hatred.

‘I can’t believe the news today,’ as the U2 song goes.

On page 57, we publish an article by Neil O’Brien, a pro-government MP, part of a wider campaign by the government of the time, both online and in mainstream media, to vilify critics of the government’s COVID-19 policies.”

TELEGRAPH REPORTERS

STUDENTS FEAR BEING PERSECUTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA, SAYS VICE CHANCELLOR

Academics ‘avoid debate’ and are worried about being isolated if they disagree with others

Students and academics fear being persecuted on social media if they disagree with others, the vice-chancellor of Oxford University has said.

It is “very hard” for students to have debate and disagreement, Prof Irene Tracey said in an interview with student newspaper the Oxford Student.

It comes after a free speech row in which Prof Tracey defended the right of Prof Kathleen Stock, the controversial gender-critical feminist, to speak at the Oxford Union debating society.

“Part of what we’ve got to learn going forward is how we can engage in debate and discussion around difficult issues you feel very differently about or may view as offensive that don’t cross that boundary of being illegal under the law of the land that we live by,” Prof Tracey told the Oxford Student.

“You also need to learn to sometimes change your mind on what you feel about things, such that if you do change your mind, you wouldn’t feel you’ve been cornered into a position because of the very quick speed at which commentary can come, particularly through social media.

“It’s very different for the generation that is active on social media compared to my day when I was a student, because there was more ease

in having debate and discussion and argument and disagreement.

“It’s very hard for students now to do that with ease and without fear of being isolated or persecuted – that’s a real shame. And it’s not just our students, this is our early career researchers, our staff, and many members of our community.”

Crowds of protesters who argue that Prof Stock’s views are transphobic disrupted the event on May 30, with one even gluing themselves to the floor during the talk.

The protesters were booed by members of the audience, with one attendee calling for “free speech” and another urging everyone to “listen to Kathleen Stock”.

Prof Tracey defended Prof Stock’s right to be invited, telling The Times in an interview: “Freedom of speech is what we stand for. She has a right to come and speak. It’s as simple as that.”

By Telegraph Reporters

The Telegraph / 13 June 2023

66 JO STEVENS MP • RACHEL REEVES MP

FAKE NEWS: MP URGED TO WITHDRAW FICTITIOUS CLAIM

Wetherspoon says an MP invented a story in which its chairman, Tim Martin, appeared before the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee (BEIS), whose chair is Rachel Reeves, now Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (she has since left her position on the BEIS Committee).

As a result of the fictitious meeting in front of Ms Reeves' committee, the MP alleged that Wetherspoon changed its policy towards paying staff.

Jo Stevens, MP for Cardiff Central, said on Twitter (25 March): "After a session in front of @RachelReevesMP @CommonsBEIS Wetherspoons have u-turned on decision not to pay 43,000 staff while pubs are shut.

"Staff to be paid on April 3 and weekly after that. Good news, but people won't forget political pressure forced your hand Tim Martin"

Wetherspoon's chairman, Tim Martin, said: "These comments by Jo Stevens MP refer to a meeting which never happened.

"I was never asked to appear in front of Rachel Reeves' committee, as both Ms Stevens and Ms Reeves know.

"It's also completely untrue to say that Wetherspoon had decided not to pay 43,000 staff while pubs are shut.

"In a video recorded on Sunday 22 March, less than two days after the pubs shut, and three days before Ms Stevens' comments, I said: 'All our endeavours are going to be on trying to make sure you get your money and the pubs reopen.'

"An e-mail was sent with the video, saying: 'All employees will be paid as normal on Friday 27 March for all hours worked up to and including Sunday 22 March.'"

Mr Martin added: "Ms Stevens' comments also appear on the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers' Union's website and so will inevitably mislead the public.

"During the Leveson Inquiry, MPs made it abundantly clear that journalists have a duty to correct misleading statements.

"Ms Stevens and Ms Reeves also have a duty to uphold these principles themselves."

Jo Stevens invents a fictitious meeting.

(Twitter 25 March 2020)

Jo Stevens

@JoStevensLabour



After a session in front of @RachelReevesMP @CommonsBEIS Wetherspoons have u-turned on decision not to pay 43,000 staff while pubs are shut. Staff to be paid on April 3 and weekly after that. Good news, but people won't forget political pressure forced your hand Tim Martin

25/03/2020, 5:19 pm

Rachel Reeves confuses 'furlough' with 'Govt loan' and fibs that Wetherspoon refused to 'lock down'.

(Twitter 24 March 2020)



Rachel Reeves

@RachelReevesMP



Unacceptable that wetherspoons has refused to pay it's 40,000 employees until it receives its Govt loan - potentially in late April - after first refusing to lock down altogether. If bosses disregard employees' wellbeing then Govt should take tougher action to force compliance.

24/03/2020, 10:28 am



Rachel Reeves, MP



Jo Stevens, MP

PHOTO CREDIT: GETTY IMAGES



Editor's note: Tim Martin explains how he wrote to Rachel Reeves MP to complain about Jo Stevens MP's invention of a fictitious appearance in front of Ms Reeves' BEIS Committee and about other matters.

Tim says: "I wrote to Rachel Reeves MP, chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee (BEIS) on 2 April 2020 and copied all committee members, to complain about Jo Stevens MP's invention of a fictitious appearance in front of the committee.

"I also complained that a letter sent by Ms Reeves, which was critical of Wetherspoon, had appeared on the BEIS website, but my reply had not.

"I did not receive a reply from Ms Reeves, but received one from another MP, a member of the committee, regarding an earlier letter from Ms Reeves."

The MP said: "the reference (by Rachel Reeves) to the 'committee's deep concerns' does not include me. To my knowledge, the letter was sent without consultation with the committee. Committee meetings had previously been cancelled in line with guidance for entry to the parliamentary estate..."

In conclusion, Rachel Reeves MP had written to Wetherspoon, expressing her 'committee's concerns', but without the knowledge of committee members.

Jo Stevens MP had stated to her followers, tagging or copying in Rachel Reeves, that I (Tim Martin) had appeared in front of the committee, which was untrue; my reply to Rachel Reeves' accusations was not visible on the BEIS website at the time – and I received no reply from Rachel Reeves to the letter below.

Editor's note: The correspondence between Rachel Reeves and Tim Martin is difficult to find on the BEIS section of the UK Parliament website, although a letter of 24 March from Rachel Reeves is more prominent.

Tim Martin's letter of 2 April, exhibited on this page, does not seem to be available at all on the website.

The correspondence between Rachel Reeves and Tim Martin is available on Wetherspoon's website (www.jdwetherspoon.com/RachelReevesMP).



J D Wetherspoon plc, PO Box 666, Walsley, WOD 4 4QU | Tel 0845 477777 | Fax 0845 288622
jdwetherspoon.com

Rachel Reeves MP
Chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee,
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA
2 April 2020

Dear Rachel

CC: Members of the BEIS Committee

Further to our recent correspondence, you will be concerned to note that Jo Stevens MP told her Twitter followers on 25 March that:

"After a session in front of @RachelReevesMP @CommonsBEIS Wetherspoons have u-turned on decision not to pay 43,000 staff while pubs are shut. Staff to be paid on April 3 and weekly after that. Good news, but people won't forget political pressure forced your hand Tim Martin"

As you and your colleagues are aware, no such "session in front of" your committee ever took place – and Wetherspoon never said that it wouldn't pay its staff while its pubs were shut. Wetherspoon actually said the opposite to staff on Sunday 22 March, two days after pubs were closed:

"All our endeavours are going to be on trying to make sure you get your money and the pubs reopen."

You will also be concerned that the highly misleading comments from Ms Stevens appear on the BFAWU website – and are likely, therefore, to have misled the public.

As an aside, I note that your letter to me of 24 March is publicly displayed on the UK Parliament website, yet our replies are not. On 30 March, we were told by your committee specialist, Ian Cruse, that you would be "publishing both replies shortly."

I am sure that the committee does not wish to mislead the public, or MPs, so a public correction of Ms Stevens' comments and the publication of Wetherspoon's responses to your letters would surely be advisable.

Best wishes

Tim Martin, Chairman
J D Wetherspoon plc

Tim says: "Both online and in the press, the MP Neil O'Brien has attacked critics of government COVID policies, contributing to their vilification and to an inhibition of debate.

In this article, he denigrates government critics by calling them 'Covid sceptics'.

That's untrue. The critics are, in fact, 'government policy sceptics'. O'Brien also uses sectarian language by referring to government critics as people who 'crawl from the woodwork'.

In my view, O'Brien's pro-Australian, anti-Swedish, hard-lockdown views won't age well.

Time, of course, will tell who is right"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

By Neil O'Brien

The Guardian / 17 January 2021

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wetherspoon **hotels**

57 hotels in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales

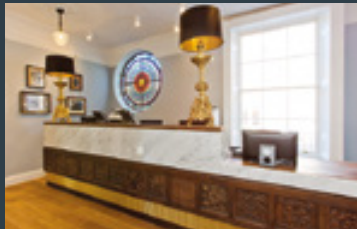
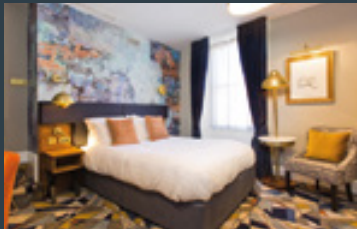
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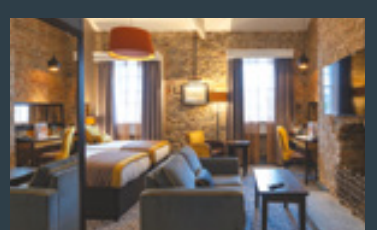
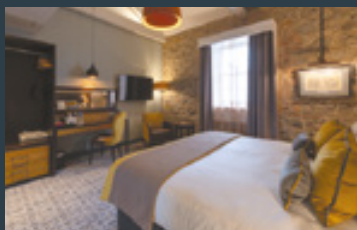
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ALWAYS LOOK ON THE BRIGHT CIDER LIFE

Two Strongbow varieties on tap from this autumn, joining Stowford Press and Kopparberg, plus other guest ciders

Cider-lovers will be even more spoiled for choice this autumn as Wetherspoon's pubs add to the ever-growing list of cider choices.

Strongbow on draught makes a welcome return, with Strongbow (4.5% ABV) and Strongbow Dark Fruit (4.0% ABV) now on tap.

Cool, dark and fruity, Strongbow Dark Fruit is made with Strongbow, the best-known name in cider, and cut with a delicious blend of blackcurrant and blackberry juice.

Draught

Available on draught, Strongbow Dark Fruit has a flavour which is perfectly balanced between the sweetness of the fruit and the ciders' sharpness.

Strongbow cider is made using a blend of bittersweet cider apples grown and pressed in the Herefordshire countryside, for a thirst-quenching taste.

Choices

These two new choices join Stowford Press Apple cider (4.5% ABV), Kopparberg Strawberry & Lime (4.0% ABV) and a range of guest ciders (various ABVs) in Wetherspoon's draught cider range.

Customers at around 120 pubs, across the southwest region of England, can also enjoy Thatchers Gold (4.8% ABV) on draught.

Deal

Wetherspoon's 500ml bottle range, with most pubs offering an 'any 2 for' mix-and-match drinks deal, has nine great cider choices.

Among the selection is Thatchers Blood Orange (4.0% ABV), Bulmers Original (4.5% ABV), Bulmers Crushed Red Berries & Lime (4.0% ABV), Angry Orchard Crisp Apple (5.0% ABV) and Aspall Apple Cyder (5.5% ABV), alongside Kopparberg's range of Passionfruit, Strawberry & Lime, Mixed Fruit (4.0% ABV each) and NEW Vintage Pear (7.0% ABV).

Kopparberg Vintage Pear is the latest cider from the Kopparberg bottle range to join Wetherspoon's ranks.

In 1882, when the Kopparberg Bryggeri was formed, pear cider was the first product developed.

With increasing consumer demand for stronger and sweeter ciders, Kopparberg has brought back that original recipe in the form of bottled Kopparberg Sweet Vintage Pear – now available at your local Wetherspoon.



**REAL-ALE
FESTIVAL**
Round-up

Wetherspoon's next festival is...

REAL-ALE FESTIVAL
WED 11 - SUN 22 OCT



The Bridge House (Belfast) Bar associate Asia Madi

FESTIVAL MAKES ALE FANS FEEL MIGHTY REAL

Customers at Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK and the Republic of Ireland were able to enjoy a range of 30 real ales, including three from overseas brewers, during a 12-day real-ale festival.

The overseas brewers were from Belgium, Switzerland and the USA. Among the festival collection were vegan (also suitable for vegetarians) and gluten-free beers.

The festival featured not only a range of malt and hop varieties from around the world, but also beers which had orange peel, chocolate and coriander in their ingredients.

The festival line-up included Orkney Cliff Edge, Oakham Buckle Up!, Vale Brass Monkey, Brombeer Freddy Export (Belgium), Theakston Double Cross IPA, Exmoor Upside Brown, Cambridge Flower Child IPA (USA), Saltaire Triple Choc, Cairngorm White Lady and Sudwerk Reeds Ale (Switzerland).

The overseas brewers were hosted at Adnams Brewery (Suffolk), Hook Norton Brewery (Oxfordshire) and Banks's Brewery (West Midlands).

Wetherspoon's marketing manager, Jen Swindells, who organised the festival, said: "The festival was a great celebration of real ale.

"It allowed us to showcase a selection of great value-for-money beers over a 12-day period.

"The event also gave customers the opportunity to enjoy several beers which had not previously been served in the pubs, including those from overseas."

Tasting notes on all beers were available in the pubs as part of the 'real-ale festival news' magazine, with a digital version of it available on the app and the Wetherspoon website.



The Playhouse (Colchester) Customers Grace Adeyemi (left) and Lynette Kayongo



The Capital Asset (Perth) Regular customers Ian Menzies (right) and Ralph Bright check out the festival ales



The Coliseum (Abergavenny) Customer Eddie Long toasts the festival



The Cricketers (Ipswich) Shift manager Dawn Prendergast serves customer Mal Parfitt



The Queen Hotel (Aldershot) Showcasing the festival ales (left to right) are shift leader Quinn Luke, team leader Chloe Wilson, shift leader Emily Thomson, housekeeper Shan Bishop and shift leader Beth Gunner



The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards) Bar associate Rachel McSorley serves customer Billi James



The Wouldhave (South Shields) Customers Lee Williams and Leeanne Corey are served by team leader Rhiannon McManus



The Lynd Cross (Horsham) Team leader Laura Southey, floor associate Bobby Knott and shift manager Lauren Withers (left to right)



The Green Dragon (Leek) Bar associate Samantha Hodgson serves customer Jamie Paton



The Great Wood (Blanchardstown) Customers Ger Harford (left) and Declan O'Brien raise a toast



The Society Rooms (Stalybridge) Shift leader and real-ale champion Laurence Cotterill toasts the festival



The Felix Holt (Nuneaton) Shift manager Olly Webb serves customers Lawrence and Evelyn Lloyd



The Blue Bell Inn (Scunthorpe) Pub manager Allan Starr celebrates the festival



The Elihu Yale (Wrexham) Pub manager Andrew Hodgson serves customer Keith Roberts



The West Kirk (Ayr) Regular customers and local CAMRA members Ray Turpie (left) and Sandy Morris enjoy the festival

Wetherspoon's next festival is...
REAL-ALE FESTIVAL
WED 11 - SUN 22 OCT

JESS RUNS THROUGH THE PAIN TO HONOUR FATHER



Shift leader Jess Holden has raised more than £5,000 for Cancer Research by running a full marathon in honour of her father, who died of cancer last year.

Jess, who works at The Jolly Tars (Thornton-Cleveleys), completed the Manchester Marathon in just under six hours.

Her father, Michael Holden, passed away in August 2022.

Jess said: "I'm amazed that I've raised so much money, yet couldn't have done it without my family, as well as my colleagues and the pub's customers."

Staff at the pub put up posters and spread the word online while also handing out sponsorship forms to customers.

Jess added that she struggled at times during the marathon – the first she has ever run.

She said: "I had shin splints, but ran through the pain."

Shift manager Michelle Smith said: "We are all so proud of Jess for completing the marathon and raising a fantastic amount of money for a great cause."

● **To donate to Jess's fund, visit the pub or her JustGiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jessholden122>**

● **Jess is pictured holding aloft her marathon-finisher's medal with (inset) her father Michael**



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATED CLEVERLY IN BEVERLEY

The Cross Key (Beverley) celebrated its seventh birthday with balloons, bunting and a fundraising lucky dip for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The lucky dip, organised by shift manager Jess Stead, saw customers pay £1 per ticket to win a £10 gift card, raising £60 for the charity.

Jess said: "We had a lot of fun on the day and would like to thank everyone who took part in the lucky dip."

Customers were also treated to homemade cupcakes featuring the number seven made by staff including kitchen shift leader Samantha Greenwood (pictured).



wetherspoon



REAL-ALE FESTIVAL

WED 11 – SUN 22 OCT

**Award-
winning
brewers**

5
international
brewers

Up to
30
ales

25
ales new to
Wetherspoon



**All festival ales available
to order on the app.**



Purity Bunny Hop 3.4% ABV

Purity Brewery, Warwickshire. Est. 2005

This hazy, pale golden ale is extra hoppy in character, with a full aroma, pronounced bitterness in the flavour, notes of grapefruit and a long, dry finish.

Hops: Azacca, Centennial, Chinook, Citra, Eureka, Pilgrim

Rudgate Vanilla Mild 3.6% ABV

Rudgate Brewery, North Yorkshire. Est. 1992

This multiaward-winning dark mild is very lightly hopped and enriched with fresh premium vanilla pods, resulting in a well-balanced, rich and smooth flavour.

Hops: East Kent Goldings

Acorn 2 Decades 4.0% ABV

Acorn Brewery, South Yorkshire. Est. 2003

Brewed with a blend of English hop varieties to celebrate 20 years' brewing, this blond beer has a tropical fruit aroma and a balanced, hoppy flavour.

Hops: Challenger, Goldings, Harlequin

Adnams Nut Brown 4.0% ABV

Adnams Brewery, Suffolk. Est. 1872

This chestnut-coloured beer has aromas of gooseberry, pine, toasted malt and caramel, leading to hints of brown sugar on the palate, balanced by a fresh bitterness, with orange and fresh bread notes.

Hops: Ekuant, Jester

Black Sheep Finisher 4.0% ABV

Black Sheep Brewery, North Yorkshire. Est. 1992

This seasonal golden pale ale is packed full of hops which deliver ripe apricot, juicy citrus and subtle spicy flavours, balanced by a light sweet maltiness.

Hops: Ernest

Brewster's Krafty Kiwi 4.0% ABV

Brewster's Brewery, Lincolnshire. Est. 1998

This occasionally brewed, light golden beer contains hints of crystal malt, enhancing the flavour and balancing the lemon zest notes and hints of pine, with a lasting resinous finish.

Hops: Pacific Gem, Pacific Jade

Steel & Oak Easy Stout 4.0% ABV

Steel & Oak Brewing, British Columbia, Canada. Est. 2014

Robyn Guille has travelled to Batemans Brewery (Lincolnshire) to brew this tropical session stout for us. The aromas of tropical and citrus fruit lead to a smooth roasted malt flavour, with notes of chocolate and toffee, then a full-bodied, creamy and refreshing finish.

Hops: Amarillo, El Dorado

Inveralmond Ossian Oatmeal Stout 4.1% ABV

Inveralmond Brewery, Perthshire. Est. 1997

This new beer is rich in flavour and packed full of coffee, cocoa and roasted malt flavours, complemented by bittersweet notes and balanced by a smooth, creamy finish.

Hops: Aurora

Hook Norton Autumn Ways 4.2% ABV

Hook Norton Brewery, Oxfordshire. Est. 1849

This ruby-coloured seasonal ale has an inviting floral aroma, while its use of Maris Otter malt, plus a touch of rye and wheat, delivers complexity to the soft dark fruit flavour.

Hops: Bramling Cross, Celeia, Fuggles, UK Cascade

Evan Evans Challenger 4.3% ABV

Evan Evans Brewery, Carmarthenshire. Est. 2004

This new deep amber autumn beer has a predominantly malty character, balanced by plenty of hop notes, delivering a smooth flavour and a fresh, crisp, spicy finish.

Hops: Challenger, Ernest, First Gold, Goldings

Maxim Slovenian Pale Ale 4.3% ABV

Maxim Brewery, County Durham. Est. 2007

This light golden seasonal ale is brewed with a blend of pale ale and lager malts to give a European character, while its Slovenian hops deliver a pleasing floral aroma and hints of lemon in the flavour.

Hops: Dana, Eureka, Styrian Wolf

Batemans Combined Harvest 4.4% ABV

Batemans Brewery, Lincolnshire. Est. 1874

This deep golden seasonal beer contains a unique multigrain blend of malted barley, oats, wheat and rye, creating a refreshing flavour with a dry-sweet character, plus citrus hints.

Hops: Bobek

Castle Rock Phoenix Tears 4.5% ABV

Castle Rock Brewery, Nottinghamshire. Est. 1998

This new copper-coloured beer, using solely UK ingredients, delivers a beautiful balance of hop notes and malt flavours, resulting in a bittersweet character and a warming, spicy finish.

Hops: Goldings, Phoenix

Harviestoun Broken Dial 4.5% ABV

Harviestoun Brewery, Clackmannanshire. Est. 1983

This amber seasonal ale has a distinctive malty flavour, with chocolate notes, balanced by a complex hop aroma and flavour, leading to a pleasing tropical fruit finish.

Hops: Celeia, Citra, Liberty, Simcoe

Robinsons Fear Of The Dark 4.5% ABV

Robinsons Brewery, Cheshire. Est. 1838

This black stout, part of this brewer's popular Iron Maiden Trooper range, has a complex blend of roasted malt, chocolate and coffee flavours, balanced by peppery hop notes.

Hops: Goldings

St Austell Average Joe! 4.5% ABV

St Austell Brewery, Cornwall. Est. 1851

This amber-coloured occasionally brewed beer has a fruity aroma, leading to generous floral flavours and hints of blackcurrant, balanced by an emerging malty finish.

Hops: Bramling Cross, Fuggles, Harlequin

Zululand Zulu Blonde 4.5% ABV

Zululand Brewery, Eshowe, South Africa. Est. 1997

Richard Chennells has returned to brew this popular beer for us again, this time at Banks's Brewery (West Midlands). This golden amber beer has a predominantly malty character, balanced by fruit flavours and hints of citrus, leading to a light, crisp finish.

Hops: Fuggles, Goldings, Saaz

Conwy Kashmir IPA 4.8% ABV

Conwy Brewery, Conwy. Est. 2003

This golden seasonal beer is a traditional IPA, delivering an assertive bitterness and plenty of hop flavour, balanced by a subtle maltiness, and leading to a spicy, peppery finish.

Hops: Challenger, East Kent Goldings, Fuggles, Pioneer

Salopian The Murmurings of a Lost Leviathan 4.8% ABV

Salopian Brewery, Shropshire. Est. 1995

This golden IPA sparkles with mesmerising tangerine and papaya sorbet notes, delivering a hoppy and full (yet not overpowering) flavour which melds beautifully across a brazen sea of passion fruit and lemon zest.

Hops: Centennial, Challenger, Mosaic, Nelson Sauvin

Shepherd Neame Cracklewick 4.8% ABV

Shepherd Neame Brewery, Kent. Est. 1698

This occasionally brewed mahogany ale has floral, citrus and spicy aromas, which complement the chocolate and roasted malt hints in its flavour, resulting in a satisfying, smooth and velvety character.

Hops: Centennial, East Kent Goldings, First Gold

Yazoo Dos Perros 4.8% ABV

Yazoo Brewing, Tennessee, USA. Est. 2003

Linus Hall has travelled to Adnams Brewery (Suffolk) to brew this deep amber beer for us. The breadly malt aroma leads to a malty body, with a clean, refreshing character and a subtle hop finish.

Hops: Perle, Saaz

Titanic Cherry Porter 4.9% ABV

Titanic Brewery, Staffordshire. Est. 1985

This dark red speciality porter has a rich aroma and a well-rounded fruity character, with its sweet cherry flavour balanced by generous hop notes.

Hops: Celeia, Goldings, Herkules, Pilgrim

Fyne Ales Quiet Shadows 5.0% ABV

Fyne Ales, Argyll. Est. 2001

This new hazy straw-coloured pale ale has a ripe fruit and resinous aroma, leading to delicate strawberry and raspberry flavours, complemented by vibrant citrus notes, before resulting in a soft, silky finish.

Hops: Barbe Rouge T90, Belma T90, Chinook T90, Simcoe

Hogs Back Ratfink & Ripsnorter 5.0% ABV

Hogs Back Brewery, Surrey. Est. 1992

This ruby beer has an enticing malty aroma, with gentle spice notes leading to a powerful malty flavour with hints of plum, balanced by generous refreshing hoppy notes.

Hops: Fuggles, Goldings

Joe's Garage Bohemian Pale Ale 5.0% ABV

Joe's Garage Brewery, Plzeň, Czech Republic. Est. 2005

Josef and Petr Krysl have travelled to Shepherd Neame Brewery (Kent) to brew this pale amber beer for us. The use of rare Czech hop varieties delivers aromatic citrus and spicy notes, along with a balanced bitterness to its full-bodied, malty flavour.

Hops: Kazbek

Lancaster Harlequin 5.0% ABV

Lancaster Brewery, Lancashire. Est. 2005

This new blond ale is brewed with a fine blend of UK hop varieties, delivering generous fruity notes in both the aroma and flavour and leading to a refreshing finish with mango hints.

Hops: First Gold, Godiva, Jester, Keyworth

Thornbridge Hubble 5.2% ABV

Thornbridge Brewery, Derbyshire. Est. 2005

This golden American pale ale is packed with a mouth-watering blend of US hops, delivering big punchy notes of mango, lemon and orange from the aroma all the way through to its refreshing finish.

Hops: Amarillo, Mosaic, Simcoe

Elgood's Warrior 5.5% ABV

Elgood's Brewery, Cambridgeshire. Est. 1795

This chestnut-coloured seasonal beer has a predominantly malty aroma, leading to a strong, well-balanced character with a rich malt flavour and subtle hop notes.

Hops: Challenger, Fuggles, Goldings, Sovereign

New Realm Hoptropolis IPA 6.0% ABV

New Realm Brewing, Georgia, USA. Est. 2016

Mitch Steele has travelled to Hook Norton Brewery (Oxfordshire) to brew this deep golden beer for us. The intensely fruity aroma leads to a medium body and emerging hop character, with plenty of tropical fruit notes and a pleasing bitterness in the finish.

Hops: Azacca, Citra, Mosaic

Wychwood King Goblin 6.6% ABV

Wychwood Brewery, Oxfordshire. Est. 1983

This rarely seen, deep ruby strong ale is brewed with roasted chocolate and crystal malts which, combined with a blend of hop varieties, produce a rich and full-bodied beer, with fruity notes and a pleasingly smooth character.

Hops: Cascade, Fuggles, Sovereign, Styrian

REAL-ALE TYPES



Pale; very light; blond; straw



Golden



Amber; mid brown



Dark brown; ruby



Black; deep ruby; very dark

HANLONS' HANDS-ON BREWERS KEEP DEVON ALE FANS HAPPY

Exeter brewery's flagship ale Yellow Hammer celebrates its 25th anniversary this year

Brewery's name: Hanlons Brewery, Newton St Cyres, Exeter, Devon



Pictured (left to right) are brewer Dave Sandercock, head brewer Richard Mayne, account manager Sam Bennett, brewery co-owner Sam Taylor and sales manager Dan Stone

Hanlons Brewery is a valued long-term supplier of real ale to Wetherspoon, both locally and on the company's national guest ale listings.

During April to June 2023, Wetherspoon's customers would have enjoyed the flagship beer from Hanlons – Yellow Hammer (4.2% ABV), available at all pubs as a guest ale.

This light and refreshing golden ale, celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, has been a favourite at Wetherspoon's pubs in the southwest since the brewery moved in 2000, lock, stock and barrel, from Vauxhall, in southwest London, to Devon.

Stout

Originally started by Kerry-born John O'Hanlon in 1995 with his first beer Port Stout (4.8% ABV), the then-named O'Hanlons Brewery moved to farm buildings south of Exeter, before a new (and current) location was found in 2013.

Dan and Sam Taylor bought the business that year and, a decade later, the husband-and-wife team still runs the family brewery.

In the brewhouse, head brewer Richard Mayne is the longest-serving team member, having started with the brewery in 1998, in London. He is assisted on the brew team by Cornishman Dave Sandercock and Andrew Palfrey.

Employee

Former Wetherspoon employee Dan Stone also joined the Hanlons Brewery team in June 2022, after 14 years working at

various pubs across Devon (in various roles including shift manager and kitchen manager), among them The Green Ginger (Torquay), The Talk of the Town (Paignton) and The Jolie Brise (Teignmouth).

Now a sales manager with Hanlons Brewery, Dan said: "I spent 14 years with Wetherspoon, finishing with six months in Dublin at The Silver Penny, which was a great experience.

"I have always had a passion for real ale and cellar work and fancied something different.

"It is great to be on this side of things now – and Hanlons is easy beer to sell."

Supplying

Dan continued: "I always remember Hanlons supplying Wetherspoon's pubs where I worked.

"The biggest issue for a brewer is always how the beer is kept, once it has left the brewery.

"I know, at first hand, the consistency of Wetherspoon's real ale – and you should never get a bad pint at a Wetherspoon pub."

Dan concluded: "I love The Imperial (Exeter) – it is a great pub, and we recently hosted its ale team here at Hanlons Brewery, where the team members enjoyed a tour and were able to increase their knowledge of our range."

ACORN STURDY AS AN OAK AFTER 20 YEARS

Barnsley brewery reintroducing some early seasonal beers as it celebrates double decade

Brewery's name: Acorn Brewery, Wombwell, Barnsley, South Yorkshire



The team at Acorn Brewery has been celebrating its 20th anniversary this summer and has been marking the occasion by reintroducing some of its early seasonal beers.

The Barnsley-based brewery has been supplying Wetherspoon since its first year in business, with customers across Yorkshire regularly enjoying Acorn Brewery's range of six core ales, as well as an extensive selection of seasonal offerings, including its single-hopped IPAs.

Old Moor Porter (4.4% ABV), named after the nearby RSPB Old Moor nature reserve, is always a popular brew, while Endeavour IPA (5.0% ABV) was available at all Wetherspoon pubs across the UK at the beginning of the year as part of the company's national guest ale listing.

Team

Husband-and-wife team Dave and Christy Hughes head up the small Acorn team, having launched their brewery on 4 July 2003 with their first brew – now the flagship award-winning Barnsley Bitter (3.8% ABV).

Dave (pictured right) said: "From our very first year, we started supplying our local Wetherspoon pub, just a mile from the brewery, The Horseshoe (Wombwell).

"It was a case of showing them what we would do – and things opened up from there.

Yorkshire

"We continue to deliver to Wetherspoon's pubs across South and West Yorkshire, as well as getting our name out there nationally with the guest ale listing.

"That system is a great opportunity for customers to try beers from outside of their local area – and it seems to work well for us and Wetherspoon.

"Sometimes, on the back of that national listing, certain pubs might also run a 'tap takeover', with a selection of our ales, following on from the popularity of our guest ale, which has been great.

Best

"It is good to engage with the pub managers at these events, as well as the customers, and we can build up a good relationship by providing the best-possible service."

Dave continued: "We can do everything we possibly can, in terms of production and delivery, to ensure a great beer, but, once the product is out of our hands, anything is possible.

"However, we know that Wetherspoon's training is very good, so our beer is in safe hands."

Dave is part of the Acorn brew team, although these days mostly as cover, while brewer Steve Bunting has been there 'since brew one'.

He is assisted by Ciaran Baker (pictured left) (previously with 15 years' service at Wetherspoon) and Joe Harris, formerly of Sheffield-based Kelham Island Brewery.

PICTURE PLAYHOUSE PLAYERS THROW THEIR WAY TO THRONE



The Picture Playhouse (Bexhill-on-Sea) The winning team

The Picture Playhouse (Bexhill-on-Sea) is the 2023 Wetherspoon charity darts competition champion.

The team lifted the winners' trophy at the final of the company's annual fundraising staff darts tournament, helping to raise £141,776 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The teams from Wetherspoon's pubs in the Republic of Ireland were raising funds for LauraLynn, Ireland's children's hospice.

The Picture Playhouse beat The Furze Wren (Bexleyheath) in the final held at The Trent Bridge Inn (Nottingham).

The tournament began in January, with 314 teams from pubs across the UK and the Republic of Ireland taking part in the opening rounds.

Fifty-nine teams progressed to the regional tournaments across 12 venues, throughout England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, before 11 teams secured their places for the hotly contested knock-out-style national final – in Nottingham.

Wetherspoon's general manager, Richard Marriner, who organised the event, said: "It was fantastic to stage this tournament again this year. I'd like to thank all of the staff who took part and the host pubs for organising the area events.

"The final in Nottingham was a great day of darts, played to a high standard, with a tense, nail-biting end to a fantastic tournament. Congratulations to The Picture Playhouse on its win."

He added: "I am pleased that we were able to raise more than £140,000 for our charity partner Young Lives vs Cancer – to help young people facing cancer."

Winning team captain Ryan Russell, kitchen manager at The Picture Playhouse, said: "I would like to thank everyone who took part in organising such an amazing event for Young Lives vs Cancer.

"Secondly, The Picture Playhouse would like to thank every team taking part in the event. It was so nice to meet fellow Wetherspoon employees from all over.

"It was a great pleasure to be a part of the tournament – and we're all so proud to have taken the trophy back to not only The Picture Playhouse, but also East Sussex."

Samantha Hughes-Smith, partnership fundraiser at Young Lives vs Cancer, concluded: "It was great to see teams from across the UK get together to support Young Lives vs Cancer.

"As well as taking part in the competition, employees really got behind the fundraising at each event across the UK and Ireland, by organising raffles, bake sales, sweepstakes and much more.

"The money raised from these incredible efforts will go on to help so many of the families whom we support.

"Thank you to every employee who took part and congratulations to The Picture Playhouse, our national champion for 2023."



The Furze Wren (Bexleyheath) Runners-up



The Trent Bridge Inn (Nottingham) All of the 2023 tournament finalists



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

All of the participating teams taking part in some of the area heats of the Wetherspoon charity darts competition



The Gate Clock (Greenwich)



The Bankers Draft (Sheffield)



The Last Post (Paisley)



The Bishop Blaize (Stretford)



The Brocket Arms (Wigan)



The Mile Castle (Newcastle)

The Picture House (Sutton-in-Ashfield)

Well done folks!
£930
...raised for our
chosen charity.



Bar associate Vicky Knapp raised £930 in sponsorship and donations by competing in a fundraising trail run.

Vicky, who works at The Picture House (Sutton-in-Ashfield) completed the Dukeries ultra marathon, running 41.6 miles for charity.

The race started in the heart of Sherwood Forest, taking in forest trails and footpaths. The route passed through Cresswell Crags, skirted the Welbeck Estate and crossed Clumber Park, surrounding farmland and the Thoresby Estate, passing The Major Oak and returning to Sherwood Forest.

The Punch Bowl (York)

Well done folks!
£127
...raised for our
chosen charity.



A raffle and bake sale at The Punch Bowl (York) raised £127 as customers celebrated the coronation.

Shift manager Rachel Southwell (pictured) led the baking and ran the raffle from a stall on the day.

Special biscuits decorated with crowns, as well as cup cakes and a jam sponge cake, were available.

Rachel said: "I have always enjoyed baking and it was fun decorating all the cakes along the lines of the coronation."

A hamper containing cakes and Prosecco was raffled over the course of the weekend's festivities.

The pub's manager, Tracy Lovett, said: "Rachel put a lot of time and skill into her baking – and the goods were very popular with customers and fellow staff."

The Wheatsheaf Inn (Wisbech)

Well done folks!
£500
...raised for our
chosen charity.



Pub manager Martin Baldwin led a nine-strong team of walkers and a couple of dogs from The Wheatsheaf Inn (Wisbech), raising £500.

The group's members walked 12 miles to The Hippodrome, Wetherspoon's pub in March, where they were greeted by colleagues and customers, many of whom boosted the charity's coffers with loose change and notes.

The project was the result of a discussion among staff about how to raise money for the charity.

Martin said: "I am proud of the group and delighted that we raised so much money.

"The walk itself was pleasant, with some lovely countryside."

The Wheatsheaf (Ellesmere Port)

Well done folks!
£120
...raised for our
chosen charity.



Cuddly toys were among the prizes in a tombola which helped to raise £120 at The Wheatsheaf (Ellesmere Port).

A May Day family fun-day also gave children the chance to learn safe circus tricks, including juggling and performing with hula hoops.

There was also a cake sale in the event, organised by pub manager Tiffany Simmonds and shift leader Nicky Holmes.

Tiffany said: "It was a great day for all the family. It was good to see so many happy children – and we are grateful to all of those who contributed to our chosen charity."

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Tiffany Simmonds, floor associate Frazier Gilmour and shift manager Georgina Sysum.

WOMBWELL

SONIC BOOM AS CARTOON HEDGEHOG AND MAYOR SARAH-JANE VISIT THE HORSESHOE



Wombwell's mayor, Cllr Sarah-Jane Tattersall, together with Sonic The Hedgehog, visited The Horseshoe (Wombwell) as part of a bid to promote the village and its attractions.

The civic dignitary and her team enjoyed tea and coffee as they met customers and staff at the pub, including shift leader Nathan Leaver.

Nathan said: "It was a pleasure to welcome the mayor – and we were happy to help in promoting Wombwell and its great businesses."

The visit was arranged by local resident Eddie Harper, who runs the Wombwell Wise Facebook page.

He said: "We wanted to promote the market, which is just outside The Horseshoe, and so it gave us the perfect opportunity to visit the pub too."

Eddie is a very well-known local figure and works with King Entertainment Productions to hire characters such as Sonic The Hedgehog to broaden the appeal of business-boosting publicity events to include children.

He said: "I love Wetherspoon – I'm a long-distance lorry driver and always look for a Wetherspoon to park near and have a meal.

"I've been to Wetherspoon's pubs from Andover to Stowmarket and Carlisle."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Benn Chattaway, team leader Vicky Hurst, Sonic The Hedgehog, Wombwell's mayor Cllr Sarah-Jane Tattersall, shift leader Nathan Leaver and Eddie Harper.

SOUTH SHIELDS

JEN RETIRES AFTER 22 HAPPY YEARS

Kitchen associate Jen Whitehead has retired after more than two decades at the same pub.

Jen is pictured receiving gifts from pub manager Phil Riddle and Wetherspoon's area manager Amanda Dunn at a surprise presentation at The Wouldhave (South Shields).

Jen was a kitchen team member at The Wouldhave for 22 years.

She also covered bar shifts, when the need arose.

Phil said: "Jen has been a great servant to Wetherspoon and, in particular, The Wouldhave.

"Her remarkable 22 years in the kitchen is no mean feat.

"She always worked with a smile on her face and was a popular team member."

Phil concluded: "Jen will be missed massively by the team – and we wish her all the best in her retirement."

Amanda added: "I would like to thank Jen for all of her hard work and dedication to the pub and the company over the last 22 years.

"She will be greatly missed – and we wish her a lovely retirement."



SHEFFIELD

RAWSON LEADERS SPRING INTO ACTION IN SHEFFIELD

Team leader Victoria Buttery and colleagues at The Rawson Spring (Sheffield) raised £606 for a local foodbank – by passing collection buckets around among customers.

When Victoria (pictured), who has two young children, asked her pub manager Josh Bell (pictured) to approve the initiative, he had no hesitation in saying ‘yes’.

She said: “I just know that so many people are struggling with bills at the moment because of the cost-of-living crisis, so I wanted to do something.

“Josh was so supportive and helpful – and I’m so pleased that we had his support.”

Victoria, then a bar associate, and team leader Cody Speight called the S6 Foodbank (named after the postal code for Hillsborough) and asked it for a list of essential items.

She said: “We went to ASDA and bought basic food stuffs, then we went back and bought children’s goods, then we went back again and bought sanitary items and deodorants.”

Josh, who also has two young children, said: “We are very proud of Victoria, how much she has raised and the efforts which she and Cody made to deliver the products to the foodbank to save them the trouble.”



RUGELEY

TOWERS TRAIL PROVES PLAZA MATTERS HUGELY IN RUGELEY

The dramatic demolition of four massive cooling towers was commemorated at The Plaza (Rugeley).

Rugeley Council commissioned 12 one-metre towers, from local artists and schoolchildren, to recall the original towers.

The Staffordshire pub was asked to house one of these miniatures.

The original 115-metre towers were destroyed in June 2021 by controlled explosions, five years after they had been decommissioned.

They were of enormous significance to townsfolk, being part of the skyline, as well as a workplace for many locals.

The pub’s manager, Sian Siddall (pictured), said: “We were delighted to accept the invitation to be the only pub to house one of these 12 commemorative towers.”

Part of the commemorative project launched by the council is the Towers Trail, offering people the chance to visit all 12 commemorative miniature towers.

Each has its own QR code, containing information about the towers and their history.

Rugeley’s development manager, Sam Bird, said: “When the remaining Rugeley cooling towers were demolished, there was a real feeling of sadness for many local people. Many of our local families moved here to work in the mines and the power station.

“As a town council, we wanted to do something to commemorate this and to educate the younger and newer members of our local community in this important period in the town’s history.

“We chose The Plaza as it had already demonstrated its commitment to local history with information boards, for customers to read, on its interior walls.

“We are delighted that Sian was able to accept our invitation to house one of the commemorative towers in The Plaza.”



ARTISTIC BOTTLE ATTRACTS ATTENTION AS GLASWEGIANS ENCOUNTER GLASWEGIN

Gin took centre stage at two of Glasgow's city-centre pubs, The Society Room and The Counting House, as customers were treated to samples from award-winning craft distiller Glaswegin.

Glaswegin, its products coming in a distinctive bottle designed by renowned local artist Paul Gray, is based near the city centre.

Account manager Jamie Wilkinson (pictured) arrived at each pub with samples and leaflets to answer customers' questions about the products and the bottle they come in.

The Society Room's shift manager, Ryan Gallacher, said: "This was our second gin-tasting and meet-the-maker event."

"The event proved very popular with customers – and Glaswegin products sell very well in the pub."

Jamie added: "I thoroughly enjoyed meeting such lovely customers and offering them samples of the gin."

"There was a lot of interest about the botanicals which give our gins their flavour."

One such botanical in the drinks is milk thistle, believed to be good for the liver.



TALENTED RUTH PUTS PLAZA IN THE PICTURE



Local artist Ruth Allen was commissioned to draw a picture of The Plaza (Rugeley) to celebrate the pub's 25th birthday.

The drawing portrays the front of the pub, housed in a former cinema.

Ruth visited the pub and talked to customers and staff as it celebrated its birthday (20 May).

She said: "It was lovely to be able to talk about my work to people and to enjoy the celebration too."

The pub's manager, Sian Siddall, said: "Ruth is very well known locally and has worked with local children and adults to develop their artistic skills."

"We were delighted that she was able to come to the pub on its birthday."

The birthday celebrations included beers from Oakham Ales, which undertook a tap takeover on the day, serving Oakham Citra and Oakham JHB.

A special birthday cake was made for the occasion and enjoyed by both customers and staff.

Sian added: "The Plaza is a wonderful pub and an important part of the Rugeley community. We were delighted that the birthday celebrations were a great success."

Pictured (left to right) are area manager Kat Prince, long-time customer Tony Hone (one of the first customers on opening day), pub manager Sian Siddall and artist Ruth Allen.

THE SUSSEX • RHYL

JOHN STILL CAUSING A STIR IN THE KITCHEN AFTER 20 YEARS



John Kenyon (pictured centre) has been celebrating 20 years with Wetherspoon, having risen through the ranks to become kitchen manager at The Sussex (Rhyl).

John joined The Palladium (Llandudno) as a kitchen associate in 2003 from another pub group, after approaching the pub's manager, Steve Edge (now a general manager with Wetherspoon).

John said: "I just turned up with my CV – and Steve more or less said: "Great, here's your uniform. You're starting right now!"

John's wife, Susie (pictured), joined The Palladium later in 2003 and is now kitchen manager at The Market Cross (Holywell), working with their son Luke (pictured), who is a kitchen associate there.

There have been brief periods where the couple have worked together, yet mostly they have worked at different pubs.

John left The Palladium to join The Picture House (Colwyn Bay), but Susie stayed.

John then moved to The Market Cross as a kitchen team leader and then shift leader at The Sussex, which he had joined as a kitchen manager in 2013.

John added: "I enjoy working for Wetherspoon – and the flexibility with hours is important.

"Susie and I have a busy family life with our three teenage children – and 40 reptiles, including bearded dragons and snakes.

"As well as working for Wetherspoon, Susie has a part-time reptile rescue operation."

LAVAZZA

TORINO, ITALIA, 1895



**FREE
REFILLS**
TEA, COFFEE AND
HOT CHOCOLATE
— ALL DAY EVERY DAY —

GROUNDS FOR CELEBRATION



Wetherspoon's customers have been enjoying Lavazza coffee beans for 18 years

Wetherspoon's customers have been enjoying the great taste of Lavazza coffee at the company's pubs since 2005.

We serve 100-per-cent Arabica Rainforest Alliance-certified Lavazza coffee, with customers enjoying more than 70 million hot drinks per year.

Wetherspoon's easy-to-use self-service coffee machines use only Lavazza, with free refills available on all coffee choices (as well as Tetley tea and hot chocolate).

Early

In the early days, Wetherspoon was involved in the development of the Lavazza La Reserva de iTierra! Selection blend, which remains the blend of choice still served today.

Choose Lavazza in a range of coffees, including flat white, cappuccino, latte, mocha, espresso, black coffee and white coffee.

Hot chocolate and Tetley tea are available from the self-service machines at all pubs, with decaffeinated tea and coffee also available.

Intense

Lavazza La Reserva de iTierra! Selection is made by blending green coffee beans, grown from Rainforest Alliance-certified growers in Central and South America. Produced using 100-per-cent Arabica beans, it has a medium body and delicate taste, with hints of almond and milk chocolate.

Established in Italy, in 1895, Lavazza is still a family-owned company, with the fourth generation very much involved in running the business and still devoted to the pursuit of coffee perfection.

Lavazza coffee is sold in more than 140 countries worldwide, with 30 billion cups consumed annually.

Schools

As well as supplying great coffee, Lavazza educates and supports communities, along with planting rainforest trees, through the Lavazza Foundation, supporting coffee-producing communities around the world.

Wetherspoon's hot drinks are accompanied by Fairtrade sugar, found at the self-service coffee stations.

Served in individual 'stick' packets, the white and brown sugar is supplied by Tate & Lyle Sugars – which has been working with Fairtrade since 2008, ensuring a fair deal for those farmers and workers producing it.

Mainly through the trading of the British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company, coffee became available in England no later than the 16th century, with the first coffee house opened in 1652 by a Greek, Pasqua Rosée, in St Michael's Alley, at Cornhill, London.

By 1675, there were more than 3,000 coffee houses throughout the country – and their popularity spread rapidly in Europe. At that time, many believed coffee to have several medicinal properties.

Today, around 25 million people make a living from growing coffee, with 500 billion cups of coffee consumed around the world each year.

SENIOR SKATER MIKE ROLLS TOWARDS 1,000-MILE TOTAL



Rollerskater and semiretired landscape gardener Mike Lyons is attempting to raise a good total for two of his favourite charities by skating 1,000 miles by the end of the summer.

Mike, a regular at The John Wallace Linton (Newport), has enlisted the help of staff and customers in his bid to raise funds for New Life Special Care Babies and the Veterans' Foundation.

He said: "I got into skating because I was no longer allowed to run, following my cardiac arrest in 2019. I took it up to celebrate my 67th birthday."

Mike pops to the pub most mornings for a vegan breakfast and a cup of coffee.

He said: "The pub's staff are welcoming and friendly at Newport and always kick-start each day with their friendly and professional approach."

The pub's manager, Sohan Singh-Bal, said: "After his breakfast, Mike often leaves cards with his JustGiving details. It's always good to see him – and we wish him well with his effort."

Mike added: "I'm indebted to my wife and the wonderful staff at the NHS, taking me from flat-lining, coma and rehabilitation to where I am now, so I decided to pay them back by raising funds via rollerskating."

Mike skates in local parks, along the River Taff, The Mumbles and around Aberavon, clocking up more miles whenever he can.

He added: "I am no hero, but those working for these charities are, so I hope that people can help by sponsoring or donating to either of these causes."

● **Mike's JustGiving pages can be found at (New Life Special Care Babies) and <https://bit.ly/3jG09f0> (Veterans' Foundation).**

WALKER BECOMES FLYER AS JUDGE OVERCOMES DREAD

Brave colleagues Donna Walker and Gillian Judge of The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew) tackled their fears to take part in a 10,000-foot skydive for charity.

Pub manager Donna (pictured left) and bar associate Gillian raised a combined £2,400 for two charities, after skydiving from an aircraft above Fife.

Donna said: "I was nervous, but, once I had completed the skydive, I wanted to do it again."

"I am super proud of Gillian for doing it with me."

Donna has given the £1,300 which she raised to Brain Tumour Research, while Gillian has donated her raised £1,100 to Young Lives vs Cancer.



THE BLACK BOY • NEWTOWN

SHARON BACK ON TRACK AFTER BUMP IN THE ROAD



Sharon Penny moved to Wales from Bridgnorth, Shropshire, to go to university in Aberystwyth, yet decided that university wasn't for her and began working at Wetherspoon's pub in the town, Yr Hen Orsaf.

Twenty years later – Sharon is still working for the company as a part-time shift leader at The Black Boy (Newtown).

She started her Wetherspoon career as a kitchen associate and worked in Aberystwyth for two years, before returning to Bridgnorth, where she was promoted to kitchen team leader at The Jewel of the Severn, Wetherspoon's pub in the town.

Sharon, who says she likes living in new places, then moved to London to work at The Glass Works (Islington) (now closed).

She continued her Wetherspoon career at Montgomery's Tower (Shrewsbury), with a promotion to kitchen manager, staying at the pub for 11 years.

During that time, she was involved with company preopening training at new locations across the country.

Sharon, who, through serious illness, was unable to work for six months, said: "It was a bad time for me, but I got through it and went back to Bridgnorth as a bar team leader.

"My illness meant that I couldn't work in the kitchen at the time."

After her struggle with ill-health, life took a turn for the better for Sharon, who got married and now has a 19-month-old daughter, Becca.

She added: "She was our miracle baby."

Sharon now works part-time as a shift leader at The Black Boy (Newtown), where her husband Stephen is the pub manager.

She said: "Stephen makes sure that I have the time off to look after our daughter and that I can cover his days off – so we don't work together all that much.

"But when we are on shift together, we have a good professional attitude and work well together."



FRYING SEVEN DAYS A WEEK – THE UK’S BIGGEST FISH AND CHIP SHOP

In the past 10 years, the company’s pubs have served more than 10 million fish-and-chip meals

Wetherspoon’s traditional meal of freshly battered fish and chips continues to be one of the menu’s most popular dishes.

There may be more than 10,000 fish and chip shops across the UK, but Wetherspoon is the nation’s biggest fish and chip shop.

Over the past 10 years, Wetherspoon’s pubs have served more than 10 million fish-and-chip meals.

Choice

Freshly battered fish and chips is served with your choice of garden peas or mushy peas – and includes a drink* (alcoholic or non-alcoholic), with more than 150 to choose from.

The pub classic is available every day of the week, as part of Wetherspoon’s pub classics and small pub classics ranges, as well as the afternoon deal.

Available Monday – Friday, 2pm – 5pm, the afternoon deal offers the choice of a small pub classic meal or a pub classic meal and includes a drink*, all in one value-for-money dish.

Battered

The freshly battered fish (cod – or haddock in Scotland) is sourced responsibly from sustainable fisheries, while the chips are made from 100 per cent British potatoes.

If you enjoy the great British treat of fish and chips, yet cannot face a larger meal or want a lighter and smaller option, this pub classic is available as part of the ever-popular ‘smaller meals’ range.

Smaller meals offer all of the same great ingredients, just not in the large quantities of the pub classic meals. So, these can be the ideal dining solution for many customers with a smaller appetite.

When you tuck in to your freshly battered fish at Wetherspoon (whether the regular or smaller meal option), you can be confident that you are getting quality and value, sourced responsibly.

Ecolabel

All cod and haddock served at Wetherspoon’s pubs carry the blue fish ecolabel – assuring you that the fish has been sustainably sourced.

Wetherspoon serves fish which has been caught by fisheries which have been certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) as sustainable.

Wetherspoon knows that its customers really care about where their food comes from – now more than ever. The MSC blue label makes it easier to make sustainable choices.

Choosing to eat fish and chips from Wetherspoon, which is the largest pub chain in the UK certified to use the MSC blue fish ecolabel, is one simple way in which you can enjoy the seafood you love, while ensuring that there will be plenty of fish left in our oceans in future.

In his novel *Oliver Twist* (1837), Charles Dickens wrote about fried fish warehouses, the forerunner to the fish and chip shop.

Fried fish was first introduced into Britain by Jewish refugees from Portugal and Spain. Published in the UK in 1846, the first Jewish cookbook included a recipe for fried fish.

Lancastrians claim that when John Lees served fish with chips at Mossley market, near Oldham, in 1863, it was the first time the combined meal was sold in the UK.

In 1860, three years earlier, Jewish immigrant Joseph Malin opened his fish and chip shop in Cleveland Street, in London’s East End, meaning that Londoners beg to differ

MUSICIAN FINDS INSPIRATION FROM FELLOW PATRONS OF THE GATE CLOCK

Young musician James Crick is launching an alternative rock album, after writing most of the songs at The Gate Clock (Greenwich).

James, 22, writes songs in the pub, before rewarding himself with a burger and a coffee.

James, known as 'Kudre' on Spotify and Apple Music, said: "The Gate Clock is a cool place to write – sometimes, I look around and ideas come to me from the people I see in the pub."

Explaining his songs, such as What I Got and The Way That We Are, from his Karbon album, James added: "The songs deal with mental health issues – I find that the writing process helps me to deal with what's going through my head – and I hope that the songs help others, too."

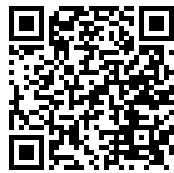
James got into music when his dad bought him a guitar for his 13th birthday – and now he plays the drums, the piano and sings as well.

He said: "I am a musician. It's what I love; it's what I do."

James's music is on Spotify at <https://tinyurl.com/3vhe4u8e> and on Apple Music at <https://tinyurl.com/yeYrfjh7>



Spotify



Apple Music



RAINBOW WELCOMES PUB FAN JED TO CUMBRIA

Wetherspoon customer Jed Taylor sent in this picture of The Dog Beck (Penrith) on a visit to the pub in Cumbria.

He captured the image of his 562nd Wetherspoon pub, although didn't realise, until afterwards, that a rainbow was perfectly framing the building.

Jed, 49, who has now reached a tally of 616 pubs, said: "I often post comments and photos on the JD Wetherspoon Appreciation Society Facebook group page.

"But I didn't know, at the time, about the rainbow."

Jed, who works as a cleaner and gardener in his home town of Worcester, is a regular at The Crown (Worcester).

He confirmed: "I probably visit around three or four times a week and, although I don't drink, I enjoy the coffee and food, particularly the mixed grill."

Jed reported that he decided, during lockdown, to add up how many Wetherspoon pubs he had visited, with the number totalling just under 400.

He said: "Obviously, because of lockdown restrictions, I couldn't add to that number, but decided to expand it, when it was allowed. I have averaged around 100 pubs every year.

"I have covered a lot of the Midlands, northwest, northeast and south, as well as many in Scotland, some on day trips, others around holidays. My favourite is The Caley Picture House (Edinburgh).

"My rule to tick off the pub is that I must buy something – popping in to use the toilet doesn't count."

Jed, a non-driver who uses public transport for his visits, concluded: "I don't think that I will be able to visit every one of them – it might be unachievable, although it's quite an addictive hobby."



MAKE SUMMER SPECIAL WITH NEW CANDY ROSÁ

Inspired combination of flavours creates this perfect cocktail

Summer is here – and your local Wetherspoon pub has a selection of NEW drinks for the season.

The perfect summer cocktail for a sunny social in a pub garden is the NEW Candy Rosá, served by the glass and as a cocktail pitcher to share.

Lemonade

Candy Rosá combines Au Vodka pink lemonade, Chambord black raspberry liqueur, Monster Ultra Rosá and lemonade – and is then garnished with lime.

Monster Ultra Rosá is NEW to the Monster range, with zero sugar and only 14 kcal in each can. Crafted to a unique recipe, with hints of pink grapefruit, guava and strawberry, it has a full load of Monster energy.

Fruity

For something else fun, fruity and exclusive to Wetherspoon, why not try the newest flavour of the Swedish vodka-based schnapps – Flävar blueberry & lemon?

Flävar vodka-based schnapps, from Sweden, are currently exclusive to Wetherspoon's pubs – and this new addition, packed with flavour, has sweet blueberries mixed with tangy lemon – for a mouth-watering, smooth drink.

Blueberry

Flävar blueberry & lemon is available as a shot and also as a spirit with a mixer[†].

In addition, there is the Flävarbomb option to enjoy, served with Monster Ultra.

NEW Baby Guinness is a mini cocktail shot, available this summer at Wetherspoon, although it does not contain Guinness!

This drink, which is Kahlúa coffee liqueur topped with Baileys, gets its name because it looks like a tiny glass of 'the black stuff'.

Also in the mini cocktail shot range, try NEW Jammy Dodger – Chambord black raspberry liqueur, topped with Baileys.

Enjoy some new tastes of summer at Wetherspoon.

NEW Cocktails

Three NEW classic cocktails have been added to the extensive range of classic cocktails, spritz cocktails and cocktail pitchers. These are:

Espresso Martini

British vodka, paired with 100% Brazilian Arabica coffee and gently sweetened with coffee liqueur, then garnished with coffee beans.

Strawberry Daiquiri

In Cuba affectionately known as Daiquiri de fresa, this combines white rum, pressed lime and sugar with strawberry liqueur and strawberry purée, then garnished with strawberry.

Tommy's Margarita

Pressed lime juice is sweetened with organic agave syrup and shaken with blanco tequila, then garnished with lime.



Espresso Martini

Strawberry Daiquiri

Tommy's Margarita

Peach Blush Spritz

Aperol Spritz Grande

Candy Rosá

REAL-ALE ARMY MAKES CAMP AT ARNOLD MACHIN

Fifty members of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) visited The Arnold Machin (Newcastle-under-Lyme) for a regional meeting and to taste the pub's ales.

Members, including CAMRA's national director, Gary Timmins, enjoyed some traditional and more colourful ales – such as Titanic Raspberry Pale and Stonehenge Sign of Spring – which, as our picture shows, is green.

Many of the ales on offer were brought in for the occasion as shift manager Brad Gizzi seized the chance to showcase the pub's range and standards in front of an influential audience.

He said: "It was great to be chosen as a venue for this important CAMRA meeting.

"We received lots of positive feedback."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Ellie Bradeley, chair of Potteries CAMRA Andy Parkin, national director Gary Timmins and shift manager Brad Gizzi.



KILN KNIT WIT NICKY CREATES A CROCHET KING AND QUEEN



Outside of work, cleaner Nicky Sawyer is a nimble-fingered exponent of the art of crocheting – so the coronation celebrations provided the perfect opportunity to show off her skills.

Nicky, who works at The Bottle Kiln (Harwich) got busy with her needles and made little replicas of the king and queen, as well as an iconic red London bus (see picture).

She said: "I've enjoyed crochet for a while and wanted to do something at the pub to mark the coronation."

Shift manager, Ricky Frost, said: "Nicky's creations, especially the puppet king and queen, were a great addition to the pub – and we'd like to thank her for her lovely contribution to what was an enjoyable weekend."

SPOONFUL OF INK SPELLS OUT HARRY'S HANG-OUT

Harry Donovan enjoys Wetherspoon so much that he's had a tattoo done to prove it.

Harry, a regular at The George (Staines-upon-Thames), already had a few tattoos, when his favourite artist posted on her Instagram account with a design featuring the words 'See you at Wetherspoons'.

Harry said: "I just had to have it done – and my friends just loved it. It's just below the T-shirt line on my left arm, so it's very noticeable."

The tattoo is about five inches across and an inch high. It was designed by Weishan Yang, known as 'Shane' and can be found on Instagram: @0.clu3_



SPARKS FLY AS PAIR TAKES EPIC ELECTRIC PUB TOUR



Wetherspoon fans Steve and Jan Olive embarked on an epic electric Wetherspoon pub tour around their home county of Somerset.

The couple visited all 14 Wetherspoon pubs in Somerset in one day, helped by local Nissan South West – who loaned them an electric vehicle for the 200-mile trip.

Wellington-based Steve and Jan set out from The Duke of Wellington (Minehead) and finished at their local The Iron Duke (Wellington).

Along the way, they visited The Carnival Inn (Bridgwater), The Reeds Arms (Burnham-on-Sea), Cabot Court Hotel (Weston-super-Mare), The Glassmaker (Nailsea), The Posset Cup (Portishead), The King of Wessex (Bath), Palladium Electric (Midsomer Norton), The Quarter Jack (Wells) The Lantokay (Street), The William Dampier (Yeovil), The Cerdic (Chard) and The Perkin Warbeck (Taunton).

Speaking to the Somerset County Gazette newspaper, Steve said: “Jan and I agreed that The Glassmaker was our favourite.

“It was certainly the smallest pub on the trip, but it was an interesting place with great décor.

“Our second favourite remains our local, The Iron Duke, where I was the first-ever customer when it opened in 2016.”

Steve, who is considering a Devon tour next (24 pubs in a weekend), concluded: “There was something different to like in every pub, from a roaring log fire in The King of Wessex to an incredible range of ciders at The Quarter Jack, movie posters and a lovely garden at Palladium Electric and sea views in Burnham and Weston-super-Mare.”

Jan is pictured (in pink) with Steve (centre), staff members and Chris Paterson (in red), who did the tour with them.

MATT'S WALK-ON PART BRINGS SMILES TO LORD OF THE ISLES

Staff members at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew) were delighted to serve a well-known local celebrity at their pub.

Scottish actor Matt Costello, probably best known for his role as Stevie The Bookie, in BBC Scotland's iconic comedy TV series Still Game, visited the pub near Glasgow.

A graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, character-actor Matt has extensive stage credits with the Royal Lyceum Theatre Edinburgh, as well as film appearances in Wild Rose, Whisky Galore and The Last Bus, among others.

The pub's manager, Donna Walker, said: “It was great to welcome Matt to the pub. He was generous with his time and more than happy to have photos taken with the team. The customers loved him too.”

Matt is pictured (second right) behind the bar with (left to right) shift manager Jacqui Collins and bar associates Evan Wilson and Dhruv Lalsinghani.



PIZZAS PROVIDE A SLICE OF HEAVEN

Circular sensations have been rolling out of dedicated on-site ovens for seven scintillating years

Since launching the Wetherspoon pizza menu in 2016, the choice and popularity of the range have continued to grow.

After installing dedicated pizza ovens in every pub and training the kitchen staff to produce the perfect Wetherspoon pizza, customers have been enjoying 11" and 8" freshly baked offerings and toppings ever since.

Every Wetherspoon pizza is available as part of a meal deal – in the small-plate selections 'any 3 for' offer, as well as among the Deli Deals® and an 11" pizza serving (which both include a drink*).

Secret

But what is the secret behind the perfect Wetherspoon pizza?

Let's start at the bottom... with the pizza bases. The base is made using freshly stretched sourdough, pressed by us in the kitchen (not premade), then freshly baked.



8" Margherita

The light and crispy sourdough bases are all first topped with a rich, tomato sauce.

We source the pomodoro pizza sauce – tomato of course – from Italy, where else?

Authentic

It is made using 100 per cent Italian tomatoes, to provide an authentic taste and high-quality pizza topping.

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

Next, the cheese – and a blended, grated cheese is the perfect mix of mozzarella and Cheddar. Why a mix? As well as a great taste, it ensures a beautiful 'browning in the baking' for that perfect pizza every time.

Seven choices of pizza are available, although every topping can be ordered additionally to combine for your own bespoke pizza or to add to the existing menu options, as an extra topping.

Courgette

The pizzas are Margherita (mozzarella, basil), pepperoni (mozzarella, pepperoni), ham and mushroom (mozzarella, ham, mushroom, rocket), BBQ chicken (mozzarella, BBQ sauce, chicken breast, red onion, rocket), roasted vegetable (mozzarella, mushroom, roasted pepper, courgette, onion, basil), vegan roasted vegetable (mushroom, roasted pepper, courgette, onion, basil) and spicy meat feast (mozzarella, ham, pepperoni, chicken breast, sliced chillies, rocket).

Extra toppings include red onion, sliced chillies, maple-cured bacon, chicken breast, pepperoni and roasted vegetables.



11" roasted vegetable

DID YOU KNOW?

The modern pizza, as we know it today, evolved in the late 18th and early 19th centuries from Neapolitan flatbreads, sold on market stalls and in bakeries.

The first dedicated pizza restaurant in the UK opened in 1965, in Soho, London.

In the first mention of pizza in London (The Tatler, July 1952, 'Dining Out Abroad' section), Isaac Bickerstaff writes: "If you want to get away from altogether messy [Italian] dishes – and let us confess, most of them are – keep an eye open for ... pizza, a baked sandwich in many varieties, sweet or otherwise."

THE NORTH WESTERN • LIVERPOOL

TEARS OF JOY IN LIVERPOOL AS FRIENDS SURPRISE SALLY



Sally Martin burst into tears as colleagues and friends staged a surprise retirement party for her at The North Western (Liverpool).

Sally, 69, retired after 17 years with Wetherspoon, including eight as floor team leader at the Liverpool pub where she has worked from the day it opened.

She was overwhelmed because, instead of her expected quiet dinner with her family, she was ushered into the main floor of the pub, where approximately 40 current and former colleagues and friends were there to surprise her.

Sally said: "I couldn't believe it.

"I cried my eyes out. I had a fab time and was spoiled with presents, flowers, a charm for my bracelet and bottles of vodka and gin."

The chief architect of this happy deception was Sally's long-time friend and colleague – pub manager Christian Greenlee.

Christian said: "Sally deserved her celebration.

"She is a one-off, a very special lady who has lots of friends and family here and elsewhere.

"Sally and I worked together, previously, at the Wetherspoon pub at Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

"We were reunited at The North Western in May 2021 – and it has been wonderful working with her for so many years.

"I just couldn't let the occasion go without doing something special for her – it was hard work arranging it all without her getting a sniff of what was going on."

Sally, who has 11 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, said: "I am going to spend more time with them now."

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Christian Greenlee, shift manager Jenny Parker, Sally Martin and shift manager Kelly Senior.

100 PER CENT BRITISH BEEF BURGER, IN CLASSIC OR AMERICAN GUISE

The style may be American, but the Wetherspoon beef burgers are all made using 100 per cent British beef.

If beef isn't your thing and chicken is your choice, there are plenty of popular options, as well as a great selection available in the meat-free burger range too.

With more than 20 options to choose from in the extensive Wetherspoon burger range, there is something for everyone.

Check out the Wetherspoon menu to see the entire range of beef burgers, double beef burgers, just-a-burger, gourmet burgers, chicken burgers and meat-free burgers, as well as the additional toppings and burger patties available to customise your selection.

All burgers are served with chips – and there's an additional serving of six onion rings (beer-battered whole ring onions) with the gourmet burger range.

All burgers include a drink* (soft or alcoholic) as part of the meal price, with more than 150 to choose from.

The beef burger meals are available in two styles: the American burger (single or double) is served with red onion, gherkin, ketchup and American-style mustard. To add cheese, choose the American cheese burger.

The classic beef burger (single or double) is served with iceberg lettuce, tomato and red onion. This comes with chips or, as a skinny option, is served with salad, instead of chips.

Wetherspoon's supplier Dunbia, a division of Dawn Meats, has been supplying beef burgers to the pubs since 2007.

For the past 16 years, Wetherspoon's customers have been enjoying millions of British beef burgers, made to a unique Wetherspoon recipe and sourced from dedicated farmer suppliers.

The burgers 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.

Every one of the 100 per cent British beef patties is always fresh, never frozen.

Wetherspoon's range of chicken burgers offers fried buttermilk chicken burger (breaded whole chicken breast fillet), grilled chicken breast burger and skinny chicken burger (grilled chicken breast with salad, instead of chips).

Try the NEW crunchy chicken strip burger, comprising two crunchy southern-fried chicken strips, made using 100 per cent chicken breast fillet, served on a bed of mayo and lettuce, in a lightly toasted brioche bun.

No meat, no problem – there's a selection in meat-free burgers too, including the two-chilli-rated (mild) fried halloumi-style cheese burger, served with sweet chilli sauce.

The Beyond Burger™ (Beyond Meat® plant-based patty) is served in the meat-free burger range, as well as in the fiesta burger – the vegan gourmet burger choice, with a Beyond Meat® plant-based patty, salsa, guacamole, roasted pepper, courgette and onion.

Produced by Beyond Meat®, Wetherspoon's vegan burger is designed to appeal to a growing fan base of carnivores and flexitarians who are looking for delicious plant-based protein...without the compromise.

This burger contains no GMOs, no soy, no gluten or cholesterol.

Founded in 2009, Beyond Meat® has a mission of using simple, plant-based ingredients, applied in fresh ways, to replicate the taste, texture and other sensory attributes of popular animal-based meat products, while offering the nutritional and environmental benefits of plant-based proteins.

Heatwave burger; Fiesta burger; Fried halloumi-style cheese burger



WETHERSPOONS • MANCHESTER

RACHEL ON A JOURNEY – FROM CRUISE SHIPPER TO CITY SLICKER

Early on in her career, Rachel Naylor had to reconcile her desire to see the world with her need to earn a living.

So Rachel, who has now celebrated 20 years with Wetherspoon, did both.

After a spell working on cruise ships, which took her to the Caribbean and Alaska, she joined her local Wetherspoon pub, The Sedge Lynn (Chorlton-cum-Hardy) as a bar associate – and was soon offered promotion by her pub manager, Will Fotheringham.

Rachel said: “I kept turning it down because I still wanted to travel and decided to travel for a year in Asia.

“When I returned home, I was ready to focus on my career and worked as a shift manager at The Bollin Fee (Wilmslow) and The Kings Hall (Cheadle Hulme) (both now closed), a short stint at The Fall Well (Liverpool) and then The J. P. Joule (Sale).”

Rachel rose through the ranks and, in June 2006, was made pub manager of one of the company’s busiest pubs – Wetherspoons (Piccadilly, Manchester). She has stayed there ever since.

She said: “Every day is different.

“The pub is always busy and that’s how I like it. I wouldn’t know what to do with myself in a quieter pub – I enjoy the challenge.

“The pub is extremely busy on match days, with either Manchester United or Manchester City fans enjoying themselves here.

“When I’m not working, I enjoy walking in the countryside – which is a complete contrast to working in a city-centre pub.

“I aim to carry on working for Wetherspoon for as long as I can, maintaining high standards at the pub and breaking sales records. I wouldn’t wish to be anywhere else.”

Rachel is pictured with two people who recognised her talent and promoted her early on: her former pub manager and now regional manager Will Fotheringham and general manager Ged Murphy, who appointed her to the Piccadilly job.



St Patrick's Day ROUND-UP



The Bridge House (Belfast) Duty manager Kirsty Jones is pictured with customers Mervyn Blair (left) and Neil Purdy

STOUT, ALE AND WHISKEY GALORE, BUT NO SNAKEBITE ON ST PATRICK'S DAY

The annual Saint Patrick's Day celebrations were in full swing once again, for 2023, with folks toasting the patron saint of Ireland.

Customers at Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK and Republic of Ireland were spoiled for drinks choices to mark the occasion.

As well as the traditional pint of draught Guinness on the drinks menu in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, to celebrate the feast day of Saint Patrick, pubs also served a great selection of Irish products.

Wetherspoon's pubs in the Republic of Ireland served draught Beamish, an Irish stout, instead of Guinness.

Among the tipples available at all pubs for Saint Patrick's Day were Jameson Irish whiskey, as well as an Irish red ale, brewed exclusively for the occasion.

Blacks Irish Red (4.4% ABV) was a collaboration between brewers Ronan Russell at Black Brewery & Distillery, in Kinsale, County Cork, and Fergus Fitzgerald at Adnams Sole Bay Brewery, based in Southwold, Suffolk.



The Paramount (Manchester) Bar associates Lewis Dearborn (left) and Alfie Slattery



The New Cross Turnpike (Welling) Customers enjoyed some traditional Irish dancing from the Hopkins McSloy Academy Irish dance school



The South Strand (Dublin) All smiles from customers Kody, Ciara and Claire Dunne

THE RAVEN SWOOPS IN FOR BRIAN'S 80TH BIRTHDAY



One of Aintree's local legends, Brian Kenny, celebrated his 80th birthday at The Raven (Liverpool).

Brian has been a regular at the pub since before it was a pub – in his childhood, when it was a cinema, he used to go to see films there.

Brian was expecting his neighbours to take him out for a birthday dinner – but The Raven was planning a surprise party for him and sent Brian's fellow regular and mate Terry to intervene.

Brian, a former Royal Marine commando, said: "Terry had to let me know that The Raven had something planned for me, so I told the neighbours and they were happy to rearrange for the following Monday."

Brian lives equidistant between The Raven and Aintree Racecourse – about half a mile from each.

The pub is one of the closest to the Grand National venue and gets extremely busy around the event.

"I go to The Raven most days. I love it. Terry is there and I know a lot of people in the pub. People are always coming over for a chat, and the staff are brilliant – just brilliant. I don't go to any other pub," he added.

After leaving the marines, Brian joined the police as a civilian security manager. He retired 17 years ago, at 63.

When he visits the pub, he enjoys a glass of white wine and fish and chips – or a Tuesday steak or a Thursday curry.

A Liverpool FC supporter and former season ticket-holder, Brian remembers the days of Bill Shankly and goalkeepers such as Tommy 'The Flying Pig' Lawrence.

The party at the pub was organised by manager Adelle Brookes.

Adelle (pictured front, second from right) said: "Brian threw a big party the week before his birthday, which was attended by most of the staff and a lot of customers.

"We wanted to give him something back and spoil him."

She added: "Brian is a cracker – an absolute star, with a lot of colourful stories to tell.

"He is considered by the staff to be part of our pub family, and we were only too pleased to put on a party for his 80th."

Brian is pictured (front centre) with staff, family and friends at The Raven.

CHELSEA MATCHES LEAD IAN TO PUB-COLLECTING

A man who began a tour of Wetherspoon pubs while supporting Chelsea Football Club has, so far, notched up more than 200 visits.

Ian Dickinson was sitting with his friend Stuart in The Oyster Rooms (Fulham) (now closed) in March 2014, before a 3-1 victory away at Craven Cottage, when his friend picked up a copy of the Wetherspoon directory, listing all pubs across the UK and Ireland.

He said: "I looked through it and realised I'd done a fair few already.

"I think that my first visit was to The Hart & Spool (Borehamwood), which my granddad used to visit."

Ian followed Chelsea home and away for years and found that Wetherspoon's pubs, often being close to a railway station, provided an ideal venue for away supporters.

He said: "I got hooked on visiting Wetherspoon's pubs, while watching Chelsea play all over the country.

"I enjoyed ticking off the boxes in the directory, but also liked the pubs for their different styles of architecture, design, the history behind the name of the pub and, of course, the different carpet in each establishment."

Ian visited his 200th Wetherspoon, The London and South Western (Battersea), where he is pictured.

Work commitments have meant that Ian has relocated to Liverpool and no longer goes to football matches, but his Wetherspoon mission continues, with his total reaching 217 when he popped to The Scarsdale Hundred (Beighton, Sheffield).

Ian added: "I can honestly say that Wetherspoon offers everything I could want, plus the staff are wonderful."



PUB AND TRAIN FAN ON TRACK FOR MIGHTY TOTAL



West Midlands-based customer Neil Wesson started his Wetherspoon 'journey' at his local – The Assembly Rooms (Solihull) (now closed) – and now has 765 pubs visited in his collection.

From Solihull to Saltcoats and Peterhead to Penzance, Neil has travelled the UK in pursuit of his collecting hobby.

Neil, 74, said: "I was a managerial supervisor in logistics at Land Rover – once you turn 50, they used to like making people offers to leave.

"I talked it over with my wife, Pamela, and left. I retired at 52 – and haven't looked back."

He continued: "I'm a railway enthusiast, trying all of the various railways around the country, and it seems that a lot of Wetherspoon fans do both things at once.

"It's all about building up your collection – and I've always liked collecting things.

"Also, visiting all of these Wetherspoon pubs (some with Pamela) gives you something to do and is good exercise, because they can be a mile or more from a railway station.

"There's so many of them, with many in really beautiful buildings, including former cinemas, theatres and churches.

"My favourite is an old opera house in Tunbridge Wells, called Opera House.

"We always love reading about the history of the new places, especially when that information was included on the menus.

"If we don't go by rail, we might be in our touring caravan.

"It gets you out of the house and gives you something to aim for around the country."

It was while visiting The Thomas Drummond (Fleetwood) that Neil bumped into a familiar face.

He recalled: "I was on an organised tram visit to Blackpool and went to The Thomas Drummond, in Fleetwood.

"I thought that I recognised the guy at the bar and said: 'Are you Tim Martin?'"

"I told him that I'd been to hundreds of Wetherspoon pubs, and he offered to buy me a pint. It was nice of him, but I didn't take up the offer.

"I said: 'Thank you, but I've just had one – and I need to go to visit another Wetherspoon!'"

KNIGHT TO REMEMBER ON ST GEORGE'S DAY

St George's Day was celebrated in style at The Crown (Worcester) when shift manager Matt Adams donned full medieval knight regalia to raise money for two good causes.

Matt, who is involved with a local historical medieval battle group, Armoured Combat Gloucester, staged a meet-and-greet afternoon while collecting for The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regimental Association and Young Lives vs Cancer (YLvC).

He said: "I had the idea to dress up as a knight to celebrate St George's Day and raise some money for charity at the same time.

"The day went well – and customers were happy to chat and donate some money.

"We raised £200 for The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regimental Association, as well as funds for YLVC."

Matt is pictured outside the pub with shift leader Greg Dunne.





The J. P. Joule (Sale) Bar associate Conal O'Driscoll with the St George's Day ale

GEORGE-OUS

Wetherspoon's pubs across England marked St George's Day with a special real ale.

Customers could enjoy a pint of Patron Saint (4.3% ABV), brewed by Cambridgeshire-based Elgood's Brewery, to toast the patron saint of England.

The mid-brown beer, with its fruity, spicy aroma, leading to a crisp, well-balanced malt and hop flavour, was also gluten free.

As well as real ale (and, of course, plenty of bunting to decorate the pubs), customers were able to celebrate the occasion with a selection of other English drinks.

Among them was the quintessential Classic Pimm's, as well as English gins, including Kent-produced Bathtub Gin.



The Moon in the Square (Bournemouth) Enjoying a sunny St George's Day on the south coast (left to right) are customers Marie Johns, George Martini, Jan Pollard and Ursula Hurley



The Winter Seam (Castleford) Celebrating in the beer garden (left to right) are customers Iain Beacroft, Louise Falconer and Tony Bowers



The Richard John Blackler (Liverpool) Bar associate Dylan Wright serves customers Sion and Amanda Jones



The Crown (Berkhamsted) Customers Caroline Livings, Jayne Shirley and Alison Johnson (left to right) celebrate St George's Day with a glass of Classic Pimm's

A MIGHTY WIND AS PUBS' BIRTHDAY CANDLES BLOWN OUT

From March to the beginning of July 2023, numerous Wetherspoon pubs celebrated a significant birthday of 25 years or more.

In total, 21 pubs marked their silver anniversary, clocking up an astonishing combined 525 years serving their respective communities since 1998.

During March and April, the 25-year celebrations were held at The Liberty Bounds (City of London), Shakespeare's Head (Holborn), The Vigilance (Brixham), The Lynd Cross (Horsham), The Up Steps Inn (Oldham), Hoylake Lights (Hoylake), The Moon and Cross (Waltham Cross), The Samuel Peto (Folkestone), The Bank Statement (Swansea), The Thomas Sheraton (Stockton-on-Tees) and Wetherspools (Gateshead).

From May to early July, the 25-year celebrations were held at The Picture House (Ebbw Vale), The Spinning Mule (Bolton), Woodrow Wilson (Carlisle), The Acorn Inn (Lichfield),

The Plaza (Rugeley), Ritz (Lincoln), The Tanners Hall (Darlington), The Colley Rowe Inn (Collier Row), The Eva Hart (Chadwell Heath) and The Moon Under Water (Boston).

Other long-serving pubs during this birthday period included J.J. Moon's (Tooting) and The Moon on the Hill (Harrow), both marking 32 years since first opening, while The Moon Under Water (Leicester Square, London) celebrated 31 years.

Also clocking up a combined 120 years' service to their local communities were four pubs marking their 30-year anniversary.

They were The Moon Under Water (Norbury), Goldengrove (Stratford), The Banker's Draft (Eltham) and The Old Manor (Bracknell).

The company's oldest pub, The Rochester Castle (Stoke Newington), celebrated its 40-year anniversary – see its special feature (page 112).

The Moon Under Water (Norbury)

First opened as a Wetherspoon in April 1993, this pub occupies the premises which was once the site of Sorrento Villa, a Victorian villa and home to the Fitchew family from the 1880s until the outbreak of World War I.

Pictured (left to right) celebrating the pub's 30th birthday are bar associate Aaliyah Clarke-Kubeyinje, shift manager Emma Read and team leader Charleigh Tilley.

Pub manager Jennifer Johnson, who has been with the company for the past 14 years, took over in June 2015.

Shift manager Emma Read has been with Wetherspoon for 21 years, the past two and a half of those at The Moon Under Water.

The pub's longest-serving staff member is kitchen team leader Caron Tilley, who has worked there for 15 years. Bar team leader Karen Fleet has also been at the pub for 10 years.



The Banker's Draft (Eltham)

The name of this Wetherspoon pub, which first opened in May 1993, recalls its former use as a branch of Martins Bank. Originally the Bank of Liverpool, founded in 1836, it merged in 1968 with Barclays.

The first customer through the doors of the new pub in 1993 was Pat Doherty, pictured (left) with shift leaders Kim Shirley and Julie Martin (right).

Catherine Cunningham started with Wetherspoon in July 2002 and was appointed pub manager at The Banker's Draft in May 2009.

Shift manager Annmarie Burke is the longest-serving staff member, having started with the company in July 2005.

Cleaner Hazel Wanden is also among several other long-serving staff members, having joined the team at the pub in November 2009.

The Bank Statement (Swansea)

Pub manager Ben Edwards took over at The Bank Statement in July 2022, having first started with Wetherspoon in April 2006.

His pub, which marked its 25th anniversary, first opened in April 1998 in a former bank building, where borrowing and lending were once the regular activities, with the original bank safes still on view.

Pictured outside the pub, marking 25 years since opening, are (left to right) team leader Rhian White, kitchen manager Bobby Jones, shift leader Nathan Campbell, floor associate John Rees and bar associate Lindsey Griffiths.

In total, 14 staff members have achieved more than five years' service, with shift manager David McCann the longest serving. He first joined the company in September 2001.

John Rees is the second longest-serving staff member, who joined the company in December 2002.



25
YEARS

25
YEARS



Wetherspoons (Gateshead)

This pub first opened in Gateshead's famous Metrocentre shopping centre in April 1998.

Pictured marking 25 years since opening (left to right) are long-serving staff members kitchen team leader Jordan Mair (10 years), kitchen manager Leanne Davis (25 years), pub manager Bill Alderson (23 years) and kitchen associate Margie McNally (25 years).

Bill took over at the pub in November 2006, having joined Wetherspoon in September 2000.

Among the other numerous long-serving staff members are bar associates Julie Hall (22 years) and Calum Ismay (16 years), shift leader Louise Roughhead (16 years) and team leader Leanne Ormeston (13 years).

Also clocking up a decade's service each are shift managers Mark Hodgson and Jamie Robson, kitchen shift leader Nathan Dorn, bar team leader Ross Turner, bar associate Dan Hall and kitchen associate Marcel Nogbue.

The Thomas Sheraton (Stockton-on-Tees)

Pictured celebrating 25 years at The Thomas Sheraton (left to right) are pub manager Stuart Kirk, shift leader Rhiannon Whitfield and kitchen manager Martin Etherington.

Stuart took over at the pub in February 2023, having first started with the company in 2008.

Among his long-serving staff members are shift managers Ellie Bryan (10 years) and Baden Knibbs (seven years), team leader Amanda Willis (14 years), shift leader Vicky Gleave (nine years) and cleaner Linda Ruddy (eight years).

The pub, which first opened in April 1998, is named after one of the great furniture designers of the Georgian age.

Thomas Sheraton was born in 1751, in Stockton-on-Tees. He worked originally as a cabinetmaker, later designing occasional tables, and ranks alongside Thomas Chippendale and George Hepplewhite as one of the 'big three' English furniture-makers of the 18th century.



25
YEARS

25
YEARS



The Picture House (Ebbw Vale)

The pub first opened in May 1998, housed in a premises which was purpose built in 1970 as a supermarket. The building stands on the site of the Astoria cinema, first built in 1940, with the pub's name recalling this use.

Pictured marking the pub's 25th birthday are (back row) shift manager Grace Randall (left) and kitchen manager Caroline Hughes. Front (left to right) are kitchen shift leader Sam Foley, with bar associates Bethany Palmer, Jacob Hooper and Joseph May.

Pub manager Gareth Davies, who has worked for Wetherspoon for more than 10 years, was appointed pub manager at The Picture House in April 2022.

Grace has worked for the company for 15 years and has been on the team at The Picture House for four years, while Caroline has been at the pub for just under a year and has 21 years' service with Wetherspoon. Sam has been at the pub and with the company for nine years.

MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS

25 YEARS



Ritz (Lincoln)

Bar Associates James Raper and Morgan Hunter Reid celebrate the pub's 25th anniversary with a pint of special birthday house ale, Cinematic Ritz (4.8% ABV), from Beermats Brewery.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in May 1998, is the former Ritz cinema.

Billed as a super cinema for Lincoln, it opened in 1932, screening its last film six decades later.

Ashley Clayton took over as pub manager at Ritz in October 2020, having joined the company in March 2015.

Among his long-serving staff at the pub are bar team leader Anita Wilson (24 years) and bar associate Mary Fryer (18 years), as well as cleaners Zofia Brzost (10 years) and Wendy Brown (six years).

Woodrow Wilson (Carlisle)

Named after Woodrow Wilson, who became the 28th president of the United States in 1912 and whose mother Janet was born in Carlisle, this pub first opened in May 1998, in a building which was once part of the Carlisle South End Co-op Society store, built in 1904.

Pub manager Daryl Morrison took over in April 2023, having first started with Wetherspoon in September 2008.

He is pictured (left) with shift leaders Amber Brecken and Jace Faulder and bar associate Jasmine Williams (left to right) marking the pub's 25th birthday with a charity bake sale.

A birthday cake was purchased, with a design to match the pub's signage, with other cakes homemade by staff and customers. The sale raised in excess of £300 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Among the pub's long-serving staff members are shift manager Sean Dale (since September 2008) and kitchen manager Leon Potts (since September 2014).



25 YEARS

The Colley Row Inn (Collier Row)

Pictured marking the 25th birthday of The Colley Row Inn (left to right) are regular customers Sue Wenman, Paul Bowyer and Michelle Caliana, with shift leader Asia Smith.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in June 1998, has been managed by Alexander Whaley since September 2021. Alexander first joined the company in July 2013.

Among the long-serving staff members is team leader Steve Powell, an ale aficionado known to everyone as 'Whiskers', who has worked at the pub since 2010.

Others include shift manager Becci Sherlock (since September 2013), kitchen manager Bryan Simmons and shift leader Gemma Deverell (both since December 2013), bar associate Emily Jones (seven years) and team leader/events manager Keeley Ziouech (five years).

The pub takes its name from the Middle English word 'colier' (from 'col'/'coal'), meaning 'charcoal-burner'. Colliers had inhabited the area since the earliest times, with the last recorded collier in c1570.



25 YEARS

The Tanners Hall (Darlington)

Pub manager Kristian Cason is pictured with team leader Rachel Lowe (left) and bar associate Chloe Diamond marking the pub's 25th birthday, with a cake.

Kristian, who has worked for Wetherspoon for 14 years, took over at The Tanners Hall in August 2017.

The longest-serving staff member on his team is kitchen associate Dale Yates, who first started working at the pub at the beginning of December 1998, just six months after its opening.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in June 1998, is located in Skinnergate – once the location of Darlington's skin market.

In 1621, the local council decreed: "Noe tanners shall bye any skins, but upon the Skynnehill." The long-gone tanners are remembered today in the pub's name.



25 YEARS

CONSTELLATION OF ALE EXPERTS OBSERVED AT THE STARGAZER



Real-ale aficionados, including Wetherspoon superfan David Bingham, turned out to celebrate the opening of The Stargazer, housed in the Icon Outlet at The O2, in Greenwich, southeast London.

David was joined by friends and contacts, including Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) Gravesend & Darent Valley branch's chairman Mick Allen, Cask Marque pub assessor Julian Herrington and Kidbrooke CAMRA Beer Festival's organiser Eric Camfield.

David said: "It was great to be there at the opening and to see my friends and enjoy a pint."

Mick Allen added: "I was impressed with the pub – and it is a great addition to The O2."

The Stargazer serves nine real ales, including Portobello Market Porter and Sharp's Doom Bar.

Its manager, Arber Hasani (pictured), said: "The opening day was very enjoyable – and we were glad to welcome David and the representatives from CAMRA and Cask Marque."

"The pub has proven extremely popular since opening, with many customers enjoying a drink or meal before or after a concert or event at The O2."

Pictured (left to right) are Julian Herrington, Mick Allen, David Bingham, Eric Camfield and Wetherspoon's area manager Rob Tokarski.

RALPH SHOWS HE'S ALL HEART AT THE TROLL CART

Ralph and Linda Wainwright chose to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary at The Troll Cart (Great Yarmouth).

The pair booked the Wetherspoon hotel for a short break and used it as a base to explore the local area with their sons Craig and David.

Ralph, a retired printer, said: "We really enjoyed it."

"The hotel was very good – and the staff were excellent, giving us a complimentary bottle of Prosecco to mark the occasion."

"They also decorated the room with banners and balloons, which was lovely."

The family visited the North Norfolk Railway, as well as Sheringham, Norwich and The Britannia Pier at Great Yarmouth.

Asked what the secret of a long marriage is, Ralph replied: "I don't know. People say Linda deserves a medal for putting up with me."

Indeed, Linda had her Scarborough honeymoon cut short because Leeds United fan Ralph wanted to get back to see the 1973 FA Cup semi final against Wolverhampton Wanderers at Maine Road, Manchester.

But he likes to think that he made it up to Linda by taking her on many visits to Austria, where his mother was born, and – for the couple's 25th anniversary, on an uninterrupted tour of the southern United States, Mexico and Hawaii.

The Troll Cart's pub manager, Todd Inns, said: "Ralph and Linda are a lovely couple and we were so pleased that they chose our hotel as their base for the anniversary holiday."



SITTINGBOURNE

ARMED FORCES PRESENT AND CORRECT FOR PAST FIVE YEARS



The Golden Hope (Sittingbourne) has been the venue, for the past five years, for a very special regular monthly meeting.

Members of the Sittingbourne Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club (AFVBC) have been gathering at the Kent Wetherspoon pub every fourth Saturday of the month for five years.

To mark their milestone, the Mayor of Swale, Cllr Simon Clark, joined the veterans at the pub for their morning club get-together.

There are two people who organise the Sittingbourne AFVBC meetings, Richard Emmett (who served in the army for 23 years, Royal Corps Transport) and Stewart Kitching (who served in the army for 28 years, Royal Engineers).

Stewart (front, second left) reported: "Five years ago, we had a chat with pub manager Jayne Boulter to ask whether the veterans could meet in the back room and have the Wetherspoon breakfast.

"She agreed – and we have been meeting there ever since, once a month. We now have 100 members, including people who work for the emergency services.

"Jayne makes us feel very welcome and safe. She and her team look after us so well."

Jayne added: "We are delighted and honoured to play host to the monthly breakfast club at the pub and thrilled that the group has marked its fifth year with us.

"The group has gone from strength to strength and provides an important support system for veterans and serving armed forces personnel.

"We are proud that AFVBC chose The Golden Hope as its monthly venue – long may it continue."

Cllr Clark (front, centre), receiving cake from Stewart's partner Janet Avery, said: "I know how much the club does to help people who have served for their country.

"I was honoured to talk to members at their five-year celebrations.

"As a regular myself at The Golden Hope, I'll be looking out for veterans when I visit the pub."

AFVBC was created by veterans of the armed forces to support those who represented the UK in combat, soldiers, sailors and air personnel, providing an informal environment, where they can meet, talk and have a laugh.

AFVBC now has more than 420 clubs and meetings in 14 countries around the world.

CANTERBURY

INGOLDSBY GANG GOES GREEN FOR MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Green was the theme as The Thomas Ingoldsby (Canterbury) did its bit for Mental Health Day.

The Mental Health Foundation encouraged people to wear the colour of its ribbon on the day to support awareness of anxiety, depression, PTSD and other conditions.

The pub collected £73.15 for the charity as staff dressed in green – and customers wore green stickers and ribbons. The pub was decorated with green banners.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associates Claire Partridge and Charley Hayes.



WELLINGTON

IRON DUKE REGULAR SHOWS HIS METTLE WITH MARATHON SWIM



A pub customer has raised £2,596 for a local hospice by swimming a distance equivalent to that of the English Channel.

Richard Elloway, 76, a regular at The Iron Duke (Wellington) raised the cash for St Margaret's Hospice in nearby Taunton by swimming 1,400 lengths of Wellington Leisure Centre pool.

Richard said: "Staff and fellow customers at the pub have been instrumental in raising the cash.

"They donated directly to the fundraising and also spread the word online and in person about my swimming and the JustGiving web page."

The money will help to fund the purchase of a second antipressure chair for the hospice.

The chairs help to prevent or relieve pressure ulcers and sores.

Richard's wife, Pamela, was treated at the hospice for seven weeks, before returning home.

The pub's manager Mat Turner, said: "Richard has been a regular of ours for many years and we know how grateful he is to St Margaret's for the care given to his wife.

"So, we were only too happy to help him to raise money for the hospice."

Pictured (left to right) are Richard and leisure centre staff.

WEYMOUTH

WEYMOUTH GROUP FINDS A WELCOME AT THE SWAN

A social group for gay and bisexual men in Weymouth is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year.

The Weymouth Gay Group (WGG) was set up initially by a small group, having discovered that there were no social opportunities in Weymouth for gay and bisexual guys (18+).

WGG has grown in numbers since its launch, yet still meets for 'friendship, chat, food, drinks and a laugh' every Thursday from 8pm at The Swan (Weymouth), on or near table 26.

One of those attending described the group as 'real ale and real friends', after a gathering at the Wetherspoon pub.

Kim Newstead, pub manager at The Swan, said: "We are always delighted to host WGG at The Swan.

"They are a great group of friendly folk, who enjoy friendship, fun and support together.

"Our pub is an important aspect of the local Weymouth community, with WGG an integral part of the social scene."

Every Monday, the WGG's 'meals out on Mondays' also take in local restaurants and pubs, including The William Henry (Weymouth).

During the summer months, the guys enjoy beach barbecues and trips to Pride and LGBTQIA+ events.

● **Its website (weymouthgaygroup.weebly.com/) also offers news, events and helpline information for the LGBTQIA+ community.**



STALYBRIDGE

ROOM TO GET CREATIVE AT THE SOCIETY ROOMS



The Society Rooms (Stalybridge) is a community space for a host of varying activities throughout the week.

Local residents gather regularly at the Wetherspoon pub to enjoy one another's company, as well as to take part in various leisure pursuits.

The pub is home to 'Crafty Spooners', a group which is open to anyone who wants to come along to have a chat and a coffee.

The friendly group meets every Monday morning, with folks bringing along their own crafting projects to complete and share with others, including knitting, drawing and crochet, or just to have a coffee and chat.

Shift manager Corrina Bates said: "We also have a small art 'gallery' display, where a local art group showcases and sells its artwork.

"Both groups come to the pub every Monday from around 9am and stay for three or four hours, doing their artwork and crafts, with the numbers growing weekly."

Corrina continued: "Every Wednesday from 9am, we host a jigsaw club with another lovely group of people who come in and do a few jigsaws, staying for a few hours.

"A lot of these people come in for the company and friendship, which is wonderful."



The pub has a community library too, where customers can buy, donate or swap books.

Every last Tuesday of the month is also bingo night at The Society Rooms, back by popular demand.

Corrina concluded: "Customers love the fact that we are a little community hub. We are delighted to welcome all of the different groups to our pub."



AVION TEAM WELCOMES MP WENDY MORTON



Staff at The Avion (Aldridge) welcomed their local MP to the pub for a planned morning constituency visit.

The Rt Hon Wendy Morton, the Conservative MP for Aldridge-Brownhills, spent almost an hour at the former cinema and local landmark building, speaking to the team and regular customers.

Shift manager Adam Foxall (left) and bar associate Jacob Blades are pictured with Wendy Morton at the pub, which is managed by Andy Newman.

Adam, who helped to organise the visit, said: "Wendy was very friendly, chatting to customers and staff.

"As well as speaking about the actual running of the pub, she asked how everything was going and whether we had any local issues or problems."

Reflecting on her visit, Wendy Morton reported: "I really enjoyed meeting Adam and his team.

"The Avion is such an iconic and historic building in Aldridge.

"It's wonderful that it continues to have a place in our local community.

"I know that it's popular with locals, as I always see someone I know in there, but, equally, it attracts visitors from further afield."

LIVERPOOL

BECKY'S BAKERS ROLLING IN DOUGH

The team at The Navigator (Liverpool) has been baking again, all in aid of charity.

Shift leader and event organiser Becky Doherty (pictured left) masterminded the Butterfly Bake Day at the pub, raising a whopping £900.

She was aided by shift manager Vicki Lloyd (pictured right) and team leader Janice Fletcher.

The charity fundraiser was also boosted by a raffle, with some generously donated prizes, including cinema visits, tickets for the Derby and an axe-throwing experience among other gifts.

Becky said: "A huge thank you to our generous customers and local businesses which donated towards the prizes and buying of tickets."

The money has been donated to three charities – with Merseyside's Claire House Children's Hospice receiving £500, £250 going to Liverpool CHICS (children's cancer support charity, based at Alder Hey) and £150 for Young Lives vs Cancer.





CUSTOMERS SAY CHEERS TO KING CHARLES

Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK marked His Majesty The King's coronation with a specially brewed real ale.

Theakston Crowning Glory (4.2% ABV) was produced for the occasion by Theakston Brewery, based at Masham in North Yorkshire.

Customers enjoyed the royal-event brew, expertly made to commemorate the coronation of King Charles III, at most UK Wetherspoon pubs throughout the bank holiday weekend.

The traditional amber-coloured beer, with an aroma of honey and blackcurrant, as well as a

refreshing bittersweet flavour, had a full-bodied taste – from its spice, pine and sweet malt notes.

Other great British drinks, available throughout the weekend to toast the royal occasion, included a selection of gins (Gordon's special dry London gin, Bathtub Gin and Bombay Bramble gin, with its infusion of blackberry and raspberry) and Classic Pimm's, along with Broadwood's Folly English sparkling brut.

Here, we highlight Wetherspoon's staff and customers at some of the pubs who joined the nation in toasting King Charles III, during the coronation weekend.



The Tim Bobbin (Urmston) Bar associate Luke Monk (centre) serves customers Colette Donlan and Jack Austin



The Castle Hotel (Ruthin) Shift manager Molly Lewis serves customers Des and Glenyce Lewis



The Central Bar (Carrickfergus) Customers Nicholas Lawrence, Trevor Kirkpatrick and Larry McCall (left to right)



The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards) Customers Emily Smith (left) and Courtney Steenson



The Blue Bell (Hemsworth) Customers Will Barnett, Tony Bowers and Rod Broomhill (left to right)



The Counting House (Glasgow) Customers Megan Wilson and Cara Gillan (right)



The John Fielding (Cwmbran) Shift manager Thomas Watkins, customers Donna Bancroft and Carol Wood and bar associate Megan Steel (left to right)



The King and Castle (Windsor) Customers Chris and Rachel Wisbey



The Kings Head (Monmouth) Bar associate Olivia Kavanagh serves customers Ellis Mackie and Yasmin Simmonds



The Port Jackson (Bishops Stortford) Pub manager Nicole Cottage with cleaner Jose Ferreira Correia (left) and kitchen team leader Craig Banks



The Penny Black (Northwich) Cross-trained associate Jess Ellis serves customers Jenny and Roger Buckley

DEREHAM

FRIENDS SHOW THEY CARE AT ROMANY RYE



Caring Friends for Cancer Mid Norfolk, a local charity, provides advice, care and support for people being diagnosed with cancer.

As well as a support office, where people can visit to arrange any help needed, the group, which was founded in 2014, organises regular meetings and social gatherings (<http://www.caringfriends.org.uk>).

Among the face-to-face services on offer is a weekly coffee morning at The Romany Rye (Dereham), where members can meet up for a cuppa and a chat every Friday (10am – 1pm) at the Wetherspoon pub.

Caring Friends' manager, Suzanne Chapman, said: "We offer a range of services for people, including helping to reduce isolation, anxiety and other negative impacts on mental and emotional health."

"The weekly coffee mornings and social events at Dereham's Wetherspoon pub give people the opportunity to come to see us – and we are all very friendly."

The pub's manager, Ian James, added: "We are delighted to host this regular Friday coffee morning at The Romany Rye."

"The pub is a great community hub for everyone, and this essential weekly social event highlights our role in the Dereham community."

Pictured at the weekly get-together are Caring Friends' trustees, committee members and volunteers Margaret Barrett (second right) and Mary Varns (far right).

TRURO

CREAM TEAS MAKE WAVES IN CORNWALL

Try Dowl (Truro) celebrated Cornwall's national day with a charity bake sale featuring cream teas made with local produce.

Customers enjoyed scones, cream and jam as the pub marked St Piran's Day with Cornish imagery, including the black-and-white national flag.

St Piran is the patron saint of tin miners, for centuries a thriving occupation in the county.

Sales of the cream teas raised £150 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Shift manager Matt Sinkins said: "It was good to celebrate all things Cornish on the day – and we are delighted that we were able to raise so much money for our charity."

Matt is pictured with bar associate Jesse Thomson, with a display of Cornish products behind the bar.



WYNDHAM GANG TRACES THE SOURCE OF ITS ALE

Staff and customers from The Wyndham Arms Hotel (Bridgend) enjoyed a brewery visit to Rhymney Brewery.

Organised by shift manager Simon James and shift leader Leighton Clarke, the group travelled the 50 miles to Pontypool (and back) for a great day out.

Simon said: "The trip was organised for our local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) members and regular customers.

"Rhymney Brewery's head brewer, Tim Roderick, was a fantastic host for the afternoon – and our regulars thoroughly enjoyed his talk about the brewing process.

"We were all able to pour our own tasters of Rhymney's fabulous Rhymney Export ale, and everyone enjoyed the whole experience."

Simon and Leighton were joined on the trip by hotel night shift leader Richard Edwards, kitchen team leader Franki Jones and kitchen associate Daniel Owens, as well as CAMRA Vale of Glamorgan & Bridgend pubs officer Steve Thompson, Cllr David Unwin and CAMRA member Graham, together with regular customers John, Mervin, Ian, David, Gary, David Dobbs, Keith and Tony, all pictured.



ST IVES

PIGTAILS PURLOINED AS MAYOR DELIVERS CUTS

Town Mayor Cllr Philip Pope turned up to take part in a Brave the Shave fundraising event at The Swan and Angel (St Ives, Cambridgeshire).

Hirsute shift manager Aaron Batsford and bar associate Jonny Bagley stepped forward to submit themselves to Mayor Cllr Philip Pope's hair clippers.

But the mayor's efforts were simply ceremonial – he lopped off a few bits here and there, leaving shift leader Mel Tyler to finish the job.

The event raised £1,800 for Young Lives vs Cancer, at which point the two plucky volunteers agreed to have their eyebrows shaved as well.

Jonny's pigtails were also donated to The Little Princess Trust, which provides free real hair wigs to children and young people who have lost their own hair through cancer treatment or other conditions.

Pictured (before) are (left to right) Aaron and Jonny with Mayor Cllr Philip Pope and (after) Aaron holding his severed pigtails aloft as shift leader Mel Tyler and Mayor Cllr Philip Pope look on.



MARATHON ACHIEVEMENT BY WETHERSPOON'S FANTASTIC FOUR

Four Wetherspoon employees completed the London Marathon, among them raising more than £6,500 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The four runners were Tom Ball, Rob Tokarski, Amber Oddie and David Harling.

Their fundraising contributed to the overall figure of just over £700,000 raised by 220 people running for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Young Lives vs Cancer staff and volunteers cheered on the runners, with two of the cheer points outside Wetherspoon pubs – The Gate Clock (Greenwich) and The Liberty Bounds (Tower of London).

Young Lives vs Cancer's partnership manager, Samantha Hughes-Smith, said: "We're so grateful to the Wetherspoon team for getting involved again this year in the London Marathon.

"It was an emotional day for all involved, and the fundraising has been fantastic.

"We're so happy for Tom, Rob, Amber and David for doing so well on the day and each getting a well-earned medal.

"We'd also like to say a big thankyou to both The Gate Clock and The Liberty Bounds for helping us with two of our cheer points on the course."

More than 48,000 runners took to the streets of London, pounding the 26.2 miles of the world-famous route, from the staggered start lines in Greenwich to the finish line on The Mall.



Shift manager Amber Oddie, who works at The Dragon Inn (Birmingham), said: "The marathon was the hardest, but most rewarding, thing I've ever done.

"After losing my granny to cancer, in February of this year, it was so important for me to make it to the finish line and so, to get through the race, I dedicated every mile to someone special.

"Mile one was for Wetherspoon, for giving me the opportunity; miles four and five were for Team Dragon, specifically Jack M, Cerese and Megan D, for all the amazing help I had from them to fundraise.

"Mile 10 was for my pub manager and friend Kelly Tipper, while mile 26 was for my beloved granny.

"My fundraising total is £3,400. My goal was only £2,000, so I'm blown away by all the support. Knowing that I had so many people behind me truly got me to the finish line. I'm so proud of everything I've achieved over the last year and, despite my protests during the race and when my friends suggested it, I'm already looking into running again next year."

Wetherspoon's area manager – London, Rob Tokarski, said: "From the moment I arrived at the starting line, there was an air of excitement and camaraderie among the runners.

"The course was challenging, but the support from fellow runners and spectators alike kept me going and, as I ran past the cheering members of the pink-and-black team for Young Lives vs Cancer, I was lifted by their energy and enthusiasm.

"It was a powerful reminder that, no matter what challenges we face in life, we have the strength and support to overcome them. I'll never forget the feeling of crossing Tower Bridge or the rush of adrenaline, on sprinting towards the finish line, when I saw my wife and two daughters on the edge of St James' Park.

"I raised £600 for Young Lives vs Cancer, completing the course in three hours and 45 minutes.

"The London Marathon was not a physical challenge alone, but a mental one too, and I came out of it feeling stronger and more motivated than ever before."



Kitchen associate David Harling, who works at The General Sir Redvers Buller (Crediton), said: “The run went well, and I managed to finish in 4 hours, 34 minutes and 29 seconds. “The experience was incredible from start to finish, especially the atmosphere of the event and passing all the famous landmarks during the run. It was amazing. “Also, to raise money for Young Lives vs Cancer was the cherry on top of what was a great day. “We had a bucket on the bar at my pub, on the day of the marathon itself, and managed to raise £192.29 for the charity. “Thanks to everyone for their support.”



Wetherspoon’s director of people, Tom Ball, said: “This was my fifth London Marathon running for Young Lives vs Cancer and, as ever, I had the most amazing day. “The support on the course was incredible – and I’m extremely proud to have raised, since my first London Marathon in 2015, more than £12,500 for the charity.”

The Three Fishes (Worthing)

Well done folks!
£136
...raised for our chosen charity.



A coronation bake sale at The Three Fishes (Worthing) raised £136. All staff either made cakes or brought something in for the sale. Treats on offer included a chocolate cake, brownies and biscuits, with a large inflatable crown to draw customers’ attention to them. The pub’s manager, Josh Jones, said: “We had a great weekend and a lot of cake was enjoyed as people celebrated the coronation. “It was a great effort from all of those involved. “We are grateful to our customers for contributing to our chosen charity.” Josh is pictured (centre) with colleagues.

The Thomas Waghorn (Chatham)

Well done folks!
£60
...raised for our chosen charity.



Colleagues Holly-mia Robinson and Sean Leftley (pictured) baked a tray of delights for customers to enjoy at The Thomas Waghorn (Chatham) as they celebrated the coronation. Bar associate Holly-mia and team leader Sean made biscuits, cupcakes and tarts, which customers purchased, raising £60. Holly-mia said: “We were helped by colleagues – a lot of us contributed. Customers really enjoyed it. We had a lot of fun.” The pub’s manager, Hannah Stevens, said: “The team really came up trumps, and the display looked – and tasted – amazing.”

The Queens Hotel (Maltby)



Forty customers and staff from The Queens Hotel (Maltby) walked eight miles to raise £1,200.

The group – some of whom brought along dogs – walked to the picturesque village of Firbeck through pleasant South Yorkshire countryside.

Pub manager Beth Burns, who organised the event, said: “We thought that it would be a good idea to invite customers, in order to generate more interest. “It definitely worked, as 30 customers joined the 10 staff members on the walk. “We’d like to thank everyone who joined in or contributed to the charity.”

Pictured (left to right, back row) are shift leaders Oliver Potts and Luke McPhail, bar associate Alex Yorke, team leader Jess Harris and kitchen associate Jersey Chalack, with (front row) pub manager Beth Burns and duty manager Eleanor Hill.

The Sir William de Wessington (Washington) and The Job Bulman (Gosforth)



Two pub managers undertook a 10,000-foot skydive to raise £1,548.

Kelly Dunn, manager of The Sir William de Wessington (Washington), and Gemma Hutchinson, who manages The Job Bulman (Gosforth), jumped from an aircraft over nearby Peterlee.

Kelly said: “I am afraid of heights and was absolutely petrified, until I left the aircraft, then it was just amazing.

“I have been with the company, on and off, for 20 years and try to do something every year for the charity.”

Both women raised money through online websites and from staff and customer donations.

Kelly added: “Gemma and I are extremely grateful to everyone who donated.

“We have even signed up to do a 15,000-foot skydive in the summer.”

Pictured (left to right) are Gemma Hutchinson, skydive instructor Ally Tebbutt and Kelly Dunn.

The Cherry Tree (Huddersfield)



Staff at The Cherry Tree (Huddersfield) participated in a static bike ride to raise £84.

The event took place over four hours, with every team member taking part.

Shift manager Jordan Amey said: “It was hard work, but great fun.

“We would like to thank all of the customers who contributed on the day.”

Pictured (left to right) are shift leader Amy Norman and team leaders Jordan Aslam and Tyler Washby.

The Sussex (Rhyl)



A total of £153 was raised by staff at The Sussex (Rhyl) in a 235-mile static ‘Rhyl-to-London bike ride’.

Virtual progress was regularly updated on a blackboard, featuring a freehand sketch of England and Wales (pictured).

It took the team 11 hours and 15 minutes to reach the target, working in shifts, and they are claiming it as a record.

Shift leader Karen Walsh said: “We looked it up on Google, which said that it would take 20 hours to cycle the route.

“So, if that’s true, we have smashed that time.”

Karen is pictured (left) with pub manager Vicky Wagstaff and the blackboard, complete with all of the day’s updates chalked up.

Cabot Court Hotel (Weston-super-Mare)



Well done folks!
£440
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Floor associate Ron Sharland cycled for 11 hours over two days to help in raising £440.

Staff took it in turn on the bike, but Ron couldn't be kept away from the static bike, cycling with just the odd break, at Cabot Court Hotel (Weston-super-Mare).

Customers were also given a chance to win a three-course meal and a hamper in a raffle – and to try cakes made by shift manager Claire Bailey.

Claire said: "I am known for my cakes. People like my Biscoff cakes – always asking, when we stage events like this, whether they are going to be included."

"Ron was the star of the show. We had to make him take his breaks. He was very keen – and customers responded to that with their generous donations."

Ron (pictured) and the cycling team raised £330, with another £110 added by the raffle and cake sales.

The Cross Keys (Beverley)



Well done folks!
£130
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Staff and customers at The Cross Keys (Beverley) collected £130 with a St Patrick's Day charity fundraiser.

Organised by shift manager Jessica Stead, all the staff dressed in green for the event, the pub was decorated and the money was raised through Guinness hat sales and a raffle to win a gallon (nine pints) of the 'black stuff'.

Shift leader Niamh Barker won the best-dressed prize of a gift card.

Pictured are shift manager Faye Devereux (right), floor associate Ruby Dearlove and, behind the bar, shift manager Emily Tomkinson.

The Iron Duke (Wellington)



Well done folks!
£554
...raised for our
chosen charity.

A cornucopia of confectionery was on display at The Iron Duke (Wellington). Customers had a choice of buying cakes or trying to win chocolate through charity raffles and events.

Customers paid £1 for a cake or £2 for a cake and a coffee, with the event raising £554.62.

One of the most popular competitions was 'How many eggs in the jar?'

A hamper of tempting treats was raffled for £2 a ticket.

Shift leader Leona Jolly said: "We managed to put together a lot of events with many goodies on offer."

"It was great fun – and thanks to everyone who took part."

Pictured (left to right) are shift leader Leona Jolly, bar associate Kaitlyn Mason and shift leader Kirsty Allen, running the festive stall.

The William Adams (Gorleston-on-Sea)



Well done folks!
£120
...raised for our
chosen charity.

A birthday celebration at The William Adams (Gorleston-on-Sea) helped to raise charity funds.

The team at the pub held a bake sale and tombola to mark its fifth birthday.

Pub manager Daniel Bullion said: "We wanted to mark the occasion properly, as a lot of our customers were unaware that we had been open for five years."

"We decorated the pub with bunting and balloons and kitchen associate Tanya Tinker baked a special '5' cake, which was enjoyed by staff and customers."

A quiz, with birthday-themed questions, brought the birthday weekend fundraising total to £120.

The Picture House (Sutton-in-Ashfield)

Staff at The Picture House (Sutton-in-Ashfield) were surprised when a woman walked in the pub and handed over £200 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Lesley Hall lost her 25-year-old daughter Lisa Hall to cancer last summer, then her husband, Andy, late last year.

Following Andy's funeral, Lesley gave the charity donations which people had made in his name to kitchen manager Kate Nott at The Picture House.

Kate said: "It was such a lovely gesture. Lesley is a lovely lady and has had much heartache recently."

"She is a regular in the pub and used to do charity walks with her daughter."

Lesley added: "I just thought that the pub would know what to do with the money. It's so important to do our best to beat cancer."

Well done folks!
£200
...raised for our
chosen charity.

The Golden Beam (Headingley)



Well done folks!
£330
...raised for our chosen charity.

Pictured enjoying the games (left to right) are customers Jouier Angus, Luke Pearlman and Sonia Kitchen

A fabulous family fundraising fun-day raised £330, thanks to the generosity of the people of Leeds.

Pub manager Chris Donoghue and his team at The Golden Beam (Headingley) hosted the community fundraiser.

Chris's mum, Karen Iveson, produced homemade cakes and treats, while bar associates Amy Heald and Jess Jones also put their baking skills to the test for the bake sale.

Team leaders Meg Decaluwe and Molly Matthews hosted the event, with Molly also turning her hand to face-painting. Youngsters enjoyed the pizza-making workshop and games too.

Chris said: "A huge thankyou to all team members for all their efforts and to everyone for their support and generosity in helping to make the event such a success."



Team leader Meg Decaluwe, pub manager Chris Donoghue and team leader Molly Matthews (left to right)

Well done folks!
£125
...raised for our chosen charity.

The James Watt (Greenock)

An egg-and-spoon race featured among a day of Easter activities at The James Watt (Greenock).

Children joined in Easter arts, crafts and puzzles as parents looked on, also enjoying the cakes on sale.

Charity coffers were boosted further by a tombola featuring prizes such as cinema tickets, chocolates and Easter eggs.

The fun-day was organised by shift manager Julie Alexander and shift leader Amanda McLellan.

Julie said: "The children had a lot of fun – especially in the egg-and-spoon race. "We were delighted to raise £125 for our charity."

The Regal Moon (Rochdale)



Well done folks!
£200
...raised for our chosen charity.

Three staff members at The Regal Moon (Rochdale) collectively walked 1.4 million steps in a month to raise £200.

Shift manager Ashleigh Hodgkinson and shift leaders Jordan Brine (left) and Sonya O'Brien (right) each recorded their steps on mobile devices as they pursued their different paths towards smashing an initial target of 1,000,000 steps.

Ashleigh said: "All three of us were delighted to beat our target and raise money for our chosen charity, through kind donations by customers and staff.

"As well as walking in the pub itself, I walked everywhere with my son Finnley.

"Sonya's walking, as well as at work, was more in the countryside, while Jordan is a massive fitness freak and is always hiking, allowing him to rack up the steps."

The John Masefield (New Ferry)



Well done folks!
£413
...raised for our chosen charity.

An Easter eggstravaganza at The John Masefield (New Ferry) raised £413.41.

Adults and children joined in the fun which included a hook-the-duck competition, raffles, tombola, an Easter egg hunt and a cake and goodies sale (with bags of popcorn).

The main raffle prize was a 32" smart TV, while others included the cuddly toys (pictured).

Shift manager Alex Patten, who works alongside mum and team leader Lisa at the pub, said: "It was a great day – and we'd like to thank the community for the donations of raffle prizes and everyone who gave money or bought cakes or raffle tickets."

Pictured with pub manager Ashlie Ward (front) are (left to right) bar associates Luke Hayes and Paige Bradley, team leader Lisa Patten and shift leader Yolanda Lee.

The Sun (Redhill)



Well done folks!
£200
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Pub customer Richard Hall had his head and bushy beard shaved at The Sun (Redhill), raising £200.

Richard volunteered after he overheard pub staff brainstorming charity fundraising ideas.

The pub's shift manager, Katie Gent, said: "Richard heard me saying that I'd seen a head-shaving at a previous pub where I'd worked and he said 'I'll do it!'"

And it was Katie who did the deed, shaving Richard in front of generous customers and staff at the pub, who donated money as the spectacle unfolded.

The event was advertised in advance, with quality posters donated by local firm Geoff Neal Group.

Pictured below (left to right) are Katie Gent, shift manager Jessie Shepley, Richard Hall, pub manager Manny Ribeiro and Richard's friend Jackson Lyons.



The Society Room (Glasgow)



Well done folks!
£343
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Shift leader Ami Ker created a special Easter hamper to provide a tasty first prize in a charity raffle at The Society Room (Glasgow).

Ami (pictured) gathered chocolates, wine and Easter eggs from colleagues and customers.

The hamper and a giant Easter egg were raffled for £1 a ticket, raising £343.50.

Ami said: "I wanted to do something at the pub to mark Easter and to help our chosen charity at the same time. Everyone who donated prizes or bought tickets is a star – and we raised more than I expected."

The Arnold Machin (Newcastle-under-Lyme)



Well done folks!
£362
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Runners led by shift manager Mark Sinfield of The Arnold Machin (Newcastle-under-Lyme) took part in nearby Stoke's 'Arf Marathon.

The Wetherspoon team took on the 13-mile route, including the challenging Heartbreak Hill after 11.5 miles, raising £362.

The Arnold Machin's manager, Cassie Leech, said: "My whole team worked really hard to make this fundraising event a great success."

Pictured (back, left to right) are shift manager Mark Sinfield, pub manager of The Wheatshaf (Stoke-on-Trent) Tom Rudnicki, team leader Dillon Rao and bar associate Lenny Rankin. Pictured (front, left to right) are Arnold Machin bar associate Elisa Alt and kitchen associate Grace Appleton.

● **If you'd like to add to that total, please visit:**
justgiving.com/fundraising/mark-sinfield96

The Cross Keys (Beverley)



Well done folks!
£146
...raised for our
chosen charity.

A week of festive fun delighted customers at The Cross Keys (Beverley).

The Easter entertainment featured a treasure hunt, a raffle with a spectacular prize and an Easter badge sale, with staff dressing as Care Bears.

Cleaner and floor associate Judy Gordon (pictured) played a starring role, bringing smiles to kids' faces as she donned her Care Bear outfit to get them in the mood for the egg hunt.

And shift manager Jess Stead approached local businesses for raffle prizes and was rewarded with a family pass at a local trampolining park.

She also put together a hamperful of gifts from other businesses as another top raffle prize. The week-long celebration raised £146.75.

The Quay (Poole)



Well done folks!
£171
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Regular customer Max Fisher dressed in bunny ears, fishnet tights and a basque as he participated in the Easter pub quiz hosted by shift manager Steph Tobin at The Quay (Poole).

A stall, featuring raffle competitions for Easter eggs and a hamper, raised £171.52.

Steph, pictured with Max, said: "We would like to thank Max for making such a great effort and also everyone who joined in and helped us to celebrate and raise money at the same time."

The Dee Hotel (West Kirby)



Well done folks!
£120
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Brewer Theakston's provided the Crowning Glory for a coronation ale festival at The Dee Hotel (West Kirby).

Crowning Glory is a specially brewed 4.2% ABV ale and was enjoyed by customers during a four-day festival at the pub, alongside Brains The Rev James Original, Greene King Abbot Reserve, JW Lees Gold and Titanic Plum Porter.

A 'Best of British' charity raffle featured prizes from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, including Bushmills Irish whiskey, bottled English beers, bottled Irn-Bru from Scotland and a large cuddly Welsh dragon.

The raffle raised £120.

Pub manager Andy Swords said: "Real ale is very popular with customers – and we wanted to showcase that during the coronation weekend."

Pictured are bar associates Freya Roberts (left) and Remy Benson.

The Railway Hotel (Lytham St Annes)



Well done folks!
£864
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Pub manager Becki White raised £864 by running 100 miles in a month.

Becki, who works at The Railway Hotel (Lytham St Annes), ticked off the miles every day by running in the local area.

She said: "I didn't have a target of running to a particular destination – I just ran everywhere I went for a month!"

In the end, she comfortably crossed the finish line.

She also thanked her team, who backed her fundraising efforts with regular collection buckets in the pub.

Becki has also completed a 5km swim challenge and will also be participating in a 10km run for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The Guildhall & Linen Exchange (Dunfermline)



Well done folks!
£1,177
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Pub regular Kandy Norris arrived at The Guildhall & Linen Exchange (Dunfermline) with £152 in funeral donations, following the death of her partner and fellow customer Graeme Leslie (pictured in photo frame).

Kandy wanted the money to go to a good cause and was aware that pub staff had recently ascended Ben Nevis to raise money for their chosen charity.

Kandy said: "Donating the money was what Graeme would have wanted."

The climb was led by pub manager Stephen Nesbitt, who said: "This was very generous of Kandy. Graeme was very well liked here – and we were all very sorry to hear of his passing."

Stephen (pictured with Kandy) and the team raised £1,177 in sponsorship donations for reaching the famous 4,411-foot summit. Shift leader Lewis Hempseed also completed the hike.

The Quay (Poole)



Well done folks!
£520
...raised for our
chosen charity.

Lego enthusiast and pub manager Charlee Blanchard staged a charity day at The Quay (Poole), during which the iconic toy building blocks took centre stage.

Fellow enthusiast Richard Cutts, a customer at the pub, added his experience and knowledge to the day, which featured a creativity competition across three junior age groups, as well as adults.

Second-hand Lego figurines and sets were on sale during the event, adding to the charity coffers.

Charlee said: "I'm a huge Lego fan. Richard and I talk about our love of Lego in the pub."

"I thought that it would be a fun idea to arrange a Lego event in the pub and am delighted that it proved so popular."

The day, which also included a bake sale and a raffle with Lego prizes, raised £520.01.

Pictured (back, left to right) are Richard Cutts, kitchen manager Emma Cox, pub manager Charlee Blanchard, kitchen shift leader Rob Hookway, team leader Taylor Jenison. Pictured (front, left to right) are customer Kieran Moore and shift manager Steph Tobin.

WELL-TRAVELLED MICHAEL TURNS PINTS INTO POEMS

Wetherspoon customer and poet Michael F Jones celebrated his 80th birthday in February 2023.

Born in 1943, in Hornsey, north London, Michael was a long-time regular at The Toll Gate (Hornsey) (now closed) and The Alfred Herring (Palmers Green), where he is pictured – and has often been seen writing some of his poetry.

Michael, who returned to London in 2015 after spells in Hong Kong and Egypt working with the British Council, has always been a keen writer, with a love of language.

He said: “I used to write a lot in my teens and completed two novels, as well as a few plays, as I was very involved with a drama society. “I enjoyed that thought-provoking and creative atmosphere.”

He added: “My writing was revived during my spell in Egypt (1986–2015), where I wrote and produced a couple of pantomimes, as well as being invited to pen a couple of educational children’s books.”

Since the end of 2022, Michael has been writing poetry and

enjoying a few drinks at the pub, while observing people and imagining the characters and their possible stories.

Michael has written ‘a collection of thoughts, emotions and observations’, entitled *The Darkness and the Light*, containing poems and photographs – a copy of which he kindly sent to Wetherspoon’s head office.

He said: “The booklet contains poems which were composed mainly in a Wetherspoon pub, primarily The Toll Gate and The Alfred Herring, so I thought it appropriate for Wetherspoon to have a copy.”

He concluded: “I now find it quite difficult to get about, which is isolating, so observing people and getting into poetry has been an escape for me.

“Friends have responded favourably to the booklet, so I’m now working on a second issue, which will probably be the last one.”

Among the poems penned at Wetherspoon are:



J Alfred Prufrock revisited

Across the bar I see you
at your table, on your chair
with your beer to hand,
and wonder at what you stare.

Are you with us, here, today
or are you, in your mind, far away
in past, present or ahead?
Nothing in your face can be read.

Should I speak to say ‘Hello’
or would that interrupt the flow
of whatever hope or dream or reminisce
you have of some deep, yearning wish?

Or is it anguished regret you mourn
of things done or not which have born
this seed of apparent soulful isolation?
But, maybe, then I misrepresent what is,
in fact, self content.

I sit, contained within myself,
thoughts fleeting, seeking anchor,
which do not stay and do not focus
but enquire what might be between us.

Perhaps, at times, someone watches me
and thinks as I think of you,
but imposes upon my privacy
with ‘Cheer up. It can’t be as bad as that.’
And thinks that will engage me in a chat!

A winter of discontent

The bee’s knees?
More like the knees freeze
wiv no summa in this winta uv discontent!
Wot’s this fink called ‘eat’?

Just try tellin’ me freezin’ feet.
Like little blocks of ice they are
Wiv icy cocktail cubes fa toes
’nd as fa me knees
not ‘eaven nor goodness knows!
You’d fink a cup of rosey lea,
which you posh lot call tea,
would warm the cockles uv me ‘cart
ta get me off towa good start
ta dodder ta the shops fa fodder
bu’ that’s if me feet n knees agrees
ta work in unison wivout debate
’nd do their job:
co-ordinate

Wot age am I of Shakespeare’s seven?
I feel I must be at least eleven
so like n igloo I feel I’ve bin in
wiv not n ‘cartwarmin’ drop uv gin.
I shoulda bin n ‘edgehog or tortoise
’nd tucked meself ’til me tummy aches
’nd waited, cosy, ’til spring breaks.
For sure, I need a Frankenstein
wiv ‘is electricity n lightnin’ bolts
ta gi’me life’s revitalising jolts!
Dja fink if I agreed a pay meter
’nd stopped bein’ smart
so bailiffs inta me ‘ome
didn’t ‘ave ta crash
I’d get n ‘igh powered Frankenstein
direct from British Gas?

(The poem relates to winter 2022/23, when energy charges were so high that gas/electricity suppliers feared that households would default on paying those bills assessed by a smart meter, so they engaged bailiffs to enter homes to replace smart meters with prepayment meters – which caused an outcry.)



ROCHESTER CASTLE REGULARS CELEBRATE PUB'S 40 YEARS



Staff and customers at The Rochester Castle (Stoke Newington) are pictured celebrating four decades since the north London pub first opened its doors to Wetherspoon's customers.

Staff decorated the pub with balloons and banners, and regulars enjoyed a birthday cake to mark the occasion.

The pub first opened on 1 May 1983, the same day as founder and chairman Tim Martin sold his first pub (named Wetherspoons) in Muswell Hill, also in north London, which he'd originally bought in 1979.

Formerly known as The Tanners Hall, The Rochester Castle was one of seven Wetherspoon pubs at the time and is now the company's oldest.

The pub was built originally in 1801 by Richard Payne, from Rochester – hence its name.

It replaced an earlier pub on the site, called The Green Dragon, known to have been in existence in 1702.

Historic England lists the current building as a three-storey, plus attic, premises (grade II), 1892–93 by architects Messrs Crickmay and Sons.

Its history notes reveal: 'This is a characteristic and exuberantly decorated pub from the height of the 'gin palace' phase of pub-building. Stylistically, it looked to the early 17th century for inspiration.'

• 'It has undergone considerable alteration, yet remains a fine example of the type, with unusual tiled decoration.'

• 'The architects, Messrs Crickmay and Sons, were specialists in the field.'

• 'Permission to erect the pub, on behalf of a Mr Heaven, was sought from the London County Council in November 1892.'

• The British History website records that a social club met at The Rochester Castle in 1839; during 1840–66, it was the meeting place of the True Brothers of Stoke Newington and Hackney Improved Birmingham Benefit Society.

• During 1852–68, the Ancient Order of Foresters used it as its base and, in 1861, so did the Combined Friends of Stoke Newington Improved Working Man's Friend Benefit Society.

• Before Wetherspoon's arrival with its no-music policy, more recent history recalls the venue, during the 1970s and early 80s, being the place to catch up-and-coming bands of the time.

• The Jam, with front-man Paul Weller, was among the acts playing at The Rochester Castle, as well as Gary Numan, Bad Manners, The Police, XTC, Dire Straits and Adam and the Ants.

• The pub's manager, Nathan Flynn, said: "The Rochester Castle has been a much-loved community pub for more than four decades now, attracting local residents, workers and visitors alike from the vibrant and diverse local area and beyond."

WIN A £30

WETHERSPOON GIFT CARD

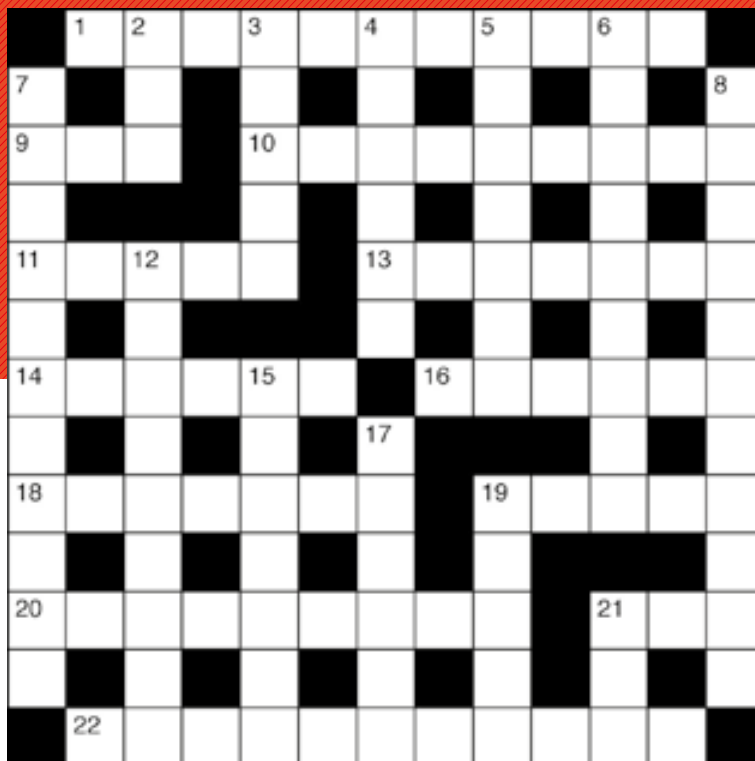
The first four correctly completed crosswords to be pulled out of the hat will win each of those entrants a Wetherspoon gift card worth £30.

Closing date for entries: 1 November 2023

Post to:

Wetherspoon News Magazine Competition
PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

4 x £30 PRIZES TO BE WON



Across

- 1. 1966 Formula One world motor racing champion (4,7)
- 9. Broad sash tied in a bow at the back worn as part of the Japanese national costume (3)
- 10. Port in Maryland, U.S.A., on Chesapeake Bay (9)
- 11. Robert, Austrian author of unfinished novel The Man Without Qualities (5)
- 13. West African republic whose capital is Abuja (7)

- 14. Byron, 1939 U.S. Open golf champion (6)
- 16. Stirrup-shaped bone in the middle ear of mammals (6)
- 18 & 21Ac. 1984 novel by Anita Brookner set in Switzerland (5,2,3)
- 19. "La ---", 1983 novel by Elmore Leonard (5)
- 20. Large light triangular racing sail (9)
- 21. See 18 Across.
- 22. French rugby union forward who won 63 caps from 1964-72 (6,5)

Down

- 2. "Bel ---", novel by Guy de Maupassant (3)
- 3. Capital of Afghanistan (5)
- 4. Greatest of the legendary paladins who died in battle at Roncesvalles (6)
- 5. Irish abbess; a patron saint of Ireland whose feast day is February 1st (7)
- 6. The 14 books included as an appendix to the Old Testament in the Vulgate version of the Bible (9)
- 7. Mervyn Peake novel, centrepiece of a famous trilogy (11)

- 8. The period of European history marking the waning of the Middle Ages (11)
- 12. Character played by Jane Seymour in the Bond film Live and Let Die (9)
- 15. Lover of Rosalind in Shakespeare's As You Like It (7)
- 17. Long-barrelled shoulder gun used by infantry soldiers (6)
- 19. Viktor, 1932-35 world men's table tennis champion (5)
- 21. In cricket, the side of the field to the left of and behind a right-handed batsman as he faces the bowler (3)

SOLUTIONS (Spring/summer 2023 issue)

- Across:** 1 Swan; 3 The Seven; 9 Magenta; 10 Owlet; 11 Payne Stewart; 13 Dubcek; 15 Pineal; 17 Meadow fescue; 20 Alien; 21 Ransome; 22 The Betsy; 23 Peel.
- Down:** 1 Sam Spade; 2 Angry; 4 Hearts; 5 Snow White and; 6 Valerie; 7 Nuts; 8 Independence; 12 Bluebell; 14 Beehive; 16 Dwarfs; 18 Close; 19 Watt.

The spring/summer 2023 crossword winners were:

★ AK, Winsford ★ SH, Braintree ★ KM, Hardwicke ★ IW, Taynult



Please complete the answers and your details, as shown, and send the completed page to:

Wetherspoon News Magazine Competition
PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

Your details:

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

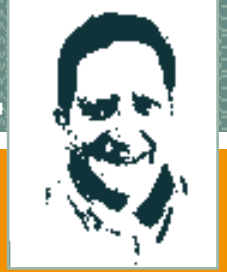
I am over 18 years (signature):

Age:

Year of birth:

Terms and conditions: The crossword is open to all UK residents over the age of 18, excluding employees of the promoter, their respective families and agents or anyone directly connected with this competition. Acceptance of the rules is a condition of entry. No purchase necessary. Entries must be received no later than 1/11/23. 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.

Promoter: J D Wetherspoon plc, Wetherspoon House, Central Park, Reeds Crescent, Watford, WD24 4QL



Nik Antona is national chairman of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

Tim says: “CAMRA has had a hugely beneficial influence on the ancient British and Irish institution of the pub. The ‘Summer of Pub’ initiative, outlined below by Nik Antona, is a good example of CAMRA’s positive and dynamic campaigning.

However, in the spirit of debate, I’m not convinced that using the planning system to stop the conversion of closed pubs to other uses is justified.

Most Wetherspoon pubs today are previously disused buildings, converted from other uses. We have often had hugely costly planning battles, sometimes taking years, to convert closed shops, for example, into pubs, on the basis that objectors and the government of the time didn’t want to lose shops. Now, the planning rules have been liberalised and it’s far easier, as you can see on most high streets, to convert shops to pubs and restaurants.

Architecturally interesting buildings can still be preserved by town planners by being ‘listed’. Otherwise, in my view, the conversion of shop to pub, and vice versa, should be fluid – in the best economic interests of the country.

As always, you, the reader, will ultimately decide who is right on this important issue.”

PUT A PUB AT THE CENTRE OF YOUR SUMMER PLANS

CAMRA’s Summer of Pub campaign is a reminder that pubs and clubs form an integral part of the communities which they serve, says CAMRA’s national chairman Nik Antona

In 2019, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) launched its first Summer of Pub campaign – a celebration to promote pub- and club-going, which we had hoped to take place every year.

Unfortunately, our plans were curtailed when the COVID-19 pandemic closed our beloved institutions and placed restrictions (on and off) on the trade for two years.

Last year, we were delighted to welcome the campaign back for the summer months... and this year is no different.

The announcement from NHS England that COVID-19, as a ‘national incident’, is over was brilliant news for all, yet its lasting effects on the beer, cider and pub trade are still being felt throughout the land.

Two and a half years of restrictions meant that many pubs, breweries and cider-makers were never able to bounce back, resulting in long-term closures and gaps in the community where businesses used to be.

EVENTS

This is why CAMRA uses the summer months to encourage all of our members and their pub-loving friends and family to organise events at their locals across the season.

The Summer of Pub campaign is a reminder to all that pubs and clubs are places of conviviality and an integral part of the communities which they serve.

From Newcastle to Lyme Regis, there are events being held up and down the land.

Whether it’s live music, mini cider festivals, pub quizzes or tap takeovers, events organised by our members bring an opportunity to try something new, encourage more punters through the door and help to keep these venues thriving, when support from the government leaves much to be desired.

THREATS

While we celebrate, it’s important to understand that threats to pubs come from all angles.

In 2017, CAMRA helped to win landmark planning protection for pubs in England, but, at the time of writing, this is under threat from a new government proposal which would give permitted development rights for vacant high-street pubs.

So-called ‘high-street rental auction’ proposals could see developers convert high-street pubs, with no way for communities to have their say.

These auctions are designed to bring disused commercial properties (including pubs) back into use, by letting councils auction off a lease of between one and five years.

These leases would allow pubs to be converted to other uses, divided into multiple units or gutted of their bars, cellars and other integral features.

Concerningly, there would be no obligation to reinstate the pub’s fittings at the end of the

lease – in fact, developers would be able to apply to make the conversion permanent.

URBAN

This would be a significant loss of protection for urban pubs, and CAMRA is calling for the government to think again about these plans.

I wrote to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Dehenna Davison, expressing our concerns about the temporary permitted development rights included in these proposals.

Time and time again, we have witnessed that, often, once a pub is converted to another use, it’s gone for good.

As always, our members are answering the call to e-mail their MPs, making sure that their voices are heard, and that high-street rental auctions are used to support and rejuvenate urban pubs, rather than turn overvalued community venues to the highest bidder.

So, what can you do to help?

First, ensure that you join CAMRA to help us as we lobby the four nations’ governments to deliver sound policies which actually support, rather than hinder, the beer and pub trade.

Second, you can continue to support your local with your patronage to help it to thrive throughout 2023... and beyond.

● **To join CAMRA, visit: join.camra.org.uk**

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01302 732123

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01255 245400

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WR1 3LL
01905 617578



The Saxon Crown (Corby, England)



Keavan's Port Hotel (Dublin, Ireland)



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Broughty Ferry

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