



Darlington ^{FREE} Drinker 176

Newsletter of the Darlington Campaign for Real Ale

January - March 2010

Pub Beer Tie Challenged

THE CAMPAIGN for Real Ale, is mounting a legal challenge to a decision by the Office of Fair Trading to reject its complaint against anti-competitive practices in the pub industry.

CAMRA asked the OFT, in a so-called 'super-complaint' in July, to take action to address consumer detriment in the industry. The request was refused late last year.

CAMRA is entitled to appeal the decision to the Competition Appeals Tribunal and is now doing so.

The super-complaint centred on the need to reform beer tie arrangements to stop large companies exploiting ties that prevent their publicans from buying beer on the open market.

Wholesale prices paid by tied publicans are considerably higher - by about £20,000 a year for an average pub - than if the same beer was bought in a competitive market. The arrangement means that pub companies make inflated profits but consumers pay higher prices and experience a restricted range of products on the bar.

Mike Benner of CAMRA said: "We have taken the decision to appeal due to the inability of the OFT to deal with the problems affecting the UK pub sector.

"Our complaint was based on securing a fair deal for the pubgoer and building a sustainable future for Britain's pubs. We believe the OFT did not take reasonable

Spring Thing Festival 2010

Darlington Arts Centre, March 2010



*The 24th annual
festival of folk
song, music
and dance,
accompanied
Thursday 18th
- Saturday 20th
March by a festival
of great real ales*

Look forward to Spring with CAMRA's festival within the festival - over 50 real ales from some of Britain's best small breweries. **Entry to beer hall free.**

Folk festival organised by Arts Centre and Darlington Folk Club. Beers organised by Darlington CAMRA

steps to understand the sector and, in particular, why over 50 pubs are closing every week across the UK.

A former member of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, Bob Young, said the OFT's response was as inadequate as CAMRA's complaint was compelling. "The OFT has not seriously considered whether there is fair competition at a local level which ensures that consumers, or pub landlords for that matter, get the best deal. This is a critical shortcoming."



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The VAT Rascals

GOOD NEWS: the Government deferred the scheduled increase in VAT on alcohol, due to take place at midnight on New Year's Eve. The bad news: the deferral was for all of six hours.

Treasury minister Stephen Timms described the delay as "welcome news" for pubs and clubs. In truth, the announcement was confirmation of one of the sneakiest of stealth taxes.

Why, the uninformed might say: surely drinkers had the benefit of the temporary reduction in VAT on goods and services from 17.5% to 15% during 2009, and knew it was to revert on 1st January?

Well no actually. Unlike for most other items there was *no* recession relief for drinkers in 2009 - because the VAT reduction on alcohol was deliberately cancelled out by a simultaneous increase in duty designed to keep overall alcohol taxation as it was.

But now, while VAT has reverted to its



Darlington Drinker

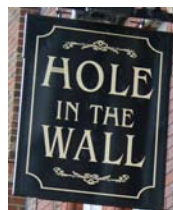
....Twenty-Five Years Ago

"A RECENT SURVEY of real ale availability in England places the Darlington area 92nd out of 94 areas surveyed.

The only two parts of the country with a lower proportion of pubs selling traditional beer are also in the North East - Cleveland and Northumberland.

A mere 18% of pubs around here offer their customers proper non-fizzy natural beer. The national average is 55%, and many areas top 80%. So much for the mythical prowess of North East beer. Come on John Smiths, Bass, Scottish & Newcastle and co. - give us more 'real' pubs."

Darlington Drinker 30, December 1984



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original rate, the duty increase has *not*. With the consequence that the VAT reversal represents a real increase in alcohol tax and hence price.

On average, a further 6p has been added to the price of a pint of beer - without the Government having the trouble of announcing the tax increase. The rise is forecast to help drive more people out of pubs, leading in time to even more pub closures. These are already running at a record fifty a week across Britain.

**LOBBYING by the whisky industry before Christmas 2008 led to the planned duty rise on spirits then being halved, from the same 8% being imposed on beer and cider to 4%..*

Continued preferential treatment towards spirits since the present Government came to power means that, while beer duty has increased by 52% since 1997, spirit duty has risen by just 19%.



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27th Cut Glass Accent

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3rd Krank It Up

10th Paul Rodgers Story

17th The Mass

24th 101

March

3rd The Voodoos

10th WitchKraft

17th Uncle Gilbert

24th Mojo Hand Band

31st Roadstunner

www.quakerhouse.net

Rural Refusals

HAMBLETON Council have refused plans to convert pubs in neighbouring North Yorkshire villages to residential use, saying that their loss would be harmful to the villages.

Stephen Greening at the **Grey Horse** at West Rounton had employed agents to argue his case. Part of it was that "the darts and dominos leagues have recently ended". Accounts showed that a 'relatively limited' profit had been made in 2007 and 2008.

The Council concluded that the proposal did not "demonstrate a lack of community need for the facility, that the facility is not viable in the applicant's or another's occupation, or that an alternative facility is provided".

Mike and Carol Oldroyd at the **Monks Table** at Welbury - known as the Duke of Wellington until the couple took it over and made it more 'restauranty' in 2007 - also employed agents.

The planners said their application had "failed to demonstrate that the business it is not financially viable for retention as a public house which is a valuable community facility or demonstrated that there is a lack of community need for the facility. There is inadequate justification to prove that the public house cannot be retained as a community asset for social activities within the village that improve community well-being".

The couple's case on financial viability cannot have been helped by the fact that they were trying to sell the property for £675,000 - 35% more than they had paid for it two and a half years earlier. During that period pub values nationally have plummeted.

Objections to the closure plans were

NEIGHBOURING Richmondshire Council, is also dealing with a planning application to axe a long-standing village pub.



Mr S Wilkinson, the owner of the **Bay Horse** at Middleton Tyas wants to convert and extend the building to create three dwellings within it, and also to build a fourth house on the car park. He cites the "failure of the public house" in his application.

Mr Wilkinson has owned Tyas's 'bottom house' since 1972. He ran it until he retired in 1999 and has leased it out to three successive sets of tenants since then. However, the electricity was cut off in October and the pub has been shut since.

Until its sudden closure the Bay Horse hosted meetings of the likes of Middleton Tyas gardening club, a didgeridoo club and was the favoured pub for the village cricket team. It also accommodated pub games such as pool, darts and dominos.

There is another pub in the village but the **Shoulder of Mutton** - the 'top house' - is more food-oriented and a hike uphill.

submitted by both sets of villagers and by Darlington CAMRA, within whose branch area they lie.

The chairman of Welbury parish council, Chris Brown, said about the Monks Table: "A village pub is the centre of village life with people meeting there. It's been closed for a few months now but there is a demand for a village pub which serves people food and drink. It used to support the local darts and domino teams but now apart from the church it's the only amenity left."



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Vernal Pleasures

THE SHORTEST day has been and gone, nights are shortening. To discerning Darlington drinkers and folk fans that points to one thing: Spring Thing 2010.

Yes, the vernal equinox approaches, and brings with it the town's 24th annual spring folk festival. With, as ever, Darlington Campaign for Real Ale's first beer festival of the year a big part of it.

A rearrangement of the bar counter and a switch to full use of handpulls will allow CAMRA's volunteer staff to serve up to fifty-six great British ales this time, together with eight farmhouse ciders and perries, within the columned confines of the Arts Centre's East Hall.

The beers will all be from independent craft breweries and will feature a number of festival specials. As ever, a wide range of styles will be present, from milds, bitters, stouts and strong beers to gold, wheat and fruit ales.

Also to hand will be a range of classic continental bottled beers, limited edition commemorative glasses and an unmissable CAMRA membership offer. (Who'll become Darlington CAMRA's 300th member?)

Very importantly, the beer festival hall will be open to all, not just visitors to the folk events - and will be free of admission charge.

Folk 'Things' get underway on 17th March, but the beer festival will start on Thursday 18th at 7pm and will continue over five sessions until the casks are drained on the evening of Saturday 20th.

**CAMRA members are needed to help at all sessions, and for the set-up on Monday 15th and dismantling on Sunday 21st. Please contact Paul on 07908 558307 as soon as possible with details of when you can work.*

Spring Thing Festival 2010

Darlington Arts Centre, March 2010



The 24th annual festival of folk song, music and dance. Accompanied Thursday 18th - Saturday 20th March by a festival of great real ales

Look forward to Spring with CAMRA's beer festival within the festival - more than 50 real ales from some of Britain's best independent breweries, plus farmhouse ciders and imported classic beers. Entry to beer hall **free** at all times

Beer Festival Hours:

Thursday 7-11.30pm
Friday 12-4 and 6-11.30pm
Saturday 11.30am-11.30pm

The full Spring Thing Folk Festival runs from Wed 17 to Sun 21 March and is organised by the Arts Centre and Darlington Folk Club. Programme of events available from the Arts Centre on (01325) 486555

Beer Festival organised by Darlington CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

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Subject to local licensing restrictions and availability at participating free houses.



Raby Query

THE LOCAL branch of the CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, has asked Darlington council what action it will take to enforce a legal agreement that requires that the Raby Hunt at Summerhouse be used as a public house.

The grade II listed old gem - a pub since at least 1856 - reopened under new owners as a 'restaurant with rooms' in October. The restaurant website says it was "formally a pub known as The Raby Hunt Inn".



The new use appears to be a clear breach of a section 106 planning agreement signed by the then-owners and the Council on 5 December 2003.

On its part, the Council agreed to grant planning permission for four dwellings to be developed within the Raby Hunt's grounds and in place of its lounge bar. In return, the owners covenanted "not to use the pub building or any part thereof otherwise than as a public house".

Section 106 agreements are used to make a proposed development, that would not be permitted otherwise, acceptable in planning terms.

A previous planning application had drawn fierce opposition and been refused by the Council in 2002 on the grounds that it would have "resulted in the permanent loss of the pub to the detriment of community life and the character of Summerhouse village". The modified application in 2003 was approved because the legal agreement supposedly ensured the retention of the pub.

The agreement was specifically binding

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on all subsequent owners, and was registered as a local land charge to ensure prospective buyers would be aware of that restriction.

The permitted new dwellings were built and sold, and the pub - reduced in size - was sold to a new owner. Landlady Pamela Askey eventually left because of ill health in August 2008.

The present owners, a Mr and Mrs Close, submitted plans for minor physical changes in May 2009 but there was no indication at the time of a change of use.

DARLINGTON RUGBY CLUB is holding a small beer festival at their Blackwell Meadows ground in Grange Road on 21-22 February. There will be around a dozen real ales. At other times, the clubhouse serves real ale on matchdays only.

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Great Beers

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Perfect Pints

BRITAIN'S 'Perfect Village', Heighington (BBC TV 2006), was the focus of Darlington CAMRA's monthly rural coach crawl in December, with a meandering route to get there. Malcolm Dunstone reports on the pretty perfect choice of cask beers that were enjoyed...

THE TRIP was well supported with only one place empty on the minibus. The group formed the majority in the lounge bar of the **Baydale Beck** at Low Coniscliffe and enjoyed Hop Back Summer Lightning (a surprise), Camerons' Strongarm and Black Sheep Bitter. It was 4C outside so no surprise there was no-one in the conservatory!

Next up, the **Duke of Wellington** at High Coniscliffe. Only one real ale, Theakston's Best Bitter, as the house regular, Strongarm, had just arrived and was still settling in the cellar. (*There were distribution delays that week - Ed.*)

Memories surfaced at **The Dog**, on the A68 near Heighington, when someone said "We left George here five years ago". It was an occasion when the then-social secretary failed to count the drinkers back onto the bus. We had Black Sheep and Allendale this time. An open fire, several bar staff and a good toilet.

The **Locomotion One** at Heighington Station was very pleasing: open fire, a greeting at the bar and sandwiches. Deuchar's IPA, Theakston Bitter and Old Speckled Hen were all available.

There was a good atmosphere awaiting at the **George & Dragon** in Heighington village itself, with two cheery, bustling rooms and Black Sheep and Magnet on handpump. Landlord Paul had warned us earlier that a cellar problem would reduce the usual range of five ales that evening, so we missed out on two Wylam beers.



Stockton Beer Festival 25th - 27th February 2010

ARC, Stockton Arts Centre, Dovecot Street, Stockton on Tees TS18 1LL

70+ real ales, lagers, cider and perry

Daytime festival 11am-5pm. Entry £1
(CAMRA members free)

Evening festival 6.30-11pm. Beer festival only £4.50
(£3.50 Saturday). Beer festival + entertainment £12
(£10 Saturday)

**Ticket s/details from ARC on 01642 525199,
www.arconline.co.uk or box office**

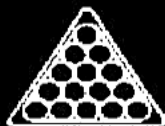
The village's next pub, the **Bay Horse**, a short walk away on the other green, did have five real ales - Copper Dragon, Speckled Hen, Taylor's Landlord, Black Sheep Bitter and Magnet. Good company and a friendly barmaid to round off another successful trip, well organised by Pete Fenwick.

**ALL ARE WELCOME on the monthly rural crawls: See back page for details.*

FURTHER PRICE reductions - the third in each case - seem to have prompted interest in Scottish & Newcastle Pub Enterprises' vacant **Bay Horse** at Great Smeaton and **Travellers Rest** at Skeeby.

Their starting prices of £250,000 and £225,00 were down to £180k and £150k respectively by late 2009. Agents Fleurets say the Bay Horse is now under offer, whilst details of the Travellers have been removed from their website. DD hopes both will re-open as pubs and return to their former prosperity: we await news with interest.

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IN CAMRA GOOD BEER GUIDE 2005/ '06/ '07/ '08/ '09/ '10

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Border Reviver

WE REGULARLY visit Berwick-upon-Tweed, a town steeped in history, changing from English to Scottish and back several times. Anyway, more importantly, pubs...

If you arrive on the train, as you walk out of the station you will see the **Castle**. Pop in, it has two cask beers; on our last visit a house beer brewed by Hadrian & Border, called Castle, and Northumberland brewery's Secret Kingdom.

From there go straight over the main road and down High Greens to a brilliant local, the **Pilot Inn**. It has three beers on, all guests: Caledonian's Deuchars IPA, Broughton Exciseman's 80/- and Hadrian & Border Tyneside Blonde.

Now head back to the main road and off towards town. The next pub with real ale is on the right, the **Brewers Arms**. This had Mordue Workie Ticket. Carry on and turn right you'll come to the **Leaping Salmon**, a Wetherspoon pub with the usual regulars and, on our visit, Goff's Tournament, Rudgate Ruby Mild and Greene King Conkers Bonkers.

Back up to the main road, head towards the town hall, turn right and you'll find **Foxton's** - look for the board announcing it as a 'male crèche: he's safe with us while you go shopping'. We had Deuchars IPA and Brewdog Trashy Blonde. Try their famous steak sandwich; we did and can recommend it.

Opposite this, the **Brown Bear** has Black Sheep Best Bitter, and down the bottom of the bank the **Queen's Head** has Northumberland Secret Kingdom.

Now go along Bridge Street. There's an eating house, the **Liquid Lounge**, which has Stewart brewery's Pentland IPA.

At the end, on the corner, is what you've been waiting for: the **Barrels Ale House**. Have a seat in the old dentist's chair at the bar and order one of the five regularly changing beers such as High House Fam



Lily Brewster, Houston Warlock, Brewdog Punk IPA, and Stewart's Pentland IPA.

If you still have the energy, cross the bridge into Tweedmouth, go up the hill, turn left and you'll find - next to the old brewery (now flats) - the **Angel**, where they have a house beer 'Duckett', brewed by Camerons, and Hadrian & Border's Farn Island.

As you can see, an excellent beer trail, also you could see Berwick Rangers, not far from the Angel, or walk round the walls of the only totally walled town in the UK.

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Opening Hours:

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**Book early for Valentine's
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- Mike Amos

'Bye Terry

DARLINGTON CAMRA members were hugely saddened to hear of the death in October, aged 56, of Terry Garnett, the ever-chirpy partner of Sue Carr at the Britannia in Archer Street.



While Sue looked after the bar and the beer, Terry spent countless summer hours festooning the front of the lovely old pub in flowers.

As Mike Amos said so well in the Northern Echo: "He was a great character, an enthusiastic raconteur, a generous friend and a proud and loving family man. The place won't be the same without him".

Among the many who will miss Terry will be the Belgian beer lovers from Heikant who come to Darlington for CAMRA's beer festivals. They invariably

spend time in the Brit, enjoying the Strongarm and Terry's company. Some have even been known to leave with the very (England) shirt off his back...

RICHARD ROBINSON of the Red Lion at Cotherstone is pictured receiving his pub's award as the final Darlington CAMRA Pub of the Season for 2009.

Richard (left in photo) serves three real ales in the characterful village free house: Jennings' Cumberland, Caledonian Deuchar's and a changing guest beer. The award was handed over by the branch's pubs officer Pete Fenwick.

**The Old Well, Bamard Castle, was runner-up and the Three Tuns, Eggleston third.*



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Forename(s)

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I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I enclose a cheque for

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Applications will be processed within 21 days

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

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To the Manager Bank or Building Society

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Please pay CAMRA Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with CAMRA and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

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- If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
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- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

The Buck Inn

Thornton Watlass, Bedale



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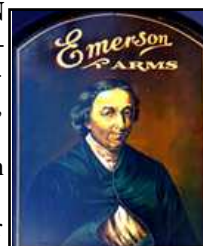
Sunday lunchtime jazz:

Jan 10 Frisco Bay Hot Stompers, Jan 24
Harriers Jazz Band, Feb 7 Bill Goyder Quar-
tet, Feb 21 Brian Carrick's Heritage Hall
Stompers, Mar 7 The Happy Chappies

Tel. Bedale 01677 422461
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BREWS, NEWS AND VIEWS

**THE EMERSON
ARMS** at Hurworth -
named after the vil-
lage's most famous son,
18th-century mathema-
tician William Emerson
- reopened back in No-
vember but this is our
first chance to welcome



the reappearance of real ale. It's in the
form of Black Sheep's session Bitter.

THE STATION, a mile down the road
at Hurworth Place, is another welcome
revival of a briefly-closed pub, this time
bought outright as a free house from the
previous pub company owners (the guide
price had been £250,000). There was no
real ale when it reopened in December
but manager James Watson hopes to
stock handpulled beer in the New Year:
ring him on 01325 720552 for updates.

DIARY DATES - DARLINGTON CAMRA - DIARY DATES

- Tue 12 Jan** - **Tanners Hall**, Skinnergate. Darlington CAMRA branch meeting, 8pm.
- Fri 15 Jan** - **Rural coach crawl** to Scorton, Atley Hill, East Cowton, Great Smeaton, Hornby, Dalton-on-Tees area. Depart Feethams (opp. Town Hall) 7pm. Details/bookings: Pete Fenwick (01325) 374817; (07792) 093245.
- Tue 3 Feb** - **Tap & Spile**, Bondgate (upstairs). Darlington CAMRA branch mtg, 8pm.
- Tue 9 Feb** - **Old Yard Tapas Bar**, Bondgate (upstairs). CAMRA North East regional business meeting, all local members welcome; 7.30pm.
- Fri 12 Feb** - **Rural coach crawl** to Middleton Tyas, Gilling West, Smallways, E Layton, Ravensworth, Kirby Hill area, dep. 7pm. Depart and bookings as above.
- Tue 2 Mar** - **Glittering Star**, Stonebridge. Darlington CAMRA branch meeting, 8pm.
- Fri 12 Mar** - **Rural coach crawl** to Piercebridge, Manfield, Barton, Melsonby, Aldbrough area, 7pm. Depart and bookings as above.

Darlington Drinker is published by the Darlington branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Circulation 3,500. News, articles and letters welcome. All items © Darlington CAMRA but may be reproduced if source acknowledged. Editor: Brendan Boyle, 6 Clareville Road, Darlington DL3 8NG; (01325) 362092; email dd@idnet.com. Additional contributors this issue: Malcolm Dunstone, Pete Fenwick & Corima Russell. Advertising: Peter Everett (01325) 241388. Ad rates a strip at quarter-page £30, half page £50, full page £80; sixth consecutive insertion free. Branch website: www.darlocamra.org.uk. CAMRA HQ is at 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW; (01727) 867201; see www.camra.org.uk for all other real ale information.