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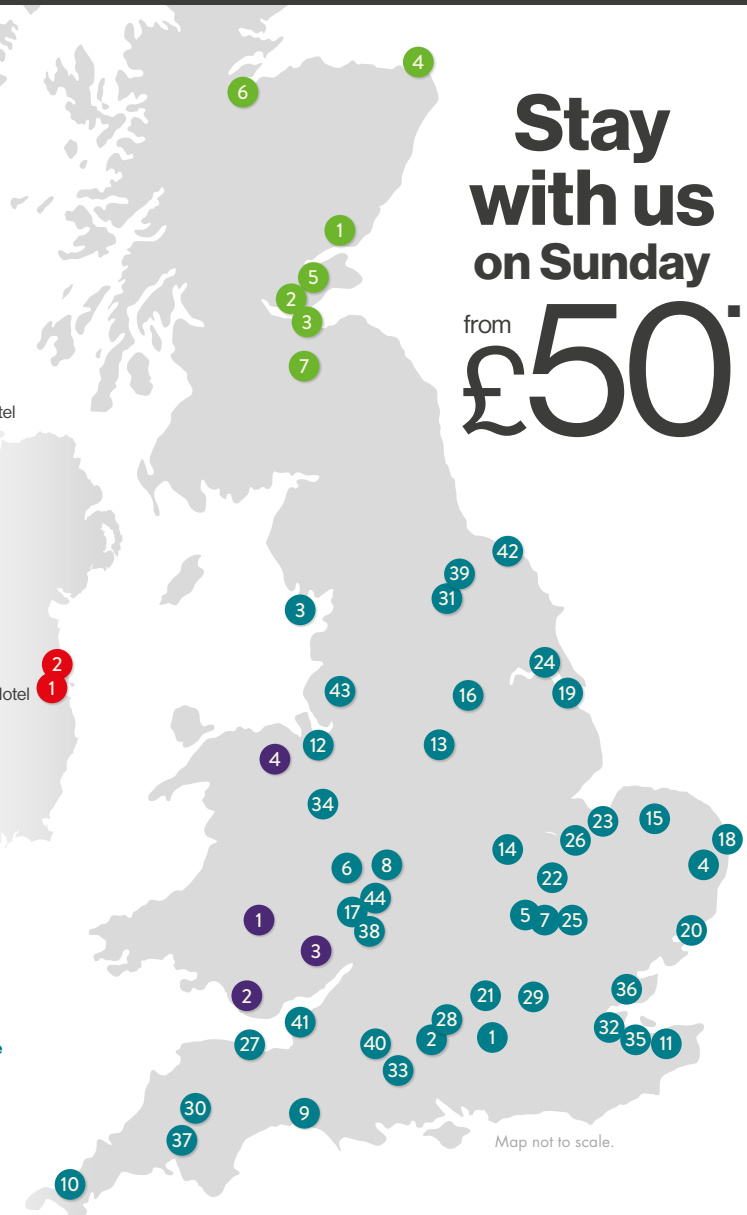
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AND TASTING NOTES



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

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

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

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It's only when the tide goes out that you learn who's swimming naked

“This land is your land and this land is my land... This land was made for you and me.”

Woody Guthrie

The world's greatest investor and, possibly, the world's greatest-ever business person is 92-year-old Warren Buffett of Omaha (Nebraska), known as the 'Sage of Omaha'.

If you'd invested £20 in Warren's company, Berkshire Hathaway, when he took the helm, about 60 years ago, it would now be worth around £500,000.

Confounding the preconception of the rapacious capitalist, Warren is widely regarded as a decent man who lives modestly and emphasises the contribution which his company makes to the US treasury – about one dollar in every thousand collected by the US tax system is from Berkshire Hathaway.

Warren is perhaps unique in regularly complaining that he pays too little tax – and he gives vast sums, annually, to charity.

He is also famous for his pithy investment observations, such as: “Only invest in a company that's so simple it could be run by an idiot – because, one day, it will be.” or... “You only learn who's been swimming naked when the tide goes out.”

Advice

While admitting his own mistakes, Warren's main investment advice is: “Rule No.1 is never lose money. Rule No.2 is remember rule No.1”.

Easier said than done, as the great man admits.

Above all, Warren is a big believer in America.

Don't bet against America, he says, emphasising that it has overcome civil war, world wars, depressions and inflation to become, despite some big problems (who doesn't have problems?), one of the richest and most free countries in the world.

My own belief, not shared by everyone, is that America has grown to be rich, powerful and free as a result of two main factors: the first is that its population has grown from about 100 million in 1900 to about 340 million today, mainly through a liberal immigration policy.

(Please see, on page 64, my 2017 evidence to a House of Lords committee about the advantages of a “North American- or Australian-type” immigration system.)

Second, the economy has flourished because the 1787 American constitution, negotiated over nine months and only four pages long, carefully balances federal and state powers and also achieves reasonable checks and balances among the president, congress (ie parliament) and the courts.

The net result, for all to see, is that as the population has grown, so has what economists call ‘GDP per capita’.

Rather than population growth diluting wealth, it has had the opposite effect.

Make no mistake, without America, democracy in the modern world would have struggled to survive.

Reluctant

In World War I and II, and in the Cold War, America, albeit reluctant to become involved at first and albeit with inevitable self-interest, eventually stepped up to the plate.

In the more recent example of the tragic Ukraine conflict, America has seen fit to offer 10 times as much financial help as has the entire EU.

The current president, despite widespread criticism, has certainly not buckled at the knee.

Warren Buffett's optimistic view about America could surely be extended to most democratic countries.

They are all ruled by fallible humans who, just like us, have many faults.

Yet the democratic system forces politicians to listen – and, in the end, we (the voters) can hold them to account and change governments.

Multiple examples, from Australia and Japan to Singapore and South Korea, demonstrate that, once democracy takes root, progress invariably follows – not in every month or year, but, inexorably, as time goes by.

Yet this optimistic view of humanity's progress isn't shared by everyone.

Many people, on witnessing at close quarters the chaos, arguments and incompetence which are inevitably part and

parcel of human existence, even in democracies, draw pessimistic conclusions and are overwhelmed by a sensation of national decline.

Pessimistic

Former MP and renowned journalist Matthew Parris seems, like Warren Buffett, to be a decent man, yet, unlike Warren's view of America, has a pessimistic view of the UK.

Matthew regards the UK as a “relatively civilised, gently declining manufacturing economy, living slightly beyond our means” (see his article opposite this page).

He feels that UK citizens are “mostly not aspirational” and are people “for whom the word ‘strive’ does not quicken the pulse”.

He fears that “we'll end up like Argentina” and mischievously lumps democratically elected politicians in with despots and the unelected, referring to the shortcomings of “the Trumps, Perons, Galtieris, Berlusconi, Corbyns and Mandurys, Johnsons and Trusses”.

This dim view of the UK population has led Matthew, and many others among the educated class, to deprecate democracy, perhaps subconsciously, and to yearn for a new system whereby power is transferred to a more refined technocratic elite – to people like them.

Matthew ignores the fact that, in spite of current problems, living standards in the UK have doubled, in real terms, since about 1980 – having already doubled in a few decades before that.

Like America, there have been wars, recessions and inflation, combined (from time to time) with governmental and parliamentary stupidity on an epic scale.

Professor Robert Tombs, of Cambridge University, has investigated the pessimistic views characterised by Matthew and many other intellectuals and refers to them as “declinism”, which, he says, is a factually inaccurate analysis of history.

The UK's economy, says Professor Tombs (see his article on pages 6–7), “has almost exactly kept pace with that of the United States ever since 1945,” based on the growth of GDP per capita.

So, who is right on this point? Matthew Parris or Professor Tombs?

For me, Professor Tombs, echoing the positive views of Warren Buffett, wins the day.

Democracy

Yes, democracy can be chaotic, and we can end up being ruled by idiots, yet we can vote them out.

And the combination of a free press and regular elections creates huge emotion and energy.

“Anger is energy,” as Sir Bob Geldof has said.

Energy, constructively channelled through thought and debate, creates progress.

But who cares what I think?

In a democracy, you're entitled to a view, but, in the end, readers and the public will decide on issues, such as this, through the ballot box.

Wetherspoon News, unlike some of the more sectarian factions of the press, is proud to at least try to present both sides of the argument.

Bravo Matthew Parris – for sticking your head above the parapet and making, as usual, clever and provocative arguments – and for creating this debate.

Bravo Robert Tombs – for your brilliant and thought-provoking historical analysis.

In a democracy, fortunately for those who live in one, the dogs may bark, but the caravan always moves on...

Tim Martin

Chairman

THE LOCKDOWN ARTICLES

Tim says: “Decades before COVID-19, the UK, like most countries, made detailed plans for a pandemic. None of the plans involved lockdowns.

However, for reasons best known to itself, parliament granted emergency powers to the government, which used them, reversing history, to impose lockdowns, curfews and other restrictions on civil liberties – at huge cost and, it now appears, with few health benefits.

On pages 54–64, we republish a series of articles about these events, culminating in an astonishing scoop from The Spectator's editor, Fraser Nelson, revealing that even the most senior cabinet ministers were kept in the dark.

This is a tale of incompetence, dangerous authoritarianism – and a deeply flawed decision-making process.”

Tim says: “Columnist and former MP Matthew Parris is pessimistic about the UK, calling it a “gently declining manufacturing economy”, whose inhabitants are “mostly not aspirational”.

He worries that the UK will “end up like Argentina” (apologies to Argentinians, who may take umbrage at this comment).

Professor Robert Tombs, of Cambridge University (read his article on pages 6–7), calls the sort of views represented by Matthew “declinism” and argues that they are misleading and factually inaccurate.

Wetherspoon News invites you to read both articles and make up your own mind on this important issue.”

WE’RE BEING FED FALSE PROMISES FROM ALL SIDES

How refreshing it would be if we had a leader who could provide the country with a dose of careful, sober realism

‘I was received very kindly by the warden,’ records Gulliver in Jonathan Swift’s 1726 satire, “and went for many days to the academy.” Gulliver is visiting laboratories on Laputa, where experts are confidently attempting the impossible.

“The first man I saw was of a meagre aspect, with sooty hands and face . . . He has been eight years upon a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers, which were to be put in phials hermetically sealed, and let out to warm the air in inclement summers. He told me . . . he should be able to supply the governor’s gardens with sunshine, at a reasonable rate.”

And so to the promises being thrown out by aspirant leaders of our country. One woman, Liz Truss, and two men, Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir Starmer, are pitching their proposals. Their apparent differences are conspicuous, but it is what unites them that alarms me. Though in different ways, and with varying degrees of unrealism, they all think the British economy can be “turned around”.

All their plans, all their policies, from defence spending to welfare, from education and Northern Powerhouse rail to the NHS and “levelling up”, from slashing our energy costs to protecting workers’ pay packets from inflation . . . all depend upon one shared assumption that none dare challenge: that Britain’s history of disappointing economic growth — sluggish in a good year, virtually non-existent now — can be overturned by politicians, and a conjectured tiger in our economic tank released to bound around the country, transforming people’s lives. There’s no good reason to believe this.

See what they’re promising. “Labour’s plan,” says Starmer, “will grow our economy, so we can once again afford world-class public services, bring down GP waiting times, tackle crime, and ensure our kids have the best education.”

“Getting people the support they need to help with the cost of living,” says Sunak, “is critical.”

“Labour is ready to reboot our economy,” says Starmer. “We will re-energise communities and spread economic power.”

“Levelling up is not just a slogan for me,” says Truss. “It’s about making sure we unleash private sector investment.”

“Levelling up should mean no matter where you grow up you have fantastic opportunities to fulfil your potential,” says Sunak.

“Economic growth,” says Truss, “is about jobs and opportunities.” Starmer agrees: under Labour, growth will be “strong, secure and fair”. Priorities for the next Labour government will be “growth, growth, growth”.

Truss is not to be outbid: “As prime minister I will unleash the full potential of Britain post-Brexit” and “be laser focused on turbocharging business investment and delivering the economic growth our country desperately needs.”

Sunak is readiest to acknowledge that the headwinds are formidable. “There is no measure any government could take, no law we could pass, that can make these global forces disappear overnight,” he says. “The next few months will be tough.” But even with Sunak it’s just a matter of patience. In time — for Sunak and Starmer a few years, for Truss about ten minutes — the British economy will be “transformed”. Those phials of cucumber essence will release their bounty and the broad sunlit uplands will unroll before our astonished eyes.

The key to these pitches is a single idea. Both as image and as metaphor, the mental picture is potent. With immigration it was the Leave

campaign’s dominating argument. “Britannia Unchained”. We are, apparently, a coiled spring of a nation.

Let me offer you the word-cloud that expresses this best. “Unleash” has already been cited twice above. See also “release”, “untether”, “unchain”, “unbind”, “unshackle”, “untie”, “uncork”, “free up”, “liberate”. Scan the speech and writing of aspirant British politicians for terms that connote taking the brakes off a powerful engine: populist rhetoric of both right and left is peppered with such imagery.

Maybe I’m harsh. For any would-be political leader, “could be” is the only hopeful-sounding answer to “isn’t”. But where is the evidence for such wild economic optimism? In my lifetime governments of the left have tried nationalisation, state-funded investment and simple subsidy to unleash what 60-odd years ago Harold Wilson called the “white heat of the technological revolution”. Governments of the right have lowered taxes, dangled tax breaks, cut red tape and deregulated in order (in the Thatcherite phrase) to “galvanise the entrepreneur” and take “the dead hand of socialism” off the neck of a choked nation struggling for air. Nothing has worked. Or perhaps it would be fairer to say that some measures have at least helped stop us going into reverse. But of the sound of snapping shackles there comes no hint. Friends, the tiger isn’t there.

We remain a relatively civilised, gently declining manufacturing economy, living slightly beyond our means, quite good at R&D but keeping afloat substantially through the efforts of wide-boys in the City of London, a metropolis the rest of the country seems to despise, its politicians too cowardly to explain that the sheep on our hills and pork pies from Melton Mowbray are not what fund our living standards. London does.

Somebody needs to tell the adult populace, as we were told when we were little, that “I want doesn’t get”. Somebody needs to come clean and remind us our nation struggles to pay its way. Somebody needs to square up to a country whose citizens are mostly not “aspirational” and for whom the word “strive” does not quicken the pulse: and to offer us the sober reassurance that they’ll cut our cloth according to our means. Sunak comes closest to this. But is this electorate — high as a kite on social media notions about government by the people — ready to put him in charge? Any former chancellor knows that workable democracy is a negotiation with the people. But who dare say it? I miss Jim Callaghan’s gloomy realism. I miss Denis Healey’s sceptical eyebrows.

So Sunak, Truss and Starmer will promise, and whoever wins must break their promises, and the electorate will shout “liar!” and, starved of trust, the politicians will make wilder promises, then break them; and — mark my words — we’ll end up like Argentina, banging saucepans beneath our leaders’ windows, crying like puppies for the world-class health service, the old-age care, the housing, the mortgage rates, the new schools, the royal yachts, the world-beating defence capabilities we were promised. Such are the leaders — the Trumps, Peróns, Galtiers, Berlusconi, Corbyns and Maduros, Johnsons and Trusses — for whom we’ll whimper. And we’ll get them. Then kick them out. Then get another. And so the vicious cycle will continue until the world begins to titter. And serve us right.

By Matthew Parris

The Times / 29 July 2022

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Tim says: “Professor Robert Tombs, a Cambridge University historian, provides a fascinating insight into Britain’s performance, compared with that of other countries.

He criticises excessive pessimism as “declinism, a periodic fear that the nation has declined, and is declining, from some earlier time of strength”.

Declinism, he says, is “a mixture of illusion and misunderstanding”.

The UK has kept pace economically with the mighty America since 1945, says Professor Tombs – and his article was written before the England women’s team won the Euros... ”

“ DOWN WITH DECLINISM

Our glory days are not over – they’re in full swing

On the anniversary of Britain voting to leave the European Union, the Principal of Hertford College, Oxford, found some words to sum it up. ‘An entire society crucified by the delusional ambitions of Brexiteers chasing moonshine,’ wrote Will Hutton. ‘An anniversary to mourn.’ One might agree or disagree with his position on the European Union, but has British society really committed suicide? It’s a theme we have heard rather a lot recently: that Britain is a mess, an international laughing stock, leader-less and futureless. The case is normally made by Brits.

Rapid shocks — terrorism, the surprising election result, the Grenfell Tower disaster — have inspired forebodings just as the Brexit negotiations are beginning. This is not just the cry of shellshocked Tories or traumatised Remainers; it goes deeper. We’re seeing the revival of an old and familiar malady: ‘declinism’, a periodic fear that the nation has declined and is declining from some earlier time of strength, cohesion and success. Declinism is a syndrome: it assumes a combination of moral, political and economic failures. Britain suffered a bout of it in the 1880s when German competition in manufactured goods was first felt. It came back in the 1960s and 1970s, coloured by economic worries, rapid decolonisation and a perception of dwindling power and influence in every field.

Today, it has re-emerged as a core anti-Brexit sentiment. With a familiar mixture of despair (from the right) and glee (from the left), we are being told that we must eschew ‘nostalgia’ and ‘post-imperial delusions’, and ‘wake up to reality’ as ‘a small offshore island’, while the big strong powers of the European Union put us in our place, leaving us a stark choice between accepting the terms they dictate or facing economic and political disaster.

Some germ of declinism has been bred into all of us. Who would deny that Britain is no longer the great power it once was? Well, speaking as a

historian, I would. Declinism is at best a distortion of reality, and mostly mere illusion. But so important is it in shaping our view of ourselves and our relations with the world that it demands sceptical scrutiny. It rests, above all, on two assumptions. First, that we have long been failing economically. Second, that we have suffered a loss of sheer power and hence influence in the world.

In the context of the Brexit debate, the conclusions are that the EU, ‘our largest market’, is our economic crutch; and that outside the EU club our feeble power and influence will dwindle to insignificance. We will be comparable, declinists scoff, to Albania or North Korea.

The belief in economic decline is a mixture of illusion and misunderstanding. Britain has been relatively wealthy at least since the Middle Ages, and industrial pioneers gave us a temporary dominance in manufacturing during the mid-19th century. This was a brief and unique episode. Naturally, other countries adopted British technology — helped by British capital and expertise — and began to catch up. This was desirable as well as natural, because it provided richer markets for British goods and services and valuable investment opportunities for British savers.

Since the 1880s, pessimists have always tended to compare British economic performance at any moment with those most rapidly catching up. When postwar European integration began in the 1950s, Italy, France and Germany were the most spectacular catchers-up, recovering from their wartime devastation and shifting their large and relatively unproductive agricultural sectors into industry.

This gave temporary ‘windfall growth’ that Britain could not equal, having no large agricultural sector to modernise. But an uncritical comparison of growth rates was mistaken for evidence of British economic failure. As early as 1953, an official report warned of ‘relegation of the UK to the second division’. This was the prime cause of

our desperate pleas to join the Common Market in the 1960s and 1970s: Britain was 'the sinking Titanic', as one of Edward Heath's advisors put it, and Europe the lifeboat.

Ironically, just as Britain joined in the early 1970s, European catching-up ended, and so did its seemingly superior economic prowess. In short, Britain's long-term economic decline in relation to Europe never happened. Supporters of the EU nevertheless still maintain that membership rescued the British economy in the 1970s and remains vital to shoring it up today.

In fact, British economic performance was never significantly affected by EU membership. Growth did not increase after joining the Common Market, essentially because trade was diverted from other markets to Europe just as Europe's own postwar growth went into long-term deceleration. Despite the hopes and political efforts expended on creating the single market (not least by Margaret Thatcher), it has not proved very successful in increasing internal EU trade, and has never been fully extended into services, Britain's main strength.

Due to both the greater dynamism of global markets and the problems of the EU itself, Britain's trade with Europe has been declining sharply in importance for two decades. This was predicted to continue even if Britain had stayed in the EU. The recent overdue depreciation of an overvalued pound will provide some stimulus to our exports both inside and outside Europe, whatever the nature of the post-Brexit deal, and would more than compensate for possible tariffs.

Over the long term, membership (or not) of the EU has made no discernible difference to our economic performance. Britain's increase in prosperity (growth in per capita GDP using purchasing power parity) has almost exactly kept pace with that of the United States ever since 1945, whether outside or inside 'Europe'. The belief that leaving the EU must mean long-term economic decline therefore has no rational basis, just as the economic reports predicting that a vote for Brexit would mean immediate financial misery had no rational basis either.

The second element of declinism concerns the loss of sheer power and importance in the world. This seems as obvious to the stoutest Tory as to the most mocking Guardianista. After all, Churchill himself was haunted by it. Yet this too is largely, if not wholly, an illusion based on comparing a pessimistic view of our current state (whenever that might be — probably any time since the 1890s) with a highly inflated view of past power: usually the High Victorian age, or else round about the time of the battle of El Alamein.

The story of Britain being on a long slide to irrelevance always revolves round decolonisation. It's quite true that the British empire is 'one with Nineveh and Tyre' — but so are all the other empires. No state has replaced Britain as the great global imperial power: empires are no longer possible or desirable, as Britain realised in the 1960s. Though a source of prestige (and of constant trouble — 'a millstone round our necks,' said Disraeli), it's doubtful whether the empire was a source of wealth or power to Britain. Overall, it cost more than it brought in, especially after Britain turned to universal free trade in the 1840s, and colonies ceased to be an exclusive economic domain.

The empire's power was used up in defending itself: it was, as one historian aptly puts it, 'a brontosaurus with huge, vulnerable limbs which the central nervous system had little capacity to protect, direct or control.' Throughout its imperial heyday, Britain had naval power, but on land was no match for Europe's great powers or even its smaller ones. It was constantly worried by threats from France, Russia, Germany and even the USA to its economy, its empire and its home islands.

What of today? Britain is more secure from major external threat than for half a millennium. Taking a long view (say the last three centuries) it remains what it always has been — one of the half-dozen or so strongest states in the world, and one of the most global in its attachments, its vision, and its trade. Within this leading group of states, Britain has not declined but has actually advanced, being now more powerful than its ancient rivals France, Germany and Russia. The Cambridge international relations specialist Brendan Simms puts Britain even higher. Taking into account economic and military potential, population, 'soft power', diplomatic influence, political resilience and self-determination, he judges it the world's third great power after the USA and China, and Europe's only truly independent force.

Power is also based on intangibles such as self-confidence, a clear strategy and determination, and here we may be lacking. Russia, with an economy the same size as Spain's, behaves like a superpower in the Middle East and is treated as one. But we fear we cannot even negotiate a mutually beneficial trade agreement with the EU. At least as much as by age and education, our attitudes seem to be determined by the division between confidence and self-doubt.

Declinism has always been a form of insularity, obsessed with Britain's failings, but ignorant of those elsewhere. Today, unemployment is lower here than among most of our neighbours. Crime is falling. Schools are improving. We have evident problems too. But to see only weaknesses, and to diagnose them as part of a syndrome of decline, is to cling to a distorted view of the world and of our place within it. At worst, this undermines our position, and risks bringing about the very outcome it fears.

Brexit was a vote of confidence in our ability to shape our future as an independent democratic nation — a choice that few of our European neighbours feel they still have. We should not allow declinist panics to confuse the outcome.



By Robert Tombs

The Spectator / 8 July 2017

Print credit: © The Spectator magazine and Robert Tombs

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

SPOON-SPOTTER SEEKS STAMPS

Dear editor

Having just read Wetherspoon News summer 2022, I was pleased to say that we have visited many of the pubs featured. I also notice that many other people are touring your pubs and are pleased, like us, to enjoy their history and architecture, as well as the service.

I wonder whether there is a case for a Wetherspoon 'passport' – which could be stamped at each establishment?

From Wetherspoon's point of view, it would encourage the expansion of the cult following and increase business from your customers.

Looking from customers' perspective, they would have the pleasure of having their passports stamped and perhaps even receive a badge for visiting all Wetherspoon pubs. A badge could be awarded for completing each of England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Perhaps, if this idea were taken up, your loyal customers may be happy to pay a small charge for such a passport.

Regards

Nigel and Maureen Strutt, Matlock, Derbyshire

Tim replies: Thanks for your comments about our pubs. It is certainly true that many people like to visit them around the UK and Ireland, at least partly because of the different types of building and design.

Avoiding the cookie-cutter approach, which often travels under the banner of 'branding', is appreciated by both customers and design aficionados.

We've considered the idea of passports before, yet felt that it would be quite expensive and time-consuming to administer. We always try to keep costs as low as possible, in order to deliver a pint or a coffee at prices which people appreciate. However, it's time to look at the issue in detail again – which I will do with the groovy team.

CURRY FAN CHIPS IN WITH A REQUEST

Dear Tim

May I say how much I enjoy your curries – and I was delighted to see the return of Thursday night's Curry Club. I do, though, have a request.

On your 'simple' curries, you give the option of rice or chips, yet with the full curry dinner, you can have only rice. I like a curry and chips myself, but can't be declining the naan bread and poppadums.

Any chance you can make swapping to chips an option on all of your curry meals?

Yours sincerely

John Maunder, Plymouth, Devon

Tim replies: There is, indeed, merit in what you say. I've no idea why it should be so, but will try to make the change on our computerised till system as quickly as possible. (Having said that, 'computer system' and 'quickly' don't always go together, in my experience.)

SAUCE OF DISCONTENT

Dear editor

I've used Wetherspoon's pubs from Bexleyheath to Weymouth.

The food and drinks are second to none for the price – and the fish, for quality, is also second to none.

But, please, put the tomato sauce back in bottles. I can't count how many times it has squirted out of the packets onto my shirt.

Yours faithfully

E Betts, Whitton, Richmond upon Thames

Tim replies: The debate about sachets or bottles has raged for nearly half a century. In our company, it's about 50/50 among staff. Most people think that sachets are more hygienic, even though bottles are regularly cleaned by the team. I just don't know what I think on this one, but will debate the issue again. Maybe you're right...

GARDENS OF EARTHLY DELIGHT

Dear editor

At the age of 91, I am a widower and disabled. However, I can still drive my automatic car.

So, I still have some independence – and my trip to The Winter Gardens (Harrogate) is an enjoyable weekly visit. As a qualified chef, in English and French cuisine, I appreciate the courtesy and quality of service which your staff members give.

Your Wetherspoon News makes interesting reading. I make sure that I 'digest' your food menu – before I leave home and decide on my meal from your lovely, wide selection.

My daughter had her wedding reception at The Winter Gardens in 1973, when it was a dance hall – happy memories.

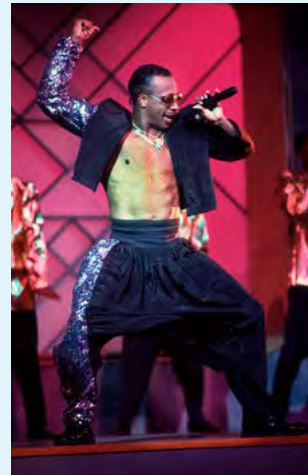
Kind regards

Alan Barker, Harrogate, North Yorkshire

Tim replies: The Winter Gardens (Harrogate) is an amazing pub, with its history recalling many happy and poignant memories for past visitors.

As you know, Wetherspoon has restored many interesting and listed old buildings. Sorry to boast, I'm probably lobbing a ball which will get smashed if I'm wrong, but Wetherspoon has probably won more design awards for building restoration than any other company in history, including architectural firms.

From Hamilton Hall (Liverpool Street station) and The Counting House (Glasgow) to The Standing Order (Edinburgh), The Prince of Wales (Cardiff), The Commercial Rooms (Bristol), The Imperial (Exeter) and Royal Victoria Pavilion (Ramsgate), to name but a few, our designers and builders have done the nation proud. As MC Hammer might say, U can't touch this...



STUMPED BY CRICKET CLUE

Dear editor

As regular visitors, when we are out and about, to Wetherspoon's pubs around the country, we visited Lichfield's pub The Acorn, one of our more regular visits.

We enjoyed a sandwich lunch and also reading your magazine, which we always find interesting. As a secondary teacher myself, I was interested to read about the way you offer a career training ladder to young people – and applaud this.

On doing your summer magazine's crossword, I wanted to inform you that crossword clue 14&20 down has an out-of-date answer – in your boxes given, the highest wicket-taker in test cricket refers to Kapil Dev – yet he is now 10th, with Muttiah Muralitharan the highest.

Keep up the good work – and we will continue to enter your competitions.

Mrs Alison Henson (via e-mail)

Tim replies: Thanks very much for your comments about training, which are greatly appreciated. An academic education is extremely important, yet human beings are built for work, I always feel – and working in pubs, whether or not you make a career of it, requires a huge amount of knowledge and experience, which can also be used outside of the pub trade. I often wish that those who rule over us, or are otherwise in important positions in the economy, had spent a few years qualifying as a grade 4 shift manager at Wetherspoon. So many of them would be far better at their job, had they done so.

As regards Kapil Dev, I have consulted the third umpire, and you are, indeed, correct. The Test committee will launch an investigation...

THE SIX TEMPLARS • HERTFORD

REMARKABLE RISE OF PUB MANAGER, 21

Michael Stokmans has, so far, had a quite remarkable Wetherspoon career.

He joined the company in February 2018 as a part-time under-18 floor associate and, by April 2022, little more than four years later (including unprecedented pandemic closures), he was appointed as a pub manager.

Michael, who turned 21 in December 2021, runs The Six Templars (Hertford), having started at The Manor House (Royston), in the town where he still lives.

He studied business, history and photography A levels at college in Cambridge, with an original plan of going to university or taking an apprenticeship.

Michael revealed: "In the end, I decided to do what I enjoy. I was already working at The Manor House and enjoying the pub industry.

"I love the people side of things and the social aspect of the job, while my business studies gave me a real background, especially as I progressed through the management levels."

Michael had made his career decision within a year of becoming a bar associate, when he turned 18, and was encouraged by his pub manager at The Manor House, David Neil, to pursue his career.

Michael said: "David told me how good the company is with career progression, the benefits available – and I could see for myself several colleagues who had progressed, which was great motivation.

"But David was the person who really encouraged me to go for it and trained me all the way through."

He added: "I set myself a lot of goals and worked really hard to achieve them. At every level, I wanted to get better and progress."

Michael's progression to shift manager level was achieved at The Manor House before he was asked, in late February 2022, to take up a holding manager role at The Six Templars. When the permanent position became available, he decided to 'go for it'.

His team at the pub includes team leader Carol Venables, who has worked at The Six Templars since it opened in March 2008 and has 17 years' service with the company.

Michael admitted: "Carol has been here since day one – and her experience has been of invaluable help to me.

"We are a good community-based pub and looking forward to next year's reopening of the theatre next door."

Looking further ahead, when he's established as a pub manager, Michael is keen to study for a Wetherspoon degree.

He added: "When I succeed as a pub manager, my long-term aim is a role at head office, perhaps in finance or marketing.

"For now, I am taking things in my stride. I knew that I would be a pub manager, yet never imagined that it would happen so quickly.

"Wetherspoon looks after its staff really well, 100 per cent, and is a good company to work for."



GUILDHALL GIVEN PRIDE OF PLACE AS DUNFERMLINE BECOMES A CITY

A photo of The Guildhall & Linen Exchange (Dunfermline) was chosen by the BBC's news website to illustrate its coverage of Dunfermline gaining city status as part of the jubilee celebrations.

The pub is steeped in local tradition, as it was once the county hall, the sheriff's office and a police station.

It is also named after its original purpose as Dunfermline's main trading exchange.

Dunfermline was one of eight cities chosen for city status to mark the Queen's platinum jubilee.

The pub's manager, Stephen Nesbitt, said: "Our area manager spotted the picture on the BBC website and popped in to tell us. We are very proud to have been chosen to illustrate this great story as Dunfermline deservedly celebrates its new status as a city.

"We are proud of Dunfermline and its history – we are in an historic building and have a lot of framed illustrations here, so that people can learn all about it, while enjoying a drink or a meal."

Area manager Sarah Kyle-Playford added: "The Guildhall & Linen Exchange is tied to the history of Dunfermline, so it was appropriate that the BBC chose it to illustrate its story covering the new city status."



REGAL REGULAR DRAWS CASH FOR CHARITY BY RAFFLING HIS PAINTINGS

A local artist has raffled some of his work at The Regal Moon (Rochdale) to raise funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

David Scott (pictured) is a regular customer at the pub, with some of his work depicting local scenes adorning its walls.

Raffle tickets were sold over several weeks and raised £370 for the cancer charity.

David frequently gets up at 4am to paint, having spent the previous day photographing local scenes or choosing images from classic films to represent in his paintings.

"I find inspiration all over the place," says David. "It could be local historic buildings or the river – or it could be something I've seen on the telly."

David has been painting for nine years, with his work available in local art shops and on Instagram under 'David Scott Artist'.

The pub's manager, Rob Burgess, said: "David and his wife Shirley are good friends of the pub.

"We are grateful to him for donating paintings for us to hang in the pub and to raffle for Young Lives vs Cancer."



GEORGE AND CAITLIN FIND TRUE LOVE BEHIND THE BAR

This summer, staff and managers at The Wallace Hartley (Colne) were finally able to celebrate a 'Wetherspoon wedding'.

Shift manager George Ashworth and bar associate Caitlin Smith tied the knot at the Grand Hotel, Llandudno, in August.

The couple first met while both working at The Brun Lea (Burnley) (now closed).

Burnley-born George explained: "I started working as a kitchen associate at the pub, seven years ago, and spent one shift a week on the bar, every Saturday night.

"Caitlin joined the team as a bar associate six months after me and we worked that Saturday shift and started to go out together after work.

"So, we met through 'Spoons."

A trained chef, George left the company for three months, yet returned to work alongside his old kitchen manager, Alex Robinson, at The Wallace Hartley, although this time at the front of house.

Caitlin soon joined the team, as did her sister and fellow bar associate Leanne Smith, while Alex went on to become pub manager.

George and Caitlin now have two children, Theodore and Albert.

As a result, unless childcare allows, they rarely work the same shift at the pub.

Speaking about the wedding, George said: "Because of COVID-19 restrictions, we had to rearrange it a couple of times. It was originally planned for September 2020, moved to June 2021 and finally August 2022.

"Caitlin was born in Bangor and lived on Anglesey, so the Llandudno wedding was chosen for our guests to travel there easily."



MYSTERIOUS MONIKERS EARN LONDON PUBS BERTH IN BOOK

Wetherspoon takes great care and pride in researching local history, when opening new pubs, with its pubs' names often linked to characters, places or events of local interest.

A new book, titled *What's in a London Pub Name?*, includes 63 of the company's more unusually named pubs, located across the Greater London area.

Authors Sam Cullen (left) and James Potts (right) have joined forces to produce a 136-page paperback guide, covering 650 pubs' names across 32 London boroughs, as well as central London.

Sam said: "There is such a fantastic variety of names for Wetherspoon pubs across London, each telling a story about the history of its local area.

"There are so many good ones which we've included in the book, but some of the best for us are: The Asparagus (Battersea) – looking at the built-up area now, who could imagine it was once a hotbed of those vegetables?

"Then, we looked east to The Eva Hart, commemorating a Titanic survivor from Chadwell Heath.

"There's the fun of The Wrong 'Un (Bexleyheath), which might perplex at

first glance, but then you realise it's another term for a 'googly' in cricket, referring to the long history of cricket in Bexley.

"We also loved The Great Spoon of Ilford, which remembers the Elizabethan actor Will Kemp, who danced all the way from Norwich to London, stopping in London for a spoon (equivalent to two pints) of ale.

"Finally, you have the charm of The Nonsuch Inn, taking its name from a palace belonging to Henry VIII, in Cheam, which acquired that curious name because the infamous Tudor monarch wanted a building so grand that nobody else could top it, so there was 'no such' palace as good as his!" James added: "The Richmal Crompton is also a nice reminder that pubs don't always have to be named after monarchs or nobility, paying homage to the author of the popular *Just William* series which she wrote while living locally."

● **What's in a London Pub Name?**, published by Capital History Publishing and priced at £8.95, is available from: <https://tinyurl.com/27mnx62m> and also online from Amazon and Waterstones.



HYGIENE – IT'S IN THE GENES

Wetherspoon given highest average rating, per premises, of any company - in new food hygiene rating league table

Wetherspoon has topped the charts in the latest food hygiene rating league table (www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk as at 1 August 2022).

Wetherspoon's pubs consistently top the charts in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) among the biggest pub chains – and this number-one spot highlights that excellent consistency.

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

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

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

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

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

Of our pubs, 775 currently have an FHRS rating, with 98.34 per cent of those achieving the highest-possible rating of five.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hygienic food-handling

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

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

Physical condition of the premises and facilities

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

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

Food safety management

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

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

Did you know?

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

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

The only independent government scheme assessing food hygiene standards

FOOD HYGIENE RATING



VERY GOOD

	Total premises scored	Average premises score out of 5
Wetherspoon	775	4.98
Aldi	769	4.98
McDonald's	1275	4.97
Lidl	659	4.97
Nando's	420	4.97
GBK	38	4.97
Browns	24	4.96
Walkabout	20	4.95
Greggs	1864	4.94
Miller & Carter	113	4.94
ASK	66	4.94
Starbucks	1028	4.93
Slug & Lettuce	77	4.93
Giraffe	15	4.93
Costa Coffee	2418	4.92
PizzaExpress	342	4.92
TGI Fridays	73	4.92
Sizzling Pub Co	177	4.91
Table Table	44	4.91
Be At One	37	4.91
Yates	35	4.91
O'Neill's	34	4.91
Prezzo	153	4.90
Côte	85	4.90
YO! Sushi	52	4.90
All Bar One	51	4.90
Burger King	480	4.89
Hungry Horse	246	4.89
Vintage Inns	149	4.89
Coffee#1	105	4.89
Nicholson's	63	4.89
Bill's	67	4.88
Las Iguanas	44	4.88
KFC	913	4.87
Chef & Brewer	135	4.87
Asda	524	4.86
Craft Union	424	4.85
Beefeater	125	4.84
Bella Italia	82	4.84
Oakman Inns	37	4.84
Café Rouge	37	4.84
Young's	128	4.83
Zizzi	126	4.83
Toby Carvery	141	4.82
Turtle Bay	44	4.82
Harvester	155	4.81
Brewers Fayre	125	4.81
Carluccio's	42	4.81
Geronimo	35	4.77
Subway	1456	4.76
Caffè Nero	541	4.75
Pitcher & Piano	16	4.75
BrewDog	47	4.74
German Doner Kebab	101	4.71
Loungers/Cosy Club	197	4.69
Brains	131	4.42

Information in this table was sourced from www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk on 1/8/22, listing 775 Wetherspoon pubs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, with an average food hygiene rating of 4.98. Please note that, where councils are yet to assess or submit their pub inspection, there may be a slight gap in the number of pubs, compared with that in our records.

Businesses are rated from 0 to 5 which is displayed at their premises and online. The top score is 5.

TERRIFIC TEAM ACHIEVES HIGH STANDARDS AT THE BLUE BOAR



Across six, seven, eight and even nine successive annual 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 inspections (the most recent in May 2021, with another due before the end of 2022) is The Blue Boar (Billericay).

The High Street pub in Essex has been managed by Theo and Leanne Korakianitis (pictured) for 22 years.

The husband-and-wife team joined Wetherspoon in 1997 as a management couple.

Josephine O'Meara, who first joined the team in June 2016 at The Blue Boar as a kitchen associate and worked her way up, took over as kitchen manager at the end of 2019 and heads a team of 10.

Leanne explained: "It is not just in the kitchen where we place that high priority on hygiene, but across the board. It is a whole team effort throughout the pub.

"The only way to achieve consistently high standards is by constant reviewing, keeping on the look-out and keeping on top of things by implementing numerous practices.

"It's not possible to achieve and maintain high standards with weekly or monthly reviews – it is a constant daily practice.

"The management team is continually striving to keep everything in order. It is a must – and isn't the responsibility of just one person... that would be impossible.

"However, I would take it personally if we were to lose our five-star rating."

Leanne continued: "We need to have a five-star rating: it shows that the pub is a safe environment and sends a strong message to customers. It is very important to us all.

"Billericay is an affluent town, with lots of individual high-end businesses, and high standards are expected."

Leanne concluded: "Our customers are very aware and have high expectations.

"We would not be accepted, if we had anything under five stars."

THE SURREY DOCKS • SURREY QUAYS

TRIBUTES TO PAULINE AND JEAN, AFTER 50 YEARS IN THE KITCHEN



A combined 50 years' service at one pub by two staff members, who joined the team when it first opened, prompted a special visit to celebrate the occasion.

Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, is pictured at The Surrey Docks (Surrey Quays) with kitchen shift leader Pauline Curtis (third left) and kitchen associate Jean Oliver (second right), together with colleagues and pub manager Kylee Garwood (far right).

Tim presented both staff members with their long-service certificate and a bouquet of flowers each.

The pub opened in May 1997, with Pauline and Jean meeting two weeks beforehand, during training for the new pub opening.

Pauline said: "It was really lovely that Tim came to present our certificates, although I have met him a couple of times already.

"However, it was even more special for Jean, who had never met Tim before. She was thrilled and looked like she had won the jackpot."

Pauline, 55, and Jean, 88, are both part of a 10-strong kitchen team at the pub.

Pauline, who started as a kitchen associate, revealed: "We don't have a kitchen manager. I more or less fill that role, without the official title or added responsibility.

"I am happy as I am, enjoy my job and try to keep everyone on their toes. I also tell people that the grass is never greener."

Pauline has two grown-up children, both in their 30s, as well as one granddaughter (aged four), with another on the way.

She said: "I work at the pub Monday to Friday and then look after my granddaughter from Friday afternoon until Sunday, which also keeps me very busy."

Pauline concluded: "When I stop to think about it, the past 25 years have gone by really quickly."

Jean added: "I was in the kitchen washing up when Tim arrived at the pub. It was a complete surprise and made my day.

"I told him that it has taken all this time, 25 years, to come to see me.

"It was good to meet him, at last."

Jean said: "No way does it seem like 25 years – it has gone so quickly.

"I couldn't wish for better people to work with. That's the main thing, and I'm happy in my work."

Tim said: "I was so pleased to be able to congratulate two long-serving staff members, Pauline and Jean, personally.

"Well done and thanks to them both for their 25 years' service and commitment to the company."

Also pictured (back, left to right) are shift managers Harry Deane and Claire Jarvis; (front, left to right) kitchen associate Katie Bartholomew and team leader Chloe Wood.

AWARDS

PRESCOT

THE WATCH MAKER HITS THE BIG TIME



The Watch Maker (Prescot) has been named by members of its local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch as a 'Pub of Excellence'.

Shift leader and real-ale champion Daniel McCourt is pictured with the 2022 'Pub of Excellence' framed certificate, presented to the pub by chair of St Helens and Districts CAMRA.

Daniel said: "The pub was shortlisted for the 'Pub of the Year' title and, although we didn't win the overall prize, we are delighted to be recognised with this 'Pub of Excellence' award."

Gillian Yates, chair of St Helens and Districts CAMRA, said: "I'm so proud of what The Watch Maker has achieved over the last few years.

"The pub is really engaged with us as a CAMRA branch and doing a lot for the local community, so we were delighted to present it this year with this 'Pub of Excellence' award as part of the 'Pub of the Year' competition.

"For pubs to make the shortlist, they need CAMRA members to score their beers throughout the year, via the What Pub web app – and the

pubs with the most people scoring their beer make the shortlist for the 'Pub of the Year' competition.

"We have more than 70 real-ale pubs in our branch, so for The Watch Maker to make the shortlist for 'Pub of the Year' shows real commitment from the team there to serving quality real ale and to engaging with their customers to encourage them to score the beer."

Branch media and public affairs officer Pam Pye added: "We are delighted that The Watch Maker is getting the recognition it deserves.

"The team there is doing a great job at making the pub a community hub."

The Watch Maker serves up to 10 real ales, including Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles Best, as well as Sharp's Doom Bar, together with an ever-changing range of guest ales.

Among the breweries often showcased are Birkenhead-based Peerless Brewing Co and Coach House Brewing Company, from Warrington.

RICHARD REWARDED FOR PUTTING FUNDRAISING INTO PUBS' DNA



Wetherspoon's **general** manager Richard Marriner has been recognised, at the Third Sector Business Charity Awards 2022, for his dedication to charity fundraising.

Richard was named winner of the 'outstanding employee' category award for his contribution to the company's charity partnership with Young Lives vs Cancer.

The Third Sector Business Charity Awards recognise and reward the partnerships between outstanding corporate and charitable organisations and celebrate their achievements.

Third Sector revealed: "To be selected for the shortlist requires examples of truly brilliant work, but to win an award is an incredible achievement."

Richard collected his prize at a black-tie ceremony at London Marriott Grosvenor Square, where the winners were announced across the awards' innovation, charity partnerships and talent categories.

However, he is the first to point out that this success is all about team effort.

Richard said: "It was nice to be nominated and lovely to win, as there were some great individuals in the category. However, it is really about what Wetherspoon and Young Lives vs Cancer have done and allowed me to do, to make our charity partnership such a success, over the years."

The awards' organiser, Third Sector, wrote: "Richard has played a part in the partnership between Young Lives vs Cancer and Wetherspoon for the full 20 years it has been running.

"He is a dedicated and passionate advocate for fundraising, vital to embedding a culture of fundraising within the organisation.

"He has raised significant sums for Young Lives vs Cancer, conceiving of the now-annual darts tournament which started as a small competition in the southeast and is now a national event, engaging colleagues across the organisation – and this event alone has raised in excess of £1,000,000 to date.

"Key to Richard's success is his ability to embed fundraising in the day-to-day business of running pubs. He uses his knowledge of his teams and experience in the business to drive fundraising which engages employees, improves morale and has a positive impact on the business too."

Speaking about his contribution to the 20-year partnership with Young Lives vs Cancer, Richard said: "Wetherspoon is a community, and the charity challenges and events give people the opportunity to excel at something which they may never have tried before.

"Whether it's darts, football, cycling, head-shaving or cake sales, it is about team-building, breaking boundaries and great community spirit.

"When you look at all of the amazing activities, through the pages of Wetherspoon News, you can see that the company is proud of everyone who gets involved."

Richard is one of the main driving forces behind the staff darts tournament, which originally started with 40 teams and raised £11,000. In 2022, 400 teams took part in pubs across the UK and Ireland, collecting £160,654 (plus €3,000 for LauraLynn).

He added: "I would like to thank deputy manager Alan Munn at The Richmal Crompton (Bromley) and shift leader Martin Avis at The Banker's Draft (Eltham) for their help in establishing the darts event.

"Both keen darts players, they have helped me for the past decade to organise and run it."

In October 2022, Richard will be celebrating 26 years working with the company, having started as a shift manager at The Paper Moon (Dartford) (now closed), after leaving university.

His first pub-manager role came at The Foxley Hatch (Purley), followed by spells at The New Cross Turnpike (Welling), Lloyds No.1 Bar now The Furze Wren (Bexleyheath) and The Milan Bar (Croydon) (now closed).

Richard then moved to a head-office role in 2003.

● **Third Sector is the UK's leading publication for everyone who needs to know what's going on in the charity and voluntary sector.**

SPEND IT LIKE BECKHAM

Wetherspoon News (summer 2022 edition) reported on Hollywood film star John Travolta's unexpected visit to The Romany Rye (Dereham).

Hot on the heels of the pub hosting an A-lister customer, former England football captain David Beckham's son Brooklyn and his new wife, actress Nicola Peltz, enjoyed an evening with friends at The Metropolitan Bar (next to Baker Street underground station, London).

Mail Online reported: "Their parents are worth an estimated combined £1.68 billion, while they recently enjoyed a lavish £3-million wedding in Florida.

"But Brooklyn Beckham and Nicola Peltz proved that they were just like the rest of us on Friday night as they enjoyed an evening at budget pub chain Wetherspoon, in London.

"Nicola, 27, flashed her huge diamond wedding ring as she walked arm in arm with her new husband, while accompanied by pals amid 23-year-old Brooklyn's 'work trip' to the capital.

"Nicola took to her Instagram stories to reshare a snap of the group gathered around a table laden with cocktails.

"While the beauty also blew a kiss to the camera while posing with pals in a snap in which their musician pal Sekou revealed he had 'took the gang to spoons'.

"The happy couple appeared to be thoroughly enjoying their night out as they gleefully posed for numerous snaps.

"The couple have been sharing a host of snaps to their respective social media as they settle in to married life."

PUB FANS JOHN AND SHARON - PERPETUALLY PERAMBULATING



Married couple John and Sharon Gibson have visited, together, more than 820 Wetherspoon pubs.

Their home base in Chesterfield provides a central location for their tours, which also take in racecourses and football grounds.

John says that they have visited 829 pubs, 61 racecourses, 92 football league grounds and 23 National League grounds.

John said: "We love Wetherspoon's pubs.

"We have visited those throughout Great Britain, including 67 Scottish pubs.

"It all started 20 years ago, when we stumbled across The Thomas Sheraton (Stockton-on-Tees).

"We hadn't heard of Wetherspoon before that."

Since then, they have ticked off venues in south and north Wales, Cornwall, the Midlands, London, the southeast and Scotland.

The couple's local Wetherspoon is The Pillar of Rock (Chesterfield).

The pub's manager, Jo Lowe, said: "John and Sharon are very much part of the furniture here - and we do like to hear about their travels."

Highlights of the last 20 years' touring include The Paddle Steamer (Largs). "It's one of the prettiest pubs I've ever seen," said John.

Certain pubs have been singled out to celebrate milestones along the way.

John and Sharon chose to visit The Sennockian (Sevenoaks) as their 700th pub, with The Scarsdale Hundred (Beighton, Sheffield) nominated as their 800th pub to be chalked off.

LOVE OF JOB KEEPS PAUL IN THE POSTE

Kitchen manager Odion Ogba is pictured receiving his long-service certificate from personnel and retail audit director James Ullman at The Poste of Stone (Stone).

Regional manager and employee director Debbie Whittingham and pub manager Neil Ridgway are also pictured.

Originally from Nigeria, Odion (known to everyone as Paul) came to the UK to study.

While he was at the College of North West London, he started working as a cleaner at J.J. Moon's (North Harrow) (now closed), where Debbie was his first pub manager.

Paul moved to The Moon on the Hill (Harrow), before teaming up with Debbie again at The Tichenham Inn (Ickenham), where he spent 11 years and progressed to kitchen manager. He joined the team at The Poste of Stone seven years ago.

Paul laughed: "If I didn't love my job, I would not be here for 25 years."

"It has been a long journey, yet I have never looked back."

Debbie said: "I thank Paul for his phenomenal loyalty and commitment over the years, which has contributed to the company's success. He is an incredible asset and a fabulous guy."



RICCARDO'S TATTOOS ARE IN TRIBUTE TO PUB'S MANAGER

Riccardo Barile has tattooed images, as a thankyou to pub manager Sean O'Farrell, of the first two pubs where he worked.

Originally from Italy, Riccardo, now a team leader at The Falcon (High Wycombe), began his Wetherspoon career in nearby Slough at The Moon and Spoon.

Riccardo says: "That job honestly saved my life. Sean was so kind to me – and we became friends. When he moved to High Wycombe, I moved with him."

His next tattoo, he says, will be Sean's signature, again in recognition of the impact which getting a job at Wetherspoon had on his life.

According to a colleague, team leader Adam Coles at The Falcon, Riccardo is "a walking canvass".

His other tattoos include images from film and television, such as The Walking Dead, Batman and Pulp Fiction.



KATSU ARRIVES ON MENU TO CURRY FAVOUR

**Beloved Japanese comfort food, with fascinating history,
available in three varieties**



The Japanese curry dish katsu, one of Japan's (and now the world's) most-beloved comfort foods, is arriving at Wetherspoon (2 November).

Pubs will be serving this brand-new curry dish on the main menu, in three varieties, and as part of Thursday's Curry Club®.

The new katsu curries, served with curry sauce, coconut-flavour rice, sliced chillies and coriander, also include a soft or alcoholic drink* as part of the price.

Escalope

Choose from NEW katsu chicken curry (with sliced breaded chicken escalope), NEW katsu grilled chicken curry (with sliced grilled chicken breast) and NEW katsu Quorn™ nugget curry, served with eight coated pieces.

Across Japan, curry is a hugely popular option at mealtimes and could possibly be considered a national dish. However, the origins of the dish are unsurprisingly not from Japan.

It was, in fact, during the Meiji Restoration (1868–89) that curry was originally brought to Japan by the British from India.

Powder

Japan's number-one English magazine, Metropolis, reveals: "Legend has it that a party of British sailors, shipwrecked off the Japanese coast, was rescued. They came ashore with their rations, which included curry powder.

"The Japanese navy, at that time, was in search of a way to feed its sailors and needed a cheap, filling option which could be cooked and served with ease. And so, the first Japanese curry recipe was born."

The most popular version of the Japanese curry in Japan, and now internationally, is the katsu curry, 'katsu' being a shortened form of 'katsuretsu' – meaning 'cutlet'.

Combination

It is the perfect combination of deep-fried breaded chicken escalope (or sometimes served with pork loin), accompanied by white rice and a thick sweet and spicy curry sauce.

Originating in India, brought to Japan by the British, then exported by Japan back to Britain (and the world), katsu curry is soon to be served at your local Wetherspoon.



Katsu grilled chicken curry; Katsu Quorn™ nugget curry; Katsu chicken curry

PEBBLES PASSES BIG TEST AS JULIE HEADS TO HEAD OFFICE

Bar associate Julie Richards, who works at The York Palace (Llanelli), was invited to Wetherspoon's head office to attend one of the weekly company meetings with chairman Tim Martin.

Along with her pub manager Nicole Dowell (pictured second left), duty manager Gavin Evans (pictured left) and her guide dog Pebbles, they travelled from Llanelli to Watford and back by train.

Julie said: "It was the very first time that I have been to head office, although I have met Tim Martin a couple of times before."

"It was quite an adventure going to London on the train and travelling on the tube. Pebbles did really well, and Tim got to meet her."

Julie admitted: "I was initially a bit nervous about going because, although I qualified with Pebbles in December 2019, we have spent a lot of time since in lockdown."

"But, when I was invited to go, I thought that it would be a good experience for both of us and would help to build our confidence."

"I also wanted to thank everyone for supporting me for the past nine years and to demonstrate that, even with a disability, you can still work and be a valued part of the community."

Julie has retinitis pigmentosa, causing peripheral vision loss, and is officially registered blind. She has some central vision (10 per cent), but is unable to see around herself or in the dark.

However, she is helped from her home to work and back by her four-and-a-half-year-old black Labrador guide dog Pebbles.

Julie previously worked for the NHS, employed at a hospital for four years, but lost her job soon after her sight began to deteriorate. She joined the team at The York Palace in April 2013.

While Julie works behind the bar, often recognising the voice of regulars before managing to see them, Pebbles stays in a special pen, away from the bustle of the busy pub. The York Palace is the first Wetherspoon pub to cater for a guide dog at work.

Julie, originally from Cardiff, but having lived in Llanelli for 34 years, said: "Pebbles is doing well. She sits downstairs in her pen and, on my breaks, in between working, I take her out for a walk."



Julie (pictured centre with Pebbles), concluded: "I enjoy my job and I'm happy as a bar associate. All of my colleagues are lovely, and I am very lucky."

Wetherspoon's area manager, Victoria Walker (pictured next to Tim Martin), said: "I know that Julie was quite anxious about going to head office, but she loved it and had an absolute blast, especially meeting Tim."

"Julie, together with Pebbles, is an inspiration to all of her colleagues and customers at The York Palace and a great credit to the Wetherspoon community."

CALUM COMPLETES AMAZING JOURNEY

When Calum Paterson was 21, he weighed 31 stone and struggled to walk up a flight of stairs.

Now, aged 28, he has lost 17 stone and has cycled from London to Paris to raise more than £1,800 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

To lose most of his weight, Calum took up gym cycling and decided that embarking on the London-to-Paris charity cycle would be a massive personal challenge.

He wanted to prove to himself he could complete it.

Calum, a shift manager at The Guildhall & Linen Exchange (Dunfermline), told his pub manager Stephen Nesbitt and area manager Sarah Kyle-Playford that he wanted to test himself to see how much he could push himself.

"They really encouraged me," said Calum. "They suggested that I became involved in a charity project to motivate myself."

At the gym, Calum trained hard for seven months before the 300-mile bike ride between the British and French capital cities.

The trip took three days, with Calum cycling around 100 miles a day. He wants to build on this feat by taking part in more charity bike rides.

Sarah said: "This was an incredible achievement for Calum, as he has been on a mission to become a healthier, fitter person and lost 17 stone."

"We are so proud of him and wish him well with future projects."

The pub's manager, Stephen Nesbitt, added: "It has been an incredible turnaround for Calum, who approached the cycle challenge with determination and courage."



THE WILLIAM WEBB ELLIS • TWICKENHAM • THE WIBBAS DOWN INN • WIMBLEDON

HOW PULLING PINTS LED TO MANAGERS' MARRIAGE



Husband and wife pub managers Andy Balastegui Gonzalez and Maja Lubkowska have, between them, clocked up more than 35 years' service for the company.

They also have Wetherspoon to thank for their meeting, as Andy first met his future wife Maja 15 years ago at The Central Bar (Shepherds Bush).

Andy had just started as a bar associate, while Maja, who had already been with Wetherspoon for five years, was a shift manager at the pub.

It is now more than five years since the Wetherspoon couple were married and held their wedding reception at The Rocket (Putney).

Maja, now pub manager at The William Webb Ellis (Twickenham), said: "I could say that I taught Andy everything he knows, but that would not be true, as he has taught me a few things, over the years."

"We are always talking about ways and things which we could do better in our pubs. We have both shared ideas which have worked for each of us."

Andy, who is pub manager at The Wibbas Down Inn (Wimbledon), said: "In our time with the company, we have worked all over west and southwest London – and because we both work for the same company, it is easy to share ideas."

Sharing ideas was even easier when the couple jointly ran The Oyster Rooms (Fulham) (now closed).

The couple have two children, Andy and Angelica.

Maja said: "When we aren't working, it's all about the kids."

"My son is into kick boxing and football, so we are always taking him to those, while Angelica is learning to play the piano at home."

Both children are also attending Instituto Español Vicente Cañada Blanch, a Spanish international school in London – the same school which their father attended as a child.

Maja admitted: "It's easier than Polish, plus the school is full time, so children learn English and Spanish at the same time."

In Maja's pub manager role at The William Webb Ellis, located close to Twickenham Stadium and the official home of England rugby, she is often serving the visiting rugby fans.

She said: "We love the rugby supporters; they can be loud, yet they are always friendly with it."

Reflecting on the past 15 years, Andy said: "A lot has changed in both the pub world and our life."

But asked for the highlights of her Wetherspoon career, Maja couldn't think of a better moment than their Putney wedding reception, on the same day as the 10th anniversary of their relationship.

Maja concluded: "I felt like a film star for the day. It was the best experience of my life – and the views of the river were stunning."

Wetherspoon's area manager, James Coble, said: "It has been a pleasure to work with Andy and Maja for the past two years and, previously, in my role as a pub manager in the same area."

"They are both highly driven managers, who lead from the front in delivering exceptional standards, year after year."

"The way in which they are able to juggle home life alongside running their businesses provides an inspiration for aspiring managers."

"Long may it continue."

AWARDS

BARNSELEY

BEN AND BRAMAH SHINE BRIGHTLY AS BEST BAR NONE BOUNCES BACK



The team at The Joseph Bramah (Barnsley) has scooped a double in the local Best Bar None awards.

Pub manager Ben Dixon and his staff picked up the 'best pub from a national company' award, as well as the most-prized 'overall winner' title at the Barnsley Best Bar None 2021/22 ceremony.

Shift managers Tom Winstanley (left) and Christian Glasspoole, as well as shift leader Tom Green (centre), attended the awards evening at The Civic Barnsley. Also pictured (right) is shift manager Neil Stephenson.

Tom said: "The awards haven't been given for the past two years, owing to COVID-19, but we did previously win four years ago.

"It was a very nice surprise, as we were convinced that it wouldn't be awarded to us again."

Barnsley Best Bar None is a voluntary accreditation scheme supported by the Home Office and organised by Barnsley Council.

It recognises excellence in Barnsley's nightlife and ensures that consistent standards are upheld across licensed premises in the town centre.

Tom added: "The win has boosted staff morale, after a tough and quite stressful time during the pandemic.

"It is great to see all that hard work recognised – and the whole team is proud to have won the two awards."

OUR ACTIONS MAKE US A CLIMATE LEADER

Wetherspoon has been recognised for reducing its greenhouse gas emissions.

It has been listed in this year's FT-Statista Europe's Climate Leaders list, highlighting companies which, over a five year period, have achieved the greatest reduction in emissions.

Wetherspoon was one of just two pub companies featured in the list's travel and leisure section.

A spokesman for the Europe's Climate Leaders 2022 special report said: "Congratulations to Wetherspoon.

"This is a data-driven initiative, in which Statista and the FT evaluated the reduction of carbon emissions intensity of thousands of major companies across Europe.

"Wetherspoon stood out in the process – and we are confident that the company is entirely deserving of the title 'climate leader'."

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, added: "We take our environmental responsibilities seriously.

"Being named a 'climate leader' is great news for the company, its staff and customers."

STOCKPORT

CASK CHAMPIONS BASK IN GLORY AT THE CALVERTS COURT



The Calverts Court (Stockport) has been voted as ‘pub of the month’, for July 2022, by the Stockport and South Manchester Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch members.

Duty manager and ale champion Tom Jones is pictured (centre) accepting the certificate from committee member Lawrence Devaney (left) and branch member Chris Wainwright.

Tom, who has worked for the company for 15 years, said: “We are delighted to win this ‘pub of the month’ award and thank our local CAMRA branch members for their support.”

Branch treasurer Jim Flynn, a fan of the pub, explained why the July 2022 accolade was awarded to The Calverts Court.

He said: “To some people, this award to a J D Wetherspoon pub housed in an old furniture store on Petersgate, Stockport, might be a surprise, but it is one of the busiest pubs in the town centre and possibly across the borough.

“It boasts the usual Wetherspoon attributes of value-for-money, a range of beers and confidence that you will not be short-changed on standards.

“However, what has earned The Calverts Court the accolade is the improvement in choice and quality of the cask beers (including milds) and ciders over the last 12 months.

“The pub has also, over this time, promoted several beer festivals, supported Mild Magic and Stockport Beer Week and held good-quality meet-the-brewer events.

“Congratulations are therefore in order to Rachael Brown, the pub’s manager, and her ale champion Tom Jones, who has been encouraged to freshen up the beer and cider offering; this, in turn, has led to this award.”

The pub always serves 10 real ales, with seven ever-changing guest ales, including beers from Brightside Brewing Company, Stockport Brewing Company and Titanic Brewery.

Phoenix Brewery’s Wobbly Bob (6.0% ABV) is a particular customer favourite.



Burrito salad bowl; Southern-fried chicken strip & maple-cured bacon salad; Grilled halloumi-style cheese & roasted vegetable salad

SALAD SELECTION GETS A SHAKE-UP

Say hallo to halloumi or buenos dias to burrito

Wetherspoon is introducing (2 November) two new salad dishes to the salads and pastas range at your local pub.

The NEW burrito salad, a vegetarian option (712 kcal), combines spicy rice, cheese, roasted pepper, courgette and onion, served with tortilla chips, guacamole and sliced chillies.

Chicken

For an added cost, meat-eating customers can add a chicken breast (206 kcal) to the dish.

Another vegetarian-option meal, coming in at just 568 kcal, is the NEW grilled halloumi-style cheese & roasted vegetable salad, with roasted pepper, courgette, onion and pico de gallo.

All salad choices include a soft or alcoholic drink* as part of the price.

Basil

The ever-popular vegan-friendly Mediterranean salad (314 kcal) is still among our menu choices. Its combination of pearl barley, quinoa, butternut squash, wheat berries, red pepper, cherry tomatoes, kale, pumpkin seeds, basil and dressing makes this dish a real winner.

Also still being served is the chicken & maple-cured bacon salad, with your choice of grilled chicken breast or southern-fried chicken strips.

If opting for a lighter bite or a healthier meal, you can't go wrong with a Wetherspoon salad choice. There is something for everyone.

What is halloumi?

This is a traditional semi-firm Cypriot cheese.

Similar in texture to mozzarella, this is brined, imparting a salty taste and a greater depth of flavour.

It is an excellent grilling cheese because it does not melt.

Halloumi slices, when cooked, will retain their shape, with the heat softening the rubbery (or 'squeaky') cheese, while mellowing its saltiness.

SHUTDOWN SLOWS, BUT CAN'T STOP, PROGRESS OF PUB FANS



When we previously featured Wetherspoon customers and fans Agnieszka (Agnes) and Alan Forbes, in Wetherspoon News (summer 2019 edition), they were chasing their goal of visiting every Wetherspoon pub by 2022.

Having started their 'collection' in May 2016, they had already clocked up 428 pubs, around half way to their total. Then, the pandemic hit.

Despite almost two years of pub closures, lockdowns and restrictions, they have now managed to visit 709 pubs and have some 'interesting' milestones among them.

Alan reported: "We visited The Reeds Arms (Burnham-on-Sea) on the day in March 2020 on which the advice from Boris Johnson 'to avoid going to the pub, if possible' changed to closing all pubs.

"However, we were first through the doors at The Admiral of the Humber (Hull) on the morning in July 2020 when the pubs reopened."

In between pub visits, the couple, who travel the world full time, yet based in south London, where their locals are The Oxted Inn (Oxted), The George (Croydon) and The Sir Julian Huxley (Selsdon), also found the time to get married.

They are pictured at The George Hotel (Hailsham) in their wedding outfits.

Agnes revealed: "We spent our wedding night at The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury) on 14 June 2021, our 600th pub, having had to postpone Alan's surprise 60th birthday party in June 2020, at the same venue.

"We also visited 15 new pubs on our honeymoon in Scotland, including staying at The Saltoun Inn (Fraserburgh), another postponement of Alan's 60th birthday celebrations."

Alan added: "In May 2022, we clocked up our 700th pub, staying at The John Francis Basset (Camborne).

"It was such a lovely hotel that we ended up staying for four nights, while walking the South West Coast Path."

He concluded: "We have converted numerous friends and family to Wetherspoon and have met up, unexpectedly, with many friends around the country, through Agnieszka's regular Facebook updates about our progress, as we get closer to our goal of visiting every Wetherspoon pub."

GIG-GOER LEGS IT FROM PUB TO PUB IN LONDON

When Joe Stephenson travelled from Carlisle to London for a gig, he spent the rest of the weekend touring Wetherspoon's pubs in the capital.

Joe took a morning train and arrived in time for a late breakfast at The Masque Haunt (Old Street) before moving on to The Sir John Oldcastle (Farringdon) to plan the rest of his tour. He went from there to Hamilton Hall (Liverpool Street station) for a glass of Kopparberg cider, then to The Liberty Bounds (Tower Hill) and The Pommelers Rest (Tower Bridge).

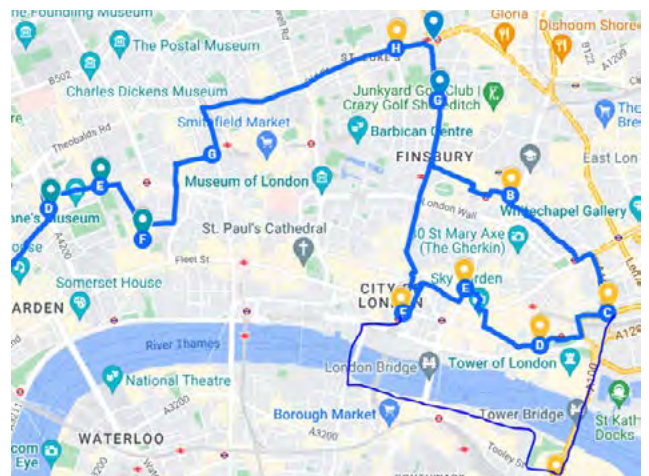
Switching by now to blackcurrant and sodas, Joe proceeded to The Sir John Hawkshaw (Cannon Street station) and on to The Ice Wharf (Camden), where he had a chicken burger before the evening gig.

He said: "I would always choose a Wetherspoon when I'm away from home because they offer good value for money and are always good pubs to go to."

Joe's tour took him to 13 pubs, walking 20 miles around them (see map).

Before his train home on the Sunday, Joe took in The Sir John Oldcastle again, Penderel's Oak (Holborn) and Shakespeare's Head (Holborn) before his favourite of them all – The Barrel Vault (St Pancras International station).

He said: The Barrel Vault is so impressive. It's spacious and has a special atmosphere."



REGULAR, GLEN, BREWS UP HIS OWN ALE FESTIVAL

Pub regular Glen Simon got to organise his own personal ale festival at The Wallace Hartley (Colne).

The idea came from a conversation which Glen had with the pub's ale champion, shift manager Cameron Tweedie.

Glen got to choose all of his favourite beers for the festival – and Cameron ordered them in.

Cameron said: “Glen is a real-ale-lover and is one of my favourite regulars. When I first started as ale champion, he helped me with a lot of good suggestions which worked out, in terms of guest ales which went down really well with customers, so this was a thankyou for that input.”

Glen chose Osset Brewery's pale ales Excelsius (5.2% ABV) and Silver King (4.3%); Daleside Brewery's Monkey Wrench (5.3% ABV), a strong ale with a malty flavour, and Kent brewer Shepherd Neame's ale Bishops Finger (5.0% ABV).

Glen said: “It was great fun and, of course, I didn't pick just beers which I like myself, but ones which others would enjoy, making up a varied range, so that people with different tastes would enjoy at least one of them. It was really nice of Cameron to ask me to become involved.”

Glen is pictured (centre) with Cameron (left) and pub manager Alex Robinson (right).



JOHN AND STEPHEN STICK THEIR NECK OUT FOR G-RAF

John McKenna, pub manager at The Kirky Puffer (Kirkintilloch), and shift leader Stephen Murphy, from The Last Post (Paisley), both lent a hand at a local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) real-ale festival.

John (pictured front), chairman of the Glasgow & West of Scotland branch of CAMRA, and Stephen, who is also the branch contact, both donated their time and expertise to the Glasgow Real-Ale Festival (G-RAF), organised by the branch.

The annual event, last held in 2019 (owing to the pandemic), returned this year for a three-day festival held at The Briggait, near the River Clyde, to the south of Glasgow's Merchant City area.

Visitors were able to sample almost 150 beers from the UK and overseas, as well as 18 ciders and perries.

Stephen (pictured) was responsible for the orders and served on the bar during the festival, while John helped to build and set up the bars, as well as offering technical services and admin support.

John reported: “It was the first festival for three years and proved popular and successful.

“It is always something I love getting involved with, but is hard work.”

John laughed: “It was great to get back to work for a rest.”



THE POSTE OF STONE • STONE

LOCAL CHAMPION ANDREW GATHERS NO MOSS IN STONE



Andrew Best, shift manager at The Poste of Stone (Stone) for the past seven years, is the epitome of a local community champion.

Andrew was born and brought up in Stone, where he has always lived and, as well as full-time work for Wetherspoon, he is also a local councillor, school governor, pubwatch chair and became deputy mayor of Stone for 2022/3.

For the townsfolk of Stone, Mr Best is certainly living up to his family name.

A family man himself, with three children aged 13, 10 and five, Andrew was already vice-chair of the school governing board, when he was approached in 2019 to become a local councillor for Walton North ward.

Andrew revealed: "I was already known for my work in the community, when I was asked to stand for the Stone Independents Group and subsequently elected to the post.

"It is not so much about the politics, but making sure that local people look after the town and its residents, ensuring that Stone gets what it needs."

Andrew's role is chair of estates, which includes helping to run community buildings in the town, among them the Frank Jordan Centre community space and the council-leased railway station premises, with Andrew overseeing the budget and upkeep.

When the Stone Town Mayor Cllr Jonathan Powell embarked on his second term in office, he nominated Andrew as deputy, much to the agreement of fellow councillors.

This latest role involves attending events and functions, charity fundraising and deputising for the mayor.

Andrew said: "My kids think it's really funny that I'm deputy mayor, and my wife is supportive.

"My mum and dad, who have always lived in Stone, are quite proud though."

As well as school governor meetings, council meetings and deputy mayoral duties, Andrew is also chair of Stone pubwatch, a role he took on during the lockdown period.

He admitted: "I was already involved and attended pubwatch meetings, representing The Poste of Stone, but, when the previous chair resigned, it was decided that I was the natural successor."

However, Andrew's career in the pub industry came about only by (happy) accident, after he returned home from teacher training college, having already decided that that career path "wasn't for me".

Andrew recalled: "I walked to the pub (The Poste of Stone) to drown my sorrows, having moved back home, and the pub manager said come and work for me instead."

That was 16 years ago, when he started as a bar associate at Stone, before several moves and career progressions, among them at The Picture House (Stafford), The Old Swan (Uttoxeter), The Thomas Botfield (Telford), The Wheatsheaf (Cheadle) and The Acorn Inn (Lichfield).

He returned to The Poste of Stone in 2015 as a shift manager, where he has worked since.

Andrew is also keen to stand again next year for re-election as councillor, although the role of mayor may be one step too far.

Andrew smiled: "I've seen the mayor's diary – and he is very busy. "I'm not sure that I would fit everything in."



ZEAL FOR REAL ALE KEEPS UPHILL AT TOP OF THE HEAP

Caerphilly pub has been in The Good Beer Guide since 2014

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

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

This is evident in the high number of Wetherspoon's 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.

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

Excellent

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

The Malcolm Uphill (Caerphilly), which opened as a Wetherspoon pub in October 2011, first featured in the guide in 2014 (published 2013), less than two years after opening.

The pub has been present in the guide ever since.

Pub manager John Stephens (left) has been at the helm since it opened, having moved from The Ernest Willows (Cardiff).

Originally from Tenby, in west Wales, John has been with the company for 22 years, starting as a shift manager at The Paper Moon (Dartford) (now closed).

The pub's cellar champion, Nick Davies (right), who joined the team at The Malcolm Uphill in 2015 as an under-18 floor associate, has progressed through the ranks to become shift manager.

John reported: "Nick is responsible for our real-ale selection, chatting to regular customers, taking on board suggestions and generally keeping an eye on what is popular and what is not.

Suggestion

"We have an 'ale corner' with a suggestion box – and Nick looks at the seasonal lists and gets an idea from our real-ale regulars what they would like us to stock.

"Real ales upwards of 4.5% ABV are always popular."

The pub serves the regular Wetherspoon choices of Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles, as well as two ever-changing guest ales.

John said: "We select one from the national listing and always have one local brewery ale available, including brews from Brecon Brewing, Evan Evans Brewery and Vale of Glamorgan (VOG) Brewery.

"Glamorgan Brewing's Jemima's Pitchfork is always a favourite too as is the national listing Greene King Abbot Reserve."

John continued: "We have a good ale following at the pub.

"We also had Glamorgan Brewing visit us earlier in the year for a meet-the-brewer session to coincide with St David's Day."

Delighted

John was also delighted to report that Nick was due to host the Mid Glamorgan CAMRA branch area meeting (August) at The Malcolm Uphill for the first time.

John's team includes several staff members who have been at the pub since it first opened, including shift leader Sonia Herbert, kitchen associate Abbey Richards and kitchen team leader Grant Keeping.

Deputy manager Hayley Todd has also been with the company for 15 years and worked with John at The Ernest Willows.

John said: "Everyone on the team is cellar trained and knows the process of keeping and serving real ale in the best condition.

"We also always make sure, at the start of every day, that there is enough of every real ale for the whole day.

"The next barrel is always ready to go immediately, so we keep customers happy and not having to wait.

"Without that preparation, a barrel change may be only a few minutes, but it is the little things which can make all the difference."

What The Good Beer Guide 2022 says:

THE MALCOLM UPHILL

Popular Wetherspoon at the top of the town, close to the main transport hub.

It usually has one or two guest beers, particularly at the weekend, and up to two ciders, often including Gwynt y Ddraig Black Dragon.

The pub can be crowded towards the weekend and hosts a popular quiz on quieter Sundays.

Ring the main entrance doorbell, if the separate accessible entrance is needed.

● 87-91 Cardiff Road, Caerphilly, CF83 1FQ

What CAMRA says:

Paul Burgess, Mid Glamorgan CAMRA chair, said: "The Malcolm Uphill brought a new era of choice to the town centre, which continues to be enjoyed by a wide cross-section of customers.

"It has become a popular and comfortable destination for shoppers, commuters and visitors to the imposing Caerphilly Castle.

"Listing in The Good Beer Guide is an achievement which is down, primarily, to the collective staff effort.

"The overall impression is just as important as the range and quality of real ales on sale.

"The latest choice of guest beer is often of interest, especially something rare or unusual."



LAND OF HOP AND GLORY...

Autumn ale festival to showcase selection of 30 ales all brewed using only British-grown hop varieties

Wetherspoon's autumn real-ale festival will be celebrating British hops, with the event's theme being ales made using hops originating from the British Isles.

The company is showing its continued commitment to British hop farmers and their home-grown and developed produce by showcasing a selection of 30 festival ales all brewed using only British-grown hop varieties.

The 12-day autumn real-ale festival runs from Wednesday 12 to Sunday 23 October (inclusive) at Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Speciality

The festival line-up also includes new, seasonal and speciality ales – in addition to which many of the ales are available in the pubs for the first time, having been brewed exclusively for the bi-annual event.

Among the 30 festival ales are three from overseas breweries – Mad Giant (Johannesburg, South Africa), Telemark Bryggeri (Skien, Norway) and Nowhereman Brewing (Western Australia).

However, these have all used British-grown hop varieties in their festival brews.

Mad Giant's Eben Uys travelled to Hook Norton Brewery (Oxfordshire) to brew the amber ale Autumn Amber (4.3% ABV), using Endeavour, Jester, Olicana and UK Chinook hops.

This reinterpretation of Mad Giant's seasonal ale delivers generous citrus and fruity hop notes, balanced by solid biscuit malt notes, resulting in a crisp, full-flavoured character.

Kjetil Jikiun, from Telemark Bryggeri, has brewed Rav (5.0% ABV) at Shepherd Neame Brewery (Kent), using Ernest, Godiva, Jester and Olicana hops.

Smooth

This red session IPA's inviting malt profile is balanced by a gentle hop bitterness, while tropical fruit and citrus notes dominate and continue into the long, smooth finish.

Banks's Brewery (West Midlands) hosted Eddie Still, who journeyed from Nowhereman Brewing (Western Australia) to brew Wungong (5.5% ABV).

It is made using Ernest, Jester, Keyworth's Early, Olicana and UK Chinook – a blend of hop varieties which delivers a feast of assorted fruity flavours, balanced by a rich malt base.

Other ales to look out for are those brewed by British brewers, especially for the festival.

These include Substructure (4.3% ABV), a golden session IPA from Argyll-based Fyne Ales, County Durham's Maxim Brewery's Olicana (4.6% ABV), a new blond ale celebrating new UK hop variety Olicana, and Staffordshire-based Titanic Brewery's Slipway IPA (5.5% ABV), a new amber-coloured IPA with a blend of fresh English hops.

Floral

Green Gold (4.0% ABV), from Windsor-based Windsor & Eton Brewery, is a new copper-coloured best bitter brewed using fresh-picked green WGV hops, delivering a floral aroma and a fresh, grassy and resinous flavour.

North Yorkshire's Black Sheep Brewery is showcasing Astronomer (4.2% ABV), a seasonal black porter brewed using WGV hops and a blend of tasty dark malts and chocolate.

It has a rich, warming character, with heaps of chocolate notes in both the aroma and palate.

Customers will be able to enjoy three one-third-of-a-pint ales for the price of a festival pint, to be sure not to miss out on any of the festival ales.

Throughout the festival, the Festival News magazine, including tasting notes for all beers, will be available at the pubs, on our website and also on the app.



Mad Giant brewery (Johannesburg, South Africa)



Telemark Bryggeri (Skien, Norway)



Nowhereman Brewing (Western Australia)



Bath White Rabbit
3.6% ABV



Bath Ales, Somerset. Est. 1995
This new straw-coloured IPA has hoppy and zesty flavours bursting with grapefruit, lime and citrus notes, delivered by the hop varieties used and complemented by a fleeting, crisp and intense bitterness.
Hops: Harlequin, Target



Rudgate Epic Endeavour
3.7% ABV



Rudgate Brewery, North Yorkshire. Est. 1992
This seasonal golden-brown ale has been brewed again to celebrate two of the great new British hop varieties – delivering generous citrus and red fruit flavours to its refreshing character.
Hops: Endeavour, Epic



Coach House Hoptober
3.8% ABV



Coach House Brewery, Cheshire. Est. 1991
This straw-coloured ale was first brewed for our 2016 autumn festival. It has a light lemony floral hop aroma, leading to a clean, refreshing flavour, with spicy orange notes on the finish.
Hops: First Gold, Minstrel, Pilot



Hogs Back Home Harvest Ale
4.0% ABV



Hogs Back Brewery, Surrey. Est. 1992
This seasonal amber-coloured ale has been brewed using hops grown on the brewer's own farm. These deliver an inviting citrus nose, rich hoppy flavours and a gentle bitterness in the finish.
Hops: Farnham White Bine, Fuggles, UK Cascade



Windsor & Eton Green Gold
4.0% ABV



Windsor & Eton Brewery, Windsor. Est. 2010
This new copper-coloured best bitter uses fresh-picked green hops, delivering a floral aroma and a fresh, grassy and resinous flavour, balanced by subtle biscuit notes, before resulting in a lingering bitterness in the finish.
Hops: WGV



Greene King Bonkers Conkers
4.1% ABV



Greene King Brewery, Suffolk. Est. 1799
This seasonal ale is amber in colour, with a distinctive fruitiness in both its aroma and flavour, balanced by a biscuit malt character and a clean, crisp bitterness in the finish.
Hops: Admiral, Bramling Cross, First Gold, Fuggles, Goldings, Pilgrim



Black Sheep Astronomer
4.2% ABV



Black Sheep Brewery, North Yorkshire. Est. 1992
This seasonal black porter is brewed using a blend of tasty dark malts and chocolate, delivering a rich, warming character, with heaps of chocolate in both the aroma and palate, complemented by subtle silky vanilla hints.
Hops: WGV



Adnams Regatta
4.3% ABV



Adnams Brewery, Suffolk. Est. 1872
This seasonal gluten-free straw-coloured ale is light and crisp in character, with the generous hop notes balanced by a biscuit malt backbone.
Hops: First Gold, Mystic



Conwy Red
4.3% ABV




Conwy Brewery, Conwy. Est. 2003
This seasonal red ale is brewed in the style of an American red ale, with distinctive citrus hop notes balanced by rich roasted and dark malt flavours.
Hops: East Kent Goldings, Goldings, WGV




Fyne Ales Substructure
4.3% ABV




Fyne Ales, Argyll. Est. 2001
This new vegan-friendly ale is a golden session IPA, naturally hazy in appearance, with tropical fruit aromas, juicy citrus flavours and a long, soft, floral finish.
Hops: Jester, Olicana, Opus




Mad Giant Autumn Amber
4.3% ABV




Mad Giant, Johannesburg, South Africa. Est. 2014
Eben Uys has travelled to Hook Norton Brewery (Oxfordshire) to brew this amber ale. This reinterpretation of Mad Giant's seasonal ale delivers generous citrus and fruity hop notes, balanced by solid biscuit malt notes, resulting in a crisp, full-flavoured character.
Hops: Endeavour, Jester, Olicana, UK Chinook




Thornbridge Hopton
4.3% ABV




Thornbridge Brewery, Derbyshire. Est. 2005
This golden-coloured English pale ale is brewed using all British ingredients, delivering a gentle citrus aroma and a robust bitterness, balanced by emerging notes of malty sweetness.
Hops: Goldings




Evan Evans Boadicea
4.4% ABV




Evan Evans Brewery, Carmarthenshire. Est. 2004
This new dark amber ale has spicy hop notes on the nose, leading to a delicious malty flavour which continues through to dry malt and rich berry fruit notes in the finish.
Hops: Boadicea, Challenger, Goldings




Green Jack Jester
4.4% ABV




Green Jack Brewery, Suffolk. Est. 2003
This golden ale has a fruity aroma followed by hints of tropical fruit, grapefruit and blackcurrant flavours, with subtle herbal notes in the refreshing finish.
Hops: Jester




Elgood's Double Swan
4.5% ABV




Elgood's Brewery, Cambridgeshire. Est. 1795
This occasionally seen, gluten-free ale is blond in colour, with a floral and hoppy aroma which leads to a crisp character, resulting in a refreshing, long, biscuity finish.
Hops: Bramling Cross, Challenger, Sovereign, UK Cascade




Shepherd Neame Rebel Flame
4.5% ABV




Shepherd Neame Brewery, Kent. Est. 1698
This seasonal deep red ale has a full, rich and satisfying character, with blackcurrant, citrus and spicy hop notes achieving a perfect balance with the caramel and roast malt flavours.
Hops: Endeavour, UK Cascade




Maxim Olicana 4.6% ABV




Maxim Brewery, County Durham. Est. 2007
This new blond ale is a celebration of new UK hop varieties, with hints of peach on the nose and a blend of tropical fruit flavours, delivering a refreshing, distinctive character.
Hops: Ernest, Olicana




Lancaster Kaleidoscope
4.7% ABV




Lancaster Brewery, Lancashire. Est. 2005
This new straw-coloured ale has a blend of mango, blackberry and lime flavours which explodes on the palate, resulting in a crisp, refreshing and memorable taste experience.
Hops: Godiva, Opus




Brewster's All The Leaves Are Brown
4.8% ABV




Brewster's Brewery, Lincolnshire. Est. 1998
This new amber-coloured ale is brewed in the style of a California common ale, using lager yeast at an ale temperature, delivering a toasted malt and caramel character, complemented by the zesty orange and spicy notes supplied by the blend of English hops.
Hops: Admiral, Emperor, Endeavour




Exmoor Oatmeal Stout
4.8% ABV




Exmoor Ales, Somerset. Est. 1980
This new black stout has aromas of roast coffee and biscuit, leading to flavours of chocolate, nut and coffee, with a rounded sweetness and smooth velvety malt mouthfeel, while its low level of bitterness in the finish is balanced by the sweet mocha malt profile.
Hops: Archer, Phoenix




Purity Warrior
5.0% ABV




Purity Brewery, Warwickshire. Est. 2005
This occasionally seen, vegan-friendly ruby IPA has aromas of berries, stone fruits and pine, leading to a creamy character, with flavours of rye bread, chocolate and malt.
Hops: Emperor, UK Chinook




Salopian Indigenous
5.0% ABV




Salopian Brewery, Shropshire. Est. 1995
This seasonal black ale is a vibrant and refreshing IPA, with a crisp, clean palate, hints of berries and spice and a lingering, zesty finish.
Hops: Challenger, Target




Telemark Rav
5.0% ABV




Telemark Bryggeri, Skien, Norway. Est. 2018
Kjetil Jikiun has travelled to Shepherd Neame Brewery (Kent) to brew this red session IPA. Its inviting malt profile is balanced by a gentle hop bitterness, while tropical fruit and citrus notes dominate and continue into the long, smooth finish.
Hops: Ernest, Godiva, Jester, Olicana




Wadworth Swordfish
5.0% ABV




Wadworth Brewery, Wiltshire. Est. 1875
This deep-copper-coloured ale has a fruity nose and gentle rum notes, leading to a smooth, full-bodied flavour, caramel overtones and a rounded hop finish.
Hops: Fuggles, Goldings




Wychwood Hobgoblin Red Ale
5.0% ABV




Eagle Brewery, Bedfordshire. Est. 1876
This new ruby ale's blend of all-English malt and hops delivers a complex fruity nose and balanced flavour, resulting in a rich, full-bodied character.
Hops: Fuggles, Goldings, Progress




Inveralmond Daracha
5.2% ABV




Inveralmond Brewery, Perthshire. Est. 1997
This seasonal ruby-coloured ale has a dry, malty character, with its oak-maturing imparting aromas and flavours of coffee, vanilla and tobacco, resulting in a pleasing, mellow oak-malt character.
Hops: Goldings




Hook Norton Flagship
5.3% ABV




Hook Norton Brewery, Oxfordshire. Est. 1849
This seasonal bronze IPA-style ale has a sweet aroma, with marmalade and fruit notes, leading to a fruity mouthfeel, with hints of orange and a full, rich, bittersweet flavour.
Hops: Admiral, Fuggles, Goldings




Nowhereman Wungong
5.5% ABV




Nowhereman Brewing, Western Australia. Est. 2017
Eddie Still has travelled to Banks's Brewery (West Midlands) to brew this russet-coloured ale. Its blend of hop varieties used delivers a feast of assorted fruity flavours, balanced by a rich malt base.
Hops: Ernest, Jester, Keyworth's Early, Olicana, UK Chinook




Titanic Slipway IPA
5.5% ABV



Titanic Brewery, Staffordshire. Est. 1985
This new amber-coloured IPA's blend of fresh English hops will delight your senses, then balancing malt flavours launch into a flavour crescendo, before gently drifting away in anticipation of the next mouthful.
Hops: Harlequin, Jester, Northdown



Batemans Victory Ale
6.0% ABV



Batemans Brewery, Lincolnshire. Est. 1874
This dark amber strong ale has an inviting marmalade aroma, leading to a character brimming with biscuit malt and succulent fruit flavours. These combine with peppery spice notes to deliver a lasting finish.
Hops: Challenger, Goldings

REAL-ALE TYPES



Pale; very light; blond; straw



Golden



Amber; mid brown



Dark brown; ruby



Black; deep ruby; very dark



Festival ale – brewed for the first time, exclusively for this festival



International brewer – non-UK brewer



New ale – not brewed before 2022



Seasonal ale – an ale not brewed permanently



Special ale – a rare ale brewed again, especially for this festival



Speciality ale – brewed with unusual ingredients in an unusual style

BRITISH HOPS IN WETHERSPOON'S AUTUMN FESTIVAL ALES

By Paul Corbett, managing director of Charles Faram, hop factors and merchants since 1865



Do you drink beer brewed by a local brewery? Would you expect your local ales to have local ingredients? Well, quite often, this isn't the case, with many British beers being brewed with hops imported from all over the world.

So, hats off to Wetherspoon for its selection in the autumn festival of beers, all brewed here in the UK and containing nothing but wonderful British hops!

While traditional great British bitters and milds have been at the forefront of UK beer sales for many years, they are now being surpassed by the pale ales, IPAs and NEIPAs which require the flavours and aromas which, for some brewers, currently only come from hops from other parts of the world.

There is no doubt that, if the same sort of flavours were available in hops grown locally, many brewers would prefer to use them, so this is why the team at Charles Faram embarked on a programme to develop locally grown hops which will compete in the fruity, high-aroma category.

Quality

This is far from easy, as British hop-breeding efforts in the past have been 100 per cent focused on producing Fuggles and Goldings types. Challenger, First Gold, Pilgrim, Progress and Target all have that delightfully delicate traditional British quality.

It takes a long time to develop new hop varieties, yet the team at Charles Faram is already well on the way, thanks to local plant expert Peter Glendinning.

Fourteen years ago, Faram embarked on a partnership project with Peter to develop new UK varieties with more intense, fruity characteristics.

There were fears that the mild, maritime UK climate may not be able to grow hops with these flavours, but initial findings had been good and they were very keen to find out more.

So, here we are, 14 years on from those initial forays – and the varieties coming off the programme have far more flavour and aroma than we could have ever imagined.

What's even more exciting is that there is more to come.

Flavour

Every year, the flavour intensity increases by another 5–10 per cent, so who knows what might be possible? What is for certain is that Faram is going to push on with developments as fast as possible.

If, as an industry, brewers and beer-drinkers want sustainability and locally grown produce, it has to be the right thing to do.

As a spin-off, one of the benefits highlighted in these new hop selections is that the growers are using in the region of 20 per cent less fertiliser and pesticide.

This is a fantastic side effect which Faram never envisaged at the start of the programme, but now has the company brimming with excitement.

To take this even further, it is now trialling some of its varieties under organic production – to see how far they can go. Having strong, disease-resistant varieties will reduce the hop industry's reliance on pesticides and be a mainstay in the gene pool available to the Faram development programme in future.

Varieties

We know that drinkers are not currently going to get all of the flavours they like from British varieties, but a great way to help the development programme would be to try a few of the new beers brewed with the Charles Faram varieties.

More sales of the current beers will encourage brewers to use more British hops and enable Faram to finance more development and hopefully produce some even more magnificent home-grown local hops.

Charles Faram would like to say a big thankyou to all Wetherspoon drinkers who are already drinking beers using the new British varieties.

Your support is very much appreciated – and thank you to everyone who reads this feature and considers 'keeping it local and saving the planet'.

Did you know?

- * British hops are produced to some of the highest pesticide residue standards in the world: many fewer active ingredients are approved for use in the UK, compared with the biggest hop-growing areas of Germany or the US.
- * Britain's hop-breeding programmes are the envy of the world: our gene bank of disease-resistant males is much sought after by other countries' farmers.
- * Britain has some of the most robust food assurance and traceability systems in the world.
- * By choosing British-hopped beers, you will be supporting the local economy – everyone from the farmer to those who work on the farms and those who service the tractors and the picking machines.
- * You will play your part in protecting our environment, as much of Britain's food is produced in a sustainable way which enhances the countryside.

THE LINFORD ARMS • CANNOCK

DOUBLE CELEBRATION FOR MANAGER ANDY



Andy Johnston marked 25 years as a manager with Wetherspoon on the same day as he celebrated his 20th wedding anniversary to wife Donna. Pictured (second left) with (left to right) regional manager and employee director Debbie Whittingham, shift manager Jonathan Titley and area manager Kat Prince, he laughed: "The photographer took loads of shots. I don't think I had that many photos taken on my wedding day."

Looking back over the past 25 years, Andy added: "I had no kids when I started working for Wetherspoon. I now have two, Skye and Jay, who both work part time as a bar associate at the pub."

With a background in the hotel business, Andy first joined Wetherspoon in 1997 as a shift manager at The Moon Under Water (Wolverhampton).

Born and bred in Wolverhampton, where he still lives, he worked for a year at the newly opened pub The Imperial (Walsall) (now closed), before returning to The Moon Under Water and several further moves in and around pubs across the West Midlands.

Andy spent seven years as deputy manager at Wetherspoon (Birmingham Airport) (now closed), before taking on his first pub manager role at The Royal Tiger (Wednesfield), 12 years ago.

Now pub manager at The Linford Arms (Cannock), where he has been at the helm for nine years, Andy has also completed his diploma and degree with the company.

He revealed: "It wasn't something I expected to be doing at this stage of my life, but to achieve my degree, at the age of 50, was very rewarding.

"It was definitely worthwhile and makes you a better manager.

"It has also been a catalyst for my kids to go to university, which is fantastic."

Andy, 52, added: "Wetherspoon is a good company – I wouldn't let my kids work for it otherwise.

"I enjoy my job and, in the future, would like to go into a personnel role with the company.

"I am interested in staff well-being, supporting and helping people with various issues, especially mental health."

THE PORT JACKSON • BISHOP'S STORTFORD

ELDER TWIN TAKES CHARGE, WITH SISTER AT HER SIDE



Twin sisters Nicole and Danyell Cottage have always been inseparable... and that includes throughout their Wetherspoon career.

Pub manager Nicole (left), the eldest by just two minutes, and duty manager Danyell have worked together at The Port Jackson (Bishop's Stortford) since August 2015.

Danyell said: "We do everything together – work together, live together and even spend our days off together. We are inseparable."

Nicole has worked for the company for just six months longer than Danyell.

She started as an 18-year-old bar associate at The Thomas Mildmay (Chelmsford) (now closed), working her way up to pub manager by the age of 23.

Danyell was also 18 when she joined her sister at The Thomas Mildmay. When Nicole was offered the role at Bishop's Stortford, they both moved.

Danyell added: "I am happy doing what I'm doing and don't want to have my own pub.

"I'll leave that responsibility to Nicole, as she is the eldest, and I'll help her all the time."

Nicole said: "We have always done front-of-house work and have also helped together at a few new pub openings, including at The Crown Hotel (Biggleswade) and The Dairyman (Brentwood).

"I'm currently helping with the area manager role, just temporarily, which is a great learning experience for me."

The sisters, 33, are originally from Laindon in Essex, where they still spend half of the week (the other half in Bishop's Stortford) looking after their 95-year-old Italian grandmother, Delia.

Danyell revealed: "We have a boat decorated in flowers outside The Port Jackson, which we have named Delia, after our inspirational and glamorous grandmother.

"She came to the UK in 1947, having met our grandpa, an English soldier, at Lake Como."

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 spring 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).

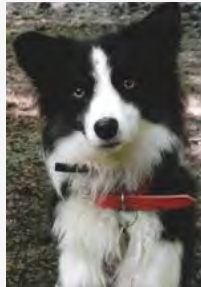
If you were to take a walk down its main street, you will see that most pubs and hotels encourage well-behaved dogs and their owners.

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

PUB STAFF MAKING MOVES TO WETHERSPOON HQ

Wetherspoon has a proud tradition of promoting from within – a policy which can clearly be seen in the head-office finance department

With more than 43,000 employees working for Wetherspoon, recruitment is key to the success of the company.

Wetherspoon has a proud tradition of promoting from within, whether in the pubs or at head office.

Thousands of employees have progressed throughout their career, and many have enjoyed a long and varied path.

The company has a high number of area and general managers who started their career as a pub manager, along with many pub managers who began as a bar or kitchen associate, with some as cleaning staff.

At head office, many employees also started their Wetherspoon career in the pubs, before moving to a central support role.

In the finance department, from a team of 43, 18 (42 per cent) started in Wetherspoon's pubs, with several now either studying towards or having already qualified as an accountant.

Finance director Ben Whitley joined Wetherspoon in 1999, starting at Hamilton Hall (City of London) as a shift manager.

A graduate of Durham University, he qualified as a chartered management accountant in 2012 and, in 2014, was appointed to the board as finance director.

Ben said: "Nowadays, we prefer to recruit from within the company, as we have a very large pool of talent from which to search.

"We have found that recruiting internally brings success, for not only the individual, but also the company – and our staff show great commitment and loyalty."

● **Here, we highlight four finance team members who have progressed through the ranks – and share their Wetherspoon story.**

Name: *Anita Krawczyk*

Position: **Finance analyst** Age: **23**

Anita began her Wetherspoon career in 2018 at J.J. Moon's (Kingsbury) as a part-time bar associate, while studying for a degree in financial economics at Kingston University London.

By January 2019, she was promoted to shift leader, working full time during the summer, until graduating in June 2020.

Anita, who moved to the UK at the age of 10 from her native Poland, said: "I took on a full-time role at J.J. Moon's when I graduated, but was at the pub for only two months before moving to The Railway Bell (Barnet), where I was promoted to shift manager.

"I mentioned to my area manager that I would love to pursue a career in finance, yet loved working for the company, so wanted to achieve that with Wetherspoon, if possible."

Anita's move to head office came in June 2021, where she is responsible for reporting on repairs spending, rent payments and analysing spend on fixed assets.

She is also studying for her Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) qualification.

She said: "I have had the support and understanding of every single manager, and I always encourage and tell people that roles are available, whatever your position, and that the support is there for you."



Name: *Ben Tomlinson*

Position: **Trainee management accountant** Age: **26**

Ben started at newly opened pub The North Western (Liverpool) as a part-time bar associate in June 2015, while studying at the city's university.

He gained degrees in mechanical engineering (undergraduate) and biomedical engineering (postgraduate), before taking a break from studying to work full time for Wetherspoon, moving to The Captain Alexander (Liverpool), where he quickly progressed to shift leader.

Ben stepped up to shift manager and had a spell at The Childwall Fiveways Hotel (Liverpool), before transferring to head office in December 2021.

Ben said: "I saw the job advertised and thought that it would be an interesting new challenge. I have always been good at maths and felt that I could expand my knowledge in the role.

"I plan to study for the CIMA qualification in future, but, at the moment, I am enjoying the varied work, looking after general ledger accounts, including staff holiday accounting and working to produce the pubs' P&Ls."



Name: *Charlotte Dixon*

Position: **Treasury manager** Age: **27**

Charlotte's day-to-day work role is to manage the company's bank accounts and cash flow, ensuring that there are enough funds to carry out business activities.

She moved to head office in August 2018 as an assistant management accountant and has recently embarked on a three-year course, studying for an Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) qualification.

Charlotte started at The Three Magnets (Letchworth) as a part-time bar associate, working at the pub near her home during her holidays from university.

When she graduated from the University of Hull, with a degree in biomedical science, she took on a full-time role at the pub, while seeking employment.

Meanwhile, Charlotte was promoted to team leader, shift leader and shift manager, moving to The Crown Hotel (Biggleswade) when it opened in August 2017, where she spent one year.

She recalled: "It was a well-timed conversation with a head-office caller which brought about my career change, following a successful interview.

"Long term, I didn't envisage myself being a pub manager and, while I had no background in finance, I've always had a desire and willingness to learn.

"When the opportunity arose, taking a head-office role was the natural next step."



Name: *Ebuka Ufodiana*

Position: **Operations finance manager** Age: **34**

Ebuka has worked for Wetherspoon for almost 15 years.

His role in the finance department helps to support the general and area managers, as well as pub teams, and he is also responsible for the pubs' gaming machines.

Ebuka started with the company in November 2007 at The Lime Kiln (Liverpool) as a part-time bar associate, while studying for a degree in economics at the University of Liverpool.

After graduating in 2009, he then worked at five pubs, across the city, progressing to senior shift manager level during the following five years.

He said: "I liked what I was doing, but thought that more studying would help me to progress further, so I applied for a few positions at head office and joined the cash-control team in 2014.

"I became manager of that team and started studying for my CIMA qualification in late 2015, before moving into the operations finance team."

Originally from Wakefield, Ebuka moved to Watford initially for his finance job, but has since returned to the northwest, where his family is based.



WOW – WONDERFUL PUBS RAISE £20M IN 20 YEARS



Wetherspoon's staff and customers have achieved a magnificent milestone – raising £20 million for the company's chosen charity – Young Lives vs Cancer.

The money has been raised over the past 20 years, with the partnership between the organisations starting in 2002.

Young Lives vs Cancer, the UK's leading children's cancer charity, provides practical, financial and emotional support to children and young people with cancer – and their families.

In the past 20 years, pub staff have organised thousands of fundraising events, including raffles, quizzes, bake sales, bingo, head-shaving, leg-waxing, sky-diving and mountain-climbing, as well as wearing crazy costumes and wacky wigs.

In addition, Wetherspoon's staff organised interpub fundraising team events, including the KICK football competition, the annual darts tournament, participating in the London marathon and, most recently, a cycle ride from London to Paris.

These have been wonderfully supported by customers and staff who have donated generously to the charity, year on year.

Young Lives vs Cancer's director of income and engagement, Luke Mallett, said: "When the partnership began with a chance meeting in 2002, the initial fundraising partnership had a target of £500,000, yet, 20 years later, that total has reached an incredible £20 million.

"Wetherspoon's staff and pub communities have amazed us year after year.

"From the bottom of our heart, we wish to thank each and every one of them for their dedication, enthusiasm and support.

"Young Lives vs Cancer supports more than 7,000 young cancer patients and their families each year, and Wetherspoon's customers, employees and local communities play a part in helping to be there for them."

Wetherspoon's people director, Tom Ball, added: "We are extremely proud to have raised so much money for such a wonderful charity.

"We look forward to raising even more in the years to come to assist Young Lives vs Cancer with its outstanding work in helping young cancer patients and their families."

Young Lives vs Cancer helps young people (0–25) with cancer, and their families, to face everything which cancer throws at them.

The charity's specialist social workers offer empowering support to help families to face the emotional effects of a cancer diagnosis.

They also offer financial and practical support by liaising with schools and employers, helping families to access grants and benefits.

Young Lives vs Cancer provides grants to help families with the costs associated with cancer, including those for petrol, parking and food.

The charity also has 11 'Homes from Home' across the UK – a free place for families to stay close by, while their child is going through treatment.

Pictured (left to right) are Wetherspoon's maintenance team leaders Christopher Smith and Gemma Sheffield, Wetherspoon's maintenance helpdesk administrator David Silverston, Young Lives vs Cancer's partnership fundraiser Sam Hughes-Smith, Wetherspoon's founder and chairman Tim Martin, Young Lives vs Cancer's head of high-value fundraising development Jo Hancock and Young Lives vs Cancer's partnerships and philanthropy co-ordinator Sarah Smith.

BIKE RIDE BRINGS BRIDGE HOUSE TOTAL TO A MIGHTY £100,000

YOUNG LIVES
vs CANCER

Fundraising efforts at The Bridge House (Belfast) have topped £100,000, thanks to the pedal power of a charity cycle challenge.

The most recent fundraising initiative in aid of Young Lives vs Cancer saw the team members at The Bridge House reach their remarkable total.

Pictured (left to right) celebrating the money milestone are bar associate Adam Morton, pub manager Phil Annett, shift managers Lyndsay McGibbon and Bronagh McLaughlin, area manager Darren Niven and Young Lives vs Cancer's fundraising engagement manager (Northern Ireland) Vicki Ewart.

Phil, who has managed The Bridge House for the past six years, said: "We are pleased to be only the second pub in the company to reach this significant fundraising total, first achieved at my former pub The Counting House (Glasgow).

"A huge well-done to everyone who has contributed over the years – and here's to many more years supporting a great charity."

Shift manager Kirsty Jones, who has been at the pub for eight years and is The Bridge House charity champion, said: "It is amazing for our pub to reach the £100,000 milestone.

"We are all very proud of the achievement.

"A big thankyou to our customers – we couldn't have done it without them.

"They love to get involved with all of the activities and have been very, very generous for a great cause.

"Cancer touches everybody in some way – and so it is brilliant to be able to give back and help out a great charity."

As charity champion, Kirsty helps to organise and promote fundraising events, including a variety of fancy-dress days, raffles, hampers and cake sales, as well as getting staff involved in company-wide initiatives, such as the Big Sleep-In, the annual darts tournament and KICK football competition.

LAURALYNN EFFORT HITS €100,000 MILESTONE

Wetherspoon is very proud to announce that the company has reached a significant fundraising milestone.

Since the charity partnership with LauraLynn was launched, towards the end of 2015, pubs across the Republic of Ireland have now smashed the €100,000 mark.

Wetherspoon's area manager, Ireland, Darren Niven, said:

"We are delighted to have achieved a fantastic €100,000 in fundraising for LauraLynn and look forward to raising more in the months and years ahead."

Darren explained: "Shortly after the company opened The Forty Foot (Dún Laoghaire), we asked staff to suggest local Irish charities which we could support.

"LauraLynn was suggested by a staff member and, following meetings with the charity, everyone got on board and has been fundraising ever since."

As the number of Wetherspoon pubs has grown across the Republic of Ireland, so has the fundraising power of our staff and customers.

And, despite the recent closures and restrictions, the enthusiastic pub teams, together with the support of generous customers, have achieved this great fundraising milestone.

LauraLynn's fundraising executive, Niamh Doyle, pictured (front centre) with Wetherspoon's area and pub managers, Ireland, said: "Partnerships like this one with Wetherspoon enable us to keep providing our specialised hospice care and support to children with life-limiting conditions and their families across Ireland.

"We are so grateful to the staff and customers at Wetherspoon for their incredible support.

"At LauraLynn, we care for children with life-limiting conditions and their families, across the country, by providing a range of support,



including short respite breaks, symptom management, therapeutic support crisis care and end-of-life care.

"Fundraising partnerships, such as the one we share with Wetherspoon, enable us to keep providing this vital support to those in our LauraLynn community of care."

LauraLynn – Ireland's Children's Hospice has supported many courageous children and their families, who have inspired so many, despite the challenges and heartache encountered along their journey.

● **To find out more about LauraLynn and how to become involved, visit: www.lauralynn.ie/events**

A SMALL WONDER – NEW 3oz BURGER

New lighter beef patty - available singly and as double or triple - allows you to personalise your portion size

Smaller portions mean more choice, when it comes to burgers at Wetherspoon.

The NEW 3oz beef burger allows customers to opt for a smaller portion (one 3oz beef patty), the usual serving being 6oz (two 3oz beef patties) and, for larger appetites, a 9oz burger portion (three 3oz beef patties, for a small extra charge).

The style may be American, but Wetherspoon's beef burgers are made from 100 per cent British beef.

Meal

All burgers are served with chips (small portion with 3oz burger meal and an added portion of six onion rings with the gourmet burger range), as well as almost any drink* (soft or alcoholic) included in the price.

The NEW 3oz and 6oz (double) burger meals are available in four styles.

Those are the American burger (served with red onion, gherkin, ketchup and American-style mustard); classic beef burger (served with Cos lettuce, tomato and red onion); skinny beef burger (served with Cos lettuce, tomato, red onion and a side salad, instead of chips); the American cheese burger (served with American-style cheese, red onion, gherkin, ketchup and American-style mustard).

For an extra charge, customers can add toppings of maple-cured bacon with Cheddar cheese or American-style cheese – or even each ingredient separately, as well as an extra patty, from any of the choices above.

Chicken

Wetherspoon's range of chicken burgers offers a fried buttermilk chicken burger (breaded whole chicken breast escalope), a grilled chicken breast burger and a skinny chicken burger (grilled chicken breast with salad, instead of chips).

Customers can select from several options in the gourmet burger range too, including the ultimate burger (two 3oz beef patties, maple-cured bacon, Cheddar cheese, signature burger sauce and gherkin) and the Empire State burger (four 3oz beef patties, American-style cheese and maple-cured bacon).

Choose beef (two 3oz beef patties), grilled chicken breast or fried buttermilk chicken for your Tennessee burger (maple-cured bacon, with Jack Daniel's® Tennessee Honey glaze) and BBQ burger (maple-cured bacon, Cheddar cheese and BBQ sauce).

The NEW heatwave burger is also among the gourmet burger styles, with the option of either grilled chicken breast or fried buttermilk chicken.

With a three-chilli rating (medium hot), the brand-new dish includes Naga chilli mayo, American-style cheese and a hash brown, topped with a spicy chicken wing.

Halloumi

Among the meat-free burger range (all served with chips) is the two-chilli-rated (mild) NEW fried halloumi-style cheese burger, served with sweet chilli sauce.

Also available are the breaded vegetable burger (lentils, carrot, onion, sweetcorn, mushroom, mozzarella and mature Cheddar cheese) and Beyond Burger™ (Beyond Meat® plant-based patty), while the meat-free gourmet burger offering is the fiesta burger (Beyond Meat® plant-based patty, salsa, guacamole, roasted pepper, courgette and onion, served with six onion rings).

Select and enjoy from the NEW burger range at your local Wetherspoon.



3oz American cheese burger; 6oz American cheese burger, with maple-cured bacon

PUB MANAGER SIAN MARSHALS SPORTS STARS AT 2022 GAMES



Pub manager Sian Siddall, who has run The Plaza (Rugeley) for the past nine years, took part in the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, as part of the Commonwealth Collective.

A volunteer for the event, Sian was a marshalling team member at the Alexander Stadium during the opening and closing ceremonies, helping to organise the athletes into their designated areas.

She was also a driver, assigned to the Cayman Islands' team, transporting competitors from Birmingham's athletes' village at The Vale into the Alexander Stadium (track and field), the NEC (boxing) and Smithfield (volleyball).

Sian said: "Before the big event, we had nine rehearsal days at Longbridge (a two-hour round trip), as well as all of the volunteering hours, so it was a massive commitment in terms of time.

"However, the rewards are priceless – and those amazing memories will stay with me.

"I was also able to take loads of selfies with so many well-known athletes.

"It was a phenomenal experience – and I can say that 'I was there.'"

SARAH CONGRATULATED ON 20 YEARS

Pub manager Sarah Heppinstall is pictured (second left) celebrating her 20th anniversary with Wetherspoon.

Staff secretly planned the presentation for her at The Glass Blower (Castleford).

She is pictured with (left to right) shift leader Gareth Brookes, area manager Dan Nicholas and shift manager Katy Walker.

Sarah's first role with the company was as a bar associate at The Horseshoe (Wombwell), when it first opened in July 2002.

She also worked at The Winter Seam (Castleford) for nine years, working her way up to deputy manager, before moving to The Glass Blower in 2013 as manager.

Sarah has two children and says that Wetherspoon's flexibility around work-life balance has been key to her ability to progress in the company.

She said: "The company has been excellent in assisting me in being both a pub manager and a mother.

"I've learned a lot over the past 20 years, and it has been a delight working with so many wonderful people."

Her success continued when, in 2019, she and The Glass Blower were nominated for two Wetherspoon awards: pub and pub manager of the year.



SCOTLAND STAFF LEARN HOW TO MATCH A PINT TO A PIZZA



More than a dozen Wetherspoon staff matched pizzas to beers at a trade event hosted by Stewart Brewing at its brewery near Edinburgh. Ale champions from The John Fairweather (Cambuslang), The Crossed Peels (Stirling), The Carron Works (Falkirk), The Counting House (Glasgow), The Last Post (Paisley) and The Hay Stook (East Kilbride) took a tour of the brewery before sampling some ales with their hosts.

The pubs sell the brewery's beers, including Edinburgh Gold (4.8% ABV) and Session IPA (3.7% ABV).

The John Fairweather's shift manager, Kelsey Clark, said: "It was a really enjoyable occasion. The beers go down well here because we have a large beer garden with a pizza oven, so they accompany the food really nicely – especially on a sunny day."

At the trade event, Wetherspoon's staff were invited to decide which pizzas best suited which beers.

To give the teams some beer-and-pizza-matching clues, they were introduced to different styles of malt which influence the beers' taste. It was also a chance for them to better understand the brewing process and the production of real ale.

The group was hosted by Stewart Brewing's restaurant manager, Joe Muzyka (pictured far left), with trade development manager Michael Lakomy (far right).

Joe said: "It was great to have the Wetherspoon staff here – they were very interested in the tasting matches and can now go back and pass these on to customers."

Kelsey is pictured (left) with shift leader Gabriella Whitehouse-Middleton from The Crossed Peels.



A DELUGE OF DEGREES AS GRADUATES GATHER



The class of 2022 (as well as of 2020 and 2021) has graduated from Leeds Beckett University, having now completed all studies.

Pictured (top) are Wetherspoon employees at the business school graduation ceremony, in Leeds, having achieved one of three qualifications: BA (hons) business management practice, chartered manager degree apprenticeship, BA (hons) business management practice or diploma in higher education in business management practice.

The achievers are (pictured) Carrie Tate, Elena Wallis, John Harrison, Ellie Lawrence, Cara Moody, Victoria Walker, Eric Fulham, Adam West, Craig Dodgson, Steph Gorchach, Naomi Greenhalgh, Rachel Stanley, Rachel Durley, Calum Brennan, Suzy White, Charlotte Moore, Colin Lovell, Carl Maddison, Kelly Wilson, Sarah Lowe, Emma Simpson and Kristina Allard (no longer with the company).

Richard Milburn and Victoria Willocks (not pictured) also graduated from the Leeds Beckett University Business School, each as an MBA senior leader.

Events, Tourism and Hospitality School graduates are pictured (bottom), having gained a professional diploma in leisure retail management.

These graduates are Charlotte Blanchard, Cherie Aris, Daniel Ruddlesden, Mark Rutherford, Martyn Flatley, Michael Loveridge, Michelle Milne, Samuel Byrne, Samuel Williams, Stephanie Robinson-Lundy and Toni Fitzgerald.

Michelle Croke, Wetherspoon's recruitment and qualifications manager, said: "Owing to the pandemic, the last graduation took place in 2019, so we had three years' worth of achievers to celebrate this time.

"Congratulations to all of our achievers, including those who weren't able to make the graduation ceremony and celebrations."

Leeds Beckett University's course director, Jane Welbourn (pictured top front, third right), said: "What a fantastic achievement by everyone involved – under such challenging circumstances.

"I am immensely proud of their dedication, commitment and agility and also proud to have been part of their journey.

"Well done – the achievement is well deserved and good luck to them all in their future career."

CELEBRATIONS APLENTY AS PUBS MARK BIG BIRTHDAYS

During May and June 2022, numerous Wetherspoon pubs celebrated a significant birthday of 25 years or more.

Five pubs marked their silver anniversary, clocking up an amazing combined 125 years serving their respective communities since 1997.

The 25-year celebrations were held at The Moon Under Water (Cradley Heath), The Yarborough Hotel (Grimsby), The Hope Tap (Reading), The Surrey Docks (Surrey Quays) and The Perkin Warbeck (Taunton).

Other long-serving pubs during that two-month birthday period included Wetherspoon's oldest pub, The Rochester Castle (Stoke Newington), marking 39 years since first opening.

The Moon Under Water (Leicester Square), situated in the heart of London's West End, celebrated 30 years.

Marking 29 years since opening were The Old Manor (Bracknell), The Banker's Draft (Eltham) and Goldengrove (Stratford), while 28 years were reached at The Wrong 'Un (Bexleyheath),

The Hart & Spool (Borehamwood), The Great Spoon of Ilford (Ilford) and The Moon and Stars (Romford).

A 27-year birthday was celebrated at The Berkeley (Bristol), The Moon and Spoon (Slough), The Herbert Wells (Woking) and The Moon Under Water (Wolverhampton), while 26 years were marked at The Figure of Eight (Birmingham) and The College Arms (Peterborough).

Also clocking up 20 years' service during May and June were 10 other pubs, being The Furze Wren (Bexleyheath), The Cerdic (Chard), The Red Lion (Doncaster), The Sir John Moore (Glasgow), The Lord Wilson (Huddersfield), The Lord Wimborne (Poole), The Robert Shaw (Westhoughton), The Battersford Court (Witham), The Postern Gate and The Punch Bowl (both York).

The Banker's Draft, Eltham

One of a small number of London Wetherspoon pubs approaching 30 years, this pub is named after the site's history in the banking industry.

The building used to be a branch of Martin's Bank, a London private bank which closed in 1969, on merging with Barclays.

The pub has been managed by Cathie Cunningham for the past 12 years.

She is pictured (left) with kitchen shift leader Julie Martin and customers Allan Williamson and Patrick Doherty, who have been regulars since May 1993.

Duty manager Martin Avis is standing behind.

Cathie, who also celebrated 20 years with Wetherspoon in July, said: "The team and regulars enjoyed a party with a buffet, and a raffle also raised £115 for Young Lives vs Cancer."



28 YEARS



The Wrong 'Un, Bexleyheath

Cricket has been a favourite local pastime in Bexleyheath for more than two centuries.

There are references to Bexley men playing cricket in 1746 and that local history is remembered in the name of this pub, which first opened in June 1994.

One of the most difficult deliveries for a batsman to play is the googly, or wrong 'un, bowled by a leg spinner.

Pub manager Heather de Souza took over running the pub in November 2020, when the previous pub manager, Terry Fitzgerald, retired after 15 years at The Wrong 'Un, many with Heather as his deputy.

Pictured (left to right) marking the pub's 28th birthday are customer Kevin Neill, shift leader Aaron Fenton, bar associate Nicole McMillan and customer Dave Gouldson.

The Herbert Wells, Woking

Pub couple Gary and Viera Hollis are pictured celebrating the 27th birthday of The Herbert Wells, which opened in June 1995.

Gary has been the pub's manager since December 1996, while his wife Viera is a shift leader.

The pub is named after science fiction writer HG Wells, who wrote his famous work, *The War of The Worlds*, during 1885–88 while living in Woking.

Wells also wrote *The Invisible Man* during that period, as well as several short stories.

There is a statue of him in the pub, alongside framed pictures and articles with details about the author's life and works.

Gary said: "The pub has been at the heart of the community for 27 years – and we were delighted to celebrate with our loyal customers, sharing a special cake with them."



27
YEARS

27
YEARS



The Moon and Spoon, Slough

Floor associate Tedd Kawome and bar associate Kaiuh Shaw are pictured at The Moon and Spoon.

The pub celebrated its 27th birthday, having opened in 1995 on the site of a former Halifax Building society branch.

The building dates from the 17th century, when it was a coaching inn on one of the main routes connecting London and the West Country.

The pub's manager, Mensah Richardson has managed the pub since May 2018, having first joined the pub's team as a 19-year-old part-time floor associate in 2012 and progressing through the ranks.

Mensah said: "I have been at the pub for 10 years now and to be able to mark this 27-year milestone, as pub manager, with the team and regular customers, is special."

The Moon Under Water, Wolverhampton

Shift manager Lauren Davey, shift leaders Glen Stewart and Molly Hammond and kitchen associate Emma Davis are pictured (left to right) celebrating the pub's 27th birthday.

It opened in May 1995, and the history of the building can be traced to Victorian times, when a furniture emporium traded on the site.

The Moon Under Water is managed by Dan Davey, Lauren's husband, who has been with the company for 23 years, the last three at this pub.

Dan laughed: "I have been with the company almost as long as the pub has existed."

He added: "We were just coming out of lockdown for the last birthday, so it was great, this time, to be able to share birthday cake with the team and regular customers."



27
YEARS

MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS

The Figure of Eight, Birmingham

Bar associate Mitchell Moddy and cross-trained associate Sophia Khizar cut a birthday cake, which was shared with customers, to mark the pub's 26th birthday.

Pub manager Karl Russell, who has been at the helm for the past five years, said: "It's a huge achievement for The Figure of Eight to be successfully running for the last 26 years."

"It's a credit to all staff and customers who have been here during that time – and we're looking forward to a fantastic future."

The pub stands close to the Gas Street canal basin, part of the city's canal system.

Built in the 18th and early 19th century, the canals became part of a national network crossing the country in a figure of eight, centred on Birmingham.



The Moon Under Water, Cradley Heath

Pub manager Nickie Holloway is pictured cutting a celebration cake, held by shift leader Rob Pilling, to mark her pub's silver anniversary.

Nickie has been with the company for 15 years, 10 of those as a pub manager, and has run The Moon Under Water since March 2020.

Also pictured (back, left to right) are bar associates Phil Hiscox and Glen Coley, shift manager Alex Weston and kitchen manager Ashley Evans.

The pub first opened in June 1997 on the site (164–166 High Street) of the former Vernon's supermarket – which, itself, had replaced smaller shops built on the site in Victorian times.

In 1890, number 164 High Street was a long-established butcher's, run by John Homer, then by Thomas Homer (1900) and then Benjamin Homer (1912).

The Hope Tap, Reading

Pictured marking the silver anniversary at this pub are cleaner Mick Yeo (left), shift manager Bobby Davies and regular customer Glenda Matterley.

Mick has been with the company since March 2010, while Bobby joined Wetherspoon in October 2013.

The pub, managed by James Harris since April 2022, opened in 1997 on the site of the old Hope Brewery which had its own pub – The Hope Tap.

According to the earliest trade directory, 103–104 Friar Street was occupied by the brewery, but, by 1860, the brewery had gone.

James, a Wetherspoon pub manager since 2009, said: "We wished the pub many happy returns on its milestone anniversary and shared the birthday love with staff, customers and the Reading community."



The Surrey Docks, Surrey Quays

Pictured (left to right) celebrating this pub's 25th birthday are duty manager Claire Jarvis, shift manager Harry Deane, shift leader Harvey Baldwin, kitchen shift leader Pauline Curtis, pub manager Kylee Garwood and kitchen associate Jean Oliver, with (bottom row) bar associate Alfie Sawyer and bar team leader Chloe Wood.

Pauline and Jean were also both marking 25 years at the pub, which included a visit from Wetherspoon's founder and chairman Tim Martin.

Kylee said: "We were all thrilled that Tim could visit us for the special 25-year celebrations."

The pub was named with the Surrey Commercial Docks in mind.

Ten docks, covering 372 acres, operated in the area during 1807–1970.

These included Greenland Dock, now a recreational marina at the back of the pub.

AMAZING ANGELA, 92, FINDS AND SPREADS JOY WITH WETHERSPOON

Wetherspoon customer Angela Darlene was 92 years young at the turn of the year.

Her niece Jacqui Simons got in touch to tell Wetherspoon about the birthday and that her aunt has been a big fan for more than 15 years. Jacqui, who lives in Spain and was unable to visit her aunt for two years during the pandemic's height, revealed: "In fact, Wetherspoon has been her salvation and motivation in life.

"Angie has visited more than 300 pubs and has taken me and my family to many of them.

"She loves the décor, atmosphere and food, feeling right at home there.

"She truly is an inspiration – and visiting Wetherspoon's pubs has definitely made her life a happier one."

In the run-up to her January birthday, Angela wasn't in the best of health, so the celebrations were put on hold until the spring in her step returned.

A family reunion in London, in April, at which she is pictured with Jacqui, together with Jacqui's son Jordan and his girlfriend Claire started at The King's Ford (Chingford), followed by The George (Wanstead), Angela's favourite 'local', and finally The New Fairlop Oak (Barkingside) – another favourite.

Angela was also delighted to receive a Wetherspoon gift card, from founder and chairman Tim Martin.



Angela said: "Wetherspoon's pubs are a big part of my life. I love the buildings. It's not an ordinary pub and you always find something different. The toilets are also unbeatable."

She concluded: "The food is good value for money, with my favourite dish being creamy mushroom risotto with a glass of merlot. You can be there all day and feel comfortable and welcome."

YEOVIL PUB IS VENUE FOR NOVEL APPROACH TO WRITING



Pub regular Terry Francis surprised staff by telling them he'd written a novel during his visits to The William Dampier (Yeovil).

Terry would come in for a coffee and a sandwich most days of the week, yet kept secret his reason for doing so, until he was certain he'd finish his book.

The book – Professor Howe and The Sewer-side Squad – is a parody of the BBC's Dr Who series. All profits from sales will go to the BBC's Children in Need fund.

Terry said: "I didn't want to tell anyone, in case I didn't finish it in time, but I did. The William Dampier is a relaxed place to come and write and, of course, the unlimited free Wi-Fi is very handy."

The pub's shift manager, Ben Humphries, said: "We all like Terry. We had no idea what he was beavering away at, until he told us."

● **Professor Howe and The Sewer-side Squad (£11.99) is published by Long Scarf Publications. For further details: <https://professorhowe.mystrikingly.com>**

TEWKESBURY'S DARK SECRET - NATIVE SON MAY HAVE INVENTED GUINNESS

Customers at The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury) have been discussing evidence of a link between their town and the invention of Guinness.

A small picture next to the pub's gents' toilets refers to the Purser family – John, John (Jr) and John (Tertius) – or 'John the Third', in modern parlance.

The three generations of the Purser family were local to Tewkesbury, but, in 1809, John III became the head brewer of Dublin's Guinness Brewery after his father had already brewed a style of porter in London.

The pub's manager, Linda Coxshall (pictured), who runs the pub with husband Stuart, said: "This could mean that Tewkesbury gave the world Guinness."

Under the portrait of the Pursers is a description of their contribution to Tewkesbury, bookkeeping and, of course, brewing.



JEWELS OF THE EAST JUDGED TO BE REAL HERITAGE PUBS

Four Wetherspoon pubs are featured in a publication from Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

The new book, titled Real Heritage Pubs of the East of England, forms part of the popular CAMRA Pub Heritage series, listing the east of England's most traditional pubs which 'still have interiors or internal features of real historical importance'.

The book explains: "CAMRA is recording the best-quality examples of such pubs. We recommend the following east-of-England pubs as being well worth a visit.

"Most have stunning interiors of significant architectural merit; some faithfully achieve a genuinely historic look and feel."

The Hippodrome (March), The Playhouse (Colchester), Waterend Barn (St Albans) and The Corn Exchange (Bury St Edmunds) are all included in a chapter on 'outstanding conversions and restorations'.

CAMRA's national project to identify pubs such as these is called 'Outstanding Conversions & Restorations'.

Full details of the project, including the pub listings, can be found here: <https://ocrpubs.camra.org.uk>

Real Heritage Pubs of the East of England, published by CAMRA Books and priced £8.99, is available to buy at: <https://shop1.camra.org.uk/product-category/books/history-culture/>

The book entries for the four Wetherspoon pubs read as follows:



The Hippodrome (March)

Originally a cinema from 1928, the building became a bingo hall in 1970 before being partly reopened as a cinema once more between 2001 and 2009.

Wetherspoon then stepped in and, after a major and very careful refurbishment, it opened as a pub in 2011.

Many original Art Deco features survive, including the circle, moulded box fronts, a 32-foot wide proscenium arch and a 24-foot deep stage.



The Playhouse (Colchester)

Opened as a theatre in 1929, the building was redesigned as a cinema in 1935 with the gallery removed and balcony enlarged; there were seats for 1,158 patrons.

From 1981 to 1993, it was a bingo club. Wetherspoon then restored it with its customary attention to detail and it reopened in 1994.

The stage has been kept and is decorated with a set as if for a play.

Up in the balcony, life-sized models of famous people occupy the seats.



Waterend Barn (St Albans)

A 17th-century barn was moved from Wheathampstead to the city centre in 1939 for use as a restaurant. In 1964, it was joined by a grade II listed 16th-century barn from Little Hormead near Buntingford.

The building was acquired by Wetherspoon in 2004 and it has done a typically good job of integrating pub use into the spaces, creating four drinking areas and highlighting the half-timbered walls and exposed roof timbers.

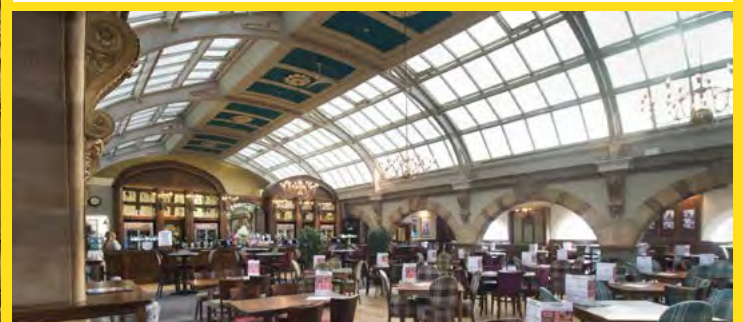


The Corn Exchange (Bury St Edmunds)

Built in 1861/2 and originally a provisions market, the corn exchange was proposed for demolition in the 1960s to be replaced by shops.

Eventually, a compromise was reached to save the building by inserting a new first floor. The grade II listed building is now a multipurpose venue, with the first floor opening as a Wetherspoon pub in 2012.

Being so close to the grand arched glass roof, with its decorated central plaster panel, you can walk through the semicircular stone arches, admiring the ornate keystones which display agricultural motifs like wheatsheaves and rams' heads. The overall effect is stunning.



WIDNES

PREMIER PLAQUES PROVIDE WITNESS TO WIDNES HISTORY



The Premier (Widnes) is now home to two local history commemorative plaques, thanks to a community partnership.

The pub has the two plaques on permanent display, on behalf of the charity The Tom Wilkinson VC statue appeal.

One plaque details the history of HMS Widnes, the ship which served in the Royal Navy and the German Kriegsmarine.

HMS Widnes was used by the Royal Navy from 1918, before being sunk in 1941 by German aircraft. It was raised and repaired by Germany, then commissioned into the German Kriegsmarine and sunk in 1943 by British destroyers.

The second memorial plaque is in honour of Corporal Geoffrey Caton SAS (1920–43), who joined the Widnes Territorials (South Lancers) before joining the Royal Artillery and 11 Commando.

Corporal Caton was the only British soldier killed, when a small raiding force hit the beach at Sicily on 10 July 1943, to disable the Italian heavy

guns, engaging more than 700 Italian soldiers. He was aged just 22.

Pictured (left to right) at the unveiling ceremony are Jillian Maloney and Tracey French (Corporal Geoffrey Caton's family members), pub manager Matthew Brennan, Chris Stapleton (chair of The Tom Wilkinson VC statue appeal) and Tony Miller (secretary, founder and trustee of the same appeal).

Matthew Brennan, who has worked for Wetherspoon for more than 10 years and has managed The Premier for the past three, said:

"When we were approached by The Tom Wilkinson VC statue appeal charity to display the plaques, we were only too happy to help.

"The plaques are on display in front of the bar, a prominent place, creating a great deal of interest among customers.

"Many of them didn't know about these stories.

"It is so important to retell this local history and to remember those involved."

CAMBUSLANG

HOLES IN FOOTBALL TEAM'S NET FUND FILLED BY FAIRWEATHER FOLK

A local under-12s football team is to buy new kit and equipment after a fundraising day at The John Fairweather (Cambuslang).

Staff at the pub staged a tombola and raffle for a hamper to raise £330 for Cambuslang Rangers.

The pub's manager, Michael Easton (pictured left), said: "The club is well supported among customers – and we wanted to do something to help the local community."

Club director Martin McIlree (pictured right) added: "The day was a lot of fun – and we are grateful to all of the staff and customers at The John Fairweather for their efforts.

"We will now be able to buy new kit and training gear, such as footballs and nets, to help the youngsters to develop their game."



STRET FORD

MANCHESTER UNITED FAN SUKIE FINDS GLORY AT BISHOP BLAIZE

The Bishop Blaize has been adopted as the unofficial home of one of the largest groups of Manchester United match fans.

Sukie's Red Devils is a supporters' group set up during lockdown by Sukie Sidhu. The life-long fan is known for his online videos of himself in a United dressing gown, often in The Bishop Blaize before matches.

The group was established on Facebook and now has more than 5,000 members from around the world who meet in the pub, as well as online.

The pub's manager, Ben Plunkett, a friend of Sukie, is more than happy to play host to the supporters.

Ben said: "Sukie is a top lad. We love him here."

But along with the laughs and the camaraderie comes a more serious side.

Sukie said: "My inspiration is to honour the memory of my cousin Billy Johal - Billy The Red - who we lost to cancer four years ago.

"We do a lot of work for charity - especially for Reds fans who have lost people or who have met with misfortune."

Speaking of The Bishop Blaize, he added: "The pub is now our home, whereas previously our home was online. It is amazing to see more and more people here - and Ben and his team are part of our life and part of what we do. They are all great people."

Sukie is pictured (right) with Ben outside the pub.



EPSOM

DERBY BIGWIGS ASSEMBLE AT ASSEMBLY ROOMS IN EPSOM



The Assembly Rooms (Epsom) was chosen as a venue for a grand opening of the Epsom Derby Festival.

The pub was chosen as the meeting point for local dignitaries, riders, trainers, owners and big-race sponsors as special plaques were put on display commemorating past Epsom Derby winners.

The plaques were the centrepiece of a day of events around the town held by the local council.

Residents' Association representative Alex Coley is pictured (left) with the pub's manager, Sel Devecioglu, and town mayor, Cllr Clive Woodbridge, with a plaque commemorating Eleanor, the first filly ever to win the race, in 1801, ridden by John Saunders.

Sel said: "It was a great day and an excellent start to the annual Epsom Derby Festival."

The display took place amid the backdrop of a high-street fun-day featuring rides and face-painting.

In the last edition of Wetherspoon News, we quoted Professor Francois Balloux, writing in The Guardian, broadly supported by Professor Robert Dingwall, writing in The Daily Telegraph, who analysed a recent World Health Organization report and concluded that Sweden's fatality rate was only "half the UK's", that "the strength of mitigation measures did not seem to be a particularly strong indicator of excess deaths" and that "the worst performer, by some measure, was Peru, despite enforcing the hardest, longest lockdown". We reproduce this series of articles on pages 54–64 and, in one of the biggest scoops since Watergate, The Spectator's editor, Fraser Nelson, tells the surreal story of how lockdown decisions were actually made in 10 Downing Street.

Wetherspoon News summer 2022

The COVID-19 debate was weaponised and politicised

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Analysis

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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

Abandoned

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Faction

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

academics – and described its output as "the science".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tim Martin
Chairman

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

By Francois Balloux

The Guardian / 8 May 2022

Print credit: Copyright Guardian News & Media Ltd 2022

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Robert Dingwall is Professor of Sociology at Nottingham Trent University.

By Robert Dingwall
The Daily Telegraph / 7 May 2022

Print credit: © Robert Dingwall/Telegraph Media Group Limited 2022

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

By Rhys Blakely, Venetia Menzies and Constance Kampfner

The Times / 6 May 2022

Print credit: The Times / News Licensing

Tim says: “The Times quotes, at length, former SAGE member and lockdown fanatic Sir Jeremy Farrar. Former Supreme Court judge Lord Sumption criticises Farrar in the article below as representing “most of what has gone wrong”, for speaking well of “Chinese methods of disease control” and for brushing aside “the appalling collateral consequences of lockdown”.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

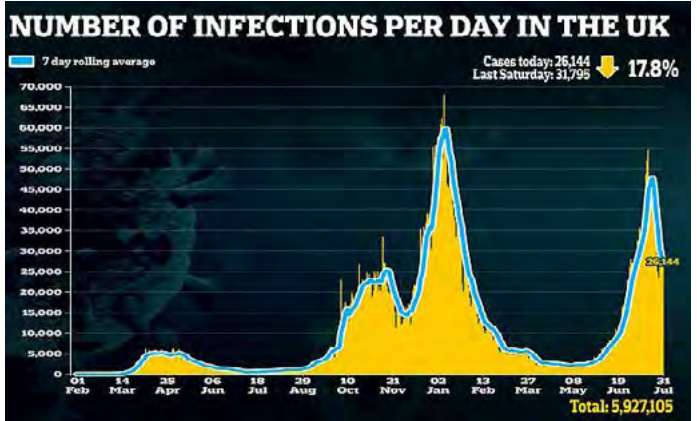
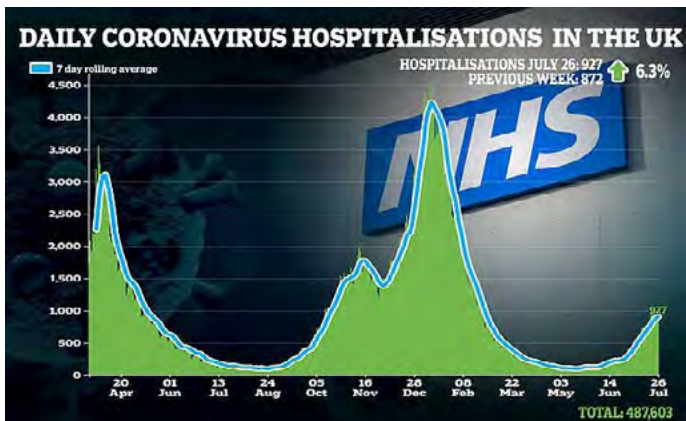
Anders Tegnell, the Swedish state epidemiologist, is dismissed in a brief footnote, although Sweden is a standing repudiation of much that Farrar stands for. Sweden has avoided a lockdown, yet has done much better than the UK.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This brings me to the most remarkable feature of this book, which is Farrar's brushing aside of the appalling collateral consequences of lockdowns: other illnesses which go untreated such as cancer or accelerate like dementia, impacts on education, equality and public debt, not to speak of the worst recession in 300 years.

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

By Jonathan Sumption

The Mail On Sunday / 31 July 2021

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

Tim says: “In the UK, parliament, in a COVID-19 panic, agreed on emergency legislation which transferred power to ‘party central’, ie 10 Downing Street. In effect, power was given to the ‘quad’ (four Oxbridge graduates), including Matt Hancock and Boris Johnson, with no scientific qualifications among them. In this article, Matt Ridley points out the dangers of an ‘accord’ among nations which, in poorly defined circumstances, could effectively transfer worldwide power to the World Health Organization, which, itself, is heavily influenced by both software developer Bill Gates and authoritarian China.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A former software developer by the name of William Gates has written a book called “How to prevent the next pandemic”. Its main message, according to one uncharitable reviewer, is that we can prevent the next pandemic by “doing all of the things that did not stop the last pandemic event, only more, faster and harder”. But even Mr Gates does allow that “regardless of how COVID started, even the remote possibility of lab-related pathogen releases should inspire governments and scientists to

redouble their efforts on lab safety, creating global standards”.

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

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

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

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

By Matt Ridley

The Telegraph / 14 May 2022

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

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

As Professor Balloux says (see page 55), the “stringency of mitigation measures does not seem to be a particularly strong predictor of excess deaths”.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They 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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Tim says: “The story of lockdowns in the UK, as illustrated in this amazing article by The Spectator’s editor, Fraser Nelson, shows politics in its worst light: parliament negligently handing emergency powers to 10 Downing Street; pandemic plans, which did not involve lockdowns, developed over decades, thrown in the bin; senior cabinet ministers, to whom parliament had granted huge powers, kept in the dark; ‘fear-messaging’ used to intimidate the public; opposition parties urging even more stringent measures than the dysfunctional government.

Catastrophic mismanagement on an epic scale...”

“ THE LOCKDOWN FILES: RISHI SUNAK ON WHAT WE WEREN’T TOLD

When Britain was being locked down, the country was assured that all risks had been properly and robustly considered. Yes, schools would close and education would suffer. Normal healthcare would take a hit and people would die as a result. But the government repeatedly said the experts had looked at all this. After all, it wasn’t as if they would lock us down without seriously weighing up the consequences, was it?

Those consequences are still making themselves known: exams madness, the NHS waiting list surge, thousands of unexplained ‘excess deaths’, judicial backlogs and economic chaos. Was all that expected, factored in, and thought by leaders to be a price worth paying? Right at the start of lockdown, ministers had already started to worry that the policy was being recklessly implemented without anyone thinking about the side-effects. Only a handful of key players at the very top made the decisions: among them Rishi Sunak, the chancellor. He has now decided to go public on what happened.

When we meet at the office he has rented for his leadership campaign, soon to enter its final week, he says at the outset that he’s not interested in pointing the finger at the fiercest proponents of lockdown. No one knew anything at the start, he says: lockdown was, by necessity, a gamble. Chris Whitty and Patrick Vallance, the chief medical officer and chief scientific adviser, would openly admit that lockdown could do more harm than good. But when the evidence started to roll in, a strange silence grew in government: dissenting voices were filtered out and a see-no-evil policy was applied.

Sunak’s story starts with the first Covid meeting, where ministers were shown an A3 poster from scientific advisers explaining the options. ‘I wish I’d kept it because it listed things that had no impact: banning live events and all that,’ he says. ‘It was saying: you should be careful not to do this stuff too early, because being able to sustain it is very hard in a modern society.’ So the scientific advice was, initially, to reject or at least delay lockdown.

This all changed when Neil Ferguson and his team at Imperial College published their famous ‘Report 9’, which argued that Covid casualties could hit 500,000 if no action was taken – but the figure could be below 20,000 if Britain locked down. That, of course, turned out to be a vast exaggeration of lockdown’s ability to curb Covid deaths. Imperial stressed it did ‘not consider the wider social and economic costs of suppression, which will be high’. But surely

someone involved in making the policy would figure it out.

This was the crux: no one really did. A cost-benefit calculation – a basic requirement for pretty much every public health intervention – was never made. ‘I wasn’t allowed to talk about the trade-off,’ says Sunak. Ministers were briefed by No. 10 on how to handle questions about the side-effects of lockdown. ‘The script was not to ever acknowledge them. The script was: oh, there’s no trade-off, because doing this for our health is good for the economy.’

If frank discussion was being suppressed externally, Sunak thought it all the more important that it took place internally. But that was not his experience. ‘I felt like no one talked,’ he says. ‘We didn’t talk at all about missed [doctor’s] appointments, or the backlog building in the NHS in a massive way. That was never part of it.’ When he did try to raise concerns, he met a brick wall. ‘Those meetings were literally me around that table, just fighting. It was incredibly uncomfortable every single time.’ He recalls one meeting where he raised education. ‘I was very emotional about it. I was like: “Forget about the economy. Surely we can all agree that kids not being in school is a major nightmare” or something like that. There was a big silence afterwards. It was the first time someone had said it. I was so furious.’

One of Sunak’s big concerns was about the fear messaging, which his Treasury team worried could have long-lasting effects. ‘In every brief, we tried to say: let’s stop the “fear” narrative. It was always wrong from the beginning. I constantly said it was wrong.’ The posters showing Covid patients on ventilators, he said, were the worst. ‘It was wrong to scare people like that.’ The closest he came to defying this was in a September 2020 speech saying that it was time to learn to ‘live without fear’ – a direct response to the Cabinet Office’s messaging. ‘They were very upset about that.’

His Eat Out to Help Out campaign was designed to be an optimistic counter-narrative. ‘The survey data across Europe showed that our country was far and away the least likely to get back to normal. All the evidence was that everyone was too scared to go and do things again. We have a consumption-driven economy, so that would be very bad.’ As indeed it was. The UK ended up with the worst economic downturn in Europe.

Lockdown – closing schools and much of the economy while sending the police after people who sat on park benches – was the most draconian policy introduced in peacetime. No. 10 wanted to present it as ‘following the

science’ rather than a political decision, and this had implications for the wiring of government decision-making. It meant elevating Sage, a sprawling group of scientific advisers, into a committee that had the power to decide whether the country would lock down or not. There was no socioeconomic equivalent to Sage; no forum where other questions would be asked.

So whoever wrote the minutes for the Sage meetings – condensing its discussions into guidance for government – would set the policy of the nation. No one, not even cabinet members, would know how these decisions were reached.

In the early days, Sunak had an advantage. ‘The Sage people didn’t realise for a very long time that there was a Treasury person on all their calls. A lovely lady. She was great because it meant that she was sitting there, listening to their discussions.’

It meant he was alerted early to the fact that these all-important minutes of Sage meetings often edited out dissenting voices. His mole, he says, would tell him: “Well, actually, it turns out that lots of people disagreed with that conclusion”, or “Here are the reasons that they were not sure about it.” So at least I would be able to go into these meetings better armed.’

But his victories were few and far between. One, he says, came in May 2020 when the first plans were being drawn to move out of lockdown in summer. ‘There’s some language in there that you will see because I fought for it,’ he says. ‘It talked about non-Covid health impact.’ Just a few sentences, he says, but he views the fact that lockdown side-effects were recognised at all at that point as a triumph.

He doesn’t name Matt Hancock, who presided over all of this as health secretary, or Liz Truss, who was silent throughout. As he said at the outset, he doesn’t want to name names but rather to speak plainly about what the public was not told – and the process that led to this. Typically, he said, ministers would be shown Sage analysis pointing to horrifying ‘scenarios’ that would come to pass if Britain did not impose or extend lockdown. But even he, as chancellor, could not find out how these all-important scenarios had been calculated.

‘I was like: “Summarise for me the key assumptions, on one page, with a bunch of sensitivities and rationale for each one”,’ Sunak says. ‘In the first year I could never get this.’

The Treasury, he says, would never recommend policy based on unexplained modelling; he regarded this as a matter of basic competence.

But for a year, UK government policy – and the fate of millions – was being decided by half-explained graphs cooked up by outside academics.

‘This is the problem,’ he says. ‘If you empower all these independent people, you’re screwed.’ Sir Gus O’Donnell, the former cabinet secretary, has suggested that Sage should have been asked to report to a higher committee, which would have considered the social and economic aspects of locking down. Sunak agrees. But having been anointed from the start, Sage retained its power until the rebellion that came last Christmas.

When the Omicron variant started to rise last December, the dance began again. A Sage analysis claimed that without a fourth lockdown, Covid deaths could hit 6,000 a day.

That was out by a factor of 20. But we only know this because, for once, the government rejected Sage’s advice. This time, Sunak was taking soundings of his own – including academics at Stanford University, where he went to business school, and his former colleagues in the world of finance who had started to do some Covid modelling. Crucially, JP Morgan used South African data on Omicron to suggest that UK hospitals would not be overrun – contrary to Sage’s predictions.

‘I’m still on the JP Morgan research [email] list,’ he says. ‘It gives me a bit of a different perspective.’ In the case of Omicron, if that very different perspective was right, then every single one of the 12 Sage scenarios provided to ministers was a vast exaggeration and Britain would be locked down needlessly. Yet the wheels were already in motion, says Sunak. ‘They had briefed already that there was going to be a press conference. The system just kind of geared up.’

He flew back early from a trip to California. By this time JP Morgan’s lockdown analysis was being emailed around among cabinet ministers like a samizdat paper, and they were ready to rebel. Sunak met Johnson. ‘I just told him it’s not right: we shouldn’t do this.’ He did not threaten to resign if there was another lockdown, ‘but I used the closest formulation of words that I could’ to imply that threat. Sunak then rang around other ministers and compared notes.

Normally, cabinet members were not kept in the loop as Covid-related decisions were being made – Johnson’s No. 10 informed them after the event, rather than consulting them. Sunak says he urged the PM to pass the decision to cabinet so that his colleagues could give him political cover for rejecting the advice of Sage. ‘I remember telling him: have the cabinet meeting. You’ll see. Every-one will be completely behind you... You don’t have to worry. I will be standing next to you, as will every other member of the cabinet, bar probably Michael [Gove] and Saj [Javid].’ As it was to prove.

Is Sunak exaggerating his own role? For what it’s worth, his account squares with what I picked up from his critics in government: that the money-obsessed Sunak was on a one-man mission to torpedo lockdown. And perhaps the Prime Minister as well. ‘Everything I did was seen through the prism of: “You’re trying to be difficult, trying to be leader,”’ he says. He tried

not to challenge the Prime Minister in public, or leave a paper trail. ‘I’d say a lot of stuff to him in private,’ he says. ‘There’s some written record of every-thing. In general, people leak it – and it causes problems.’

At any point, Sunak could have gone public – or even resigned. I ask him if he should have done. To quit in that way during a pandemic, he says, would have been irresponsible. And to go public, or let his misgivings become known, would have been seen as a direct attack on the PM.

At the time, No. 10’s strategy was to create the impression that lockdown was a scientifically created policy which only crackpots dared question. If word leaked that the chancellor had grave reservations, or that a basic cost-benefit analysis had never been applied, it would have been politically unhelpful for No. 10.

Only now can Sunak speak freely. He is opening up not just because he is running to be prime minister, he says, but because there are important lessons in all of this. Not who did what wrong, but how it came to pass that such important questions about lockdown’s profound knock-on effects – issues that will probably dominate politics for years to come – were never properly explored.

‘All this blaming civil servants – I hate it,’ he says. ‘We are elected to run the country, not to blame someone else. If the apparatus is not there, then we change it.’ When things go well, he says, ‘it comes from the person at the top being able to make decisions properly – and understanding how to make good decisions’.

Which is, of course, his ultimate point: ‘The leader matters. It matters who the person at the top is.’ It’s the reason he resigned, finally, and part of his pitch to be leader of the Conservative party. He says ministers need to be honest about the flip-side of any policy (including tax cuts), and that denial always makes things worse.

And the other lessons of lockdown? ‘We shouldn’t have empowered the scientists in the way we did,’ he says. ‘And you have to acknowledge trade-offs from the beginning. If we’d done all of that, we could be in a very different place.’ How different? ‘We’d probably have made different decisions on things like schools, for example.’ Could a more frank discussion have helped Britain avoid lockdown entirely, as Sweden did? ‘I don’t know, but it could have been shorter. Different. Quicker.’

There’s one major factor he doesn’t raise: the opinion polls. Lockdowns were being imposed all over a terrified world in March 2020 and the Prime Minister was already being accused of having blood on his hands by failing to act earlier. Surely whoever was in No. 10 would have been forced to lock down by public opinion? But the public, Sunak says, was being scared witless, while being kept in the dark about lockdown’s -likely effects. ‘We helped shape that: with the fear messaging, empowering the scientists and not talking about the trade-offs.’

Those trade-offs are apparent. At first, no one asked what all those cancelled NHS appointments would mean. When the answer came, it was devastating: a waiting list that is projected to grow from six million now to nine million by 2024. Avoidable cancer deaths due

to late diagnosis will run into the thousands. Then there’s the economic impact. ‘We are short of 300,000 to 400,000 [workers],’ he says. ‘That is a problem.’ Some 5.3 million are on out-of-work benefits, with many over-fifties giving up on work entirely: a tendency that Sunak says was not spotted ‘until it was too late’.

Even now, Sunak doesn’t argue that lockdown was a mistake – just that the many downsides in health, the economy and society in general could have been mitigated if they had been openly discussed. An official inquiry has begun, but Sunak says there are lessons to learn now. The emergence of another Covid variant (or another new pathogen) may lead to demands for another lockdown someday. One of the questions will be how to protect democratic scrutiny in a future crisis – how to ensure that robust questioning and testing of policy continues, even when it is expedient for the government to suppress the debate.

To Sunak, this was the problem at the heart of the government’s Covid response: a lack of candour. There was a failure to raise difficult questions about where all this might lead – and a tendency to use fear messaging to stifle debate, instead of encouraging discussion. So in a sentence, how would he have handled the pandemic differently? ‘I would just have had a more grown-up conversation with the country.’



By Fraser Nelson

The Spectator / 27 August 2022

Print credit: The Spectator magazine and Fraser Nelson – Editor

Tim says: "Wetherspoon took issue with The Daily Telegraph, when it misrepresented my views on immigration.

Maybe some people disagree, but I've always argued that a reasonable level of legal immigration, controlled by elected politicians, based on something like the American or Australian 'points system', is a plus for the UK's economy.

The paragraphs in pink below are the actual evidence I gave on the issue, in parliament, to the House of Lords' Economic Affairs Committee in 2017."

The Daily Telegraph

Apology and correction published by The Daily Telegraph, Friday 4 June 2021:

4 June 2021

Correction: [The Daily Telegraph] article may have given the impression that Wetherspoons, in common with other companies in the hospitality sector, was struggling to recruit staff. In fact, Wetherspoons is not facing staff shortages or recruitment issues. We apologise for any confusion and are happy to correct the record. ”

Released : 02 Jun 2021 13:20

The Telegraph newspaper published an article online yesterday ("Wetherspoons boss calls for more EU migration as bars and restaurants tackle staff shortage" - 1 June 2021), which misrepresented Wetherspoon's position.

The Telegraph journalist contacted Tim Martin, the Wetherspoon chairman, and requested comments regarding reports of staff shortages in the hospitality industry generally.

Following the press query, Mr Martin personally made enquiries within the company and, in subsequent texts to the journalist, said "anecdotal feedback from ... pubs since reopening [is that there are] lots of people applying generally."

Mr Martin's texts also said that for a "new pub opening last week (in a town in North Yorkshire), for example, [there were] 160 applications for 70 jobs."

Mr Martin's texts added that "there were 20 applications for four vacancies" in a Bedfordshire pub and there was "a good volume of applications for vacancies in Bletchley and Milton Keynes".

Mr Martin concluded that it was "a reasonably good position for JDW in the country" and that "recruitment is more challenging in some seaside towns- but that's no different to what we experience in any year."

The anecdotal evidence provided by Mr Martin was not reported by the journalist, who instead said that "British pubs and restaurants struggle to recruit staff in the post-pandemic labour market squeeze".

The journalist also said "pub and restaurant bosses warned they were being forced to shut sites during the crucial lunchtime trade due to a shortage of workers", which the article implied was a problem for Wetherspoon- and which is clearly not true from the evidence provided by Mr Martin to the journalist.

The article also said that Mr Martin "urged Boris Johnson to introduce a visa scheme for EU workers".

In fact, Mr Martin has had no contact whatsoever with Mr Johnson since he became Prime Minister.

Mr Martin, as with many Brexit supporters, has, however, supported an Australia-style immigration points system, with the possibility of preferential visas for countries in close proximity to the UK, as Australia operates with New Zealand, for example (See, for example, Mr Martin's evidence to the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee on 8th March 2017 - Appendix 1 see opposite).

Tim Martin said: "I was trying to be helpful to the journalist by providing up-to-date anecdotal information on staffing, which clearly demonstrated a very positive situation for Wetherspoon.

"However, my comments were misreported.

"The false story, expressed in the headline "Wetherspoons boss calls for more EU migration as bars and restaurants tackle staff shortage" and expressed or implied elsewhere in the article, was that Wetherspoon was suffering staff shortages, which clearly isn't true, and that I had subsequently been moved to change my stance on immigration, which, as my evidence to parliament several years ago clearly shows, isn't true either."

APPENDIX 1 Extract

Tim Martin's evidence to the House of Lords' Economic Affairs Committee (published 21 July 2017)

Page 21: Members present: Lord Hollick (The Chairman); Lord Burns; Lord Darling of Roulanish; Lord Forsyth of Drumlean; Lord Kerr of Kinlochard; Lord Lamont of Lerwick; Lord Layard; Lord Sharkey; Lord Tugendhat; Baroness Wheatcroft.

The Chairman: Given the expected end of free movement of people between the UK and EU, what would you like to see replacing it that would control immigration?

Mr Tim Martin: At the risk of incurring the wrath of Lord Darling, I think the referendum was about democracy.

You touched on the issue earlier. Looking round the world, New Zealanders can work in Australia; the Irish could work here and we could work there long before the EU.

There is an argument based on pragmatism and proximity. EU workers have been allowed to come and work here in the past, and there is a case for them being able to do so in the future on some preferential basis, partly on grounds of pragmatism.

The reason it would be very difficult to do the same thing for India or China is that they have 2.5 billion people between them and you just cannot open your borders to them on a pragmatic basis; but on a preferential work permit basis, and with the historical links with Ireland, which will continue, you can do something for EU countries.

The Chairman: Do you see the Government playing a role in saying that the hospitality industry, or even the pub sector of it, can have so many people, or would you allow the market to decide that?

Mr Tim Martin: I do not know the answer to that, but for the UK to be a successful country and economy in the next 20, 30 or 50 years we need a gradually rising population, and that will need some type of reasonably controlled immigration.

If we do not get it, the economy will tend to go backwards. We need a North American or Australian-type system.

WETHERSPOON GLAD TO BE A MAIN SPONSOR – AS BEER FESTIVAL RETURNS



CAMRA's chief executive Tom Stainer (pictured left) with CAMRA volunteer Mark Parkes

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) hosted its Great British Beer Festival, following a two-year hiatus owing to pandemic restrictions. The five-day event, held at the beginning of August at London Olympia, the festival's home since 2012, saw Wetherspoon support the real-ale celebration as one of the main sponsors.

Wetherspoon's own real-ale festival organiser, marketing manager Jen Swindells, said: "We were delighted to support this iconic event as a festival partner and have our company logo proudly displayed, for the first time, on all of the festival glasses.

"It was a chance for us to forge ever-closer links with CAMRA and to help to promote real ale among regular enthusiasts, as well as first-time festival visitors."

Wetherspoon's name, together with the words 'supporting real-ale breweries since 1979' and the CAMRA logo, was printed on all festival pint glasses and half-pint chalice glasses used throughout the event. The Great British Beer Festival, in its 45th year, showcased British and international beers from more than 500 breweries, as well as ciders, perries, wines and gins.

Visitors were able to experience the natural magic of 'grain to glass', while enjoying live music, street food and an unrivalled selection of award-winning beers.

An A-to-Z of 22 UK breweries, from Adnams to The Wild Beer Co, also hosted their own dedicated brewery bars.

CONSUMER SURVEY REVEALS PUBS' STRIKING POPULARITY

Wetherspoon is the most visited licensed brand and the third most visited brand in the great British hospitality sector.

Those are the findings of CGA BrandTrack, a syndicated annual consumer survey of the eating-out habits and drinking-out behaviour of 20,000 nationally representative British consumers.

The survey, undertaken by CGA by NielsenIQ, tracks consumers' interactions with, and perceptions of, the largest 70 hospitality brands.

Among the companies tracked are Greene King, Greggs, Harvester, KFC, McDonald's, Nando's and Pizza Hut.

The survey showed that 20.5 million customers visited Wetherspoon's pubs in a six-month period.

It is also highlighted that 43 per cent of those surveyed had visited Wetherspoon in the same period.

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, said: "We are delighted with the survey's findings.

"Our staff work hard to offer customers excellent pubs, with first-class service at all times.

"This, together with the quality of the pubs, their food and drinks, obviously resonates with customers who continue, in their millions, to visit Wetherspoon's pubs.

"We do not take our customers for granted and appreciate the fact that they choose to visit Wetherspoon."

NOW OPEN



Heswall

THE PRESE WELL

Wetherspoon has opened its newest pub on Merseyside, at Heswall.

The Prese Well, developed on the site of the former Exchange Bar, is managed by Caroline Campbell (pictured second right) who has also managed at The Square Bottle (Chester) and The Master Mariner (New Brighton).

Also pictured at the official opening are (left to right) councillors Andrew and Kathy Hodson and former Liverpool and England footballer John Barnes.

The pub's name recalls Heswall's history, when the Hesse Well was one of the village's many wells. A plaque on the boundary wall of Hesse Well House states that the well closed in 1891. Heswall was also served by the Pin Well, Lightfoot Well, Rosebank Well, Bank House Well and Far Well.

However, the Prese (also known as Penns) well seems to have been one of the main wells and gives its name to the pub. Situated on Telegraph Road, the well was little more than a stone's throw from the site of the new pub.

In the heart of Heswall, the new pub building was once a manual telephone exchange, built during the inter-war years.

5 The Mount, Heswall, Merseyside, CH60 4RE





Bourne

THE RAYMOND MAYS

The mayor of Bourne, Cllr Anna Kelly, officially opened Wetherspoon's new pub. She is pictured with pub manager James Ladym (second right), area manager Abby Herdman (second left), the mayor's consort Ned Kelly and staff.

Also attending were members of the original British Racing Motors (BRM) team and former mechanics, along with one of two surviving Raymond Mays cars, on display for the opening day thanks to current custodian Carolyn Corliss (far left).

Housed in two former shops, the pub is named after the motor-racing legend Raymond Mays, who lived in Bourne all of his life.

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

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

**44-48 North Street, Bourne
Lincolnshire, PE10 9AB**



NEW LOOK

Watford

THE MOON UNDER WATER

Pub manager Kwame Tefe is pictured in the new-look beer garden at his pub – The Moon Under Water (Watford).

Wetherspoon extended and refurbished the existing beer garden at the rear of the High Street pub which first opened in December 1994.

The pub's delivery yard and refuse area have been redeveloped and incorporated to double the size of the original outdoor space. There is now seated accommodation for 150 customers.

The new-look paved garden features new garden dining furniture, outdoor lighting and planters with shrubs and trees, as well as an internal lobby at the rear of the pub.

Kwame said: "The Moon Under Water is an extremely popular pub.

"We aim to offer customers the best-possible experience – and the new-look extended beer garden is a great addition.

"This investment also highlights the company's commitment to the pub and to Watford itself."

44 High Street, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD17 2BS



Leeds City station

WETHERSPOONS

Pub manager John Tondeur is pictured at his new-look pub – Wetherspoons (Leeds City station).

The popular pub, which first opened in April 2000, has undergone a full refurbishment.

It has been redecorated, with new carpets and furniture added, along with new toilets.

The pub also benefits from a large customer area at the front.

John said: "Wetherspoons is a busy pub, attracting train users and the general public.

"The pub looks wonderful – with customers commenting on how much they like the new look."

Leeds City station, North Concourse
Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS1 4DY



Bolton

THE SPINNING MULE

The Spinning Mule (Bolton) has undergone a refurbishment and upgrade project.

The pub, which first opened in May 1998, is managed by Simon Long. Simon is pictured (left) with the mayor of Bolton, Cllr Akhtar Zaman and bar associate Matthew Drake at the pub's official reopening.

The Spinning Mule has received a full internal redecoration, with new carpet fitted throughout, as well as new decorative lighting installed.

New furniture has been added, together with existing furniture refurbished and four new feature fixed booth seating areas also installed.

A new lobby area has been added at the front of the pub, with a mural on the wall of the pub entrance. New additional artwork is also now on display.

The bar area and coffee station have both been upgraded, as has the existing feature fireplace. The ladies, gents and accessible toilets have also had a full refurbishment.

A brand-new beer garden has also been added at the rear of the premises, with space for approximately 20 seated customers.

The stonework on the exterior of the building, at the front of the pub, has been cleaned and new signage installed.

The pub's manager, Simon Long, said: "We are thrilled with our refurbished pub and upgraded facilities – and our customers are now enjoying the new-look environment of The Spinning Mule."



**Nelson Square, Bolton
Greater Manchester, BL1 1JT**

Sheerness

THE BELLE AND LION

Pub manager Kelly Smith is pictured in the new-look garden at her Sheerness pub The Belle and Lion.

The Kent pub has seen the garden extended at the side of the premises – to triple its original size. There is now space in the outside area to accommodate 126 customers.

Kelly said: "The new-look garden complements the pub perfectly and has been welcomed by customers."

The garden extension, which had been overgrown and neglected land, is now paved to match the current garden area, with an additional 'compass' paving feature.

Two-thirds of the new outside space is covered with a steel-and-glass canopy.

Modern outside dining tables and chairs, festoon lighting and hanging flower baskets have also been installed.

An existing outbuilding has also been fully refurbished to provide a 'snug' area – perfect for customer groups.

The garden, as well as the pub, is all on one level and fully accessible for wheelchair users and less mobile customers.

22-24 High Street, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 1NL



NEW

WETHERSPOON IS OPENING

The Scribbling Mill
White Rose shopping centre
Dewsbury Road, Leeds, LS11 8LU
11 October 2022

The London and North Western
Birmingham New Street station
Birmingham, B2 4QA
21 November 2022

COMMUNITY

RUGELEY

PLAZA ACTS AS HUB FOR THOSE FINDING REFUGE IN RUGELEY



Kind-hearted citizens across the UK have been opening their homes to help families fleeing the war in Ukraine.

Townfolk in Rugeley are no exception – with the local Wetherspoon pub, The Plaza, providing a weekly community hub as a central meeting point and networking venue.

The pub's manager, Sian Siddall (pictured front left, with bar associate Jade Gallier), explained: "It all started with one family, a mum and her two children, being hosted by a friend of mine.

"I volunteer at a local youth football team – and Paul (pictured far right, wearing grey) is one of the new football coaches there.

"He mentioned about helping a Ukrainian family, the first in the area to do so, and the processes he went through to host them.

"He now shares that invaluable knowledge with other families in the area, at the weekly Monday-morning session at the pub."

Sian hosts the Monday coffee morning (starting at 10am) as a meet, greet and welcome to all of the Ukrainian families rehomed in Rugeley.

She offers tea, coffee and squash, as well as colouring packs for the youngsters, in the quieter and more private upstairs section of The Plaza.

Sian said: "The group is growing in strength every week, as new families arrive and word gets around. One family, when they heard about the group, travelled from the next town.

"Paul helps with information about finding local jobs, schools for children, completing forms and any benefits which may be available.

"Rugeley Town Council's chair, Neil Stanley, also attends, feeding back to other councillors about what is needed and discussing additional support required."

Sian concluded: "We offer a safe, comfortable environment, in the heart of Rugeley, where all of those attending can sit, talk and offer support to one another."

BARRY

WELSH SCHOOL BOOSTED BY REACTION AT ROMILLY

Pub manager Nathan Warren and his team at The Sir Samuel Romilly (Barry) are supporting a local primary school with fundraising initiatives at their pub.

Nathan explained: "We have teamed up with one of our customers, Rita Limbrick, who works for the Cadoxton Youth Project helping youngsters in the local area.

"We wanted to support our local Welsh-speaking primary school, Ysgol Sant Curig, towards improvements for its playground facilities – which were in urgent need of attention.

"Fundraising over a few months, including raffles and fancy-dress initiatives, collected £550, thanks to the support of our customers and team."

Shift manager Carianwen Taylor (left), whose children attended the school, is pictured with Rita (right) handing over a cheque to headteacher Rhodri Jones and pupils from the school.

Nathan concluded: "We want our support to continue, to help future projects, and will carry on fundraising with Rita for the local community."



CAERPHILLY

BIKERS ROAR BACK TO MALCOLM UPHILL



More than 150 motorcycles and riders met up at The Malcolm Uphill (Caerphilly).

The pub, named after the famous Welsh professional motorcycle racer, was a regular meeting spot for bikers before COVID-19 – and now the tradition has emerged again.

The event, organised by the South Wales Classic Motorcycle Club, was held to celebrate one of Uphill's finest achievements – averaging 100mph on a Triumph Bonneville production bike during the Isle of Man TT races.

Many of the bikers are regulars at the pub.

After one hearty breakfast, and after a short tour in Uphill's honour around the valleys, many of the riders returned for another.

Duty manager Hayley Todd (pictured front left) said: "It's great to see the bikers back.

"There were so many different types of bike and a lot of enthusiasm from the group – they certainly were a hungry bunch.

"They really like the breakfast here!"

The bike club's chair, Alwyn Dart (pictured second left), said: "Huge thanks go to the team at The Malcolm Uphill for allowing us to host the start of the event and for throwing in some bacon rolls for our participants."

Caerphilly's mayor, Cllr Mike Prew, also turned up to meet the group and give them all a good send-off.

DEVONIAN RHAPSODY AS WEST COUNTRY BREWERS SPREAD THE JOY

Salcombe Brewery's Shingle Bay pale ale enjoyed nationwide in October

Brewery's name: Salcombe Brewery Co, Kingsbridge, Devon



Pictured (left to right) are managing director Jordan Mace, key account manager Joe Dixon and assistant head brewer Chris Lang

Wetherspoon's customers can enjoy the light pale ale **Shingle Bay (4.2% ABV)** at pubs nationwide during October – from the company's seasonal guest ale list.

This is the first national listing for Salcombe Brewery Co, a family-run business, situated in the beautiful Devon countryside, with views towards the Salcombe Estuary.

The brewhouse, headed up by two young Exeter University graduates, namely head brewer Sam Beaman and assistant head brewer Chris Lang, is built on the site of a decommissioned water reservoir.

Ambient

The state-of-the-art brewhouse utilises the natural ambient temperature of the large semisubmerged concrete-lined reservoir for storing beers at perfect conditioning temperature.

The site also has its own borehole, supplying the brewery with its own source of pure Devonian water.

Brewery founders and owners, husband-and-wife team, John and Gerry Tiner moved to the area after falling in love with the place on family holidays over a 35-year period.

It was also John's mission to save his favourite pint of Shingle Bay, when the brewery making it was set to close.

Along with business partner Mike George, he bought the old Quercus Brewery and hired Boston-brewer Tom Madeiros at the eight-barrel plant.

Larger

In 2015, Salcombe Brewery Co moved to its current larger-capacity site and, in 2021, opened a production facility nearby, capable of kegging, canning and bottling, all in house.

Joe Dixon, Salcombe Brewery's key account manager, revealed: "I have many friends, as well as family members, who work or have worked for Wetherspoon and so I know the company well.

"The staff learn great skill sets – and I always say that the best place you'll get a pint of cask ale is in a Wetherspoon pub.

Barrel

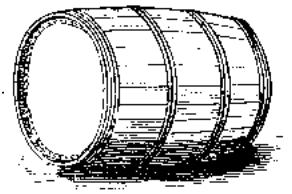
"We've always been more than happy to send a barrel of our beer to Wetherspoon's pubs across Devon (Brixham, Exeter, Newton Abbot, Paignton, Plymouth, Teignmouth and Torquay).

"The national real-ale guest listing is a game-changer for us and an exciting opportunity."

Joe concluded: "It is amazing to see our beer being served.

"It gives us great brand exposure (with access to almost 900 pubs) – and we are all very excited by it.

"It's our first dip of a toe, so to speak, nationwide, and we would love to be involved in a real-ale festival event in the near future."



FOLLOW THE ALE TRAIL TO CATCH A COYOTE

Norfolk-based Wolf Brewery's first gluten-free beer available as a seasonal guest ale throughout October

Brewery's name: Wolf Brewery, Besthorpe, Attleborough, Norfolk



Throughout October, real-ale enthusiasts can enjoy a pint of Wolf Coyote (4.3% ABV) at Wetherspoon's pubs – as part of the seasonal guest ale listing.

It is Norfolk-based Wolf Brewery's first gluten-free ale, as head brewer and brewery manager Will Edwards (pictured) explained: "We were being asked more and more for a gluten-free beer – and feedback has been very encouraging, so far."

Wolf Brewery supplies at least one guest ale a year, for Wetherspoon's national listing, and has previously brewed bespoke beers for the company's annual real-ale festival, including the 40th anniversary event – which had the exclusive brew Wolf Voyager 1 (4.6% ABV).

Awareness

Will continued: "We are not a nationwide brand and like to keep local, but Wetherspoon's national listings and festivals help to get our name out there, which is great for us for brand awareness."

"The more beer we can produce, the more ingredients we need to buy – this, in turn, helps to bring the cost prices down and so helps everyone."

Wolf Brewery was founded in September 1995 on the old Gaymers Cider site in Attleborough.

The business grew steadily and, in 2005, was sold to the Edwards family, winning 'supreme champion beer of Britain' in the same year.

Investment

In 2006, having outgrown that premises, major investment was made in a new brewhouse.

In autumn 2013, a further move to a purpose-built brewery at Decoy Farm, in the heart of Norfolk, provided Wolf Brewery's current home.

The water used throughout the brewery is drawn from an onsite chalk-based well, while locally grown malted barley is used in the process, with the spent grain going back to the neighbouring farm as cattle feed.

Will has been at Wolf Brewery for 11 years, revealing that he "started at the bottom and have worked my way to the top".

East

During that time, his ales have been delivered directly to Wetherspoon's pubs from across the east of England, including those in Cambridge, Colchester, Hitchin, Norwich, Peterborough and Saffron Walden.

He revealed: "The pubs serve loads of guest ales, so the selection chops and changes, but our top seller is Golden Jackal (3.7% ABV).

"Other popular ones are our multiaward-winning Granny Wouldn't Like It (4.8% ABV) and Lazy Dog (4.7% ABV).

"All Wetherspoon pubs are big real-ale sellers, although The Bell Hotel (Norwich) and The Playhouse (Colchester) are probably our biggest customers.

"We have a good relationship with all of the pubs."

The Lime Kiln and The Captain Alexander (both Liverpool)

Well Done Folks!
£1,600
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



30 staff from two Wetherspoon pubs climbed Mount Snowdon to raise £1,600 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The group braved 'horrible' weather and several mishaps to complete the ascent and return home safely.

Team leader Shay Mathers-Waters and shift manager Ashleigh Schofield of The Lime Kiln (Liverpool) helped to organise the event with staff from The Captain Alexander (Liverpool).

The group was dropped off in the wrong car park, so was forced to take the arduous Rhyd Ddu route to the summit. They then took a wrong turn on the way back down and spent an extra three hours on the mountain.

"It took us six hours there and back," said Shay, adding: "The weather certainly wasn't on our side on the day, but it was a great achievement for everyone and for Young Lives vs Cancer."

Shay is pictured (left) wearing a purple hat, with bar associate Ellouise Crozier to his right. Behind her (left to right) are kitchen associate Jake Norman, kitchen team leaders Kieran Lester and Christina Hanlon, shift manager Matt Fletcher (yellow jacket), with bar team leader Charlotte Lunn in the foreground.

The Gary Cooper (Dunstable)

Well Done Folks!
£200
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Team leader Ryan Allard and bar associate Candice de Oliveira hold aloft special envelopes containing prizes at The Gary Cooper (Dunstable).

The prizes included vouchers for free drinks, plus lollies and sweets for children, at a charity day to raise cash for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Each envelope was marked with a day of the year, from 1 January to 31 December, and customers paid £1 – or more, if they chose to – per envelope.

Around £200 was raised.

Ryan said: "As well as the fundraising envelopes, we decorated the pub with balloons – and it proved to be a popular day. We are grateful to everyone who took part."

The Last Post (Paisley)

Well Done Folks!
£1,500
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Four hikers from The Last Post (Paisley) completed the renowned Kiltwalk to raise £1,500 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The four – shift leaders Stephen Murphy and Leon Cameron and bar associates Adam Wilson and Joe Rafferty – walked 23.2 miles from Glasgow Green to Balloch, at the foot of Loch Lomond.

They joined 10,000 people on the day, all of whom were walking for charity.

Stephen said: "I wanted to do something to raise money for charity before I reach the age of 50 – and the Kiltwalk is something I've always wanted to do.

"It took a lot out of us – it's one thing walking the floors of Wetherspoon all day, but another when you're out in the countryside.

"We are all very grateful to customers who sponsored us or gave donations."

Pictured (left to right) are Leon, Adam, Joe and Stephen.

The Silkstone Inn (Barnsley)

Well Done Folks!
£350
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



A 12-hour static bike ride raised £350 for Young Lives vs Cancer at The Silkstone Inn (Barnsley).

Twelve staff each cycled for an hour as collection buckets were passed around to customers.

As awareness of the event spread beyond the pub itself, passers-by began to drop in, just to donate their spare change.

Bar associate Lydia Wallis (pictured) said: "Some people came in the pub simply to donate to our fundraising. It was so nice. We were really pleased to raise so much money and look forward to doing it again in the future."

The Picture House (Sutton-in-Ashfield)

Well Done Folks!
£250
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Twelve members of a family who lost a relative to cancer went on a sponsored walk to raise money to fight the disease.

The Townsend family – some of whom are regulars at The Picture House (Sutton-in-Ashfield) – donated an initial £85 to the pub to give to Young Lives vs Cancer, following the walk around King’s Mill Reservoir.

But since then, word of the family’s efforts has spread – and customers have bumped up donations to £250.

The walk was undertaken to raise money in memory of, and as a tribute to, Lisa-Marie Townsend, on what would have been her birthday. Lisa-Marie lost her life to cancer in her early 20s.

The pub’s shift manager, Kate Nott, said: “They chose to do a walk themselves, with all monies going to Young Lives vs Cancer. It was a lovely example of community spirit.”

Lisa-Marie’s husband, Stuart, organised the event, along with her parents Andy and Lesley.

They are pictured (respectively, far left and second from the right) with other family members.

Those taking part were husband Stuart, parents Andy and Lesley, Ian, Phyllis, Sharon, Kourosh, Carole, Phil, Niyah, Sue, Sandra and Jackie.

The Babington Arms (Derby)

Well Done Folks!
£358
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Poor Ann Harker suffered a soaking after customers nominated her in a Dunk The Manager contest.

Ann, shift leader at The Babington Arms (Derby), was drenched by colleagues after 102 customers voted her into the dunking chair.

The event was all in fun, though, and raised £358 for Young Lives vs Cancer, with each vote sold for £1.

The actual dunking was very well attended as pub manager Parisa Darling (pictured left) and shift manager Cheryl Freeborough (pictured right) did the honours.

Parisa said: “A lot of people came to watch the event.

“It was very popular – and our regulars loved watching the votes change day by day – we are grateful to them for their kind donations.”

The Playhouse (Colchester) and The Picture Palace (Braintree)



Well Done Folks!
£5,210
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Two Wetherspoon pubs in Essex joined forces to raise more than £5,000 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Staff members and former colleagues from The Playhouse (Colchester) and The Picture Palace (Braintree) attempted the Three Peaks Challenge.

Taking part were shift managers Sam Cosgrove and Joe Cosgrove, kitchen manager Liam Newman, shift leaders Kay de Godoy-Robertson and Geoff Squibb, kitchen shift leader Reece Harper, team leaders Lily Matthews, Maddison Seal and Matt Holt and bar associates George Shoobridge and Crystal Griffin, as well as former employees Ella Dungey and Ellie Watson. Marcus Grainger, pub manager at The Picture Palace, also joined the trip.

Pub manager at The Playhouse Jackie Dungey, who was the designated driver, along with her sister Leah Sweeney, said: “It was a really difficult challenge, and we were hampered by injuries, as well as the van breaking down.

“Despite all of the difficulties, everyone had a great time and should be very proud.”

Thanks to sponsorship, cake bakes and book sales, the group raised £5,210.

The Bishop Blaize (Stretford)

Well Done Folks!
£260
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Customers from The Bishop Blaize (Stretford) enjoyed a day of horse-racing at Haydock Park.

The pub’s manager, Ben Plunkett, organised the event.

Before the coach left, customers had breakfast at the pub, while watching racing in the pub of a different type, with customers donating to Young Lives vs Cancer to participate.

Ben, pictured (left) with kitchen manager Mike Garner (centre) and kitchen associate Nathan Shelmerdine, said: “We raised £260 for our charity.

“It was a fun day – and the sun even shone for us.”

The Kirky Puffer (Kirkintilloch) and The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew)



Two pubs in and around Glasgow joined forces to raise £1,037 for Young Lives vs Cancer, through sponsorship and customer donations.

Pub manager John McKenna and four of his management team from The Kirky Puffer (Kirkintilloch), together with pub manager Donna Walker and two of her management team who work at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew), took part in a sponsored walk.

The fundraisers walked from Kirkintilloch to The Captain James Lang (Dumbarton), the pub previously managed by John, a distance of 24 miles, along the scenic Forth and Clyde Canal.

John said: "Twenty-four miles is a long walk – it took us all day, but we weren't rushing and stopped on the way for a breather and to admire the view."

"A huge well-done to everyone who took part and a massive thankyou to all of those colleagues, customers, family and friends for their support, helping us to raise money for this worthy cause."

Pictured (left to right) are The Lord of the Isles' pub manager Donna Walker, The Kirky Puffer's duty managers Lizzie Quinn and Sara Caine, shift manager James Hamilton and shift leader Natalie Brady (The Lord of the Isles), pub manager John McKenna (front, centre), kitchen team leader Lee Adamiec and team leader Katy Brown (all from The Kirky Puffer).

The Poste of Stone (Stone)

A smoothie bike-ride event at The Poste of Stone (Stone) raised £74 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

A smoothie bike harnesses pedal power to fuel a blender – after under a minute, the rider is rewarded with a refreshing drink.

These were sold to customers at the pub during the event.

Staff and customers took turns on the bike as a collection bucket was passed round.

Shift leader Josh Freeman (pictured) helped to organise the event with shift manager Andrew Best.

Josh said: "We borrowed the smoothie bike from a local shop, based in Stone (velorunner.co.uk). It's the first time we've done an event like this here – and we want to do more in future."



The Robert The Bruce (Dumfries)



Now you see it – now you don't! Three hirsute bar staff at The Robert The Bruce (Dumfries) raised £1,000 for Young Lives vs Cancer by having their beard shaved off.

Shift leader William Sawley and duty managers Andrew Daish and Sean Robson (pictured left to right) were shaved by a local barber drafted in for the occasion.

Money was raised via an online page, but mainly from donations on the day.

The event was given a big plug by BBC Radio Scotland on its Friday What's On slot. Shift leader Chloe Tipping had to give a brief interview explaining what was happening.

She said: "I told them what it was for and what was going on. It was great that they gave us some publicity for the charity."

Duty manager Kerri Watson, who organised the event with Chloe, said: "We were really pleased to raise so much money – a big thankyou to the boys and, of course, everyone who donated."



Thorn's Farm (Yate)



A charity day at Thorn's Farm (Yate) raised more than £1,300 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Kitchen manager Tracy Hendry (pictured) decided to organise the event on the pub's 10th birthday weekend.

Customers took part by way of a raffle, a cake sale and a quiz night, while staff also contributed to the fundraising with a static bike ride inside the pub.

Tracy, who blew up almost 50 balloons for the event, said: "It was a fantastic effort from everyone here – and we would like to thank the customers for their support."

The Thomas Ingoldsby (Canterbury)



Well Done Folks!
£1,272
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Pub manager Ali Stevenson and her fabulous team at The Thomas Ingoldsby (Canterbury) turned rainbows and glitter into charity cash at their Pride Day fundraiser.

Staff baked cakes and offered glitter face decorations to coincide with Canterbury Pride 2022, a celebration for the whole family of LGBTQIA+ identity, set in the heart of Canterbury, with events and a parade.

The real star of the show at The Thomas Ingoldsby, however, was shift manager Ricky Baker, who embraced his inner diva to become Tess Tickles (pictured front) for the day. Tess collected a massive £1,050 in charity donations.

With £222 generated through the cake sale and face-painting, the fundraising day raised £1,272 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Ali said: "Ricky (AKA Tess) worked in drag all day, with a charity donation QR code stuck on his backside, cheekily encouraging customers to 'scan his bum', collecting more than £1,000."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Michael Wood, team leaders Olivia Bridges and Owen Cameron, pub manager Ali Stevenson, shift managers Jemma Hitchcock and Lori Taylor and bar associates Khalil Persad and Jake Modos, with (front) Tess Tickles.

The Willow Grove (Southport)



Well Done Folks!
£1,018
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

A team of climbers from The Willow Grove (Southport) scaled Scafell Pike to raise more than £1,000 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The team, led by pub manager Daniel Mercer, braved cold conditions to reach the peak of England's highest mountain and descend again in six hours – despite an initial wrong turn.

Money was raised through sponsorship forms and donations – with £1,018 the final total collected.

Daniel said: "We went the wrong way initially, but it didn't cost us too much time. It was minus one at the summit, but then, as we came down, the sun came out and it warmed up nicely.

"We are all very grateful to all of those who sponsored us and donated to the cause."

Pictured (left to right) are kitchen manager Owen Morris, bar associates Sam Wilkins and Ben Lavender, shift manager Gabrielle Watkinson, shift leader Ryan Colvin, Daniel Mercer, shift leader Darion Moore, bar associate Craig Black, kitchen shift leader Jayne Serajuddy, kitchen associate Matthew Lightfoot and bar associate Owen Lewis.

The Liquorice Gardens (Worksop)



Well Done Folks!
£2,000
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Walkers from six pubs set off in heavy rain to conquer Yorkshire's three peaks in a charity fundraising event for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Led by organiser Chris Ballantyne, kitchen manager at The Liquorice Gardens (Worksop), the 25-strong team climbed the Yorkshire Dales' peaks of Pen-y-ghent, Whernside and Ingleborough.

The Three Peaks Challenge involves 24.5 miles and climbing 1,500 metres. It's a tough challenge – and only half of Wetherspoon's team members completed it, with many having to pull out through fatigue or minor injuries.

Chris said: "Everyone did their absolute best, but 24.5 miles with all of that climbing can take their toll, especially if you're not a seasoned walker.

"Those with the stamina to complete all three peaks were rewarded with spectacular views.

"We scaled Ingleborough first, but it was only around 8am, so the morning mist hadn't cleared, but the other two peaks gave us some wonderful views of the Dales and beyond."

In total, £2,000 was raised from sponsorship and customers' donations. Chris is pictured (front) with the team at the start of the walk.

The Six Chimneys (Wakefield)



Well Done Folks!
£104
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

Golfers from Wetherspoon's pubs in Yorkshire and beyond had to pay out when they hit water or the bunker on a charity day organised by shift manager Grant May of The Six Chimneys (Wakefield).

And plenty of hazards were hit as £104 was raised for Young Lives vs Cancer during the tournament held at Wakefield's Waterton Park Golf Club.

The event was attended by players from seven pubs.

Grant (pictured) is a member at the club and has an impressive handicap of seven, despite having played for only the last five years.

He said: "It was a great day – and we had a lot of fun. Players were encouraged not to take the game too seriously, in order to leave plenty of scope for money to be raised."

Grant holed an Eagle, yet this wasn't enough to win him the tournament, as the honours went to Mark Barnes, manager at The Sheaf Island (Sheffield).

The other pubs represented were The Crossed Shuttle (Pudsey), The Briggate (Leeds), The Joseph Bramah (Barnsley), Globe Hotel (King's Lynn) and The Highland Laddie (Stockton-on-Tees).

Sir John Stirling Maxwell (Glasgow)

Well Done Folks!
£463
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



A team of intrepid hikers from Sir John Stirling Maxwell (Glasgow) bagged two Munros, along with a bunch of charity cash, in a sponsored fundraiser.

A Munro is a Scottish mountain with an elevation of more than 914.4 metres (the height being based on 3,000 feet).

Pictured heading off from the pub on their mountain adventure are shift leader and organiser Kirsty Randalls (front), with (left to right) kitchen/bar associate Connor Finnigan, kitchen team leader Jack Ewan, kitchen associate Andrew Crossan and bar associate Josef Heidinger.

Duty managers Billy Wright and Lorne MacGillivray (not pictured) also took part.

This challenge saw the group climb both Ben Lawers, the highest mountain in the central highlands, high above Loch Tay, and Beinn Ghlas.

The fundraisers, aided by charity champion Georgia Bridges, collected £463 in donations and sponsorship (online and at the pub) for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The Crossed Shuttle (Pudsey)

Well Done Folks!
£300
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Duty manager Adam Walley and shift manager Coral Masterman, from The Crossed Shuttle (Pudsey), organised the first annual Nidderdale staff hike, to raise funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The pair are pictured at the start of their sponsored walk – which started at The Bowling Green (Otley).

The fundraisers took part in a 20-mile circular route, returning to the pub, raising £300 in online sponsorship and cash donations for the charity.

The cross-country trek took in several local landmarks, including Fewston and Swinsty reservoirs, as well as Lindley Wood and the grade II listed 17th-century Dob Park bridge, all within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Adam said: “We chose to start from The Bowling Green because it is a good starting point for a lot of walks and leads to some lovely Yorkshire countryside.

“We are planning to organise this sponsored hike annually, hopefully getting bigger and better each year.

“Thank you to everyone who supported us.”

The Bath Arms (Warminster)

Well Done Folks!
£1,440
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Three plucky skydivers from The Bath Arms (Warminster) – one of whom has a fear of heights – raised £1,440 for Young Lives vs Cancer in a charity mission over Salisbury.

Shift manager Kim Sainsbury-Donaghy came up with the money-spinning idea during a brainstorming session and asked for volunteers – Ed Smith found his hand in the air before he confessed to his acrophobia.

Shift manager Ed told Kim and fellow jumper bar associate Morgan Patterson just days before the event which took place at Old Sarum airfield.

Kim said: “We all think he’s very brave – although, for all of us, it was our first-ever jump. When we landed, we looked round for Ed and asked him how he felt and he just said: ‘Let’s go again!’”

Kim is pictured with Ed (right) and Morgan before the jump.

The Auld Brig (Irvine)

Well Done Folks!
£1,000
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



The team at The Auld Brig (Irvine) smashed its £1,000 fundraising target with a sponsored charity climb for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Organised by shift manager and keen hillwalker Gregor Cairns, a group of 25 staff, together with three dogs, climbed Goatfell.

They needed two trains and a ferry crossing, from Ardrossan to Brodick, to reach their climbing destination, the highest peak (874 metres) on the Isle of Arran.

Gregor said: “It was a long day, and the weather conditions were terrible, but it never crossed my mind that we wouldn’t complete the challenge, as we were doing it for Young Lives vs Cancer.

“Despite the awful wet weather, it was great to achieve the challenge with a great group of people.

“Everyone should be very proud of themselves, particularly with our collective fundraising total of £1,000.”

The Quay (Poole)

Well Done Folks!
£400
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



Children were treated to a Lego Day as the team at The Quay (Poole) raised money for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Scoops were on hand to fill with Lego bricks, so that the children could bring their building skills to bear.

Other treats included face-painting and a range of cakes and milkshakes made by kitchen manager Emma Cox and shift leader Steph Tobin.

Professional face-painters, Tom's Funky Face-Paints, was drafted in to provide animal-themed face makeovers.

Steph said: "The day was very successful – and we raised £400 for the charity."

Pictured (back row, left to right) are face-painter Hannah Wareham with young Henry Price, face-painter Thomas Wareham, pub manager Charlee Blanchard and team leader Chris Cox; (middle row) team leader Josh Vincent (left) with bar associate Morgan Blake; (front row, left to right) floor associate Livvy Lann-Frisby (left) and kitchen manager Emma Cox.

The Court Leet (Ormskirk)



Well Done Folks!
£1,200
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY

The Court Leet (Ormskirk) joined in the fun when the town staged its fifth annual gingerbread festival.

Staff at the pub sold and raffled gingerbread and other goodies to raise £1,200 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The star of the show was shift manager Tom Grice, who dressed up as a giant gingerbread man on the day to entertain children.

Ormskirk is famous for its gingerbread, which has been produced there for almost 300 years.

The annual festival features heritage stalls and gingerbread food and drink, alongside music, comedy and children's events.

Shift manager Chloe Walters (pictured left with Tom Grice and bar associate Molly Hilton), who organised the pub events, said: "We were delighted to be involved. It was great fun – and we also raised money for our chosen charity."

The Moon Under Water (Wigan)

Well Done Folks!
£578
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



An intrepid team of walkers from The Moon Under Water (Wigan) walked 12 miles to raise funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The group members, led by pub manager Sian McKenzie, began their walk at The Friar Penketh (Warrington) and walked back to their home pub via The Sir Thomas Gerard (Ashton-in-Makerfield).

On the day, they raised £498 for the charity, but when customers learned of the walk, subsequent donations brought the total to £578.

Sian (pictured middle row, second right) said: "We would like to thank customers and staff for their generosity."

Others (all pictured) taking part from the pub were (back, left to right) shift leaders Lindz Devine and Ben Gallagher, team leader Harry Pickavance and bar associate Ashley Horrobin, (middle, left to right) bar associate Chelsea Whittaker, shift manager Emma Ford and bar associate Ju Cionco, with (front) kitchen associate Annie Whewall.

The Cross Keys (Beverley)

Well Done Folks!
£390
RAISED FOR OUR
CHOSEN CHARITY



A team from The Cross Keys (Beverley) literally crawled through mud to raise much-needed funds for two cancer charities.

They took part in Hull's Pretty Muddy event, in which participants run a 5k obstacle course covered in thick, wet mud.

Pub manager Emma Badham said: "It was great fun. We all really enjoyed it and are looking for something similar to do in the future."

Her team raised £780 to be split between the Race for Life cancer charity and Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pictured (back row, from left) are kitchen shift leader Sam Greenwood, shift leader Curtis Suffield, shift manager Mikey Manston, kitchen shift leader Dan Longbottom and shift leader Charlie Moore, with (middle row) pub manager Emma Badham, bar associate Callum Leak, shift manager Emma Thorley and (front row) cleaner Judy Gordon and shift leader Mili Mercer.

PEN MIGHTIER THAN SWORD FOR GREAT WAR AUTHOR PAM



Pub regular and author Pam Preedy held a book-signing at The Richmal Crompton (Bromley) to raise money for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pam's book, *Living Through The Great War at Home*, describes the challenges faced by the local community during World War I.

The book-signing was attended by Bromley's mayor, Cllr Hannah Gray.

Pam took a diploma in local history and, when she had finished, needed a new project. She decided to do some research about the men of Bromley who had died in World War I. While researching through the local newspapers, she found stories which inspired her to write the book.

In addition, she created a search website (www.militaryancestors.co.uk) of mostly local people and has a blog: www.bromleyhistoricaltimes.co.uk

The pub's manager, Karen Hart, said: "The book is of real interest to local people. Pam herself was born and raised in the area and is now a mother and grandmother."

Author Pam said: "Karen was so kind to arrange the book-signing in the pub."

"It was a thoroughly enjoyable event, and I was pleased to raise money for Wetherspoon's charity too. A donation was made to Young Lives vs Cancer from sales of the book and a raffle on the day."

Pictured (from left) are Karen Hart, Pam and husband John with Mayor Cllr Hannah Gray.

● **Living Through The Great War at Home is published by Austin Macauley Publishing and is available online.**

DAY OF FUN BRINGS IN SERIOUS SUM

A family fun-day at The Tullow Gate (Carlow, Republic of Ireland) raised €300 for Wetherspoon's chosen charity, LauraLynn - Ireland's children's hospice.

Children took part in a range of activities, including face-painting, playing with balloon animals, inflatable goal competitions, arts and crafts and a toddlers' toy corner.

For grown-ups, there was a raffle, featuring a selection of prizes, including vouchers donated by local businesses.

In addition, before the fun-day itself, a hamper worth €230 was raffled.

Organiser and shift leader Ruth Kelly said:

"It wouldn't have been possible without donations from local businesses, and we would like to thank them for their generosity.

"The Tullow Gate is a very family friendly pub, with the fun-day being the perfect way for customers to enjoy themselves and, at the same time, support a wonderful charity."



CATHERINE CLOCKS UP 20 YEARS WITH SIR THOMAS



Colleagues gathered round shift leader Catherine Mort to thank her for 20 years' service at The Sir Thomas Gerard (Ashton-in-Makerfield).

Catherine joined the pub in 2002 as a part-time bar associate, yet soon decided that she wanted to go full time.

She quickly progressed on the career ladder to team leader, thanks to an ability to see what needed doing, when and by whom.

Catherine said: "As a manager, I like to be clear and make sure that everyone knows exactly what they need to be doing, but I also like to think that I am motivational, because I do have a lot of experience to share."

The past 20 years have not been all about work, though – she has a 17-year-old son, Callum, who likes rugby and supports Wigan.

Also, outside of work, Catherine is a keen gardener, but – above all else – enjoys going on holiday.

She said: "It's great to be able to do that again – I had to shield during the pandemic, so there was a lot of gardening, cleaning, chilling and watching box sets, but I just wanted to get back to work."

Pub manager Nicola Wadsworth said: "We all appreciate the contribution which Catherine has made, not just to the pub, but also to us all as friends – and we are proud to mark her 20 years' service here."

Pictured (from left) are pub manager Nicola Wadsworth, area manager Mike Morrissey, bar associate Paula Tucker, shift leader Catherine Mort, shift manager Christine Krasocki and kitchen shift leader Jemma Edwards.

Area manager Mike Morrissey said: "It is a fantastic achievement for Catherine to have been with the company for 20 years now, and I want to thank her for all of her hard work during that time.

"It really is appreciated."

BRIEF ENCOUNTER WITH TIM IS JUST THE TICKET FOR WETHERSPOON FANS

Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, is pictured at Slough railway station with customers Steve Brooke (left) and Kevin Bartlett.

Tim, who was visiting pubs in the area and had just been to The Moon and Spoon (Slough), bumped into the former railwaymen on their own Wetherspoon pub tour.

Tim said: "They had also just been into The Moon and Spoon, and I was delighted to meet them.

"It is superb that they, like so many others, have such an interest in visiting our pubs."

Steve, who hails from Morley, has visited 424 Wetherspoon pubs, so far, while his touring buddy Kevin, from Castleford, has clocked up 458... and counting.



TASTE THE FUTURE – WINE ON DRAUGHT



The quality is unaffected, yet the carbon footprint is just one-twenty-fourth of that of bottled wine

Have you tried Wetherspoon's draught wine? If you are a wine-drinker and haven't, why not?

It may be an unexpected and delightful surprise, as the quality of draught wine, contrary to what many may think, is exactly the same as that from a bottle, fresh every time, served at the perfect temperature.

Serving draught is better for the planet too – with lower carbon emissions (24 times lower) than bottled wine.

Wetherspoon's Coldwater Creek draught wines are served in four available options: the two white wines pinot grigio (11.5% ABV) and Chardonnay (12.5% ABV), rosé (12% ABV) and the red merlot (12% ABV).

First launched in Wetherspoon pubs in 2005, the Coldwater Creek wine selection has continued to be ever popular with customers.

That popularity is thanks to the consistent quality and wide choice of wines.

Perfect

It is also thanks, in part, to the dispensing draught system, helping pub staff always to be sure that they are pouring a fresh glass every time.

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 conditions for producing wine.

Special

It is a very special wine-making region, resulting in fruity, easy-drinking wines.

The wines have been expertly crafted under the experienced eye of Concha Y Toro's principal winemaker, Max Weinlaub, and senior winemaker, Marcelo Gangas, based at the Cono Sur winery, in Chile. Concha Y Toro, which produces Wetherspoon's draught wine, is the second-largest branded wine supplier in the UK.

The company owns more than 116km² of vineyards.

If you have yet to try Wetherspoon's draught wines, what are you waiting for?

Concha y Toro's history began in 1883 with its founder, Melchor Concha y Toro, dreaming about creating 'the best wines'.

That tradition has been persevered over time, inspiring its continued work, with passion and excellence.

Today, Concha y Toro is one of the most admired wine brands in the world. Its various wines and brands are enjoyed by consumers around the world, in more than 130 countries.



Tasting notes

Chardonnay (12.5% ABV): Bursting with peach and citrus fruit aromas, this wine's taste is smooth and rich, in a modern, unoaked style, with flavours of pineapple and other tropical fruits.

Pinot grigio (11.5% ABV): This is lighter and crisper than the Chardonnay, with flavours of green apples and pears. It is a lovely partner to fish and salad dishes.



Rosé (12% ABV): A beautiful bright pink colour, made from the premium grape variety cabernet sauvignon, this wine's strawberry and cherry aromas are followed by a lovely balance of luscious red fruit flavours and a refreshing crispness on the palate.



Merlot (12% ABV): Bright red in the glass, with a lovely aroma of raspberries and cherries, this is a smooth and easy-drinking wine, bursting with fruity flavours and a hint of spice.

THE PONTLOTTYN • ABERTILLERY

EXPERIENCE HELPS SARAH TO MANAGE THROUGH A CRISIS



This summer, pub manager Sarah Newton marked 21 years' service with Wetherspoon.

She first began as a kitchen associate at The Olympia (Tredegar) while still at college, quickly progressing to kitchen manager within two years, a position she held for a decade.

Sarah has worked at several pubs in The Valleys, including those in Aberdare, Abergavenny, Blackwood, Caerphilly and Pontypool, taking over her first pub as manager in September 2019 at The Pontlottyn (Abertillery).

Sarah, pictured with her 20 years' service certificate presented last year, said: "Part of me thinks that the past 21 years have gone by quickly, but there has been such a change for me moving from the kitchen to front of house."

When Sarah was at college, she was looking to become a veterinary nurse, keen to work with animals.

She said: "I now can't imagine or see myself doing anything else but managing a pub."

Sarah continued: "My dad was in the army, so I moved around all my life. It is nice to have a career with a company like Wetherspoon, where there are options and a wide band of experiences to choose from."

In more recent years, Sarah's dad, Carl, enjoyed a night manager role at The Queen's Hotel (Newport) (now closed), while her mum, Kate, previously a care worker, was a kitchen associate at The Olympia (Tredegar) and The Coliseum (Abergavenny).

Two of Sarah's three brothers, the youngest Ryan and the eldest Adam, also work for the company.

Adam is the kitchen manager at The Coliseum, while Ryan works as a bar associate at The Godfrey Morgan (Newport).

Speaking about her own pub, Sarah reported: "Recovery from the lockdowns has been a long process in Wales, so it is wonderful to see the pub busy with happy customers and staff."

"We have our bingo session on a Wednesday, with quiz night on Sunday – and it is all about making people feel safe and welcome."

She added: "I didn't really realise the full extent of a pub manager's role – and it is a lot harder than you might imagine."

"However, I have been helped and well supported by a great team."

"The guys are brilliant, the team is fantastic, I couldn't do it without them and they have done me proud."



The Queen's
Platinum Jubilee

Round-up



The Old Swan (Uttoxeter) Shift manager Emma Veitch organised a children's craft day. Poppie Roberts, Lottie Rowland and Miley Manton are pictured (left to right) enjoying the activities. Floor associate Connor Lewis also went 'above and beyond' donning a full Union Jack suit for the day.

RED, WHITE, BLUE – AND PURPLE TOO – AT PUBS' JUBILEE JUBILATIONS

The nation, as well as citizens from across the Commonwealth, all came together to mark the Queen's platinum jubilee.

During a fantastic four-day celebration, staff and customers at Wetherspoon's pubs also joined in the monarch's 70th anniversary festivities.

In all four corners of the United Kingdom, pubs were decked in red, white and blue (and purple), adorned with banners, balloons and bunting – with cake definitely the order of the day at parties and community events.

Fancy-dress fun, charity raffles and fundraising bake sales generated plenty of jubilee joy, as well as charity cash for Young Lives vs Cancer.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II 1926–2022

These pages were compiled before the death of Her Majesty The Queen.

They highlight the warmth felt towards the Queen by our employees and customers as they celebrated her platinum jubilee earlier in the year.

The company is grateful for the 70 years of public service which the Queen gave to the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, to whom she dedicated her life.



The Butler's Bell (Stafford) Piddock (left to right) are bar associate Faye Bagnall, shift leader Emma Piddock and team leader Izabela Nowosielska, with the jubilee raffle first prize – a 'best of British' goody hamper – which generated £237 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



The Old Market Hall (Mexborough) Trying out the royal throne is youngster Naomi Grace Brown, daughter of bar associate Sarah Braddock. Regular customer and throne-builder Adrian Hoyle (Laura's dad) is also pictured, with shift leader Francesca Skillcorn (right) and shift manager Laura Hoyle. A raffle collected £300 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



The Three Fishes (Worthing) Home bakes, cakes and biscuits, a bonus ball, together with two hampers stuffed with 'all things British' as raffle prizes, raised £135 for Young Lives vs Cancer. Duty manager Nikki Catt, pub manager Joshua Jones and customers John Peter and Sheila Court are pictured (left to right) enjoying the festivities.



The Spirit Merchant (Newtownards) Bar associate Sophie Francis is pictured with customers Connor Greenally (left) and Roy Cunningham enjoying a jubilee cake sale. Face-painting by shift leader Elle Fegan, kids' games and a charity head shave, for regular customer Ian Burrigge (raising more than £400), collected a total of £640 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



The Cross Keys (Beverley) Shift leader Curtis Suffield and bar associate Sophia Bissolati are pictured with a very special royal guest at their celebrations! Jubilee-themed activities throughout the weekend included a 'great British quiz', face-painting and royal masks, jubilee-inspired real ales, cakes and games, as well as photos with 'The Queen', which collected £72 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



The Lord Burton (Burton upon Trent) Pictured (left to right) are bar associates Olivia Laki and Jamie Iley, shift manager and event organiser Danielle Cliff, kitchen associate Marcin Arciszewski, kitchen manager Kelly Whetton, shift leaders Mark Babbage and Nicola Gill, kitchen shift leader Nicola Wadham and kitchen associate Braidon Weir. The bake sale, raffles, face-painting and treasure hunt raised £145 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



The Hedgeford Lodge (Hednesford) Team leader Danielle Rogers, pub manager Vicky Phillips, bar associate Shannon Buckland (back) and volunteer Lynne Cundliffe are pictured (left to right) in the decorated garden, with some jubilee bakes. The cakes, some made by bar associate Paul Tranter's mum Vivienne helped to raise £110 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



The William Owen (Haverfordwest) The mayor of Haverfordwest, Cllr Alan Buckfield (far left), joined in the jubilee celebrations with staff and customers, some dressed in patriotic Union Jack outfits. The Haverfordwest Yarn Bombers also displayed some of their jubilee work, to mark the occasion, which included knitted and crocheted panels and street furniture toppers.



The Central Bar (Carrickfergus) Bar associate Ethan Hillock (left) and customer Michael Cash are pictured, in suitable head gear, enjoying the jubilee celebrations.



The Picture House (Colwyn Bay) Pub manager Sam Stafford (right) and team leader Meg Murphy are pictured, wearing suitable jubilee attire, alongside Her Majesty, raising funds for Young Lives vs Cancer. A bake sale, tombola, raffle, colouring competition, flag and sweetie cone sale amassed £320.



The Queen's
Platinum Jubilee

Round-up



The Shoulder of Mutton (Ashby-de-la-Zouch) Cakes and costumes were the order of the day at a fundraiser organised by pub manager Ellie Martin, raising £208 for Young Lives vs Cancer, which included a raffle. Pictured (left to right) are customer Beverley Mansfield and bar associate Heidi Collins enjoying the home bakes.



The Benjamin Fawcett (Driffield) Pictured enjoying the celebrations (left to right) are floor associate Owen Richardson, team leader Luke Allison, shift leader Mike Denham and team leader Liam Kell. Shift manager Hayley Martin and shift leader Claire Dennis organised the various decorations and stalls, serving Pimm's, gin and cakes.



The Silkstone Inn (Barnsley) A charity bake sale, 'guess the number of sweets in a jar' and a British produce hamper raffle collected £96.50 for Young Lives vs Cancer. Staff also dressed in red, white and blue, including bar associate Thomas Johnson and shift manager Shannon Quinn (pictured).



The Dog Beck (Penrith) Pictured (left to right) are kitchen manager Marie Jettson, pub manager Colin Birchall, shift manager Sam Reekie, shift leader Abbie Sleightholme and kitchen associate Stevie Waggett, ready for the jubilee fancy-dress catwalk. The mayor of Penrith, Cllr Charlie Shepherd, helped to sell tombola tickets at the fundraiser, collecting £268.81 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



The Picture House (Stafford) Team leader Jon Bayliss-Fox, shift manager Sophie Wootton and shift leader Danielle Powell, are pictured (left to right) showcasing a variety of celebration cupcakes, flapjacks and sponge cakes, in a fundraising bake sale which raised £120 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



The Plaza (Rugeley) Pub manager Sian Siddall (centre) dressed as the Queen for the day at the jubilee fundraising event. She is pictured with cleaner Louise Johnson and bar associate Adam Wainwright. A charity cake sale also raised £76 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



The Port Jackson (Bishop's Stortford) and **The Six Templars (Hertford)** Bunting, flags and decorations made sure that both pubs were in full jubilee mode to mark the celebrations in style. Customers at The Port Jackson also had fun enjoying a 'photo opportunity' with Her Majesty. At **The Punch Bowl (York)**, a jubilee charity bake sale, organised by shift manager Rachel Southwell, raised £63 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

THE YARBOROUGH HOTEL • GRIMSBY • THE JOSEPH MORTON • LOUTH • THE WHITE HORSE • BRIGG

EMMA, EMMA AND GEMMA CLOCK UP COMBINED 60 YEARS



Three staff members at three pubs in area manager Christian Bainbridge's region have clocked up 20 years' service each for Wetherspoon.

The joint celebration, marking a combined 60 years' dedication, took place at The Yarborough Hotel (Grimsby), where Gemma Pearson (left) works as a kitchen team leader.

Pub managers Emma Hooton (right) and Emma Keeley are also pictured with their 20 years' service certificates.

Emma Hooton took over in May 2016 as pub manager at The White Horse (Brigg), after a brief spell as shift manager, following a five-month sabbatical.

She started as a part-time bar associate at The Sweyn Forkbeard (Gainsborough), while studying A levels at college – then progressed to shift-manager level in her nine years at her home-town pub.

Emma recalled: "I didn't have any work plans after college, so decided to stay at the pub and it soon became my career path."

Her first pub as manager was Ice Barque (Grimsby) (now closed), where she spent three years, then a stint at The Yarborough Hotel, before her five-month break to travel in the Far East.

Emma returned for a month, as holding manager at The Sweyn Forkbeard, before moving to The White Horse, first as a shift manager then pub manager, where she still works.

Emma, who also has a five-year-old daughter, Bonnie, said: "I have a good strong team and most of them are local. We have lovely regular customers and are more of a restaurant pub. I really enjoy my job and am happy being a pub manager."

Both Emmas were students together at secondary school and college, before they both successfully applied for a job with Wetherspoon, within two weeks of each other.

Emma Hooton laughed: "We can't get rid of each other!"

Emma Keeley, now Emma Smith, having married at the beginning of June, took over at The Joseph Morton (Louth) towards the end of 2020, after five years at The Yarborough Hotel.

Emma also joined the company in 2002 as a part-time bar associate at The Sweyn Forkbeard, while studying her A levels – then went on to complete a degree in psychology and advertising at Lincoln University.

She progressed to shift manager level, during her six years at the Gainsborough pub, taking on her first pub-manager role in 2008 at The Forum (Lincoln) (now closed).

Emma recalled: "I finished university in 2005 and was offered a management role at The Sweyn Forkbeard. I then worked my way up within three years to have my own pub.

"I moved in 2011 from The Forum to The Joseph Morton, three months after it opened, and that was where I met my husband-to-be, Adie, who was a kitchen associate at the time."

Emma, who now has a four-year-old son, Archie, newly opened The Coliseum Picture Theatre (Cleethorpes) in 2014, before a five-year spell at The Yarborough Hotel, including the hotel's opening.

She admitted: "When I had Archie, the pub and hotel were a bit too big to run, with a young baby too; so, when the chance came to move back to Louth, I took it.

"It's a lovely community pub – and I have a great team, among them shift leader Steve Slack, who has been at the pub since it opened.

"The 20 years have flown by, but I still love my job and all of the different career challenges which it has brought along the way."

Kitchen team leader Gemma Pearson started her Wetherspoon career as a bar associate at Ice Barque when it first opened, in April 2002.

She progressed to team leader, working both front of house and, more regularly, in the kitchen, before the pub was closed in November 2016 and she was transferred to The Yarborough Hotel.

Gemma said: "It doesn't seem like 20 years, until you start talking about and remembering the ways in which we used to do certain jobs and how things have changed so much."

She added: "I worked with Emma Hooton at Ice Barque and Emma Smith here at The Yarborough Hotel, so we all have a connection."

Gemma concluded: "I must enjoy my job, as I have been doing it for all this time.

"It is the people, especially my colleagues, who make it enjoyable.

"Everyone gets on well and we have a great team."



TIME TO GET VOCAL ABOUT CARLING MADE LOCAL

Wetherspoon and Molson Coors have teamed up to fund projects nominated by customers

During this October, Carling will relaunch its Made Local community campaign. After the success of the 2017, 2018 and 2019 campaigns, Wetherspoon and Carling have teamed up again to support UK communities.

Throughout October, local groups and charities will be able to apply for a share of the pot which Molson Coors (Carling) and Wetherspoon have put together – £40,000!

For the first time, this will be completely digital – and we need your help in finding charities. If you know of one close to your heart, please reach out and let it know that we can help it to make a difference.

Carling and Wetherspoon will then place all entrants into a panel and allocate funds to the winners, based on the level of community need and the impact.

To be eligible, charities need to apply online via the ActionFunder platform (QR code below). ActionFunder connects businesses (and foundations) with local communities to drive real change.

Please scan QR codes – share the links around and let's secure some amazing funding for our local community. The charities and groups can be of any size, so please encourage all to apply.

Know a local charity in need of funding?



Forward it this link to apply!

A reminder of some of the fund winners, courtesy of Carling and Wetherspoon, from 2019:



Wood For Good, Exeter



Common Ground, Brighton



Community Cinema, Brighouse



Connecting You, Selby



Boardwalk, Ley Hill



Teign Drifters, Teign

What happens next?
Look out for more information in pubs or visit actionfunder.org/wetherspoon to apply. Applications close 30 October 2022.



Watch: 2019 winners

HOOKED ON CLASSICS

Our pub classics menu choices can safely be said to be of acknowledged excellence



Freshly battered cod* and chips; Bangers and mash; Steak & kidney pudding

There is a very good reason why certain Wetherspoon menu choices are listed as pub classics.

Definition of a classic (noun.) – an item judged over a period of time to be of the highest quality; outstanding of its kind; of the first class; of acknowledged excellence.

Among the Wetherspoon pub classics (available from 2 November) are two absolutely classic dishes: NEW bangers and mash (as well as NEW vegetarian bangers and mash), along with NEW steak & kidney pudding.

Range

All meal choices from the pub classics range include a soft or alcoholic drink* as part of the price.

Also from November, the NEW Wetherspoon 'afternoon deal' will be available on all pub classics and small pub classics (range of smaller meal sizes), offering even greater value for money, from Monday to Friday, between 2pm and 5pm. See the menu at your local pub or ask at the bar for details and prices.

Bangers and mash has been a firm favourite since time immemorial and continues, all year round, to be an ever-popular heart-warming meal with customers.

This great British dish is a bang-on pub classic and, during the colder months, becomes the ultimate in comfort food.

The meal is served with three succulent Lincolnshire sausages, a good helping of Maris Piper mashed potato, garden peas and gravy.

Vegetarian

It is also available as a vegetarian option, served with three Quorn™ sausages.

The prime meat premium pork Lincolnshire sausages, as well as the vegetarian option and regional variations, offer a filling meal.

Another great British pub classic is steak & kidney pudding, served with peas and gravy, as well as your choice of chips or mashed potato.

As with the bangers and mash, and all pub classics, the meal price also includes a soft or alcoholic drink*.

Pie

A silver award-winner at the British Pie Awards, Wetherspoon's steak & kidney pudding (English and Welsh pubs) combines prime cuts of British beef steak and kidney in a rich, meaty sauce, encased in a traditional steamed suet pudding shell.

Also among the pub classics are five-bean chilli; sausages, chips and beans; vegan sausages, chips and beans; all-day brunch; vegetarian all-day brunch; Wiltshire cured ham, eggs and chips; freshly battered cod* and chips; Whitby breaded scampi.

Enjoy an absolute pub classic meal at Wetherspoon, today.



Keeping it in the family

Loughnane's

A family-owned business, Loughnane's of Galway supplies the pork sausages to our pubs across the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Made with 100 per cent Irish pork, only ever fresh and from quality-assured farms, the quality sausages from Loughnane's of Galway are made with only natural ingredients and using traditional Irish recipes.

Founded by Seán Loughnane, who had been in the retail butchering business all his life, the butcher's shop was set up in 1975, when he moved to Galway.

Now owned and run by brothers Daire and Eoin Loughnane, the company is one of Ireland's largest and most experienced (four generations) sausage producers.

It has been supplying Wetherspoon for more than seven years.

Mash Direct

Mash Direct, based near Comber, in County Down, supplies all of our mashed potato for Wetherspoon's meals at pubs across the UK and the Republic of Ireland, as well as swede (neeps) for our Scottish pubs' haggis, neeps and tatties (including for Burns' week).

The Hamilton family has been farming the land around Strangford Lough since the 1800s, with Jack Hamilton being its sixth-generation farmer and the current director of Mash Direct.

The crops are grown on the Hamilton farm, perfectly located for minimum frost, owing to its salty sea air.

The vegetables are then steam cooked and prepared on the farm and have been delivered to Wetherspoon for the past decade.

Wrights Food Group

One of the UK's leading food manufacturers, Cheshire-based Wrights Food Group is now supplying its award-winning steak & kidney puddings to Wetherspoon.

In 1926, the company began with just a humble meat & potato pie, when John James Wright started providing quality, wholesome food for the ordinary working people of Stoke-on-Trent.

Still a family business to this day, Wrights Food Group is guided by Peter Wright, the founder's great-grandson, although the company, with 570 employees, now operates from its state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities and distribution centre.

It supplies a wide range of savoury and sweet products to the UK hospitality sector, as well as to 26 overseas export markets.

*Haddock in Scotland.

WEDDING PARTY YET TO BEGIN, A YEAR AFTER PUB PAIR 'ELOPED'



Karolina and Nick Barrett have celebrated their first year of marriage after 'eloping' to marry in Windermere, in the Lake District.

The pair met five years ago while working at The Barking Dog (Barking) (currently closed and set to reopen in 2024), where Nick was a manager and Karolina had joined as a bar associate.

They had been planning a traditional wedding – but then came lockdown.

Karolina, originally from Poland, is now a shift manager at The George (Wanstead), with Nick now a shift manager at The Great Spoon of Ilford (Ilford).

She said: "We didn't want to wait for all of the restrictions to be lifted, so, as soon as we could, we went to a hotel in Windermere to get married.

"The hotel provided everything, including witnesses.

"We have promised to arrange a big wedding celebration for hundreds of friends and family, combining Polish and English traditions."

Nick added: "In the future, we would like to run our own Wetherspoon pub together."

TEAM LEADER POLLY TO ACT UP AT STAGE SCHOOL

Budding actress Polly Jones has been accepted into Brighton's prestigious Rose Bruford drama school.

For several years now, Polly, a shift leader at The Red Well (Wellingborough), has been balancing her pub work with her acting career, as we reported in our summer 2022 edition.

But she was keen to take the next step with formal training, in order to widen her horizons and prospects.

Polly said: "I have an agent, I'm doing modelling work and getting a lot of good auditions, but, in order to be the best I can be, I need the kind of training which Rose Bruford drama school offers.

"It means a lot to be accepted by a prestigious school like this."

Though she's reaching for the sky, Polly's feet remain firmly on the ground and she's not quite ready to leave Wetherspoon just yet.

"I have a transfer to The Bright Helm (Brighton)," she said.



SPOON COLLECTOR JOHN CLOCKS UP 890 PUB VISITS



Shift manager Gemma Fields uncovered a remarkable story while chatting to John Hunt on his tour of Wetherspoon pubs.

John 'Chester' Hunt, aged 83, dropped in to The Railway (Rainham) and told Gemma that the pub was the 889th Wetherspoon outlet he had visited.

"I think he's amazing," said Gemma. "He has been all over the country by public transport to visit everywhere from Wick in Scotland to Llandudno in Wales – everywhere – he had some lovely stories to tell."

John (known as Chester because of his resemblance to Chester Goode, a character played by Dennis Weaver from the Western drama series Gunsmoke) had an update for Wetherspoon News.

He said: "I've done 890 now, because, the following day, I went to the docklands pub [The Ledger Building]."

He started his tour in his home town of Southampton, as he lives in Weston, near the mouths of the rivers Test and Itchen.

At The Standing Order (Southampton) a few years ago, he had a quick chat with Wetherspoon's chairman Tim Martin. "He and I drink the same beer, I think – Abbot Ale," said John.

As well as a pint of Abbot, John enjoys a curry, a steak or a scampi and chips.

Asked why he tours Wetherspoon's pubs, John said: "It's no good staying in. I did enough of that during the pandemic. You get a lot of value for your money in Wetherspoon's pubs and you do meet some nice people as well."

He was also planning a trip to Yorkshire during the summer, where he intended to tick a few more pubs off his list.

His favourite pubs are The Palladium (Llandudno) and Opera House (Tunbridge Wells).

John is pictured with shift managers Gemma Fields (left) and Zoe Ball.

SPEEDY THREE VISIT 12 PUBS IN TOUR DE ESSEX

A 114-mile bike ride was the perfect warm-up for three Wetherspoon fundraisers, preparing to take on the recent London-to-Paris cycle challenge.

Pub managers (pictured left to right) Billy Anscombe (Moon and Starfish, Clacton-on-Sea) and Simon Bassford (The Elms, Leigh-on-Sea), together with shift leader Martin Wilkinson (The Blue Boar, Billericay), embarked on the ambitious ride.

Cycling 114 miles in just one day, the intrepid trio cycled to a dozen Wetherspoon pubs in area manager Alan Duncan's region across Essex.

They visited The Battersford Court (Witham), The Blue Boar (Billericay), The Bottle Kiln (Harwich), The Elms (Leigh-on-Sea), The Ivory Peg (Chelmsford), The Last Post (Southend-on-Sea), Moon and Starfish (Clacton-on-Sea), Parsons' Barn (Shoeburyness), The Playhouse (Colchester), The Roebuck (Rayleigh), Rose & Crown (Maldon) and The Picture Palace (Braintree).

Billy said: "This was quite a challenge in one day, yet great preparation for the London-to-Paris bike ride, which was an amazing experience."



VC WINNERS CAN BE SEEN AGAIN AT THE WATCHMAN



Artwork featuring local Victoria Cross winners has been put back up inside The Watchman (New Malden), following the end of COVID-19 restrictions.

The artwork, depicting Victoria Cross winners Cyril Barton and Ian Bazalgette, had to make room for divider screens, back when pubs were restricted to 'table service only'.

However, they have now been restored, much to the satisfaction of customers and staff.

Deputy manager Liam Clark said: "It was a real shame to have to take them down, but we kept them safe – and it is a pleasure to see them back up again. Stories such as this deserve to be honoured and remembered."

Cyril Barton was an RAF bomber pilot in World War II, having attended school in New Malden.

He was awarded the Victoria Cross after an incredible piece of bravery, during which he fought off more agile German aircraft over Nuremberg and managed to nurse his badly shot-up plane back to England, saving the life of three of his crew. Sadly, after a crash landing, he, himself, died of his injuries.

Ian Bazalgette, who also grew up in New Malden, received the Victoria Cross posthumously, after pursuing a bombing sortie on a V-1 rocket base, despite near-catastrophic damage to his aircraft. Having ordered most of his crew to bail out, he crash-landed and was killed.



BLACK VELVET TRIBUTE TO NORMAN'S 20 YEARS

Area manager Anthony Buckley (right) and pub manager Andrew Cassidy (left) presented kitchen team leader Norman Elliott with gifts to mark 20 years' service at The Water House (Durham).

Norman, who joined the company in 2002, received a Guinness eight-pack to mark the occasion, along with a bottle of Champagne.

He said: "I really enjoy working with the team here. We all work hard to support one another."

He started at The Rohan Kanhai (Ashington) and also worked at The William Jameson (Sunderland), Union Rooms (Newcastle) (now closed) and The High Main (Byker), arriving at The Water House (for his second spell) just over four years ago.

Outside of work, Norman enjoys football and is keen on exercise.

Andrew added: "Norman has been part of the backbone of several pubs, including The Water House, for 20 years – and we are all very grateful to him for his service."



MAGNIFICENT SEVEN FIND GOLD IN THEM THAR HILLS

Seven magnificent fundraisers from The Benjamin Fawcett (Driffield) took part in the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge, jointly raising a massive £2,040 for Marie Curie.

Marie Curie provides care and support to people living with a terminal illness.

The challenge was originally set by shift manager Maxine Powell (front right), who was joined by five of her colleagues and one former staff member.

Pictured (back, left to right) are shift manager Jessica Allison, shift leaders Lucy Adams and Claire Dennis, shift manager Hayley Kennedy and pub manager Leah Fisher.

Former staff member Emma Norsworthy (front left) is also pictured.

Claire said: "The charity is close to the heart of a lot of people, including The Benjamin Fawcett's team – and we were delighted to exceed our original target by more than £600.

"The team faced thunderstorms, hail stones, wind and sunshine, as well as injuries, while trying to complete the challenge."

The Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge route is 24 miles long, with an ascent of 1,585 metres, taking on, in under 12 hours, the Pennine peaks of Ingleborough, Pen-y-ghent and Wharfedale.



IN PUBS AND IN PARIS, WE'VE GOT A LOT OF SPOKES PEOPLE

Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK and Ireland provided their simultaneous support, through pedal power, during a collective charity fundraising event.

Staff at numerous pubs took part in a charity cycle challenge, in support of the company's two charity partners, while 34 Wetherspoon managers and staff were also taking part in the London-to-Paris bike ride.

Keeping the pedal power going were teams at The Parchment Makers (Havant), The Barker's Brewery (Huyton), The West Kirk (Ayr), The Carnival Inn (Bridgwater), The Hat and Feathers (Seaham) and Cabot Court Hotel (Weston-super-Mare).

Also among the pubs taking part were The Moon on the Hill (Sutton), The Manor House (Royston), The George Inn (Sandbach), The Glass Blower (Castleford), The Hay Stook (East Kilbride) and The Captain Noel Newton (Oakham).

The UK pubs amassed £107,000 for Young Lives vs Cancer, while eight pubs in the Republic of Ireland collected €4,376.30 for LauraLynn.

During the fundraising event, using static bikes at the pubs, each team covered a distance equivalent to at least 250 miles (the London-to-Paris cyclists' distance) or keeping the pedals moving non-stop for a full 12 hours.

Wetherspoon's people director, Tom Ball, said: "There may have been a team of only 34 colleagues on the road from London to Paris, but the whole Wetherspoon team wanted to get behind them and the charities.

"The pub teams were supporting the two great company charities, Young Lives vs Cancer and LauraLynn, while the cycling team was taking part in the London-to-Paris bike ride.

"The staff all enjoyed the event, and the customers were very generous, helping us to raise money for the respective causes."



London-to-Paris cyclists heading off from St Pancras



The Silver Penny (Dublin) Bar associate Jasmine Thornton, team leader Cian McCormack and bar associate Kathy Kennedy (left to right)



The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew) Shift leader Darren Kinney (on the bike) and kitchen associate Daniel Green



The Bridge House (Belfast) Shift manager Aileen McCann and team leader Lee Johnston

COMMUNITY

WEMBLEY

WEMBLEY VICTORY AFTER MOON'S MANAGER LILY PUNTS PUBWATCH



When Lily Capillo took over J.J. Moon's (Wembley), she decided that the area needed a local pubwatch group to help local publicans to cope with match days during events at the nearby football stadium.

Pub manager Lily (pictured front centre) made some calls to other licensees, with 15 attending the first Wembley pubwatch meeting, at which she was elected chairperson. A representative from Brent Council's licensing department, Esther Chan (back, second left), also attended.

Lily said: "When we work together, it is easier to deal with the issues which come up on match days. As a group, we can get better lines of communication with the police and licensing authorities.

"The first meeting was a bit nervy, but then we all introduced ourselves and soon discovered that we were dealing with a lot of the same issues."

Lily is grateful for the support of Wetherspoon's legal team, especially when it comes to structuring and chairing meetings.

She added: "The pubwatch group needs some legal backup – but so do I, as I hadn't been in a position where I'm chairing a meeting before, so the support from the company and my area manager Kyle Kirkbride has been invaluable.

"Since the group's formation, the police have been sharing better intelligence about how to keep rival groups of fans apart – and whether any known troublemakers have been spotted in the area."

Kyle added: "Lily has done a great job in terms of the pubwatch group. She has put a lot of time and effort into it – it is paying off now, in terms of smoother running of the area's pubs on big match days."

HOLYWELL

GENEROUS MARKET CROSS CUSTOMERS SHOW THEY CARE

Customers at The Market Cross (Holywell) donated cash to pay for 60 gift packs for residents of local care homes.

The initiative was conducted with Flint & District Lions Club – which took the packs containing toiletries and other items to residents who have no remaining family.

Shift manager Clare Gill put the care packs together. She said: "We have a continuing relationship with the Lions, so that we can help local people in need.

"We would like to thank the generous customers of the pub for all their contributions to make this possible."

The group's president, Terry Withington, said: "We are very pleased with our relationship with the pub – it's working really well and we'd like to thank Clare, her colleagues and customers for their kindness."

Clare is pictured with members of the Lions.



BRIGHOUSE

FORTIES FANS MEET AGAIN AS BRIGHOUSE BLACKOUT ENDS

Staff and customers at The Richard Oastler (Brighouse) were able to join in the fun again, with the return of the annual Brighouse 1940s weekend 2022.

Organised by Brighouse Business Initiative (BBI), the annual vintage-style knees-up, which aims to promote Brighouse and bring community spirit to the town, made a welcome return after two years of COVID-19 cancellations.

Shift manager Katie Dunne said: "We were delighted to take part in Brighouse's annual 1940s weekend, which was back this year.

"It is always a fantastic event, and this year was no exception.

"As a pub, we love to get involved with staff dressing in 40s fancy dress and decorating the pub."

This year saw jive dancing, singing and live bands, DJs of the era and classic cars, as well as the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, featuring a Hurricane and a Spitfire.

The town's streets were also filled with more than 70 stalls, selling food, crafts and 1940s-themed items and gifts.

Pictured in 1940s dress for the event (left to right) are bar associates Ethan McHugh and Holly Washington-Brown and team leader Jamie Beck-Capper.



MEXBOROUGH

IT AIN'T DARTH HOT MUM, AS SENTINEL SQUAD SWOOPS IN



The Old Market Hall (Mexborough) teamed up with The Sentinel Squad to raise money for charity.

The Sentinel Squad is a Star Wars-themed group which attends charity events to boost the coffers – mostly, they attend children's charity events.

The squad turned up to support a more general superhero-themed town-centre event in Mexborough, also featuring food stalls and a bouncy castle.

At the pub, charity champion and shift leader Francesca Skillcorn organised a bake sale, a 'name the Teddy' competition and a football-card exchange.

In total, at the pub alone, £321 was raised for charities, including Young Lives vs Cancer.

Francesca said: "We have linked up with The Sentinel Squad before – and it always attracts interest and donations. We are grateful to the squad and to our customers who donated and took part on the day."

Pictured are members of The Sentinel Squad with the pub's manager, Matt Fearn (standing, right) with (kneeling) shift manager Laura Hoyle and Francesca Skillcorn (pictured right).

RUNCORN

FERRY BOAT HONOURS HEROIC SON OF RUNCORN



A plaque commemorating the war heroism of Captain Joseph Frederick Terretta has been unveiled at The Ferry Boat (Runcorn).

The plaque, complete with an engraved image of Runcorn-born Captain Terretta and the story of his wartime career, was unveiled after it was donated by charity The Tom Wilkinson VC statue appeal.

The Lancashire charity raises funds to help to commemorate local VC winners in this way.

Captain Terretta's repeated acts of bravery saved the life of drowning soldiers and also helped to supply allied forces fighting at Normandy, after the D-Day landings of June 1944.

The pub's manager, Jimmy Quinn, said: "We were asked by the charity whether we would host the plaque in the pub – and we were delighted to.

"It means that it will be on show to all of our customers."

Pictured (from left) are bar associate Ste Arnold, shift leader Jake Steel and pub manager Jimmy Quinn with the plaque.

Want to win a better staycation? Probably.

Share a photo of your pint of Carlsberg Danish Pilsner throughout October for a chance to win a better staycation.

Tag **#WinWithCarlsberg** on Instagram posts or stories and make sure you're following **@carlsberguk** to win.

Carlsberg



PROBABLY THE BEST  BEER IN THE WORLD

25+, residents of England & Wales only. 1 entry per person, per week. Internet access, email account & Instagram account allowing 3rd party messages required. Starts 00:01 on 3.10.22. Ends 23:59 on 30.10.22. To enter, buy a draught pint of Carlsberg Pilsner from a licensed premises in England/Wales, follow @CarlsbergUK on Instagram, respond to this post by sharing a photo of that pint in your stories/feed & include #WinWithCarlsberg. Photos mustn't show under 25s or irresponsible illegal drinking. 1 prize of 3 nights' accommodation (1 double or twin room) in Great Britain for the winner & 1 guest & £200 for travel/expenses available. Other expenses excluded. Prize non-transferable & no cash alternative. Location options/other prize information notified to winner (breakfast/evening meals vary depending on location selected). Preferred location & stay dates honoured where possible subject to booking availability (UK public holidays excluded). Prize must be booked & taken before 31.12.23. Guest must be 25+. Prize must be claimed, preferred location/stay dates & winner/guest ID provided within 14 days of request. Winner & guest must be legally able to travel to 'staycation' location on date booked for travel (incl. meeting all Covid-19 rules) & provide own travel insurance. Winner drawn at random & contacted by direct Instagram message by 6 November 2022. Full T&Cs & privacy policy available at [Winwithcarlsberg.co.uk](https://www.winwithcarlsberg.co.uk). Promoter: Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company Limited, WV1 4JT. Brewed in the UK, the Danish way. Please drink responsibly. [Bedrinkaware.co.uk](https://www.bedrinkaware.co.uk).

for the facts
drinkaware.co.uk

DAN PAYS TRIBUTE TO HIS NAN, WITH MEMORIAL IN PUB GARDEN



Kitchen manager Dan Hammond held a picture of his grandmother, Susan Daniel, as he planted memorial flowers in the garden of The Three Hulats (Leeds) in her honour.

Sue, as she was known, a regular at the pub since it opened in 1999, was mourned by many of the pub's staff and customers, following her passing earlier this year.

Dan said: "It was a special moment – and I'm grateful to the pub team for allowing the family and me to do this."

"It is because of my nan that I'm working at the pub."

Dan was working as bar manager at Butlin's in Skegness and was looking to move to the pub industry.

Knowing this, his nan had a quiet word with pub managers Graham and Maria Church, who, at the time, were looking for bar staff.

The exact spot chosen for the memorial flowers was near to the windows adjacent to the side garden of the pub, Sue's favourite place to sit.

The flowers chosen were purple Sevilla, representing Sue's wish that her funeral should have a purple theme.

Pub manager Maria Church said: "Sue was a very warm, kind-hearted person – and everyone used to say hello to her. We were only too pleased to help Dan to remember his nan in this way."

Dan is pictured with family members and other well-wishers.

WOMBWELL

HOEDOWN AT HORSESHOE IS MANE EVENT AS PUB TURNS 20

The Horseshoe (Wombwell) celebrated its 20th anniversary with a big birthday party, balloons and celebration cake for everyone.

Pub manager Dani Semmens (second right), who has worked for the company for 10 years and managed the pub since December 2021, said: "We are a real community pub and wanted to involve everyone in the celebrations."

"Regular customer 'Astro the Magician' entertained everyone with magic tricks and balloon animals, while Magical Moments (the recently opened gift

shop next door) offered discount on our party decorations and there was cake for all of the regulars."

Customers made generous donations for cake and sweetie bags, as part of the celebrations, raising £150 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

George Jones (far left) and John Norris (right), two regular customers since the first day of opening two decades ago, particularly enjoyed the event.

Also pictured are team leader Vicky Hurst (second left) and bar associate Joanne Gibbons.



● We feature more birthday stories on pages 102–104, as well as milestone birthdays on pages 46–48

A BUNNY HOP BACK IN TIME TO AN EXCEPTIONAL EASTER

It may now be a distant memory, but Easter 2022 was a particularly busy time for Wetherspoon's pubs and their charity fundraising activities.

Staff and customers at numerous pubs showed kindness and support to their local communities, with collections and donations from Mile End to Maesteg, London to Liverpool, across Manchester and the West Midlands and into the Scottish Borders.

Unfortunately, we did not have room in the summer edition of Wetherspoon News to showcase the teams' dedication to good causes, but can now highlight their commitment here...

Kind-hearted shift leader Rachel Southwell dressed as the Easter bunny to raise money for Young Lives vs Cancer at **The Punch Bowl (York).**

An Easter egg hunt was also arranged for children at the pub, with a hamper prize of chocolate goodies for the winner.

Rachel then moved on to **The Postern Gate (York) and collected more cash from customers, returning with **£75**.**



Staff at **The Plaza (Rugeley)** hosted a big Easter market event in the beer garden at the pub. Stalls hosted by local businesses, children's crafts, an inflatable surfboard simulator and fundraising activities collected **£212** for Young Lives vs Cancer. Pictured at the event (left to right) are pub manager Sian Siddall, shift manager Jordan Holmes and bar associate Louise Johnson.



Staff at **The Market Cross (Holywell)** linked up with Flint & District Lions Group to collect 100 eggs for local children with special educational needs. The effort was led by shift manager Clare Gill. It's the second time that the pub has joined forces with the local community group - at Christmas, the pub collected gifts to distribute to care home residents. Clare said: "We will do more work with them in the future - it's a good relationship and we were glad to help local children at Easter." The eggs were given to school children at Flint's Ysgol Pen Coch. Clare is pictured receiving a certificate of appreciation from Flint & District Lions Group's chairman Terry Withington.



A collection of 50 Easter eggs, donated by staff and customers at **The Half Moon (Mile End)**, was organised at the pub by shift leader Christine Chapman. Christine (second right), together with kitchen shift leader Chelsea Gibson (second left), delivered the gifts to the staff and children at the Royal London Hospital.



An Easter raffle at **The Navigator (Liverpool)** raised **£200** for Young Lives vs Cancer. Staff at the pub also co-ordinated an Easter egg drive, with all of the Wetherspoon pubs across Liverpool joining forces to collect and donate chocolate eggs to Aid To All, Cash for Kids Liverpool and Unity Youth and Community Centre. Team leader Janice Fletcher, pictured (left) with kitchen team leader Mick McNeillis, kindly delivered all of the eggs to each charity.



Pubs across Manchester collected Easter eggs from customers and staff to donate to Ronald McDonald House Manchester, a family residential unit for children being treated at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital and St Mary's Neonatal Unit. Pictured with their haul (left to right) are shift managers Adele Graham (**The Gateway, East Didsbury**) and Danielle Bateson (**The Great Central, Manchester**), house assistant Elliot Castledine (Ronald McDonald House), shift leader Jake Winterburn and team leader Tam Owen (both **The Ford Madox Brown, Manchester**).



Staff and customers at **The Bellwether (Wednesbury)** collected donations of Easter eggs (or cash to purchase eggs) during a month-long initiative. Pictured gifting a total of 168 Easter eggs to Sutton Coldfield's Good Hope Hospital children's ward are shift leader Megan Smith (far left) and shift manager Jordan Richards (second right).



A hamper donated by supermarket Morrisons and a collection of 50 Easter eggs and treats, donated by staff and customers at **The Eccles Cross (Eccles)**, were gifted to the Panda Unit Salford Royal Hospital, Manchester. Delighted hospital staff are pictured with the gifts.



Organised by bar associate Jodie Wood (pictured right) from **St. Matthew's Hall (Walsall)**, staff and customers collected Easter eggs and treats for the staff and patients at Walsall Manor Hospital.



Staff and customers at **The Bourtree (Hawick)** collected 200 Easter eggs (some pictured), organised by pub manager Richard Conway's team, for the Burnfoot Community Hub – a charity-run organisation in the local Hawick community, aiming to improve the well-being, quality of life and opportunities of the people of Burnfoot.



The Easter bunny visited **The Sawyer's Arms (Maesteg)**, organised by shift leader Becky Herbert, helping the team to raise £66 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



★ **STOKE NEWINGTON**

THE ROCHESTER CASTLE



Founder and chairman Tim Martin opened his first Wetherspoon pub in Muswell Hill, north London, in 1979. The pub, named Wetherspoons, was sold in 1983.

On the same day, also in north London, Tim had purchased and then opened (1 May 1983) The Rochester Castle (Stoke Newington).

Formerly known as The Tanners Hall, it was one of seven Wetherspoon pubs at the time and is now the company's oldest.

The Rochester Castle celebrated its 39th birthday at the beginning of May, this year, marking the milestone in pints of beer and decking the pub in balloons and banners. Pictured (left to right) are kitchen associate Robert Hughes, pub manager Ralph Banda, shift manager Nathan Flynn and area manager Rob Churly.

The pub was originally built 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 and its no-music policy, more recent history recalls the venue, during the 1970s and early 80s, as being the place to catch one of the 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.

Pub manager Ralph Banda said: "The Rochester Castle has been a real community pub for almost four decades, attracting local residents, workers and visitors alike.

"It is a much-loved hub in a vibrant, yet laid-back, eclectic and wonderfully diverse, little corner of the capital."



★ WITHAM THE BATTESFORD COURT

20
YEARS

Shift manager Peter Extance and his father Kelvin shared some memories as The Battesford Court (Witham) celebrated its 20th birthday.

As regulars tucked in to cake, Peter (then aged 10) remembered that his dad decorated the pub before it first opened, in June 2002.

Peter said: "My dad used to bring me along sometimes after school, so that I could see the work he'd done. He still gets in now and then for a couple of beers after work."

Peter's association with the pub resumed when he joined as a bar associate in 2010 and continues to this day.

The pub's manager, Joanne Gilchrist, said: "It was a lovely occasion and a chance to thank our regulars for their support over the years."

Pictured (from left) are shift leader Kai Whitnall, team leader Anne-Marie Jager, kitchen associate Benjamin Paule and bar associate Tommy Palmer.



★ WIDNES THE PREMIER

21
YEARS

Duty manager Carolann Kinsella hosted a 21st birthday party at The Premier (Widnes) – the pub she's worked in since the day it opened.

Customers were treated to free Prosecco and cake as they were invited to take part in a tombola and a raffle. Children were given party bags to take home.

Wetherspoon gift cards were raffled, with £200 raised for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Carolann said: "The day was a great success. We decorated the pub with balloons, and customers had a really nice time."

Carolann did her preopening training at the pub just before June 2001 and is now a shift manager.

She added: "It has been a very good 21 years for both me and the pub."

The pub's manager, Matthew Brennan, said: "It was a lovely occasion, and Carolann was the star of the show. We were delighted to be able to mark her length of service here, as well as the pub's coming-of-age."

Pictured (from left) are bar associate Nikki Allen, Carolann Kinsella and shift leader Natalie Brown.



★ WOOLWICH THE GREAT HARRY

23
YEARS

Staff at The Great Harry (Woolwich) are pictured marking the pub's 23rd birthday.

Pub manager Arber Hasani is pictured (left) with bar associate Frankie Faux, kitchen team leader Dylan Milburn (back) and duty manager Brandon Brewer.

The pub, named after the flagship of King Henry VIII's navy, opened in July 1999.

To celebrate the occasion, customers enjoyed birthday cake.

Arber said: "We were delighted to celebrate the pub's birthday and take the opportunity to thank our loyal customers."



★ BURY ST EDMUNDS THE CORN EXCHANGE

10
YEARS

Craig Uttley and Ellen Bright (both pictured) simultaneously celebrated 10 years' service at The Corn Exchange (Bury St Edmunds) and the pub's 10th birthday.

Pub manager Craig and kitchen manager Ellen have both worked there since the pub opened in June 2012.

Craig said: "A lot of the staff have been with us for a few years now – and that really helps to build a team who all know one another well and work together well."





★ GLASGOW

THE SOCIETY ROOM

20 YEARS

The Society Room (Glasgow) celebrated its 20th birthday with cupcakes, cakes, balloons and Prosecco.

The pub first opened its doors on 29 April 2002 and managers Bobby and Jennifer McCrone have been there for 10 years.

Bobby said: "We still have a staff member who has been here from the start – Tracy Sanders is a kitchen associate here and is our longest-serving team member."

Pictured (back row, from left) are bar associate Alistair Hogg, team leader Ami Ker and bar associates Ashleigh Kennedy and Vipul Holani; (middle row, from left) bar associate Leah Swan, shift manager Allan Kerr and bar associate Paul Allan, with (front row) bar associate Thomas Roberts and team leader Brooklyn Adkins.



★ HARROGATE

THE WINTER GARDENS

20 YEARS

The Winter Gardens (Harrogate) marked its 20th birthday with a cake sale for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Staff at the pub, which opened in July 2002, made a variety of cakes to sell to customers, raising more than £200 for the charity.

Team leader Marcia Buckle, who organised the event, said: "We wanted to do something to mark our 20th birthday as a pub and also use the occasion as a fundraiser for Young Lives vs Cancer. We thank everyone who donated and enjoyed some cake."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Teddy Johnson, shift leader Lewis Sergienko, team leader Marcia Buckle and bar associate Ryan Dunn.



★ NORTHALLERTON

THE BUCK INN

1 YEAR

Northallerton Mayor Cllr Phil Eames joined in the fun as The Buck Inn (Northallerton) celebrated its first birthday.

The pub opened a year ago, just after pandemic restrictions were lifted to allow licensed premises to open as normal.

A day of festivities unfolded as customers and their children enjoyed party games, hunts for prizes and close-up magic.

The pub's manager, Chris Allen, said: "We put a lot of effort into giving customers a good time to thank them for their support in our very first year."

He is pictured, right, with Cllr Eames and shift manager Dawn Tull.



★ BEXLEYHEATH

THE FURZE WREN

20 YEARS

Staff gathered to mark the 20th birthday of The Furze Wren (Bexleyheath).

The pub, named after a species of bird discovered in 1773 in Bexleyheath by Dr John Latham, opened in June 2002.

Kitchen manager Aurelia Drabik has worked at the pub for six years and many more of the team for three years or more.

Shift manager Gemma Leach said: "We are all proud to work at the pub and celebrate its 20th birthday."

Pictured (back row) are team leaders Samantha Wall, Adrian Batty and Ian Crush; (front row) bar associate Molly May McMullen, team leader Erika Mikalauskaite, bar associate Ben Pickett and shift manager Gemma Leach.



WIN A £30

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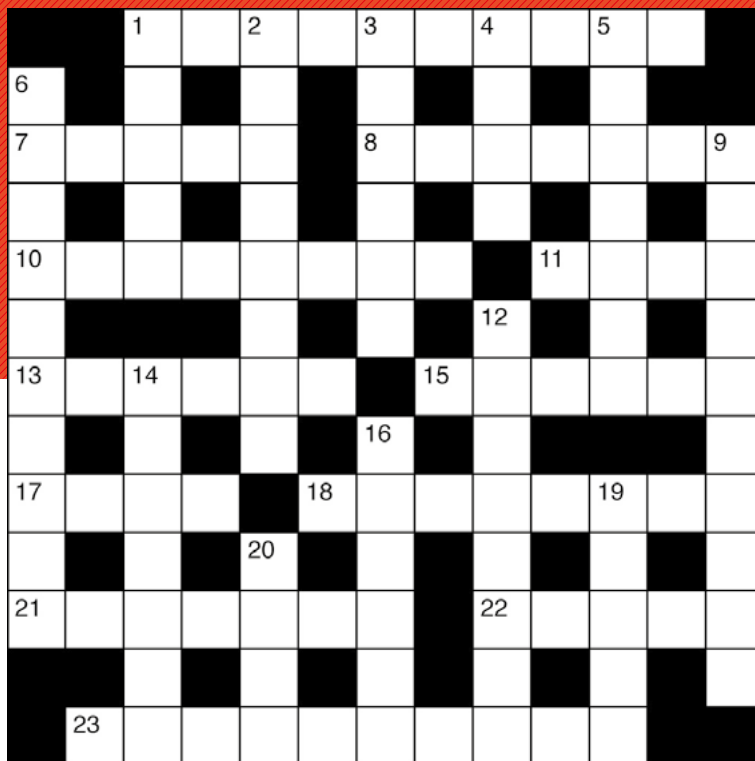
The first four correctly completed crosswords to be pulled out of the hat will win each of those entrants a Wetherspoon gift card worth £30.

Closing date for entries: 10 November 2022

Post to:

Wetherspoon News Magazine Competitions
PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

4 X £30 PRIZES TO BE WON



Across

- 1. G.K., author of The Napoleon of Notting Hill (10)
- 7. Hard translucent fossil resin which often contains trapped insects (5)
- 8. In Greek mythology, the sister of Orestes (7)
- 10 & 18Ac. 1965 Peter Sellers film scripted by Woody Allen (5,3,8)
- 11. City in Avon, England, which the Romans called Aquae Sulis (4)

- 13. Legendary Gaelic bard and warrior, son of Finn McCool (6)
- 15. African republic whose capital is Lilongwe (6)
- 17. "The --- of the Rose", novel by Umberto Eco (4)
- 18. See 10 Across.
- 21. Imaginary sea creature fabled to have a woman's head and upper body and a fish's tail (7)
- 22. Main vessel in the arterial network (5)
- 23. Miss Trent in Dickens's The Old Curiosity Shop (6,4)

Down

- 1. Highly venomous snake of the genus Naja (5)
- 2. A member of an ancient people of central Italy whose civilisation greatly influenced the Romans (8)
- 3. 1950 film which marked the screen debut of Marlon Brando (3,3)
- 4. Sir Carol, English director of the film The Third Man (4)
- 5. Industrial city in the Czech Republic at the junction of the Oder and Ostravice rivers (7)
- 6. Welsh golfer, 1991 U.S. Masters golf champion (3,7)

- 9 & 19Dn. Charles Dickens novel featuring Tiny Tim (1,9,5)
- 12. Any of various nonvenomous rodent-eating snakes such as Elaphe obsoleta of North America (3,5)
- 14. The Japanese warrior caste that provided the fighting aristocracy from the 11c to the 19c (7)
- 16. "Crocodile ---", film starring comedian Paul Hogan (6)
- 19. See 9 Down.
- 20. Lionel, English composer and lyricist whose shows include Oliver (4)

SOLUTIONS (Summer 2022 issue)

- Across:** 6 Emerson; 7 Bacon; 9 Els; 10 The Castle; 12 Bitter Sweet; 15 Dick Fosbury; 17 Aconcagua; 19 Jay; 21 Heron; 22 Fidelio
- Down:** 1 Emily; 2 Art; 3 Koch; 4 Cassowary; 5 Boulder; 8 Scarab; 11 Dickinson; 13 Thomas; 14 Pincher; 16 Kapil; 18 Uris; 20 Dev

The summer 2022 crossword winners were:

- ★ SF, Buckley ★ GB, Cardigan ★ CD, Newcastle ★ MA, Swindon



Please complete the answers and your details, as shown, and send the completed page to:

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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 10/11/22. Proof of dispatch is not proof of receipt. The winners will be the first correctly answered entries drawn. Where multiple prizes are offered, the winners will be the first relevant number of correct entries drawn. The judge's decision is final; no correspondence will be entered into. One entry per household. The winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative available. The promoter reserves the right to cancel or amend this promotion, owing to events arising beyond its control. The promoter is not responsible for any third-party acts or omissions. Once the competition has been drawn all entry slips and information provided therein will be securely destroyed and shall not be retained by J D Wetherspoon plc or its affiliates.

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Nik Antona is national chairman of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

Cheers

CASK – THE BEST-KEPT SECRET BEHIND THE BAR

If you swerve the multitude of beers brewed with a method unique to British culture, you don't know what you're missing, says Nik Antona of CAMRA

As the days grow shorter and summer seems but a distant memory, there's no better time to head to your favourite pub and see what's on tap.

And when I say tap, I'm not talking about those shiny silver keg fonts.

For your next pint, I challenge you to seek cask beer – which is usually served from those authentic hand-pulls.

You may consider your drink of choice to be already set in stone, whether that's a gin, whisky, wine or craft lager, yet cask is one of the best-kept secrets behind the bar and well worth adding to your drink repertoire.

So, what makes cask so special?

If you've never tried cask beer before, you can easily recognise it on the bar, as it is usually served using the traditional hand-pull.

A huge misconception is that cask is just one style of beer – usually a bitter – and that, if you don't fancy a huge pint of bitter, then it's not for you.

This couldn't be further from the truth: the reality is that cask beer can come in a wide range of styles and flavours, depending on the pub you're visiting.

From creamy, chocolatey stouts to smooth milds and hoppy IPAs, you can find just as much to choose from in cask as you can in keg.

What makes cask different from other beers is that it is a natural, artisan and fresh product.

Cask relies on the brewer's yeast to provide its natural, light carbonation.

It's a traditional brewing method, unique to British culture, which is making the UK a real beer destination for enthusiasts abroad.

Because cask relies on that natural carbonation, it has a much shorter shelf life, meaning that

it tends to be one of the freshest drinks you can order at a pub, club or tap room.

By the same token, most cask which you find is usually brewed locally, giving it real provenance to the area where you find yourself.

Cask beer is also considered one of the most eco-friendly drinks.



From creamy, chocolatey stouts to smooth milds and hoppy IPAs, you can find just as much to choose from in cask as you can in keg



How do I find good cask?

As I said, cask beer is the best-kept secret behind the bar – meaning that, sometimes, you do have to go looking for it.

Luckily, CAMRA has been doing the groundwork on this for over 50 years.

Our 50th edition of *The Good Beer Guide* (published 27 October) features the very best pubs across the UK – all of which have a fantastic selection of cask beer available.

CAMRA also maintains a rigorous festival programme, boasting over 180 local festivals across the UK.

Beer festivals are a fantastic way to try great cask – and they're lovingly served by dedicated volunteers who want you

to discover the secret of cask, so are happy to help in steering you in the right direction.

You can sample from a huge selection of styles and flavours and can often choose one-third and two-third serving sizes.

Sometimes, a full pint can be too much of a commitment, when you're trying something new, so don't be afraid to ask for samples or smaller measures.

Finally, you can keep an eye out for our awards – we are always recognising excellence within the trade.

From our Champion Beer of Britain award to our Pub/Club of the Year awards, you'll be sure to find fantastic, lovingly served cask at any pub, club, brewery or tap room promoted by the Campaign for Real Ale.

Can I find out more?

If we've sufficiently whetted your appetite, the first step is to head to the bar and order yourself some cask.

While supping, check out our Learn & Discover page at <https://camra.org.uk/learn-discover>, where you'll find a huge range of materials to help you on your cask journey.

You can also check out the latest in beer and pub news by visiting our online paper at wb.camra.org.uk, picking up a copy of our quarterly *BEER* magazine or tuning in to the CAMRA podcast *Pubs. Pints. People.*

Converted? Be sure to join the Campaign for Real Ale and help us to spread the word: join.camra.org.uk

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