

# Danny Bevvu

Tyneside & Northumberland CAMRA

FREE

Issue 264 • Summer 2025



## WYLAM BREWERY AT 25



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Welcome to the summer edition of *CannyBevvy* — and what a packed one it is.

This issue celebrates not just great beer, but the people, pubs, and places that make our region so special. From the 25th anniversary of Wylam Brewery to new openings in North Shields and Newcastle's historic Blackfriars, there's plenty to raise a glass to. We've also welcomed new teams at Beer Street and celebrated the success of the Newcastle Beer & Cider Festival, where bierkeller benches made their debut, the hats were wilder than ever, and over £1,500 was raised for local charities — hats off, literally, to everyone involved.

But it's also an issue where we've had to say farewell to some much-loved venues. Wor Local in Prudhoe poured its final pint just a day after winning an award — a bittersweet reminder of the pressures pubs are under. Our Chairman reflects on this in his column, and across our pub news pages, we've charted closures, campaigns, and conversations with MPs as we continue to fight for the future of the trade.

There's also room for hope. New faces, fresh ideas, and inventive brewing are keeping things alive — whether it's Belgian-style ales from a former friary kitchen, or CAMRA members blending freemasonry and real ale in unexpected ways.

So whether you're reading this in your local, on a train to a beer fest, or at home with a bottle from the fridge — we hope you enjoy what we've pulled together. And more importantly, we hope you're inspired to get out there, try something new, and keep supporting the pubs, breweries, and people who make it all happen.

Cheers! Anthony McMullen - Editor, *Canny Bevvy*

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# CannyBevvy Contacts

**Editor: Anthony McMullen**

[editor@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:editor@cannybevvy.co.uk)

**Advertising: David Russell**

[advertising@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:advertising@cannybevvy.co.uk)

**Distribution: Adrian Gray**

[distribution@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:distribution@cannybevvy.co.uk)

## Branch Contacts

**Chairman, Press & Publicity:**

**Paul Hillhouse**

[chairman@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:chairman@cannybevvy.co.uk)

[press@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:press@cannybevvy.co.uk)

**Vice Chair & Secretary: Hattie Rowling**

[vicechair@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:vicechair@cannybevvy.co.uk)

[secretary@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:secretary@cannybevvy.co.uk)

**Social Secretary: David Russell**

[socialsecretary@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:socialsecretary@cannybevvy.co.uk)

**Social Media: David Wells**

[socialmedia@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:socialmedia@cannybevvy.co.uk)

For full list of contacts see website.

**Website:** [www.cannybevvy.co.uk](http://www.cannybevvy.co.uk)

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## Branch Diary

### Thursday 5th June

Branch Visit to Stockton

Join us for a day exploring Stockton's pubs  
— travel by train.

### Tuesday 10th June

Branch Meeting – Tynemouth Social Club

Come along, have your say, and enjoy a pint  
with fellow members.

### Thursday 19th June

Whitley Wander: a leisurely evening tour  
of Whitley Bay's finest boozers.

### Saturday 28th June

Festival Coach Trip – Knaresborough

Coach trip for those who volunteered at  
the Newcastle Beer & Cider Festival.

### Wednesday 9th July

Branch Meeting

Venue to be confirmed – check online for updates.

### Thursday 31st July

Outing – Grey Horse, Consett Beer Festival

Sample the festival line-up at this County  
Durham favourite.

### Saturday 16th August

CAMRAmble – Details TBC

A mystery ramble with beers en route.

For info: [dhaddon@hotmail.com](mailto:dhaddon@hotmail.com)

All events are subject to change.

Please check the *Canny Bevvy* website

[www.cannybevvy.co.uk](http://www.cannybevvy.co.uk) for up to date details.

## Enter our Cover Shot Competition!

We are looking for budding photographers  
to submit their photographs for our front  
cover, featuring pubs or the brewing industry  
of Tyneside and Northumberland.

Please contact [editor@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:editor@cannybevvy.co.uk) for more details



# Chairman's Comments – Time to Back Our Locals More Than Ever

In just the first three months of 2025, a shocking **303 pubs** across England, Scotland and Wales have closed, with **46 more lost in Tyneside and Northumberland alone**, as premises are converted to other uses. Here in our own patch, the **Hard Rock Café** and **The Earl of Pitt Street** both closed their doors in March. They were followed soon after by the closure of **Prohibition Bar**, and the **Horticulture group** – including Horticulture Coastal in Whitley Bay, Horticulture Newcastle, and El Guapo – all of which shut within a single week in April. This followed the shock announcement that **Wor Local in Prudhoe**, our **Northumberland Cider Pub of the Year**, had also closed its doors for good. As we move into a new financial year, pubs face further pressures with **increases to National Insurance and the Living Wage**, alongside a **reduction in Business Rates Relief**. It seems the squeeze on the industry is only tightening.

I've spoken many times in these pages about the **perfect storm facing our pubs** – crippling energy bills for businesses, combined with the cost-of-living crisis meaning we all have less to spend and, understandably, fewer trips to the local. Sadly, these challenges aren't going away any time soon, and with every new burden placed on the trade, more pubs are reaching breaking point.

We mustn't underestimate the impact these closures have on our communities. With libraries and other community spaces cut back over years of austerity, pubs are often **the last remaining social hub in many towns and villages**. They aren't just places for a pint; they are **employers, supporters of local producers, and contributors to our local economy**.

I recently spoke to **BBC Look North** about the closure of the **Community Ownership Fund**, a scheme that had offered a glimmer of hope to communities trying to save their pubs. While the Government has promised a **Community Right to Buy** scheme, it is unclear when this will be introduced – and, crucially, whether it will come with any meaningful financial support. Without funding, communities may have the right to buy their local pub, but **raising the money in time is almost impossible**, leaving many treasured locals at risk of being lost forever.

Despite all the doom and gloom, I want to end on a more positive note. Over the past few months, members of the **Tyneside and Northumberland CAMRA Branch** have met with several **local MPs**, pushing for **extra support for pubs** and for **changes to the tied pub system** to give **smaller independent breweries** better access to the market. These conversations have been encouraging, with every MP we met expressing their **willingness to back our campaigns**. We're hopeful that the **upcoming Government review of The Pubs Code** will result in positive changes for both breweries and tenants.

Let's hope that this support translates into **real action to help slow the rate of closures**.

But, as I always say, **the best thing we can all do right now is simple — Keep using your local.**

Cheers,  
Paul Hillhouse  
[chairman@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:chairman@cannybevvy.co.uk)



# Cheers to 47 Years – Newcastle B



The 47th Newcastle Beer & Cider Festival brought the Northumbria Students' Union to life once again this April, with over 100 real ales and 40 ciders, a packed entertainment programme, and some standout moments that'll be talked about until next year's first pint is poured.

Beer lovers from near and far filled the hall — including regulars from **Germany** and even **Texas**, both of whom made their annual pilgrimage to sample one of the **most diverse selections of beer in the UK**.

## Festival Favourites & Award Winners

Among the many highlights was **Thirsty Moose's Cocoa Swirl**, which took the prize for **Best Chocolate Beer** — a decadent drop that proved popular with judges and drinkers alike.

**Hadrian Border's "Things Can Only Get Bitter"** also grabbed attention with a name and flavour combo that perfectly captured the spirit of the event.



The **local festival brew challenge** pushed North East breweries to bring their best, with support from favourites like **Wylam**, **Hexhamshire**, and **Firebrick**, not to mention the **Allendale x Suncreek (Florida)** collaboration that added an international twist.

## Bierkeller Benches & Brilliant Music

This year saw the introduction of **bierkeller-style benches** in the main hall — a big hit with festivalgoers, and now set to become a permanent feature. They brought a proper sociable feel to the space, making it easier for guests to sit, share, and swap beer recommendations.

The **Microbus Stage** in Red's Bar and the **Main Stage** on Saturday delivered a fantastic soundtrack across three days. From **Bradley Thompson's** singalong sets to **Blistered Molly's** electrifying rock covers, the music kept the atmosphere buzzing from start to finish.



# Beer & Cider Festival 2025 Wrap-Up



And for a touch of tradition, the ever-welcome **Monkseaton Morris** returned, sword-dancing their way into the hearts of the crowd once again.

## Hats Off – And a Huge Thank You

**Thursday's Hat Day** once again brought colour, creativity, and a proper bit of fun to the festival. Over **250 attendees** embraced the theme, donning everything from classic flat caps to full-on fancy dress. A definite highlight this year was a flurry of **homemade paper mitres** — affectionately dubbed Bishop's Hats — which turned heads and raised plenty of smiles. (See the photo spread for proof!)

As ever, our **festival charities** played a big part in the weekend. Volunteers from **Andy's Man Club**, **Women's Cancer Detection Service**, and **St Oswald's Hospice** were on hand throughout the event, engaging with guests and spreading awareness of their incredible work. Thanks to the generosity of festivalgoers, over **£1,500** was raised to support their causes.



A huge thank you to everyone who contributed — whether by sporting a silly hat, buying a charity raffle ticket, or simply popping a few quid in a collection bucket. You made a real difference.

## Behind the Bar – Volunteers Make It Happen

As ever, the festival wouldn't be possible without its team of dedicated **volunteers**. From conditioning casks to manning the bars and packing away the last tables, their efforts ensure every pint is served in perfect condition.

## Looking Ahead

We're already counting down to the **48th Newcastle Beer & Cider Festival**, set to take place from **15th–18th April 2026**.

If you'd like to be involved — whether as a **volunteer, brewer, performer, or sponsor** — drop us a line: [festivalorganiser@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:festivalorganiser@cannybevvy.co.uk)

Until then, thanks to everyone who joined us — and here's to the next round.





## SIBA Judging Takes Place at Gateshead Beer & Music Festival

The Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) hosted its Indie Beer Awards North East at the Gateshead Beer and Music Festival earlier this month, with the North East branch proudly represented by Jan Anderson among the judging panel.

The awards, held at Gateshead Rugby Football Club, brought together beer sommeliers, master brewers, and industry experts to assess the region's finest independent beers. Formerly known as the SIBA Independent Beer Awards, the competition has been rebranded to align with the Indie Beer campaign, which celebrates the creativity and quality of independent breweries across the UK.

*"Judging beers in a huge range of styles, the Indie Beer Awards really do show the very best the North East has to offer. The quality across the board was incredibly high this year. Huge congratulations to all the category winners, and in particular to Harrogate Brewing Co., who took home the two top awards of the day – a huge achievement in a very tough field."*

— Neil Walker, Indie Beer Awards Organiser

## How Judging Works

Each beer is judged individually on its own merits — not against others in the same flight — and assessed on aroma, flavour, presentation (including colour, head retention, and carbonation), overall quality, and saleability (not to be confused with sessionability).

Beers scoring highly are awarded medals as follows:-

- **Gold (90+ points)** – Exceptional; seamless structure and individual character. A beer you'd highly recommend and drink again.
- **Silver (80–89 points)** – Excellent; well-balanced with superb aroma and taste. A beer you'd definitely return to.
- **Bronze (70–79 points)** – Good; enjoyable and recommendable, but just short of the next level.

## North East Brewers Among the Winners

Once again, North East breweries made a strong showing. Notable results included a **Bronze overall Champion in Cask** for Hadrian Border's *Northumbrian Gold*.







## WINNERS

### Gold Awards

- **Firebrick Brewery**  
– *Propa Belta* (Cask 4.4%–5.5%)
- **Almasty Brewing Company**  
– *Believe* (Cask IPA over 5.6%)

### Silver Awards

- **Cask Bitter up to 4.4%**  
Allendale Brewery – *Wagtail*  
Hadrian Border – *Tyneside Blonde*  
First & Last – *Equinox*
- **Cask Bitter 4.5%–6.4%**  
Hadrian Border – *Northumbrian Gold*
- **Cask Speciality Light**  
Twice Brewed Brew House  
– *Number of the Yeast*
- **Cask Over 6.5%**  
Twice Brewed Brew House  
– *Main Offender*

### Bronze Awards

- **Cask Pale up to 4.4%**  
Allendale Brewery – *Pennine Pale*  
Firebrick Brewery – *Trade Star*
- **Cask IPA over 5.6%**  
Firebrick Brewery – *Pacific*  
Thirsty Moose Brewing Co.  
– *Oot n' Aboot*
- **Cask Speciality Dark**  
Thirsty Moose Brewing Co.  
– *Canny Canuck*  
Twice Brewed Brew House  
– *Year in Hibernation*
- **Cask Dark Beer 4.5%–6.4%**  
Twice Brewed Brew House  
– *Steel Rigg*
- **Cask Speciality Light**  
Allendale Brewery – *Adder*



### What's Next?

Gold winners from the North East will now progress to the National Finals in Liverpool, taking place in March 2026, where they will go head-to-head with the best beers from across the UK.

# Blackfriars Visit



**In the heart of Newcastle we find one of the city's oldest buildings dating back to 1239, housing Newcastle's newest brewery, where monks first brewed beers hundreds of years ago.**

**Blackfriars** is a 13th-century former Dominican friary and is steeped in medieval history overtime the site had become derelict, during the 1970s and 80s the buildings were restored. In 2002 the current owners opened a restaurant in what's believed to be the oldest dining room in the UK.

Today's visit is about beer. In 2024 a decision was made to revive the brewing tradition by opening a microbrewery. A new 550 litre kit was bought, and brewing began in the former chapter house which long ago was a meeting place for the bakers and brewers.

Ben Hall is the head brewer, formerly a chef at Blackfriars restaurant, he has always been a keen home brewer, he stepped this up during Covid and is now a full time pro. A Frenchman educated in Belgium who grew up with monastic beers, it seems right he should be brewing in the former friary.

The core range consists of three keg beers, a Pale ale, a Pilsner and a 4.5% IPA, it's probable a porter will be added to the range very soon. All three are also available in bottles. Ben has recently brewed several Belgian style beers including a Triple and is very keen to brew other one off specials. Ben prefers to use traditional ingredients and has plans to use a heritage malt. The beers are currently brewed mainly for the restaurants at Blackfriars, Hinnies in Whitley Bay and Dobson & Parnell. They are also available in the Parlour bar at Blackfriars.

In the near future the plan is to widen the availability to a limited number of local outlets.



# PUB & BREWERY NEWS

In addition to the closures mentioned in the Chairmans Comments:-

**Northern Alchemy** ceased trading on **12th May**, drawing to a close 10 years of brewing. The branch extends heartfelt thanks to the team for a decade of excellent beers and creativity.

**The Wheatsheaf Inn**, Carlisle Street, Felling, has been listed for sale with an asking price of **£175,000**.

**The Bridgend Inn** in Ovingham has reopened with new owners following a full refurbishment. The venue is now food-led but welcomes drinkers, with **two real ales** on the bar.

**The Black & White Bull** has been taken over by the team behind **The Tanners Arms** (Ouseburn) and relaunched as **The Blue Star** — a nod to the historic **Newcastle Brewery** once nearby. The revamped venue aims to bring Tanners' beer and Scranners Arms food to the West End, with a casual sport-friendly feel due to its proximity to **St James' Park**. No cask beer at launch, but it's great to see the doors open again.



In **North Shields**, **The Salty Sea Dog** has been reborn as **Penelope O'Shea's Irish Tavern**, combining live music, sport on TV, cold pints, and interactive darts.

**New & Coming Soon**  
**Aperture Alehouse** is coming soon to **West Percy Street, North Shields**. The neighbourhood bar and bottle shop is the brainchild of **Ryan Simpson**, formerly of **The Town Mouse**, and will serve up craft beer, natural wine, local spirits, and more in a relaxed setting.

**Heineken** has announced a **£2.2 million investment** in its **Star Pubs** estate across the North East. This follows the successful reopening of **The Schooner** in **Amble**, which underwent a **£420,000 refurbishment**. In **Prudhoe**, the former **Mickley & Prudhoe Unionist Club** will soon reopen as the **West Road Tavern** — a **sports bar and grill** with a full internal renovation now approved.

## Planning Portal Round-Up

- A planning application has been submitted to convert the **Queen's Head**, 13–14 Albion Row, **Tynemouth**, into a **residential property with attached office space**.
- Change of use has been proposed for **16–18 Wretham Place**, Newcastle NE2 1XU, converting a former printer and hairdresser unit into a **micropub/wine bar**.
- At **Pacific House**, Newcastle, the application seeks to convert the basement into **student accommodation amenity space**, while the upper floors would become **nine flats**.
- In the **Ouseburn**, the revised **Malmo Quay redevelopment** has been submitted. While not directly affecting pubs, it may shift the area's dynamic as more residential buildings are introduced. Public comments close soon — now is the time to have your say.

## Thank You to Our Hosts

The branch would like to thank the following venues for their support and hospitality at recent meetings and events:

**The Victoria Comet**, Newcastle, **The Grey Horse**, Consett, **The Bridge Hotel**, Newcastle, **Blackfriars / St Dominic's Brewery**, Newcastle, **Red House**, Newcastle.

And a special thanks to **The Five Swans**, Newcastle — for hosting our Women in Beer themed tasting as part of the Wetherspoons Beer Festival.

If you have any **pub news to share**, please email: [chairman@cannybevvy.co.uk](mailto:chairman@cannybevvy.co.uk)



A much-loved Newcastle micropub has entered a new chapter, as **mother and son duo** Dawn and Elliot take over the running of **Beer Street**, nestled in the railway arches on **Forth Street** — just a stone's throw from Central Station.

Originally opened in 2018 as part of the **Wobbly Duck** family of pubs, Beer Street took its name from the iconic **Hogarth prints, Beer Street and Gin Lane**. The venue quickly earned its stripes, featuring in the **CAMRA Good Beer Guide** multiple times. It adapted well to the challenges of the pandemic, adding a **bottle shop** during COVID — two sizeable fridges remain in place today, offering customers the choice to **drink in or take away**.

## A Fresh Start, Rooted in Community

We caught up with **Dawn and Elliot** just before the relaunch to hear what's in store.

Elliot, who brings **hospitality experience from the city's nightclub scene**, was keen to find a space of his own — ideally with a closing time before sunrise. When the opportunity came along, Dawn didn't hesitate to get involved.

*"We're really looking forward to welcoming back the regulars," says Elliot. "It's about taking the best of what Beer Street already offered and building on that."*

## A Showcase of Choice

The revamped Beer Street will feature a **rotating line-up of beers across a wide range of styles**, with an opening selection that sets the tone:

- **Brass Castle – Peach Blonde**
- **Brew York – Tonkoko (on cask)**
- **Mauldons – Best Bitter**
- **Vault City – Sour and Tropical IPAs**
- **Stannary – Tokyo Dawn Wheat Beer**
- **Tartarus – Belgian Quad (on keg)**

And if that wasn't enough, **two well-stocked fridges** offer a take-home or on-site selection featuring **local stars** like **Thirsty Moose, Full Circle, and Firebrick**.

Notably, **you won't find any macro lagers on tap** — the team are proudly independent. Instead, they offer an **artisanal Pilsner from Wild Craft Brewing**.

## Events, Atmosphere, and a Shy Bar Dog

Plans are already underway to expand Beer Street's role as a **community space**, with **quiz nights, board games, spoken word sessions, and early openings on match days**. Acoustic music nights may also be in the pipeline. There's also talk of **collaboration with nearby live music venue The Boilershop**, offering the perfect spot for **pre-gig drinks**.

The pub remains **dog-friendly**, though regulars should be gentle with **Geoffrey the bar dog**, who's known to be a bit shy — he prefers quieter shifts.

## When to Visit

Opening Hours:

- **Monday–Thursday: 4pm – 11pm**
- **Friday–Sunday: 12 noon – 11pm**

Whether you're a long-time fan or a first-time visitor, Beer Street promises a warm welcome, a proper pint, and a community spirit as refreshing as the beer on offer.





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**8th, 9th, 10th August 2025**

## TWICE BREWED INN



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chat with the brew team. Plus live music  
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# Wylam Brewery at 25: A Story



As Wylam Brewery marks its 25th anniversary, it's worth reflecting on the remarkable journey from a small farm-based setup to one of the region's most recognised names in modern brewing.

Founded in 2000 by **John Boyle** and **Robin Leighton**, Wylam began with Robin's home-brewed recipes and full-mash brewing techniques. Unable to find a site in the village of Wylam itself, they installed a 4½-barrel kit in an outbuilding at **South Houghton Farm in Heddon on the Wall**. Their first brew, *Landlord's Choice*, was poured at The Boathouse in Wylam — their local.

Early on, they also brewed Gold Tankard (4%), a celebration ale honouring local beer writer **Alastair Gilmour**, who had just been named Beer Writer of the Year by the British Guild of Beer Writers. Fittingly, it used all "gold" themed ingredients: **Golden Promise malt**, **golden naked oats**, and **First Gold hops**.

Tragically, Robin passed away suddenly in 2005 aged just 63. John continued the brewery's operations with help from his son **Matt Boyle**, and in 2006 they installed a new **20-barrel plant**, tripling capacity. John himself passed away in March 2025 at the age of 80, leaving behind a lasting brewing legacy.

## Enter the Modern Era

In 2010, **Dave Stone** joined the team as a director. A seasoned figure in Newcastle's nightlife and pub scene, Dave had already stocked Wylam beers in his venues and saw potential in the brewery during the cresting **craft beer wave**.

It was in 2012 that Wylam brewed what would become a game-changer — the **supercharged IPA Jakehead**. With its bold hop character, Jakehead quickly became a fan favourite, winning **Britain's Top Beer** in a 2015 national poll. It remains a flagship brew to this day, appearing on keg and on rare occasions in cask for *National Jakehead Day*.

# of Passion, Progress and Pints

In 2016, Wylam took a bold step and moved into its now-iconic home: the **Palace of Arts in Exhibition Park**, Newcastle. Originally built for the **North East Coast Exhibition**, the building had more recently housed the Military Vehicle Museum before falling into disrepair. After a **multi-million-pound restoration**, it reopened as a **brewery, taproom, and event venue** — hosting beer festivals, music legends, and thousands of beer lovers.

## A New Chapter with Vaulkhard Group

In early 2024, Wylam Brewery became part of the **Vaulkhard Group**, a Newcastle hospitality powerhouse whose portfolio includes The Bridge Tavern, The Town Wall, and The Beehive. **Harry Vaulkhard** has expressed his commitment to preserving Wylam's heritage while keeping innovation at the heart of its future.

To mark the 25th anniversary, the brewery has rebrewed some classics — *Landlord's Choice*, *Red Kite*, and *Gold* — as a nod to the past and a celebration of how far Wylam has come.

The *CannyBevvy* team and the Tyneside & Northumberland branch raise a glass to **25 years of brewing brilliance**. Here's to the next chapter in Wylam's story — full of hops, heritage, and hearty cheers.

The **Palace of Arts** lives up to its name, hosting **music and food events throughout the year**. A wide range of artists have graced the stage, including **Pete Doherty, Hayseed Dixie, Sleeper, Martin Kemp, The Zutons, Gary Numan, Huey Morgan, Kula Shaker**, and local legends **Lindisfarne**.

Food events are a firm fixture too, with top vendors from **Newcastle and beyond** battling it out for culinary glory. *Lord of the Wings* returns in **September**, featuring **15 food traders** paired with Wylam's beers. Then it's *Argie Bhaji* in **November**, where some of the **best curries** go head-to-head for the title.

And don't miss **Wylam's 25th Birthday Celebration**, taking place on **21st and 22nd June**.



# Dates for your Diary

## Beer Festivals:

**12 -15 June**

Tynedale Beer & Cider Festival

**5-6 July**

Horncliffe Beer & Music Festival

**12-13 July**

Ryton RFC Beer Festival

**5-9 August**

Great British Beer Festival,  
Birmingham

**8-9 August**

Gosforth RFC Beer Festival

**9-10 August**

Twice Brewed Beer Festival

**16 August**

Stephenson Railway Museum Beer Festival

**22 August**

Stocksfield Cricket Club Beer Festival

**12-13 September**

Full Circle Fest

**If you would like to see your festival or event listed in the next issue please email us.**



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[harrogateandriponcamra.org.uk/ale-trail.html](http://harrogateandriponcamra.org.uk/ale-trail.html)

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Our fourth CAMRA ramble took us on an easy walk from Gateshead, along the south bank of the river Tyne, on to Bill Quay and then, by taking a hairpin turn, to Felling. It was a bright May lunchtime with a cooling breeze when 17 members (plus three canines) gathered at Microbus in anticipation of the six mile walk ahead with some enjoyable ales along the way.



**Microbus** is a quirky CAMRA award winning and 2025 *Good Beer Guide* listed micropub located in a railway archway directly opposite the entrance to High Level Bridge. It was opened in 2022 by a group of campervan enthusiasts and has six handpulls dispensing a selection of fine ales. The bar is campervan themed and the pub is adorned with paraphernalia reflecting the owners' enthusiasm for these vehicles. I enjoyed *Monk's Bar Pale* (4.7%), a very tasty citrus beer produced by a collaboration of *Brew York* and *Northern Monk* breweries.

At the stroke of one o'clock we set off on our walk, heading east we passed the famous SAGE Gateshead, which in 2023 announced its new name, The Glasshouse International Centre for Music. The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art loomed large ahead of us as we continued our ramble passing a hotel and fashionable apartments.

The landscape took on a very industrial look as we continued along South Shore Road but we were soon enjoying a pleasant stroll along riverside paths until we reached

**The Fog on the Tyne**, formerly known as The Schooner. Now refashioned, this welcoming smart and popular pub has a very large patio drinking area and offers a huge selection of meals with very amusing names. The "Tina Turner Burger" (simply the breast – chicken) and "Greece Is The Word" burger (Halloumi) being two of my favourites. All three recently installed handpulls were pouring *Firebrick - Moustache Foam Bitter* (4.6%), *Allendale - Golden Plover* (4.0%) and *Three Brothers - Joy Division Pale* (3.9%).



Thanking our host Fred and his team for their wonderful hospitality, a now larger group of 22 and canines set off on a 2.6 mile leg of our walk for the Bill Quay area of Gateshead. Enjoying mostly pathways along the river with some in woodlands we arrived at **The Cricketers** at Bill Quay. This stand alone, split-level, one-roomed traditional pub has a bar adorned with numerous old photos of the pub and of the area. A great community pub, it serves two regular beers from the Marstons portfolio. I enjoyed *Wainwright Golden* (4.1%) whilst sat in the beer garden, a sun trap on such a lovely day.



# teshead to Felling



Very conveniently and a mere 100 yards up the river bank is **The Wardley**, an imposing and attractive structure of red brick with stone surrounds to the openings and a quirky, decoratively detailed turret. Rebuilt 1897 this now lonely former hotel was once at the end of Ann Street – one of a number of terraces, now demolished, running down towards the river bank. On our visit the pub was very busy with live sport showing on television screens inside and a large number of drinkers sat in the large area of outside seating. This is where I thoroughly enjoyed one of my favourite beers; Yorkshire-brewed *Ossett - White Rat* (4.0%).

The final part of our walk was less than two miles and within 45 minutes we arrived at two very popular real ale pubs in Felling; **The Old Fox** and **The Wheat Sheaf**, both CAMRA 2025 *Good Beer Guide* listed. At the former and despite there being a good array of other beers available, I couldn't resist another pint of *Ossett - White Rat* (4.0%). This superb traditional street pub has a community vibe and is the sister pub of **The Wobbly Duck** in Eldon Square in Newcastle city centre.



Retracing our earlier steps on Carlisle Street we visited our last pub of the day; the aforementioned **Wheat Sheaf**. This Big Lamp Brewery owned pub with its green and yellow ceramic exterior has an interior listed by CAMRA of special national historic interest. Rebuilt in 1907, the original three-bay bar-back and panelled counter remain, as do a pair of massive urinals in the outside gents'. Two windows have delightfully etched wheat-sheaves on the side road frontage. As expected there were three ales available from *Big Lamp Brewery* but to our delight there was also *Ratmospheric* (4.2%) from *Rat Brewery*. I managed to get the last half pint of this after enjoying another favourite of mine; *Big Lamp – Prince Bishop Ale* (4.8%) which was of the highest quality.

Both pubs are within minutes' walk of Felling Metro station

I am anticipating that our next CAMRAmble in August will conclude at a local beer festival. Please keep a look out on the branch diary. I hope that you can join us for what will be yet another enjoyable day sampling some of the fine real ales whilst enjoying a pleasant walk in good company.

Tara-a-bit!

@MorpethWolf



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# Dipton Mill named Branch Pub of the Year



Each year, members of the **Tyneside & Northumberland CAMRA branch** cast their votes to crown their favourite pubs across the region. After a round of local winners is announced, those top pubs go head-to-head — judged by a team of volunteers on a wide range of criteria.

This year's competition was particularly close, with seven superb pubs visited and assessed on everything from **beer quality and condition**, to product knowledge, community focus, cleanliness, and of course, service and welcome.

## A Worthy Winner Near Hexham

Taking the crown as **Overall Branch Pub of the Year** is the **Dipton Mill Inn**, tucked away near Hexham. A true rural gem, this cosy, welcoming inn is known for its charm — complete with **two roaring real fires**, excellent **home-cooked food**, and top-notch **real ales brewed right in the pub's own garden** by the **Hexhamshire Brewery**.

Members of the branch visited the pub to present **Janet Brooker** with not one but two well-deserved certificates:

- **South-West Northumberland Pub of the Year**
- **Overall Branch Pub of the Year**

Congratulations go to **Janet, Mark, and the whole team** for their hard work and hospitality.

## On to the Regional Stage

As overall winner, **Dipton Mill Inn** now progresses to the next stage of the competition — representing the branch at **regional level** against other winners from **Durham, Darlington, Sunderland, and Cleveland**.

Best of luck — and if you haven't yet visited Dipton Mill Inn, now's the perfect excuse to enjoy a pint by the fire in one of the North East's finest pubs.



# Ale & Aprons: An Interview with Freemason Trevor McBean

We sat down with **Trevor McBean**, secretary of Saint Nicholas Lodge No. 1676, based in Newcastle, to chat about an unusual mix — **freemasonry and real ale**. As one of the UK's few Real/Craft Ale Lodges, Saint Nicholas offers a refreshingly different take on tradition.

## For those unfamiliar, how did you first get involved in freemasonry?

I was introduced by my dad, Donald McBean — a carpenter, scout leader, and surveyor. He'd been a member of Saint Nicholas Lodge for years, and when he became Master, he invited me to join. That was the start of a journey I see more like a career — full of progression, responsibility, and connections across the country and beyond.

## And where does beer come in?

We're the designated **Real/Craft Ale Lodge** for the Province of Northumberland. We hold our meetings at **The Gosforth Hotel** rather than a traditional masonic hall — it suits us perfectly. We're flexible, too. The lodge is portable, so we can set up anywhere in about 20 minutes. After the formalities, we collapse the kit and head to what we call the **festive board** — where the beer flows, stories are shared, and non-masons are welcome.

## How do freemasonry and beer complement each other?

They go hand in hand. Historically, masons met in pubs and guild halls — Newcastle's **Bigg Market** and **Groat Market** were key gathering spots. We carry on that tradition, combining masonic values with a love of the local pub scene. We organise **perambulations** — which is a posh way of saying pub crawls — open to masons, families and friends. It's all about community and camaraderie.

## Any myths to bust?

Quite a few! People don't always realise how much **charity work we do**. Freemasons raise **millions each year**, often quietly, supporting both local causes and national charities.

Another myth is that it's men-only — that's no longer true. There are **women-only lodges**, and anyone interested, regardless of gender, can get involved. Start with your local provincial office or visit our website.

## What's next for Saint Nicholas?

We want to **grow our membership** and welcome folks who love good beer and good company. We're looking at **collaborations with CAMRA** and making things more inclusive — with **family-friendly socials, food tours**, and support for **local breweries**.

## Sounds great. Where can people learn more?

The best place is the Provincial Grand Lodge of Northumberland's website: [northumberlandmasons.org.uk](http://northumberlandmasons.org.uk) Or get in touch and mention *The Canny Bevy* — we're happy to chat whether you're curious about freemasonry, beer, or both

## Any last words?

Freemasonry isn't for everyone, but for me, it's brought **friendship, growth, and service to the community**. And when you can do all that with a proper pint in hand? Even better.



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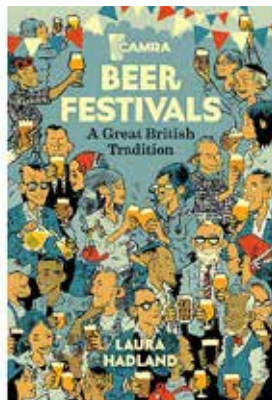
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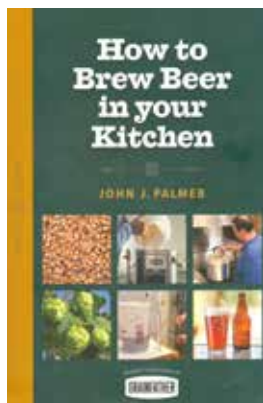
**Laura  
Hadland  
Paperback  
£15.99**

For more than 50 years beer and cider festivals have been the highlight of a CAMRA branch's year. Festivals attract a diverse range of drinkers, some festival goers are highly knowledgeable others are 'dragged' along by friends or work colleagues. Beer festivals have been a key part of a CAMRA branch's local campaigning and member recruitment.

Laura Hadland's book concentrates on CAMRA festivals, obviously, they are the best festivals for beer and cider drinkers. She covers the first festivals, national festivals and branch festivals. Independent festivals are included, but take up only a small amount of space in this well researched book.

Throughout the book Hadland weaves into the text the memories of people involved in festivals. Tyneside and Northumberland branch members Tony Brookes and Daisy Turnell are included, and former branch member Tony Millns (he was a member in the early days of our branch, sadly he died last December). There are memories and anecdotes from volunteers and festival goers.

It's a book which will primarily interest CAMRA members who have been involved in beer festivals and travelled around the country visiting festivals. It traces how beer festivals have evolved over the last 50+ years. I found the book to be interesting and entertaining.



**How to  
Brew Beer  
in Your  
Kitchen**

**John J.  
Palmer  
Paperback  
£17.99**

There are many home brew books that claim to be a simple and straight forward beginners guide to home brewing. Author John J. Palmer has written many home brewing books, one is a huge tome of 600 pages. However, this book is written with the first time brewer in mind. It approaches the subject from the view point of someone (as the title suggests) who has basic equipment and is brewing in their kitchen - the back cover blurb summarises '*...with a minimum of fuss and bother.*'

It has 30 recipes, many of them international beer styles - quite a few American, which is probably due to the author being American.

The book is illustrated in colour throughout, written in an accessible, easy-to-read style. Full of tips and advice, it is probably the best book for someone new to brewing - I am sure some experienced home brewers would also find it useful.



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Just 45 minutes on the train from Newcastle lies Berwick-upon-Tweed, England's most northerly town. So northerly that it has changed hands between England and Scotland multiple times in its history and even today the football team plays in the Scottish rather than the English leagues.

These days you won't find any marauding Scotsmen but you will find some quirky venues and some great real ale. In particular, Bridge Street is where you want to head to, home to **The Curfew, Atelier and Barrels Ale House**.



**The Curfew** is a micropub established in 2014 in a unit behind Bridge Street, accessed via an alley and courtyard to the side which provides an outside seating area perfect for al fresco pints in nice weather. Originally occupying just the rear unit, subsequent expansion has seen the pub take over the front unit as well creating significantly more space inside. At any one time The Curfew offers four cask ales sourced from local breweries and further afield, along with three traditional ciders, keg lines and a selection of European beers in bottles so it caters for pretty much all beer and cider tastes. On our visit last summer they were celebrating their 10th birthday with a beer festival. This meant as well as the usual four hand pulls, they had squeezed casks of beer into various nooks and crannies and had around 20 beers on offer.



If you get peckish on your visit, The Curfew goes beyond the usual selection of crisps and peanuts with a selection of cold pies available supplied by a local butcher. My particular favourite is the game pie as, in my opinion, nothing beats a great slab of game pie as an accompaniment to a pint (sorry vegetarians!). The venue is a favourite of branch members and was voted **North Northumberland Pub of the Year** by members in 2022 and 2021.



Lying over the road from The Curfew is **Atelier**. This café bar has three hand pulls with a changing selection of beers mostly sourced from Scotland and the North East of England. There are also a range of keg taps and European bottled beers to go with their extensive wine list. While the real ale is kept well and it's a pleasant place to pop in for a pint, Atelier's real highlight is their food. Booking is advised for an evening visit, however there is often a table available for walk-ins at other times of day and our visit saw us seated easily on a Friday afternoon.





Sourcing locally produced ingredients where possible, they offer a range of hot pies and gourmet sandwiches, however if you are too full for these after gorging on game pie at The Curfew, there are various charcuterie offerings available both as sharing platters and small plates. These pair surprisingly well with a nice ale and encompass some flavours a bit more out of the ordinary – on our visit the red wine and dark chocolate salami was going down a treat alongside a crisp pale ale.

Moving slightly down the road on the corner where Bridge Street meets Bridge End, you'll find **The Barrels Ale House** - a quirky pub with two small rooms and a basement bar which hosts regular gigs. There's barely a blank bit of wall in the pub with the room to the left of the bar jam packed with old photographs of the town, while the main room with the bar displays various items of music memorabilia.



A particular highlight is found at the left end of the bar where there sits what is either described as an old dentists chair or barbers chair depending on your point of view – though I'm not sure I'd trust those behind the bar to attend to either my teeth or my hair! They do, however, serve a good pint of real ale from the five hand pulls which feature a changing range of beers from both sides of the border.

So, if you fancy a day out this summer with cracking real ale and great grub then head for England's most northerly town and sample the delights that Berwick has to offer.



# Quiz!

1. Hadrian Border  
2. Thirsty Moose  
3. Rugby  
4. When hops are added at the end of fermentation  
5. Any source of fermentable sugar that's not malted grain  
6. Heaton Stanington  
7. Coronation Street  
8. Allendale and Emmerdale  
9. Twice Brewed  
10. Rigg and Furrow

Answers:

## Canny Bevv Quiz

by Martin Ellis

- 1 In this year's Newcastle Beer and Cider Festival Battle of the Beers competition, which brewery won the best bitter category with a beer named Things Can Only Get Bitter?
- 2 In this year's Newcastle Beer and Cider Festival Battle of the Beers competition, which brewery won the chocolate ale category with a beer named Cocoa Swirl?
- 3 Which sport is played at the venue for the Tynedale Beer Festival?
- 4 What is dry hopping?
- 5 What is an adjunct?
- 6 Which Newcastle football club is the current Tyneside Club of the Year?
- 7 The current *Good Beer Guide* is available with a choice of covers featuring soap opera pubs? Which pubs?
- 8 Which Tynedale brewery brews gluten free Hop On?
- 9 Which Tynedale brewery brews Legendary Sycamore Gap?
- 10 Which farm based brewery brews Run Hop Run?

## LAST ORDERS

If you have a complaint about any unfair trading practices, such as short measures, beer quality, overcharging, service or misleading product promotions, you should firstly inform the publican. If however you do not get a satisfactory response, then CAMRA recommends that you contact Citizens Advice. Contact details listed below.

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