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WETHERSPOON**NEWS**

UK EDITION



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wetherspoon in numbers

56

hotels in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

251

pubs in CAMRA's The Good Beer Guide 2025.

99.32 per cent

of pubs achieving a top hygiene rating of five stars.

20 years

as a Top Employer United Kingdom.

£24 million

raised for Young Lives vs Cancer since 2002.

£569 million

in free shares and bonuses paid to employees since 2006.

£6 billion

generated in tax in the last 10 years.

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See food menu for symbol explanations. J D Wetherspoon plc reserves the right to withdraw/change offers (without notice), at any time. See website for full details: jdwetherspoon.com. Allergen and nutritional information can be found on the customer information screen, website and Wetherspoon app.

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Have I got news for Ian Hislop?

Yes I have, says Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, who takes issue with the TV funnyman's far-fetched claims about a pub visit

A Wetherspoon customer, Lynn Picknett, wrote to Ian Hislop (see 1), a team captain of the legendary TV programme *Have I Got News for You* (HIGNFY), complaining about its repeated "sneering and sniping" references to Wetherspoon.

In Wetherspoon's defence, Ms Picknett pointed out that she had "never ... stuck to the carpet once" and that the pubs offer "a warm, welcoming haven".

The customer said that she had "joined in the cheap laughs aimed at Wetherspoon's – the first dozen or so times.

"But, after that, enough was enough."

The reply from Mr Hislop (see 2, opposite) was a surprise.

He did acknowledge that "the generalisation [about Wetherspoon] may be unfair".

Fight

However, he then went on to say that he "was in a Wetherspoon's in Wales six weeks ago and watched a fight (woman beating up her husband), as well as a group of under age dealers trying to sell drugs even cheaper than the cut price shots".

I must admit that my personal intuition on reading Mr Hislop's reply to Ms Picknett was that he was 'gilding the lily' somewhat or, to be blunter, fantasising.

Of course, things can go wrong in pubs, but the situation which Mr Hislop allegedly witnessed seems far-fetched.

In my 10 or so pub visits each week for the last 40 plus years, I have never seen a woman beat up her husband.

And how did Mr Hislop know that the alleged drug dealers were under age – did he check their ID? And how did he know that the drugs were cheaper than the shots?

Reckless

Since all of our pubs are covered by CCTV, the alleged behaviour would have been reckless indeed, yet we can find no trace of these incidents in any Welsh pub during the time of Mr Hislop's visit.

In any event, in order to help our investigations, I wrote to Mr Hislop (see 4, opposite) asking which pub he had visited – but (see 5, opposite) he declined to help us with our enquiries.

So, what is the moral of this story?

Well, I'm not sure actually. Maybe Wetherspoon shouldn't be too sensitive about misrepresentations made in an iconic comedy series, which must be touched with genius, since it has lasted for over 30 years.

Or maybe, like Lynn Picknett, we could conclude that "enough is enough".

Slurs

Certainly, Wetherspoon can list plenty of achievements, as the following pages demonstrate, which belie the HIGNFY slurs: more pubs in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide than any other company, top hygiene ratings nationwide from local authorities, more design awards than any company in history (I truly believe) and so on.

Before ending my history of this spat, bear with me while I digress ever so slightly to describe a remarkable coincidence...

Before starting the pub company, I worked for a few months in London for a major newspaper group, selling advertising space in the Belfast Telegraph and other regional publications.

At work, I sat next to a recent graduate from the University of Cambridge – Dave.

I became friendly with him and his best pal, who had a job as a writer for the BBC – and we spent many nights out on the town after work, in those far-off days.

The best pal was Jimmy Mulville, creator of HIGNFY, albeit I haven't seen him since.

So listen, Ian, in this troubled world, we'll let bygones be bygones, but I'll expect you to arrange a pint for Jimmy, Dave, yourself and me, OK?

Tim Martin
Chairman

6 Carlisle Street

London

W1D 3BN

15 July 2024

Dear Ian Hislop,

I usually watch your show, *Has Islingtonia Got News for You*, and often manage to enjoy it. I even joined in with the cheap laughs aimed at Wetherspoon's – the first dozen or so times. But after that, enough was enough.

I get that to those for whom an £80 pork chop upstairs at the French doesn't require thinking about – as opposed to it not bearing thinking about – Wetherspoon's might be a concept as alien as stale brioche for M. Antoinette, but for some of us it's the only eating out we can know.

I also understand that the pearl-clutching whenever Wetherspoon's is brought up is largely connected with the whole Tim Martin/Brexit thing, so to you and your team it's fair game.

But to most of us for whom Wetherspoon's is a warm, welcoming haven – and even a joy – immoderate discussions about the coronation of Nigel Farage or the joys of Brexit are simply never heard. Along with young families, older people escaping lonely and ice-box-like homes and abused women to whom the pubs are designated safe areas (and they are – did you even know that?), we old Bohemians have put down roots in our local Spoons – gratefully, too. If it wasn't there, some of us would literally never go out.

To hear the intelligentsia sneering and sniping at the chain is sad but doesn't surprise us. After all, champagne socialists might have a soft spot for we little people on paper, but in grim real-life we're all just mindless Reform-voting chavs. Let them go rot in Wetherspoons!

Perhaps I should point out that I've never even stuck to the carpet once.

Anyway.... Here I am inviting you to one of the comfier pubs – maybe the Rocket at Putney – while fully realising I'm potentially handing you a cheap laugh. I can just see it. You dropping into the banter on *HIGNFY* the line that some woman invited you to a Wetherspoon's ... loaded pause ... one of your specially honed knowing glances at the audience ensures they all dutifully fall about... then you add with perfect comic timing, 'Well, she was from *Croydon*...' Not a dry seat in the house.

Still, the offer stands.

And I should say that I'm a great fan of your documentaries. When you know what you're talking about you're utterly brilliant.

Sincerely,

Lynn Picknett

1

PRIVATE EYE

2

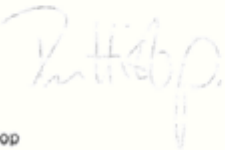
6 CARLISLE STREET, LONDON W1D 3BN
Telephone: 020 7437 4017 Fax: 020 7437 0705 Email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk

25th July 2024

Dear Lynn,

Many thanks for your letter of 15th July. Ok – fair comment, point taken although the generalisation may be unfair. I was in a Wetherspoon's in Wales 6 weeks ago, and watched a fight (woman beating up her husband) as well as a group of under age dealers trying to sell drugs even cheaper than the cut price shots....

Best,



Ian Hislop
EDITOR

Tim Martin
J.D. Wetherspoon
Wetherspoon House
Central Park
Reeds Crescent
Watford
WD24 4QL

15 December 2024

Dear Tim Martin,

I thought you might like to see my exchange of letters with Ian Hislop in the summer, after I'd been infuriated by the seemingly almost non-stop vicious sneering about Wetherspoons in the previous series of *Have I Got News For You*. Perhaps it's just a coincidence that it wasn't there in the recent series, but I like to think I had some part in making it stop!

Wishing you, your family and all your hard-working staff a very happy Christmas and a hugely successful New Year!

Best wishes,



Lynn Picknett
Enc.

3



4

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jdwetherspoon.com

Ian Hislop
Private Eye
6 Carlisle Street
LONDON
W1D 3BN

21 January 2025

Dear Ian,

RE: DRUG DEALING ETC. IN WALES

I've been informed by a customer that you wrote to her, having witnessed a "woman beating up her husband" in one of our pubs and, also, "a group of under-age dealers trying to sell drugs even cheaper than the shots".

As a licensed business, we have a legal duty to follow up allegations of misbehaviour in our pubs.

It would therefore be extremely helpful if you could let me know which pub you referred to and the approximate time of your visit.

Wetherspoon pubs are not immune from incidences of poor behaviour - we have millions of customers per week - but, generally, have an excellent reputation (though not at HIGNFY, apparently...).

For example, Wetherspoon is the top-ranked large pub company for local authority "scores on the doors" hygiene ratings, we have more pubs in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide than any other company - and so on.

Thank you for your attention and for any assistance you can provide in following up your observations in one of our Welsh pubs.

Kind regards,



Tim Martin
Chairman
J D WETHERSPOON PLC

PRIVATE EYE

6 CARLISLE STREET, LONDON W1D 3BN
Telephone: 020 7437 4017 Fax: 020 7437 0705 Email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk

Tim Martin
JD Wetherspoon PLC
PO BOX 616
Watford, WD24 4QU

10th February 2025

Dear Tim Martin,

Thank you for your letter of 21st January. I did reply to a lady who wrote to me on the subject of HIGNFY and Wetherspoons, but I do not intend to take the matter any further.

With best wishes,



Ian Hislop
Editor

5

YOUR SAY

Write: The Editor, Wetherspoon News, J D Wetherspoon plc
Central Park, Reeds Crescent, Watford, WD24 4QL

E-mail: editor@jdwetherspoon.co.uk

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

FROM AMERICA WITH LOVE

Dear Sir Timothy



I would like to thank you for the pleasure which your company has given to my wife and me over the past couple of decades.

We have vacationed regularly in the UK for many years and, since discovering Wetherspoon, have made your pubs one of our go-to dining destinations.

Exceptional value, novel décor, friendly staff and, as we transitioned from alcohol to coffee in our advancing years, that second cup of 'flat white' have, in our eyes, made your concept a winner.

Our most recent visit was spent mainly in Winchester, yet we also dallied in Cardiff, where I was pleased to see the boxes retained in The Prince of Wales' conversion, which had been a theatre during our student days there in the late 1950s.

Unfortunately, because of our ages, it is unlikely that we'll be able to visit the UK again, but, as a happy memory, there's a photo of my wife of 64 years having a laugh with a staff member at The Old Gaolhouse (Winchester) – a copy of which I enclose to really convey the pleasure referred to in my opening sentence.

Sincerely

Neil Cameron, Coupeville, Washington, USA

Tim replies: Thank you very much, Neil, for your kind comments about The Old Gaolhouse and The Prince of Wales. Love the photo.

So glad that you and the missus managed, over the years, to get over to the UK so much and that Wetherspoon and the dedicated pub teams form such key parts of your memories. Kindest regards and best of luck to you both.

TIME TO GET A GRIP IN GRIMSBY

Dear Sir

Listening to many customers at The Yarborough Hotel (Grimsby), it appears that quite a few people have problems getting into the restaurant/bar to enjoy their meal/drinks.

What they all say is that they need a handrail on the outside steps, at both the front and side of the hotel.

Would it be possible for this to be included in your future plans?

I would also like to comment – both my husband and I visit a lot of Wetherspoon's pubs in England and find them to be very bright and welcoming.

Sad to say, Grimsby is very dark and needs brightening up!

Hoping that you will take our comments on board.

Kind regards

Barry and Sylvia Everett

Grimsby, Lincolnshire

Tim replies: So sorry to hear that our Grimsby pub has entered the dark side. I'll take a look at it myself.

At the same time, I'll look into the possibility of better handrails for the entrances.

A PLEA FOR CHEESE

Dear Sir Tim

I enjoy Wetherspoon's pubs, visiting them regularly with my relations. There is one drawback: I am diabetic – one of more than five million diabetics in the UK.

I enjoy a meal, then what do I do to round it off?

There is a whole list of desserts available, but not for me.

This is, of course, because of their sugar content.

When my companions notice that I am not having a dessert, they, too, decide against it – and we leave early, so the turnover and profit from five or six desserts leave with us.

Of course, this is not the fault of just Wetherspoon.

No dining place of the Wetherspoon genre offers a simple cheese-and-biscuit alternative.

With a choice of Brie-style cheeses, a blue cheese or a good, tasty cheese, like Lancashire, with a small selection of biscuits – it would mean that half a dozen of us could enjoy a few more minutes' relaxation.

Why not? If a cheese course is uneconomic, surely the profit from conventional desserts subsidises this?

Wetherspoon grew on its own reputation of no-frills, innovative dining.

Is it possible to extend this to include people like me?

Not everyone likes cheese, but possibly 10 per cent of diabetics would welcome the choice and, at (say) £1-per-serving profit, a possible £250,000 walks out of Wetherspoon's pubs every day.

Yours etc

Lionel Anthony

Bourton, Dorset

Tim replies: Interesting point about cheese, Lionel.

I will certainly look at the possibility.

It may not have broad enough appeal, yet, as you say, there is a significant market among diabetics.

WETHERSPOON GIFT GIVES ME A LIFT

Dear Eddie

Just a short note to say a big thankyou for my gift card – the first time I've ever won anything.

Great that my letter was answered by Sir Tim.

It's great that the boss takes the time to look into things.

We enjoyed our brekkie in Eastbourne the other day. My partner loves the oat milk.

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely

Tom Payne

Bexhill, East Sussex

Tim replies: Congratulations on your letter being printed, Tom, and thanks for the comments about Wetherspoon in Eastbourne. Both of our pubs there have fantastic teams and long-serving pub managers.

SWERVING SPOONS LEADS TO TEARS

Dear Tim

We go to The Kingfisher (Poynton) regularly and have done for many years, as does the rest of our family.

We love it. It is run brilliantly by James [Doyle] the manager and his brilliant team of good, hard-working people.

They are all lovely. It's a pleasure to go there.

These last few months, our son, Philip, and daughter-in-law, Jayne, have been taking their granddaughter, Alba Marie, there (our great-granddaughter, aged two and a half) for breakfast after her dance class.

However, the other Saturday morning, for a change, they took her to McDonald's. When they arrived, she burst into tears.

When asked why she was crying, she said that she wanted to go to Wetherspoon, in Poynton. When they told us, we thought that it was really funny, hence this letter to you.

So, every Saturday since then, after dance class, they bring her with a big smile on her face to The Kingfisher for her porridge and fruit. Clearly, she knows what she likes best.

Hope that you find this as funny as we did.

Yours sincerely

Ann and Philip Ward and family

Hazel Grove, Stockport

Tim replies: So glad to hear that James and the groovy team at Poynton are extending Wetherspoon's appeal to future generations.

Please tell your great-granddaughter that, in my unbiased opinion, she is a person of great taste and discernment.

FOOTBALL-LOVING PRINCE SITS DOWN WITH FELLOW VILLA FANS



Customers at a Wetherspoon pub in Birmingham were surprised to be rubbing shoulders with royalty.

The Prince of Wales visited The London and North Western, at Birmingham New Street railway station, where he enjoyed a glass of Bulmers cider, during a visit to the city to attend a conference.

A keen football fan and well-known Aston Villa supporter since his school days, Prince William joined a group of fellow Villa fans and Villa Park season ticket-holders for a drink and half-hour chat about the club and its forthcoming matches.

Prince William was also more than happy to pose for photographs in the pub.

The trip to The London and North Western was organised after Prince William asked the football club to arrange a gathering with some die-hard supporters.

One fan told the BBC that the prince was a “genuine bloke, who really loves Villa” and that he also weighed in on the Premier League fixture, saying that he “thought it would be a tough game”.

Daniel Jones, an 18-year-old sixth form college student from Staffordshire, said that the prince was a “lovely guy, proper down to earth” who “loves Villa and the passion we all share”.

He added: “I think, if he didn’t have other commitments, he would have loved to be at the match.”

John McEvoy, 64, from Solihull, said: “William said that a family friend took him to his first game, Villa against Bolton, and he’s loved the team ever since.

“He said that he’d be watching the match on TV. He was just a really nice, genuine bloke, who really loves Villa.”

In 2015, Prince William told the BBC: “A long time ago at school, I got into football big time.

“I was looking around for clubs.

“All my friends at school were either Man United fans or Chelsea fans and I didn’t want to follow the run-of-the-mill teams.

“I wanted to have a team which was more mid table which could give me more emotional rollercoaster moments.”

Pub manager John Whitewood said: “We had no prior warning until the Prince of Wales walked in, so it was a surprise to both the staff and customers.

“We have had a few actors and sports stars visiting, since the pub opened, but this is definitely the first time we have had a royal visit, and it was a lovely experience for everyone in the pub at the time.

“It was a lovely gesture for Prince William to meet up with his fellow Aston Villa fans, while he was in Birmingham – and he is welcome back for prematch drinks any time.”

Wetherspoon’s pubs have played host to numerous celebrities and VIPs.

They include former prime minister Rishi Sunak MP (at The Buck Inn, Northallerton), actor John Travolta (at The Romany Rye, Dereham) and World Cup winner hat-trick hero Geoff Hurst (at The Crosse Keys, City of London).

Other famous people to have visited a Wetherspoon pub include Newcastle United footballer Sandro Tonali, actress Pamela Anderson, actor and musician Kiefer Sutherland and U2’s lead vocalist Bono.



WETHERSPOON TAKES TOP THREE PLACES IN GOOGLE MAPS LIST OF BEST-LOVED PUBS

The company occupies 11 places of top 20, based on number of good reviews

Wetherspoon has come out on top in a Google Maps report of the 20 best-loved pubs in the UK.

To rank the top spots, researchers highlighted those places featuring the highest number of reviews on the website, along with ratings of more than four stars, then assigned scores by combining these two numbers.

Wetherspoon had the top-three-ranking pubs: The Standing Order (Edinburgh) came top, with a score of 4.2 stars, based on 11,599 reviews; The Velvet Coaster (Blackpool) came second (4.3 stars/11,145 reviews); The Counting House (Glasgow) came third (four stars/10,635 reviews). Wetherspoon was also responsible for four of the top-five pubs, with The Albert and The Lion (Blackpool) coming fifth.

In addition, a further seven Wetherspoon pubs were in the list's top 20, resulting in Wetherspoon having 11 pubs in the UK's top 20.

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, said: "This is a massive accolade for both the company and the individual pubs named in the top 20.

"It is fantastic that the top three pubs are all Wetherspoon, with a further eight listed in the top 20.

"Google reviews are all independent, making the results even more rewarding.

"Our aim is to offer customers the best-possible pubs, in terms of excellent quality and value-for-money food and drinks, in comfortable and safe surroundings."

Wetherspoon's positions in the UK's top pubs for 2025

1. **The Standing Order** – J D Wetherspoon, Edinburgh
2. **The Velvet Coaster** – J D Wetherspoon, Blackpool
3. **The Counting House** – J D Wetherspoon, Glasgow
5. **The Albert and The Lion** – J D Wetherspoon, Blackpool
6. **The Palladium** – J D Wetherspoon, Llandudno
9. **The Moon in the Square** – J D Wetherspoon, Bournemouth
13. **The Montagu Pyke** – J D Wetherspoon, London
14. **The Moon Under Water** – J D Wetherspoon, Manchester
15. **The Angel Hotel** – J D Wetherspoon, Whitby
17. **The Liberty Bounds** – J D Wetherspoon, London
19. **Royal Victoria Pavilion** – J D Wetherspoon, Ramsgate

Source: Google Maps

The Standing Order

62–66 George Street
Edinburgh, EH2 2LR

Opened in July 1997, this pub takes its name from its former use as the Union Bank of Scotland, the premises being listed grade A.

Designed by David Bryce during 1874–78, in a Neo-classical style, the property was later completed by his nephew John.



The Velvet Coaster

501-507 Promenade
Blackpool, FY4 1BA

This pub opened in May 2015, at Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Britain's 'most-visited tourist attraction', which began in 1896 as a small fairground among the sand hills.

The Velvet Coaster was one of the exciting new rides introduced in the early 1900s.

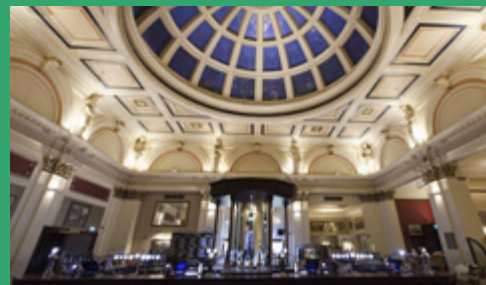


The Counting House

2 St Vincent Place
Glasgow, G1 2DH

This pub opened in December 1996, in the premises previously owned by the Bank of Scotland. The building was designed for the bank, during 1867-70, by JT Ruchead.

His design, in the Italian Renaissance style, set the tone for the west end of George Square.



The Albert and The Lion

Bank Hey Street
Blackpool, FY1 4RU

Opened in July 2010, this pub takes its name from Stanley Holloway's famous comic monologue and best-selling recording – Albert and The Lion. Albert was 'a little lad ... swallowed whole' by the lion in the menagerie at the foot of Blackpool Tower.



BATLEY

KATIE AND STE BRING ABOUT BATLEY BEER BREAKTHROUGH



Pub manager Ste Richardson and shift manager Katie Ward are pictured proudly showing off their Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) award.

The Union Rooms (Batley) was voted Heavy Woollen District CAMRA's 'pub of the season' for autumn 2024.

Ste, who has managed the pub since November 2022, said: "This is the first award presented to any Wetherspoon pub in the district, and everyone is really proud of the recognition and absolutely thrilled."

The Union Rooms serves seven real ales at all times. As well as Sharp's Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles, there are always four ever-changing guest ales available.

Ste said: "Phoenix Wobbly Bob (6.0% ABV) is by far the most popular guest ale, and we also showcase beers from breweries including Acorn, Daleside, Exmoor, Fuggle Bunny and Moorhouse's."

"Katie, our ale champion, has done an absolutely amazing job keeping the ales in tip-top condition.

"She is responsible for ordering, including taking on board customers' suggestions in our 'request a guest' post box.

"We have a good relationship with many of the local CAMRA members, some of whom are regular customers on Friday and Saturday evenings.

"This award is great recognition for all of the hard work in our continual effort to improve the quality and range of the ales at The Union Rooms."

Mike Roebuck, chairman of Heavy Woollen branch of CAMRA, said: "As a branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), we are committed to recognising pubs and clubs which go above and beyond to promote real ale in West Yorkshire's Heavy Woollen area.

"This is the first time that our branch has awarded a 'pub of the season' certificate to a Wetherspoon pub, and it is testament to pub manager Ste Richardson's hard work and innovation in championing real ale at this venue."

AIRPORT PUBS ARE FLYING HIGH



Wetherspoon has been named as winner of the 'best airport retailer' for the Food and Beverage awards at the British Travel Awards 2024.

The prestigious awards are voted for by members of the public.

Wetherspoon has eight airport pubs in England and Scotland.

They are The Crown Rivers (Heathrow, T5, after security) and Star Light (Heathrow, T4, after security), The Red Lion (Gatwick, North Terminal, after security) and The Flying Horse (Gatwick, South Terminal, after security), The Beehive (Gatwick South Terminal, before security),

The Windmill (Stansted, after security), Wetherspoon (Birmingham, after security) and The Sir Walter Scott (Edinburgh, after security).

The pubs are open from the first flight's departure until the last flight lands.

Wetherspoon's regional manager, Barry Brewster, said: "We are thrilled to win the award, especially as it was voted for by members of the public.

"There are lots of food and drinks outlets across all of the airports, so to be named as the best of the bunch is a great accolade.

"We thank our hard-working and loyal staff at our airport pubs for their efforts in offering customers the best-possible service at all times, together with a great choice of food and drinks."

GLASGOW

BUSY PODIUM IN GLASGOW AS SIX PUBS ALL TAKE GOLD



All six Wetherspoon pubs in Glasgow city centre have been recognised at the Best Bar None (BBN) Glasgow awards 2024.

The Counting House, The Crystal Palace, The Hengler's Circus, The Esquire House, The Sir John Moore and The Society Room achieved a gold award each at the annual event.

The Crystal Palace and The Sir John Moore were also joint winners (standard category) of the prestigious overall gold award and go through to the National Best Bar None awards for Scotland.

It was the third year in succession that The Crystal Palace won overall gold, as well as winning overall gold at the national awards 2023.

Compèred by presenter Greg Summers, the awards took place in the ballroom at the city's Grand Central Hotel.

Wetherspoon's area manager, Stewart Dumbreck, said:

"We are delighted that all six Glasgow pubs have won a gold award – a remarkable achievement.

"Congratulations also to pub managers Graeme Goodwin (The Crystal Palace) and Ross Henderson (The Sir John Moore) and their teams for their overall winner success. Well done everyone."

Premises were inspected ahead of the awards by four independent assessors.

They were judged on their efforts around prevention of crime and disorder, securing public safety, prevention of public nuisance, promotion of public health and the protection of children from harm.

Members of BBN Glasgow also benefit from additional training on topics such as stewarding, crime scene preservation, drug awareness, responsible drinking and recognising and protecting vulnerable people.

BBN Glasgow's Lise Fisher said: "It's great to see so many city venues striving to achieve excellence in customer safety and providing an enjoyable experience for customers.

"The results are a true testament to the ongoing hard work and dedication of licensees and their staff across the city."

BBN Glasgow has been running since 2005 and is delivered on behalf of Glasgow's Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) in partnership with Glasgow City Council, Retailers Against Crime (RAC), Police Scotland and the licensed trade.

Pictured (left to right) are pub managers Luke Murray (The Hengler's Circus), Bobby McCrone (The Society Room) and Ross Henderson (The Sir John Moore), area manager Stewart Dumbreck (back) and pub managers Graeme Goodwin (The Crystal Palace), Phil Broadley (The Esquire House) and Michael Murphy (The Counting House).

LIFE IS GRAND WHEN YOU'RE A POWER BRAND

Wetherspoon has been named by the British public as a Power Brand.

Power Brand is one of two consumer awards voted for by the public in a survey for the Peach 20/20 Hero and Icon Awards.

Over a 12-month period, CGA by NIQ surveyed 20,000 consumers about the pub, bar and restaurant brands they use.

Peach 20/20 & Atlantic Club's founder and executive director, Peter Martin, said: "Wetherspoon is a national phenomenon which has rewritten the pub playbook.

"A champion of cask beer and all-day affordable food, it knows what it does and also what it doesn't do – and has a genius knack of knowing

what the public wants and of delivering it."

Wetherspoon's finance director, Ben Whitley, added: "We are immensely proud of the award and thank all of those who voted for us.

"We also wish to thank our loyal customers and hard-working staff.

"It is especially pleasing to win an award voted for by the public."

The awards are sponsored by Fourth, the hospitality technology platform.

Pictured (left to right) are Peter Martin, Wetherspoon's chief executive John Hutson, Ben Whitley, Fourth Hospitality VP EMEA region Alison Fraser.



NO BLACK MARKS FOR CRACK TEAM SERVING THE BLACK STUFF

Wetherspoon's pubs have been judged to have a perfect record, when it comes to serving the perfect pint of Guinness

Wetherspoon's pubs have a 100-per-cent pass rate, when it comes to serving the perfect pint of Guinness.

The company is always proud to provide the best value, quality and service possible to customers – and every single eligible Wetherspoon pub has achieved the highly coveted Guinness accreditation.

Diageo, supplier of Guinness to Wetherspoon, has been working with the pubs' teams for nine years, ensuring that staff have everything they need to provide the perfect pint of its product.

The Guinness accreditation is an annual assessment, which includes unannounced visits from a Diageo assessor.

Achieved

For the first time since being introduced, the accreditation has been achieved by all Wetherspoon pubs in England, Scotland and Wales (the accreditation does not include Northern Ireland or Ireland).

Wetherspoon's reputation and commitment to serving the perfect pint of beer are second to none – and the partnership with Diageo continues to ensure that the dedication for perfection is rigorously tested, to serve customers a great pint of 'the black stuff'.

The Diageo assessor visits each pub, unannounced, to purchase a pint of Guinness and check that it is dispensed correctly.

Observing the six-step guidelines for a perfect pour, it takes 119.5 seconds to pour and serve draught Guinness.

Step 1 Take a cool, dry, Guinness-branded glass.

Step 2 Hold the glass firmly at 45° under the tap.

Step 3 Pull the handle fully forwards, towards you, slowly straightening the glass as it fills, stopping when it is three-quarters full.

Step 4 Leave the surge to settle, allowing the creamy head to form. The head should be 10–15mm high.

Step 5 Top up the glass by pushing the tap handle away from you. Stop when the head is proud of the rim. There should be no overspill.

Step 6 Present the perfect pint to the customer with a steady hand, logo facing forwards.

Assessors also check the bar and cellar dispense equipment to ensure that it is clean and well maintained.

Any failure in any area would lead to a failed accreditation – and the assessor would provide corrective coaching and highlight the reason for the failure.

Each assessor will leave a Guinness accreditation plaque with each successful pub to proudly display.

Proud

Wetherspoon's head of retail audit, Mark Latham, said: "We are proud to have achieved a 100-per-cent pass rate, with every pub gaining its accreditation. It's a fantastic collective achievement."

He continued: "Before the annual accreditation, Wetherspoon issues all bar employees with training, including a video on how to pour the perfect pint.

"This is followed by a knowledge quiz, where staff need to gain 100 per cent to pass this annual (as well as new-starter) training.

"The training is not just to get the accreditation, yet helps to ensure that customers are served a perfect pint of Guinness, in a branded glass, every time."

Quality

Mark added: "The Guinness accreditation initiative is a welcome addition to our own regular high-standard quality checks.

"We have a team of auditors visiting every Wetherspoon pub's cellar, at least once a month, to ensure that standard operating procedures are being adhered to and that high standards of quality and hygiene are being achieved and maintained."

Guinness GB's head of marketing, Nick Payman, said: "Guinness's quality is the cornerstone of our brand, and we're absolutely delighted to see J D Wetherspoon placing such emphasis on maintaining those same high standards.

"It's this commitment to quality which drives our continued success, bringing more people into the Guinness family and, by extension, through the doors of Wetherspoon's pubs."



QUALITY APPROVED



GUINNESS

PERFECT
GUINNESS
DRAUGHT
SERVED HERE

Guinness – a brief history

Born in 1725, in County Kildare, Ireland, Arthur Guinness inherited £100 from his godfather, Archbishop Price, using the money to set up his own ale brewery in neighbouring town, Leixlip.

At 34, Arthur decided to try his luck in the capital, signing a 9,000-year lease on a small, disused property at St James' Gate, Dublin, from which to start his brewing journey.

The original lease is still available to view at the Dublin archive.

A failing brewing industry in Ireland led Arthur to begin exporting, sending just six and a half barrels of Guinness beer on a ship bound for England.

The rapid growth of a new beer, 'porter', in London resulted in Arthur's halting ale production and concentrating on perfecting a bold, black beer, the West Indian porter (a precursor to Guinness Foreign Extra Stout) which remains part of Guinness's range to this day.

Over the next 200 years, Guinness quickly became part of the world's cultural fabric.

Today, it is brewed in more than 60 locations worldwide, with Nigeria opening the first brewery (1963) outside of the UK and Ireland.

With more than 8,500 years remaining on the original St James' Gate lease, Guinness has a lot more beer to make.

PROUD DAY AS PUBWATCH PRIZES ARE PRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT

Wetherspoon was once again proud to sponsor the National Pubwatch awards at the House of Lords.

The company has been a supporter of National Pubwatch since its inauguration in 1997 and has sponsored its awards since 2019.

National Pubwatch is a voluntary organisation which supports more than 800 pubwatch schemes across the UK (Wetherspoon is involved in 532 pubwatch schemes across the land) and works to promote safe, secure and social drinking environments in all licensed premises throughout the UK.

The 'National Pubwatch of the year' award, judged by National Pubwatch committee members, recognises the work of local pubwatch schemes and their efforts to provide safe drinking environments for customers and staff.

Two pubwatches, Dalston and Worthing, were awarded 'highly commended'.

Chesterfield pubwatch, running for 22 years, was recognised as an effective and forward-thinking organisation which works in partnership with the police and Chesterfield Borough Council.

Industry stalwart Mike Clist was given an 'award of merit' in recognition of his long service to the pub sector and his work with Best Bar None, the British Institute of Innkeeping and the Licensed Trade Charity.

An 'award of merit' recognises the contribution of individuals to the safety of the late-night economy.

A 'bravery and meritorious conduct' award, recognising those whose actions have either saved life or minimised physical harm in the night-time economy, was won by Lindsey Wakeman, general manager at The Registry (Walsall).

She protected a vulnerable female customer and assisted in the apprehension of an alleged offender.

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

"The National Pubwatch awards are so important in recognising the hard work of local pubwatches, their members and individuals.

"They are working on the ground to ensure that we have a safe pub and licensed trade for customers and staff.

"We would like to thank J D Wetherspoon for all of its support for National Pubwatch and the awards."

Wetherspoon's legal director and company secretary, Nigel Connor, added: "This year has again seen some fantastic entries which reflect the strength and importance of UK-wide pubwatches in helping to create safe towns and cities.

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

● **Pictured (left to right) are The Registry's general manager Lindsey Wakeman, Worthing pubwatch's chair Vino Vijayakumar, Chesterfield pubwatch's secretary Jane Randall, chairman Roger Butler, founder member Simone Johnston, Night-Time Economy lead for London Borough of Hackney Sam Mathys, Nigel Connor, Dalston pubwatch's chair Kerry Maisey, National Pubwatch chairman Steve Baker OBE, Mike Clist and honorary president of National Pubwatch Lord Graham Evans.**



'AMAZING WORK'

23-YEAR PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUNG LIVES VS CANCER RAISES £24m



Wetherspoon is celebrating raising £24 million for Young Lives vs Cancer, the company's chosen charity, supporting children and young people with cancer – and their families.

Since the partnership began in 2002, staff and customers at Wetherspoon's pubs and head office have completed marathons, cycled thousands of miles, hosted quiz nights, hiked up mountains and so much more.

The annual 'kick' and 'darts' fundraisers are regular and much anticipated events in the Wetherspoon calendar – raising thousands for children and young people with cancer every year, towards this £24-million milestone.

Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, said: "We are immensely proud of our association with Young Lives vs Cancer, which first started in 2002.

"The staff and customers do amazing work in raising money – and we are thrilled that we have reached the £24-million milestone."

Young Lives vs Cancer's corporate partnerships lead, Liz Lowrey, said: "Thank you so much to Wetherspoon for raising this amazing amount of money to help young people with cancer.

"The money which Wetherspoon has raised will have supported more than 16,000 children and young people with cancer – from diagnosis, through treatment and beyond. From all of us at Young Lives vs Cancer... thank you."

The funds continue to assist Young Lives vs Cancer with helping children and young people with cancer and their families – from the moment of diagnosis.

The charity provides financial grants to ease the burden of funding travel to hospital, food and extra clothes. The 10 Homes from Home also offer families a free place to stay near hospitals, keeping family members together when they need one another most.

They have specialist social workers, there to provide the right support, at the right time. They do it all – from liaising with a child's school and offering parents a shoulder to cry on to helping with navigating the costs of cancer.

One young person who knows better than most how vital these services are is Farid, who was a guest at Wetherspoon for the £24-million-milestone announcement.

University student Farid (pictured next to Tim Martin) was diagnosed with a cancerous tumour behind his eye, leaving him unsure where this left him – concerning his sight, his studies, his job and his finances. That's where Young Lives vs Cancer social worker Mel stepped in to help to bring calm to the chaos.

Farid said: "I had no one who was helping to do that before and was struggling to do it myself – I would have struggled to do the treatment and complete my studies. Mel was fantastic – and I will never forget the help she gave me throughout my treatment."

● For more information about Young Lives vs Cancer, visit: www.younglivesvscancer.org.uk

SITES NEAR LONDON TRAIN STATIONS PROVIDE PLATFORMS FOR TWO NEW PUBS

Wetherspoon is to open two new pubs in London, each close to a railway station.

Walham Green, on Fulham Road (located in the old market halls, previously the entrance to Fulham Broadway underground station), is set to open in June, while The Sun Wharf, in Tooley Street, London Bridge (close to London Bridge railway station), is set to open in August.

The two pubs follow the opening of The Captain Flinders on Eversholt Street, Euston (close to Euston station) and The Lion & The Unicorn (Waterloo station).

Walham Green will offer 4,700 square feet of customer area, set over its ground and first floor.

There will also be a first-floor roof terrace (600 square feet).

The pub is being developed on the grade II listed former entrance building and ticket hall of Fulham Broadway underground station.

The Edwardian baroque-style entrance was built in 1910, designed by the railway company's architect Harry W Ford.

It was built on the site of the original station entrance which opened in 1880.

The station was named Walham Green, after the village which occupied what is now Fulham Broadway and its adjacent area.

In 1952, the name was changed to Fulham Broadway.

The Sun Wharf is being developed on what was previously the famous London Dungeon tourist attraction.

It features distinctive brick arches, next to the entrance into London Bridge railway station.

The pub will offer 4,200 square feet of customer space on one level.

In the early part of the 20th century, the street's many railway arches were occupied by importers and 'provision agents', whose livelihoods depended on the huge produce warehouses opposite.

One which survived until the mid 1980s was The Sun Wharf, the name given to this pub.

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, said: "We are looking forward to opening two new pubs in London."

"We are confident that they will prove popular with a wide range of customers, including those using the busy train station located close to each of them."

The Lion & The Unicorn (Waterloo)

Upper-Ground Floor, The Sidings, Waterloo station, London, SE1 7BH



The pub is located in The Sidings, in the former Eurostar terminus (based directly underneath platforms 20–24, adjacent to BrewDog).

The pub is open Monday – Thursday, 7.30am – midnight; Friday, 7.30am – 1am; Saturday, 8am – 1am; Sunday, 8am – midnight.

Food is served from opening until 11pm every day.

It is open for family dining throughout the week – with children (accompanied by an adult) welcome in the pub until 9pm.

The pub is wheelchair accessible, with a specially adapted toilet for those customers needing accessible facilities.

The pub's interior design is inspired by the historic architecture from The Festival of Britain, at which The Lion and Unicorn Pavilion was the fans' favourite must-see attraction.

The Captain Flinders (Euston)

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



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

The pub is open Monday – Thursday, 8am – 11.30pm; Friday and Saturday, 8am – 12.30am; Sunday, 8am – 10.30pm.

Food is served from opening time until 11pm Monday – Saturday (10pm on Sunday).

The pub, which is wheelchair accessible, is open for family dining throughout the week – with children (accompanied by an adult) welcome in the pub until 9pm.

There is a small pavement-café-style outside seating area at the front of the pub, accommodating 24 customers.

Named after the Royal Navy explorer who led the first circumnavigation (1801–03) of Australia, the pub has a traditional London-pub tiled feature wall and bespoke carpet, drawing its cable pattern's design inspiration from Euston station.

CEO JOHN AND MUM EDIE PERCH AT PUB BEFORE OWLS MATCH

Wetherspoon's chief executive, John Hutson, is pictured with his mum, Edie, at The Rawson Spring (Hillsborough), close to Sheffield Wednesday's stadium.

The mother and son are ardent Sheffield Wednesday supporters and meet in the pub before games.

The pub is the unofficial pre- and post-match venue for Wednesday supporters.

Edie, 86, whose father John was a committee member of the Swallownest branch of the Sheffield Wednesday supporters' club, has been attending games since 1946, while John's first game at Hillsborough was in 1975.

John said: "My mum and I love the club and go to the matches together, whenever we can.

"It is obviously very handy to have a Wetherspoon pub so close to the ground.

"There is also some nice symmetry in the fact that my mum and her sister-in-law, Mary, used to swim here together, when the premises was the Hillsborough Baths."

Wetherspoon redeveloped the former baths into its pub in 2007.



JAMIE SELECTED FOR SCOTLAND, AFTER CLEANING UP ON POOL TABLE

Cleaner Jamie Wilson played for Scotland at the 8-Ball Pool European Championships in Malta.

Jamie, 38, who works at The James Watt (Greenock), has spent the past two years sharpening his skills.

He said: "I was chosen to represent the D-team with a great bunch of players.

"I've only started putting in the real time and effort the last couple of years to improve my game and, even a year ago, I'd have been absolutely nowhere near being able to achieve this."

Shift manager Tayrn Coyle said: "We are all very proud of Jamie playing for Scotland.

"He absolutely loves the game and has worked so hard for this."

Jamie added that he is grateful to his managers for the time off he needed to practise and take part in the prestigious tournament, which he hopes to use as a springboard for his career.

He said: "I'm extremely proud of myself, yet still have a long way to go to get where I want to be in the sport.

"Representing Scotland has given me a confidence boost to progress even further."

NO JOKES IN SPECIAL CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

Seven Wetherspoon pubs across Scotland participated in a Scottish Government campaign conducted during the festive period, with the aim of reducing the number of people having a drink or taking drugs while driving.

The campaign took part in the pubs over three days, four hours at a time.

Teams of field marketers visited the pubs (along with other venues in Edinburgh and Glasgow) to share key messages and engage in short conversations with customers to raise awareness of the risks and consequences.

They used a Christmas cracker as the mechanism to initiate conversation, with key messages inside, instead of traditional jokes.

A spokesman for the Scottish Government said: "Wetherspoon demonstrated a strong commitment to social responsibility by participating in the project."

Wetherspoon's area manager (Edinburgh), Duncan McSparran, added: "We were pleased that so many of our pubs were involved in the excellent project.

"We are always happy to support innovative projects around safety."

The participating pubs were The Standing Order, The Alexander Graham Bell, The Caley Picture House and The Playfair (all in Edinburgh) and The Counting House, The Crystal Palace and The Society Room (all in Glasgow).

MORGAN STANLEY'S BEER SALES REPORT CALLS FOR TAX EQUALITY

An in-depth report by respected research analysts at Morgan Stanley has highlighted the volume decline of drinks sales in the on-trade (pubs, bars and restaurants).

It compares the decline with the increasing beer volume sales in the off-trade (supermarkets).

In effect, supermarkets have achieved this because of the tax disparity which exists between them and pubs, restaurants and bars.

This has been echoed by Wetherspoon's founder and chairman, Tim Martin, for many years.

Both the report and Mr Martin have referred to the fact that supermarkets are able to sell beer more cheaply because, to subsidise alcohol's pricing, they have used the zero-per-cent VAT charged on food which they sell – and, in this way, take sales from the on-trade.

Morgan Stanley's leisure analyst, Jamie Rollo, wrote the report titled Economies of Ale: Best Pubs in a Tough Neighbourhood.

He points out that pub operators' profit margins have been in decline for two decades, with the number of UK pubs having reduced, since 1990, by 30 per cent – to around 45,000.

Mr Rollo states: "On-trade beer volumes have declined by 52 per cent between 2000 and 2023, with customers preferring to buy beer from the supermarket, where pints are much cheaper."

And he highlights a report from the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA) showing that UK household expenditure on on-trade beer fell from £10.3 billion in 2012 to £8.8 billion in 2019.

The report also states that approximately 6.8 billion pints were sold in the on-trade in 2000, whereas, in 2023, this was around 3.2 billion.

Over the same time, off-trade volumes have increased from approximately 3.2 billion pints to approximately 4.5 billion pints.

The off-trade now commands 58 per cent of volume, compared with 32 per cent in 2000.

Tim Martin said: "Wetherspoon has campaigned for tax equality for many years.

"Jamie Rollo's report emphasises the need for the government to act now.

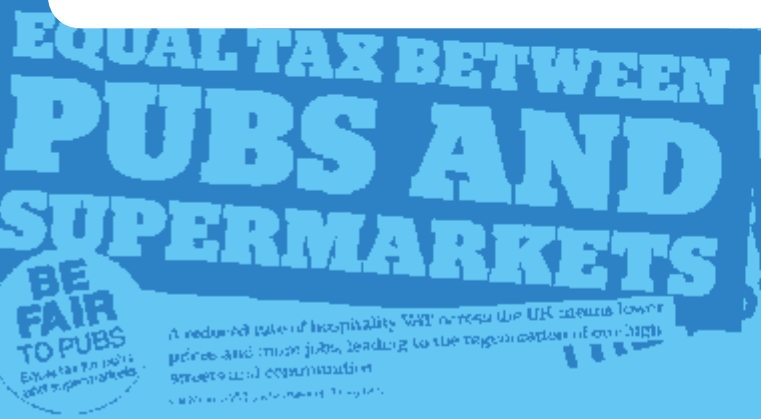
"Pubs are part of the fabric of our society and are being treated unfairly.

"They have been under fantastic pressure for decades because of the tax disadvantage with supermarkets.

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

"It does not make sense for the hospitality industry to subsidise supermarkets.

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



THE PREMIER • WIDNES

A DEFINITE WIN-WIN FOR YOUNG MANAGER JOSHUA



Pub manager Joshua Bottomley started his Wetherspoon career as an under-18 part-time floor associate, while studying for his A levels. Fast forward from October 2016 – and Joshua marked two years (in February 2025) as manager of the pub where he started – The Premier (Widnes).

Joshua recalled: “When I turned 18, I stepped up to work on the bar and was promoted, in quick succession, to team leader and shift leader.”

Although he cites several staff departures which aided his speedy progression, it was his own abilities which clearly made those promotions possible.

Joshua, who hails from St Helens, continued: “When I finished my A levels, I always wanted to go on to university, to study for a business degree; so, as soon as I found out that I could do that through work, I jumped at the opportunity.”

Joshua completed his level-5 apprenticeship in July 2024 and is currently working towards level 6 and gaining his degree, with graduation set for the summer of 2025.

He admitted: “It is challenging, juggling a full-time job with the studying, and is a lot of hard work, but definitely a win-win.”

“To be able to study for a degree, as part of a career path, was a big attraction for me. We are fortunate that the company offers this opportunity.”

That career path saw Joshua spend a short spell at The Court Leet (Ormskirk), from June 2022, in preparation for his role as pub manager, alongside experienced pub manager Lisa Newton.

He said: “Lisa was great with me. She gave me free rein to find my feet and progress, giving me the confidence and knowledge to know exactly what it would be like to have my own pub.”

“As a result, when I took on The Premier in February 2023 as pub manager, it was exactly what I expected, and things are going well.”

Joshua, 25, continued: “The majority of the team I have known and worked with for most of my eight years with the company.

“We have a good relationship, and those long-standing ties certainly made it probably the easiest jump into pub management which I could have hoped for. To have familiar surroundings and people has been great.”

But as a self-confessed career-motivated person, Joshua is already looking to his future.

He added: “My first aim is to get my degree while I’m at The Premier, before building up to a larger and busier pub.”

“I need to step outside of my comfort zone, with new people and environments, to see whether I can cope and progress.”

Joshua concluded: “Perhaps a role as area manager or auditor could be something for the future, but I certainly see a long-term career with Wetherspoon. The company has been good to me.”

SECRET DINERS DELIGHTED BY HEALTHY OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN



In a survey carried out by the Soil Association, Wetherspoon has been named as the top pub chain for offering freshly prepared and healthy options for children.

Its annual Out to Lunch league table ranking of menus highlighted several UK restaurant and pub chains “misleading or even ripping parents off” by serving ready meals and ultra-processed food to children, according to the study.

The report showed that several meals served by restaurant and pub chains do not include fresh ingredients.

The Soil Association used secret diners and surveyed restaurant and pub chains, including Wetherspoon, to compile its annual Out to Lunch league table ranking.

It also asked those surveyed to offer information on how their three most popular meals were freshly prepared.

According to the report, there was an “abundance of unhealthy options, excessively sugary desserts and problematic additives, plus ultra-processed and low-welfare meat”.

Wetherspoon was praised for serving all of its children’s meals with two portions of vegetables and a fruit option for dessert.

It also stated that Wetherspoon offered good-value children’s meals.

The Soil Association’s senior policy officer, Oona Buttafoco, told the Press Association: “Parents want and deserve better – they’ve told us that fresh food and healthy, delicious choices are their number-one priority, when eating out with their kids.

“Restaurant chains are facing significant cost pressures, and we sympathise with the challenges which they face, but are concerned that some chains may be misleading parents, or even ripping parents off, by essentially serving ready meals.

“This often isn’t what parents think they are paying for, and it’s concerning when ultra-processed foods are dominating British children’s diets.

“It’s not all bad news though. A handful of chains is doing brilliantly, serving freshly prepared, responsibly sourced, healthy and tasty food, as well as providing transparency on ingredient-sourcing – and all this at a reasonable price.”

Wetherspoon’s food-development manager, Sarah Shaw, said: “Wetherspoon is proud to have been ranked number two in the Out to Lunch league table, as well as being the leading pub chain.

“We strive to offer children’s meals which are both tasty and nutritious – which is good news for the children, as well as for their parents.”

THE O2, LONDON

STARGAZER’S MANAGERS GAZE ADMIRINGLY AT STAR NIKOLAS

Bar associate Nikolas Buklieruis (pictured) has been recognised for his hard work and commitment.

Nikolas, who joined the team at The Stargazer (The O2, London) in April 2024, received the ‘service star of the month’ award (November 2024), presented by Lee Holland, operations director at The O2.

The award was given for ‘excellent communications and going above and beyond to ensure that The Stargazer continues to wow The O2’s customers’.

Pub manager Kylee Garwood said: “The pub management team was asked to nominate a staff member, and Nikolas received the most votes.

“He was nominated for his hard work and commitment to the job, as well as for always being reliable and on time for his shift. He just gets on with things and works very well.”

Wetherspoon’s general manager, Richard Marriner, added: “Congratulations to Nikolas on his award and continued excellent customer service at The Stargazer.”



WE'RE A DIVERSE BUNCH - AND ALL THE BETTER FOR IT



Wetherspoon has been named as a Leader in Diversity 2025.

It is the second consecutive year that the company has been named in the report undertaken by the Financial Times and Statista.

Additionally, Wetherspoon was the highest-rated pub company in the Europe-wide report.

According to the Financial Times: "Each year, the report's authors have sought the views of more than 100,000 employees across the

continent to create the FT-Statista companies' ranking of Europe's Diversity Leaders."

The following parameters were taken into consideration: direct and indirect statements of age, gender equality, ethnicity, physical ability, LGBTQ+ and general diversity.

The report is carried out independently.

Wetherspoon's people director, Tom Ball, said: "We are thrilled to be named as a Leader in Diversity 2025.

"Our staff are our greatest asset – and we are proud of their diversity and the fact that Wetherspoon is an inclusive employer."

SHEFFIELD

PRAISE FOR PETER AFTER PUB'S NEGLECTED PATCH IS PRETTIFIED

Pub manager Peter Bryan is pictured proudly holding a silver gilt award for renovation work on the side garden at The Wagon & Horses (Chapelton, Sheffield).

The Small Business Award came from Yorkshire in Bloom for the small garden, following a reclamation project over the summer.

Peter said: "It was just a patch of wasteland before. It's not part of our customer area, yet did look untidy, so we decided to do something about it.

"The award is for the pub and everyone involved in the work – and it's brilliant that this has been recognised."

The pub was recommended for the award by local parish councillors who helped with the project.

The garden has also been replanted with rosemary, mint and other herbs, as well as bright flowers.



FIND ROOM IN YOUR SCHEDULE TO GET AWAY FROM THE EVERYDAY

Choose any of the 56 hotels in locations across Britain and Ireland to ensure a happy excursion this year

If you are looking for a getaway and a stay at a Wetherspoon hotel, this summer or at any time, book directly – at jdwetherspoon.com, on the app or by phone.

Each of the hotels is situated above or near a Wetherspoon pub, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, and has its own unique style and character, with many housed in beautifully restored historic buildings.

Whether it's a much-needed short break, extended stay, or a convenient one-night stop-over, Wetherspoon has a collection of hotels in city, coastal and countryside locations, across Britain and Ireland, offering the perfect accommodation.

The website (hotels.jdwetherspoon.com) is easy to use and simple to navigate, allowing for quicker and easier booking options.

Information on all 56 Wetherspoon hotels is also available, ensuring that you choose the perfect location for your stay.

Each hotel room features an en suite bathroom, complimentary tea- and coffee-making facilities, hair dryer, flat-screen television with Freeview TV (Saorview Freesat TV in Ireland) and unlimited free Wi-Fi.

England

Hotel guests can also use the coffee machines in the bar for free refills of coffee, tea and hot chocolate during their stay.

The hotel rooms can accommodate a mixture of double, twin and family occupancy, some being interconnecting.

There are also accessible bedrooms, with wet-room facilities, suitable for guests needing accessible facilities.



BOOK DIRECT

Available only at jdwetherspoon.com on the app or by phone.

The Greenwood Hotel

674 Whitton Avenue West, Northolt, London, UB5 4LA

This grade II listed hotel has 12 en suite rooms.

A warm and inviting pub forms part of the hotel, alongside a beautiful 4,000-square-foot garden, making this hotel a perfect stay for families, leisure or business.

The hotel is around a 20-minute drive from Heathrow Airport.

Direct rail links from nearby Northolt Park station mean that Wembley Central can be reached within 10 minutes and Marylebone (central London) within 20 minutes, making it the perfect location for those wanting to explore the sites of London or attend events at Wembley Stadium/Arena.



The Mile Castle

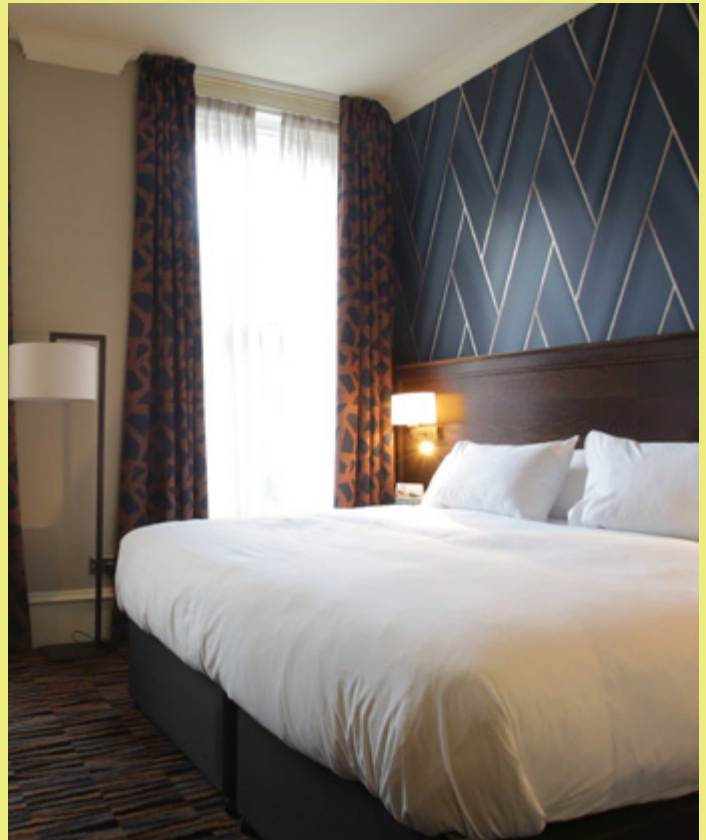
19–25 Grainger Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 5JE

The Mile Castle hotel is housed in the grade II listed Gibb Chambers building, in Newcastle city centre, conveniently located for the city's attractions and night life.

It is a short walk from Newcastle train station and a 10-minute walk from St James' Park, home to Newcastle United.

Situated in the building adjoining the existing pub, which first opened in 2009, the company's newest hotel occupies four floors of the building (lower ground, ground, first and second floors).

All 26-bedrooms offer an en suite bathroom, with two rooms designed specifically for guests needing accessible facilities.



The Catherine Wheel

7–15 Hart Street, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 2AR

This Wetherspoon hotel is located in Henley's oldest street, in the historic heart of the town, best known for its annual Henley Regatta.

The Catherine Wheel has 30 individual bedrooms, many with feature original beams, and is located nearby to Oxford and Reading, in the surrounding Chiltern countryside and Thames Valley.

Whether you would prefer to relax on a boat travelling down the River Thames, shop till you drop or fill your days with adventure and excitement at a choice of amusement parks, including Legoland and Chessington World of Adventures, there is a variety of attractions within a short distance of the hotel.



The White Lady

98 St John's Road, Corstorphine, Edinburgh, EH12 8AT

This hotel is located in Edinburgh's fashionable Corstorphine area, a short drive from the city's airport. Once a small village on the outskirts of the Capital, it is now a prosperous suburb, renowned for its boutique shops and lively social scene.

The hotel offers 30 bedrooms, five of which are family rooms, with six twin rooms and 19 double bedrooms.

Just off the city bypass and 10 minutes from Edinburgh International Airport, it is close to Murrayfield, Edinburgh Zoo and all city-centre attractions, with regular bus services to the city centre (about 20 minutes) and a bus stop just in front of the hotel.



The George Hotel

George Street, Brecon, LD3 7LD

This 16th-century coaching inn offers four en suite bedrooms. It's the perfect base from which to explore the beautiful surroundings of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

A thriving market town in the Usk Valley, Brecon was established as a town in Norman times. Narrow compact streets, Georgian façades and the restored canal basin all tell tales of times gone by.

For culture, seek the 12th-century cathedral, The Royal Welsh Museum and Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery.



Keavan's Port Hotel

1 Camden Street Upper, Dublin, D02 TC61

This hotel is set in Dublin's 'village quarter' and housed in a redeveloped series of eight Georgian townhouses (seven of which are protected), in Dublin's city centre.

Several historical aspects of the old buildings have been retained and restored, including a circular stained-glass window and the preserved former chapel of the convent of the Little Sisters of the Assumption – from 1890 until the 1940s.

This hotel has 89 en suite rooms, including accessible rooms, complete with full DDA-compliant bathroom facilities.

The hotel is located on regenerated Camden Street Upper, 1km from the city centre and Grafton Street.

It is located within a short distance of many of Dublin's attractions.



MANAGER JENNY RUNS TO RAISE AWARENESS

Pub manager Jenny Farr (pictured) has been raising funds for a charity close to her heart by taking part in the London Royal Parks half marathon.

Jenny, who runs The Crown Rivers (Heathrow Airport T5) with her husband Graham, has collected £400 through online donations in support of Prostate Cancer UK.

Jenny said: "Losing my dad suddenly to prostate cancer and not having the

chance to say goodbye has been one of the most painful things I've ever gone through.

"I'm hoping, by raising funds and awareness, that this may help other dads, husbands, brothers, uncles and sons to get tests and/or diagnoses sooner... and possibly save a life or at least give loved-ones a little more time together."



LINDY'S ALE SKILLS HELP SPOUTER'S TURN CORNER



Shift manager Lindy Barrick (pictured) has been praised for her outstanding work in getting Spouter's Corner (Wood Green) into the Campaign for Real Ale's (CAMRA) publication The Good Beer Guide 2025.

The pub, managed by Rob Newman, secured its first-ever listing in the guide – and Rob is quick to praise Lindy for achieving this.

He said: "We are thrilled that the pub is listed in The Good Beer Guide 2025. "This is all due to Lindy's hard work and dedication.

"She has built a great relationship with the local CAMRA branch members and local brewers and made sure that our real-ale offering is first class at all times, in terms of choice and quality."

Lindy added: "I like to give myself challenges – before I came here in September 2023, the pub was known more for lager than real ale.

"I previously worked at The Toll Gate (no longer a Wetherspoon pub), which was a few miles from Spouter's Corner, and the pub had a very good reputation for its real ale, which I was proud to be part of.

"I joined CAMRA, went to tastings and undertook online courses, in order to increase my knowledge of real ale.

"I have continued that at Spouter's Corner and also talk to our regulars all the time to get feedback and ask them what beers they would like to be on offer here."

Lindy also works closely with Redemption Brewery (located nearby) and says that retired brewer and fellow Spurs fan Lawrie Gordon taught her a lot about ale.

She said: "Lawrie and I get on really well. He knows so much about beer and has been a great help to me."

Spouter's Corner, two miles from The Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, sells Redemption's Hotspur and Big Chief ales.

MAIDENHEAD

BEER FANS ENJOY BEAR HUG AT CAMRA'S 'PUB OF THE SEASON'



The Bear (Maidenhead) has been recognised by members of the local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) branch.

The pub, managed by Eddie Clarkson (pictured), has been named 'pub of the season' for winter 2024/25 by the Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead CAMRA branch.

Eddie said: "It's a really exciting time for us here, and we are delighted to receive this award.

"The ale sales are growing well – thanks, in part, to the support of the local CAMRA branch members.

"Without their support, we would not be able to put on the regular extensive range which we do.

"Following our refurbishment last summer, we now have extra ale pumps which have been absolutely vital in helping us to put on a good range of ales.

"The team here takes a lot of pride and care in the cellar and the quality of ales we serve.

"The whole team is involved in the cellar management and ale selection, so this award is for everyone."

Bob Beauchamp, membership secretary and co-ordinator for The Good Beer Guide, Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead CAMRA, added: "The Bear has been in The Good Beer Guide for the last six years – and has deserved that accolade.

"The Bear has also been very supportive of branch activities, with two monthly socials held at the pub – the 'first Thursday lunch' and the 'thirsty third evening'.

"The manager also asks the CAMRA members for their recommendations for beers to be stocked.

"Consequently, The Bear now attracts real-ale-drinkers from far and wide, seeking various beers on cold winter days, hence the nomination for a well-earned 'pub of the season' award for winter."

KILLING OFF AN URBAN MYTH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“ WHY WETHERSPOONS IS SO CHEAP COMPARED TO OTHER LONDON PUBS

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

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

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

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

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

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

So what makes Wetherspoons so cheap?

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

However, this is a rumour that Wetherspoons strongly refutes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

By Melissa Sigodo
MyLondon / 3 July 2021

Print credit: MyLondon

A CRAFTY WAY TO GET YOUR FIVE-A-DAY

Fruity concoctions from independent breweries feature coconut, lychee, mango, papaya, passion fruit, peach, pineapple, pink grapefruit and tropical hops

Craft-beer-lovers now have some great fruity brews to enjoy at Wetherspoon's pubs.

Wetherspoon has been supporting and championing breweries and microbreweries throughout the UK for more than 45 years, with a commitment to serving the best range of beers available.

Since the regional craft beer initiative was launched in 2022, customers have clearly been choosing what they like best.

Pubs are now serving three popular craft beers across England and Northern Ireland.

Pubs in Scotland will be serving Fierce IPA, Stewart New Relic and Loch Lomond Zoom Time, while pubs in Wales, alongside Nethergate Growling Dog, will serve Tenby Son of a Beach and Purple Moose High Hops.

Wetherspoon's marketing executive, Jess Schofield, responsible for the craft beer projects, said: "Our craft beer selection continues to prove very popular with customers – and we have listened to their feedback.

"Our aim is to ensure that we continue to offer customers the very best of craft beers available, from breweries around the UK."

Growling Dog Tropical IPA

Nethergate Brewery

Meticulously refined over 18 months, this 7.5% ABV powerhouse IPA combines lush tropical flavours with a satisfyingly crisp, hoppy bite.

Juicy bursts of mango, pineapple and papaya lead the charge, perfectly matched by a bitter finish. This is a tropical escape for beer-lovers who want flavour with a fierce edge.

Founded in 1986 by best mates Ian Hornsey and Dick Burge, Nethergate Brewery started in the small Suffolk town of Long Melford, near Sudbury, with big dreams and a passion for great beer.

Head brewer Ian Carson began his brewing journey in 2007, at just 17.

Now 35, with nearly two decades' experience, he has earned a respected reputation for crafting beers across a range of styles – from classic porters to crafty IPAs and boundary-pushing brews.



Judicious Juicy pale

Kirkstall

This hazy, soft, clean and highly hopped pale ale is packed full of pink grapefruit, mango, pineapple, lychee, passion fruit and peach, with a gentle hint of coconut.

Kirkstall uses its own unique strain of yeast to create this tropical, hazy pale ale, designed to be both juicy and delicious, hence: Judicious.

Founded in 2011 in Leeds, by Steve Holt, Kirkstall Brewery is continuing the brewing legacy of the monks of Kirkstall Abbey (c1152) and the original Kirkstall Brewery Company (c1833).

Kirkstall brewer Will Inman has been brewing for 14 years, having started working in a craft beer bar in the US.

He gained work experience closer to home at Kelham Island Brewery, in Sheffield, before his first full-time brewing role at Thornbridge, joining Kirkstall in 2017.



Citra Unfiltered session IPA

Oakham

This unfiltered session IPA is exploding with trademark Oakham hop character and left unfiltered and naturally cloudy for maximum flavour.

Oakham's head brewer, Ed Sharman, has been with Oakham Ales since joining as a brewery assistant in 2011.

His flair for brewing great beers has been augmented by a superb level of technical brewing expertise passed on from previous Oakham head brewers.

Founded in 1993 in Oakham (Rutland) by the late John Wood, Oakham Ales moved in 1998 to the Brewery Tap site in Peterborough, before constructing a new and much larger brewery in 2006 in the city.

The brewery is celebrated for its pioneering use of US-sourced hops and the consistent quality of its hoppy and highly refreshing beers.



PICTURE AT PLAZA HAS CHANGED A LOT SINCE SHIRLEY TEMPLE STARRED HERE



Pub manager Sian Siddall (centre) with shift managers Charlotte Gibson and Jonathan Tittley

The building housing The Plaza (Rugeley) celebrated its 90th anniversary with an all-day celebration.

It was originally a cinema called The Picture House. When the building opened its doors to the public, at 7pm on 12 November 1934, all eyes were on the big screen, with Jesse Matthews in Evergreen and Shirley Temple in Pardon My Pups.

Pub manager Sian Siddall and her team at the pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in May 1998, hosted the celebrations for customers and staff.

Sian said: "In tribute to the 90 years, we celebrated the former life of the building as a cinema, with staff wearing film-themed costumes and selling ice cream pots and popcorn.

"It was a fun day and a great way to mark the birthday of a cherished building in the town."

Customers and members of the Landor (Local History) Society kindly loaned memorabilia items, including signage and cinema programmes, photographs and newspaper clippings.

These were displayed for customers to see on the special day at The Plaza. The pub also screened (no sound) the film Independence Day, starring Will Smith, throughout the day.

This was the last film to be shown before the cinema, renamed The Plaza in the 1940s, finally closed its doors on 5 September 1996.

Sian added: "We are proud of the building's history and, as current custodians, know how important that history is to the local community."

ARTIST NICK PUTS OLD TRAFFORD HEROES ON BISHOP BLAIZE WALL



Artist Nick Dillon's portraits of Old Trafford sports legends adorn The Bishop Blaize (Stretford, Manchester).

They include record-breaking England bowler Jimmy Anderson, as well as Manchester United heroes George Best, Eric Cantona and manager Sir Alex Ferguson.

Nick first met pub manager Ben Plunkett in 2010.

Ben said: "I quickly learned about Nick's artistic work and, because the pub is next to Old Trafford, decided to put some of his portraits of the city's best-known sporting heroes on the walls here."

Nick tells the story of how he met Frenchman Eric Cantona, who scored 81 of his 160 career goals for Manchester United, at the pub.

He said: "I was just putting his portrait up on the wall when he walked in, saw what I was doing and said 'bonjour'."

Nick has since moved to Billericay, where he is planning to approach Essex pubs with more paintings, including depictions of Depeche Mode and Yazoo, both from the county.

Pub manager Ben Plunkett, who has managed the pub since 2010 (and worked for Wetherspoon since 2004) added: "Nick is a superb artist - and we are proud to have his sporting portraits on display at the pub."

JUST THE JOB - INSTITUTE DECLARES WETHERSPOON A TOP EMPLOYER



Wetherspoon has been recognised by the Top Employers Institute as a Top Employer United Kingdom 2025.

It is the 20th time that Wetherspoon has been certified by the Top Employers Institute (TEI) – the independent organisation behind the Top Employers accreditation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

KILMARNOCK

WHEATSHEAF IS INN WITH THE IN-CROWD



Shift manager David Price is pictured (left) receiving the award from Ayrshire & Wigtownshire CAMRA's branch member Alex Burt (East Ayrshire social co-ordinator)

The Wheatsheaf Inn (Kilmarnock) has scooped the 'pub of the year' award, voted for by local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) members.

The Scottish pub has been named East Ayrshire 'pub of the year' 2024 winner by the Ayrshire & Wigtownshire CAMRA branch.

Pub manager Louise Ritchie said: "We are thrilled to win one of four area awards for 2024, ahead of some excellent real-ale pubs across the region.

"The Wheatsheaf Inn has also been included in CAMRA's publication The Good Beer Guide 2025 – and this is the sixth year in succession, highlighting our continued commitment to real ale and excellent standards."

To select the four area pubs of the year (which also include north and south Ayrshire and Wigtownshire), branch members attending area socials held in November and December were asked to nominate a pub worthy of the title.

This choice is based on their personal experiences over the previous 12 months, taking account of several factors, including the beers' quality and choice, general ambience and the pubs' support of CAMRA's values.

The four area winners, including The Wheatsheaf Inn, were then visited by a panel of four CAMRA member judges and were judged using CAMRA's criteria, to name an overall winning venue as Ayrshire & Wigtownshire 'pub of the year' – which progresses to the national awards.

GET YOUR MITTS ON A FABULOUS SPRITZ

Take your pick from these five seasonal stunners

Get ready for summer with Wetherspoon's spritz cocktail range, a choice of five classic and fruity recipes for all tastes.

The five spritz cocktails in the Wetherspoon range are Hugo Spritz, Mango & Passionfruit Spritz, Classic Aperol Spritz, Peach Blush Spritz and Limoncello Spritz.

All of the cocktails are served in a wine glass, with ice and a fruit garnish.

With a fabulous five to choose from, which will be your summer of spritz choice?

- **Hugo Spritz:** 25ml Tanqueray, 25ml elderflower cordial, 125ml Teresa Rizzi Prosecco, topped with soda and garnished with lime and mint
- **Mango & Passionfruit Spritz:** 25ml Smirnoff Mango & Passionfruit, 125ml Prosecco, topped with lemonade and garnished with lemon
- **Classic Aperol Spritz:** 50ml Aperol, 125ml Teresa Rizzi Prosecco, topped with soda and garnished with orange
- **Peach Blush Spritz:** 25ml Archers peach schnapps, 125ml Coldwater Creek Rosé, topped with lemonade and garnished with strawberry
- **Limoncello Spritz:** 50ml Isolabella Limoncello, 125ml Teresa Rizzi Prosecco, topped with soda and garnished with lemon



The history of the classic spritzes

Spritzes originated in northern Italy, particularly Venice and the Veneto region, dating back to the end of the 19th century.

Becoming a cocktail in the 1920s, they have since continued to rise in popularity, now having many variations and interpretations.

In the 1950s, the famous recipe, including the bitter orange aperitif which made the Aperol Spritz so popular, was born and quickly became a favourite in Italy and then globally.

In the south of Italy, on the Amalfi coast and Sicily, the Limoncello Spritz was born. Limoncello is made by steeping the zest of Sorrento or Sfusato lemons in a neutral spirit, then mixing with sugar syrup.

The Hugo Spritz is a regional signature drink originating amid the Dolomite mountain range. It is flavoured with elderflower cordial, a floral base which allows the Prosecco flavour to shine through, presenting an alternative to the more popular Italian spritzes.

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

In Wetherspoon's 2024 financial year (12 months to July 2024), it generated £780.2 million in tax – about £1 in every £1,000 of ALL UK government taxes. The average tax generated per pub in 2024 was £980,000.

The table¹ below shows the tax generated by the company in its financial years 2015–2024.

During this period, taxes amounted to about 37 per cent of every pound which went 'over the bar', net of VAT – about 26 times the company's profit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wetherspoon's tax payments in financial years 2015–2024	2024 £m	2023 £m	2022 £m	2021 £m	2020 £m	2019 £m	2018 £m	2017 £m	2016 £m	2015 £m	2015–2024 £m
VAT	394.7	372.3	287.7	93.8	244.3	357.9	332.8	323.4	311.7	294.4	3,013.0
Alcohol duty	163.7	166.1	158.6	70.6	124.2	174.4	175.9	167.2	164.4	161.4	1,526.5
PAYE and NIC	134.7	124.0	141.9	101.5	106.6	121.4	109.2	96.2	95.1	84.8	1,115.4
Business rates	41.3	49.9	50.3	1.5	39.5	57.3	55.6	53.0	50.2	48.7	447.3
Corporation tax	9.9	12.2	1.5	–	21.5	19.9	26.1	20.7	19.9	15.3	147.0
Corporation tax credit (historic capital allowances)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	-2.0	-2.0
Fruit/slot machine duty	16.7	15.7	12.8	4.3	9.0	11.6	10.5	10.5	11.0	11.2	113.3
Climate change levies	10.2	11.1	9.7	7.9	10.0	9.6	9.2	9.7	8.7	6.4	92.5
Stamp duty	1.1	0.9	2.7	1.8	4.9	3.7	1.2	5.1	2.6	1.8	25.8
Sugar tax	2.6	3.1	2.7	1.3	2.0	2.9	0.8	–	–	–	15.4
Fuel duty	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.1	1.7	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.9	20.0
Apprenticeship levy	2.5	2.5	2.2	1.9	1.2	1.3	1.7	0.6	–	–	13.9
Carbon tax	–	–	–	–	–	1.9	3.0	3.4	3.6	3.7	15.6
Premise licence and TV licences	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	1.6	7.8
Landfill tax	–	–	–	–	–	–	1.7	2.5	2.2	2.2	8.6
Insurance premium tax	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	–	1.7
Furlough tax	–	–	-4.4	-213	-124.1	–	–	–	–	–	-341.5
Eat Out to Help Out	–	–	–	-23.2	–	–	–	–	–	–	-23.2
Local government grants	–	–	-1.4	-11.1	–	–	–	–	–	–	-12.5
Total tax	780.2	760.4	666.9	39.1	442.1	765.1	730.7	695.3	672.4	632.4	6,184.6
Tax per pub (£m)	0.98	0.92	0.78	0.05	0.51	0.87	0.83	0.78	0.71	0.67	7.10
Tax as % of net sales	38.3%	39.5%	38.3%	5.1%	35.0%	42.1%	43.1%	41.9%	42.1%	41.8%	36.7%
Profit/(loss) after tax	58.5	33.8	-24.9	-146.5	-38.5	79.6	83.6	76.9	56.9	57.5	236.9

¹Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2015–2024



CERVEZA

Modelo

IT'S CALLED ESPECIAL FOR A REASON

DISCOVER
Special





Shift leader **Hollie Quinn** at **John The Clerk of Cramlington (Cramlington)**

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

£569 MILLION IN FREE SHARES AND BONUSES PAID TO EMPLOYEES SINCE 2006

86.3 per cent paid to pub staff

Since the early 1980s, Wetherspoon has awarded bonuses, free shares and 'share options' to pub employees.

The current scheme of paying monthly bonuses to all pub employees, subject to certain criteria, started in 1998, with a government-approved free share scheme introduced in 2003.

Bonuses and share schemes provide an extra incentive for people to stay with the company: there are 26 employees who have worked for the company for more than 30 years, 662 for more than 20 years, 4,056 for more than 10 years and 11,444 for more than five years. Since 2006, the company has paid £569 million to its employees in respect of bonuses and free shares.

BONUSES AND SHARES

Of the recipients, approximately 96.5 per cent went to employees below board level, with around 86.3 per cent paid to employees working in pubs.

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

In the financial year ended July 2024, bonuses and free shares of £49 million were awarded (see table¹ below), with 96 per cent of employees receiving a bonus and/or shares in that period.

At the current time, 24,510 of our 42,300 employees have been awarded free shares in the company.

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

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

Since the share scheme was introduced, Wetherspoon has awarded 30 million shares to employees – approximately 25 per cent of all shares in existence today.

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

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

Wetherspoon: Bonuses and free shares vs profits, 2006–24

Financial year	Bonuses and free shares	Profit after tax (loss/profit after tax) ²	Bonus etc as % of profit
	£m	£m	
2024	49	59	86
2023	36	34	129
2022	30	-25	-
2021	23	-146	-
2020	33	-39	-
2019	46	80	58
2018	43	84	51
2017	44	77	57
2016	33	57	58
2015	31	57	53
2014	29	59	50
2013	29	65	44
2012	24	57	42
2011	23	52	43
2010	23	51	44
2009	21	45	45
2008	16	36	45
2007	19	47	41
2006	17	40	41
Total	569	690	53.7³

¹ Source: J D Wetherspoon plc's annual reports and accounts 2006–24

² International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) 16 was implemented in the year ending 26 July 2020 (FY20). From this period, all profit numbers in the above table are on a post-IFRS-16 basis. Before this date, all profit numbers are on a pre-IFRS-16 basis.

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

ALTRINCHAM

UNICORN MAKES GREAT LEAP FORWARD



Shift manager Mark Leech holds aloft the 'most improved pub' award, following a presentation at The Unicorn (Altrincham).

The pub was given the accolade by the Trafford and Hulme branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

Shift manager Mark said: "We have made a lot of effort in the last year to improve the ales range available to customers and are glad to have those efforts recognised in this way."

He paid tribute to shift manager and ale champion Ben Preston, who came up with the idea of using a whisky barrel as a suggestion box for

customers to let the pub's staff know which beers they would like to try.

CAMRA branch chair Mark Reeves said: "The Unicorn has really transformed its cask ale offer this past year and was scored highly by branch members for the quality of its ales.

"It is a worthy award-winner."

Among the beers on offer at the pub are Brightside Mancunian, Phoenix Wobbly Bob and Titanic Plum Porter.

GLOUCESTER

THE LORD HIGH CONSTABLE PROVES TO BE HIGH ACHIEVER

The Lord High Constable of England (Gloucester) has struck gold.

The Wetherspoon pub located at Gloucester Docks has been awarded gold at the Gloucester Best Bar None awards, the city's annual presentation organised by Gloucester City Council and Gloucester BID.

Pub manager Liam Stack (pictured) said: "We are delighted to achieve gold at the Best Bar None awards, highlighting our commitment to the safety and well-being of both staff and customers."

Best Bar None accreditation is awarded to venues which are outstanding in every way.

The scheme rewards those premises raising the standard by taking pride in their surroundings, operating responsibly and demonstrating a commitment to reducing alcohol-related crime, resulting in an enhanced customer experience.

Best Bar None is a national accreditation and award scheme supported by the Home Office.

It was held for the first time in 2015, in Gloucester.

Wetherspoon's area manager, Jono Taylor, said: "Congratulations to Liam and his team on their well-deserved gold award."



BLUEBERRY BITTER FINDS FRUITY FANS IN SOUTHPORT

Fruit-flavoured beers came to the fore as Coach House Brewery took over the taps at The Sir Henry Segrave (Southport).

The Warrington-based brewer showed off its Blueberry Bitter and Pineapple Bitter (each 5.0% ABV) as customers queued for a tipple.

"They went down very well with the regulars," said shift

manager Stuart Ochiltree, whose Coach House favourite is Blueberry Bitter.

In addition, customers were able to try Gunpowder, a 3.8% ABV premium mild.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Connor West, shift manager Stuart Ochiltree and shift leader Abbie Crane.



RICHARD FINDS FAME FOR HIS OWN PUB-NAME GAME



Wetherspoon enthusiast Richard Westwood has visited almost 30,000 pubs across the UK – including hundreds of Wetherspoon pubs.

Richard collects pub names, with his pub visits being to those with individual names.

Wetherspoon is the perfect fit for Richard – as most of the pubs have a unique name each.

Richard, 80, is originally from West Yorkshire, but now lives in Somerset and frequents The Quarter Jack (Wells).

He started collecting pub names in the mid 1960s, having left school to start a career at Halifax Building Society.

He said: "Before that, it was trains, then I collected coins. Then, with my friend John, we came up with the idea of collecting pubs – the rules were that we had to have a pint in each one and that each pub had to have a different name."

"It's interesting to find out where the names come from.

"In London, I visited Penderel's Oak (Holborn) and discovered that it was named after Richard Penderel, who helped Charles II escape by hiding him in an oak tree.

"Each pub's name tells a story – and they are all of interest to me.

"On my pub collection tours, I make a point of visiting towns where there is a Wetherspoon.

He added: "I know, when I visit a Wetherspoon pub, that there is going to be good ale on offer – and, in the morning, I go there for breakfast and finish my planning of visits, after a breakfast wrap and a coffee.

"I have more than 29,000 pubs on a list which I have compiled over six decades.

"I still have 500 pubs which I would like to visit."

His story reached Wetherspoon News via his son Stephen, who said: "My father's dedication to this incredible journey is not just testament to his passion for pubs, but also reflects a life-long appreciation for the vibrant community and history which they represent."

Some of the uniquely named Wetherspoon pubs which Richard has visited are:

- ★ The Mechanical Elephant (Margate), named after a promenade attraction
- ★ The Sennockian (Sevenoaks), with a 'Sennockian' being a pupil of Sevenoaks School
- ★ The Quarter Jack's name refers to the (on the two quarter hours) chiming bell decorations on the clock of Wells Cathedral
- ★ The Wrong 'Un (Bexleyheath), named after a wrong 'un, or googly, in cricket, played in Bexleyheath as far back as 1746
- ★ The Swatters Carr (Middlesbrough), named after an isolated farmhouse dating from 1618

SCORES ON THE DOORS SHOW CONSISTENTLY MIGHTY MARKS

Wetherspoon's pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales clock up average food hygiene rating of 4.99 out of 5

Wetherspoon's pubs are consistently high in the charts in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

The company's pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales have an average food hygiene rating of 4.99 across 735 rated pubs, with 731 of those achieving the maximum-possible score of five.

Combined

The top three companies (see table opposite) have a rating of 5.00 each, but with a combined number of only 146 premises, compared with Wetherspoon's total of 735 rated pubs.

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

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

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

Higher

Wetherspoon was ahead of pub companies Nicholson's, Sizzling Pub Co and Young's and was also rated higher than restaurant and sandwich chains, including Greggs, McDonald's, Nando's, Prezzo and Wagamama – although all of these companies also scored highly.

Of our pubs, 735 currently have an FHRS rating, with 99.32 per cent of those achieving the highest-possible rating of five.

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

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

Ratings

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

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

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

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

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

Hygienic food-handling

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

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

Physical condition of the premises and facilities

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

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

Food safety management

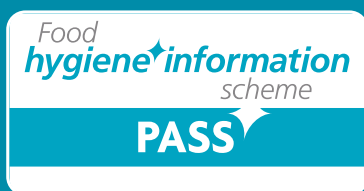
This ensures that suitable precautions are taken to keep food safe, including:

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

Did you know?

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

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



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

There are 55 Wetherspoon pubs in Scotland, all of which have been FHIS rated as 'pass'.

The only independent government scheme assessing food hygiene standards

FOOD HYGIENE RATING



VERY GOOD

	Total premises scored	Average premises score out of 5
Giggling Squid	52	5.00
Slug & Lettuce	73	5.00
Yates	21	5.00
Wetherspoon	735	4.99
Turtle Bay	52	4.98
Wagamama	162	4.98
Cosy Club	35	4.97
Nando's	442	4.97
Greggs	2214	4.96
McDonald's	1344	4.96
Starbucks	1252	4.96
All Bar One	41	4.95
Miller & Carter	116	4.95
Prezzo	101	4.95
Walkabout	18	4.94
Zizzi	126	4.94
Carluccio's	28	4.93
Nicholson's	60	4.93
O'Neill's	43	4.93
Be at One	40	4.92
Burger King	501	4.92
Coffee#1	120	4.92
Côte	77	4.92
KFC	921	4.91
Pret	448	4.91
YO! Sushi	54	4.91
YO! To Go	273	4.91
Toby Carvery	144	4.90
The Ivy Collection	44	4.89
Costa Coffee	2451	4.88
Craft Union	569	4.88
PizzaExpress	340	4.88
Sizzling Pub Co	208	4.88
Vintage Inns	177	4.87
Harvester	141	4.86
Ember Inns	144	4.85
Papa Johns	410	4.85
Young's	222	4.85
Bill's	46	4.83
Oakman	31	4.83
Loungers	211	4.82
Stonehouse	82	4.82
Browns	25	4.80
Geronimo	30	4.80
Subway	1883	4.80
Table Table	33	4.78
Fuller's	173	4.76
German Döner Kebab	131	4.76
Shepherd Neame	249	4.74
TGI Fridays	40	4.74
Brewers fayre	120	4.73
Las Iguanas	49	4.71
The Breakfast Club	21	4.70
BrewDog	46	4.67
Bella Italia	73	4.65
Caffè Nero	571	4.57
Wadworth	126	4.45
Dixy Chicken	144	3.84
Shepherd Neame	242	4.72
Las Iguanas	47	4.68
Caffè Nero	576	4.59
Café Rouge	19	4.53
Wadworth	139	4.48

Information in this table was sourced in January 2025 from www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk, listing 735 Wetherspoon pubs in England, Northern Ireland and Wales with an average food hygiene rating of 4.99. Please note that, where councils are yet to assess or submit their pub inspection, there may be a slight gap in the number of pubs, compared with that in our records. Businesses are rated from 0 to 5 which is displayed at their premises and online. The top score is 5.

NEXT TO GODLINESS

The London & County (Eastbourne), managed by Val Cheang, has scored top marks for cleanliness for eight consecutive inspections



Across seven, eight, nine and even 10 successive annual inspections, many of our pubs (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) have achieved the highest-possible rating of five stars.

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

Among our pubs achieving a continuous maximum five-star rating, for the last eight consecutive inspections, is The London & County (Eastbourne).

Manager

Val Cheang (pictured) has been pub manager there since 2009, although has worked for the company for 21 years.

Val started in 2004 as a bar associate at The Village Inn (Gatwick) (no longer a Wetherspoon pub) and was deputy manager at The Flying Horse (Gatwick), before stepping up in 2009 to pub manager at The London & County.

Speaking about the importance of the eighth consecutive five-star hygiene rating at his pub, Val revealed simply: "It's a must.

Five-star

"Falling below a five-star rating is not an option, not only for the team and our pub, but for the company in general and for customers.

"If you do fall below, people will ask questions... and rightly so. Customers enjoy our high standards, and a five-star rating is almost an expectation."

Kitchen manager Tegan Dunlop (pictured) joined the team at The London & County in May 2024 and leads a team of eight in the kitchen.

Promoted

Having spent almost seven years at The Picture Playhouse (Bexhill-on-Sea), progressing to shift leader, she was promoted to kitchen manager when she moved to Eastbourne.

Val continued: "In my 15 years at the pub, we have always had high ratings in Wetherspoon's in-house inspections (as well as external customer visits) for back-of-house checks and internal audits.

"From day one of getting staff recruitment and induction right, we lay down the procedures, which then become ingrained in each team member's everyday role.

"We undertake many checks throughout the day, which are all recorded, not only in the kitchen and bar area, but in the toilets and cellar, as well as fire safety checks, to ensure that everything is happening as it should – throughout the working day."

Val concluded: "If there is something competitive, such as a company-wide league table, I want to be as high as possible, but it is down to the whole team to work hard to achieve success."

STE STEERS BROCKET ARMS' CUSTOMERS ONTO BEER BUS



Customers from The Brocket Arms (Wigan) enjoy their regular trips on a beer bus, thanks to organiser and shift manager Ste Higham.

Four times a year, the bus picks up customers at The Brocket Arms before taking them on a day trip.

The cost of the trip includes breakfast, coffee, travel and a beer at the destination town.

To date, customers have visited Lancaster, Stalybridge, Huddersfield, Ulverton and Chester.

Ste said: "The tours are very popular – and it is a great way to get to know our regular customers even better.

"We might need two buses next time.

"When we arrive at the town, passengers are dropped off for the day to spend it how they please.

"Some go shopping. Others join us at the local Wetherspoon where we buy them a round. We also visit other pubs which serve ale."

Pictured is a busload of customers from The Brocket Arms outside Sir Richard Owen (Lancaster), with manager Ste Higham, shift leader Andrew Cooper and cleaner Dean Stanistreet among the group.

REFURBISHED REGINALD MITCHELL THRILLED TO WELCOME BLIND VETERANS

Blind Veterans UK chose The Reginald Mitchell (Hanley) for their annual Christmas celebration – on the same day the pub reopened following a major refurbishment project.

Pub manager James Mancell and his wife, duty manager Megan Mancell, welcomed the group, led by service development manager Andy Buchan.

Wetherspoon's regional manager and employee director Debbie Whittingham (pictured far right) was on hand to serve the veterans their drinks.

Megan said: "It was pure coincidence that the group chose to come to our pub for Christmas just as we were reopening after the refurb.

"They had a great time – and it was lovely to meet them."



FLUSHED WITH SUCCESS, THANKS TO TERRIFIC TOILETS



The Stargazer (The O2, Greenwich)

Hundreds of Wetherspoon pubs have gained high grades for the quality and standard of their toilets – in the Loo of the Year Awards 2024.

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

In the ‘hotels’ category, George Hotel (Bewdley), Jolly’s Hotel (Broughty Ferry), The George Hotel (Brecon) and Keavan’s Port Hotel (Dublin) were named as the individual category award-winners.

In the ‘pubs’ category, The Stargazer (The O2, Greenwich), The Bobbing John (Alloa), Yr Hen Dderwen (Carmarthen) and The Silver Penny (Dublin) were named as the individual category award-winners.

In the ‘historic buildings’ category, The Foley Arms Hotel (Great Malvern), The Palladium (Llandudno) and The Old Borough (Swords) won.

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

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

Toilets are graded bronze, silver, gold, platinum, platinum plus or diamond, with unacceptable toilets not graded at all.

A diamond grading (the highest-possible rating) is awarded to those venues offering ‘the highest standards of cleaning and the provision of facilities to meet all users’ needs’.

Toilets are judged against numerous criteria, including décor and maintenance, cleanliness, accessibility, hand-washing and -drying equipment, safety and overall management.

Wetherspoon’s pubs and hotels received four diamond awards, 237 platinum-plus awards, 530 platinum awards, 14 gold awards and one silver award.

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

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

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

It was also named in the 2024 ‘champions’ league standards of excellence’.

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

In addition, The Poulton Elk (Poulton-le-Fylde) was awarded in the ‘accessible toilets’ category, with cleaner Mami Matumona (The Welkin, Liverpool) also named as ‘washroom technician of the year’.

Keavan’s Port Hotel (Dublin) was named as the highest-scoring entry for an individual category in Ireland.



The Silver Penny (Dublin)



Jolly's Hotel (Broughty Ferry)



The Bell Hanger (Chepstow)

QUARTET OF NEW B

Four new gourmet options added to already-extensive burger range



**THE  BIG
SMOKE**

 BUFFALO 

BURGERS TO ENJOY

A quartet of new gourmet choices has been added to the extensive burger range at Wetherspoon (available from 14 May).

The four brand-new gourmet burgers are each served with six beer-battered onion rings and chips (or a side salad, on request), as well as a soft or alcoholic drink, as part of the price.

All beef burgers served at Wetherspoon are made with 100 per cent British beef, freshly cooked to order and traceable from farm to fork.

The buttermilk chicken is made with 100% chicken breast which has been marinated in buttermilk, making the chicken juicy, tender and full of flavour.

Added to the great Wetherspoon gourmet burger selection are:

NEW The Big Smoke – marries a 6oz beef patty (or fried buttermilk chicken) with pulled BBQ beef brisket, American-style cheese and maple-cured bacon, with iceberg lettuce, tomato and red onion.

NEW Buffalo – is the spicy choice, made with fried buttermilk chicken, blue cheese sauce, Naga chilli sauce and American-style cheese, with iceberg lettuce, tomato and red onion – then topped with a spicy chicken wing.

NEW BBQ stack – is the vegan option which comprises a plant-based patty, iceberg lettuce, tomato and red onion, stacked with onion rings and covered with BBQ sauce.

NEW Cheese meltdown – comprises 6oz beef patty (or fried buttermilk chicken) and American-style cheese, smothered with Emmental & Cheddar cheese sauce, with iceberg lettuce, tomato and red onion.



BBQ
Stack

CHEESE
MELTDOWN

A RESPONSIBLE RETAILER REUSING AND RECYCLING

With processes in place across the estate, Wetherspoon is wise about waste



Collection



Glass-recycling



Energy-recovery facility

Wetherspoon is committed to protecting the environment, regarding recycling and sustainability, with numerous company policies and procedures in place.

As a responsible retailer, the company takes its corporate and social responsibility very seriously and is doing everything possible to minimise environmental impact and protect the planet.

Much of Wetherspoon's waste management is achieved in house, via the company's national distribution centre and its own fleet of vehicles; however, glass, food waste and general waste are collected from the pubs directly by Veolia.

Partnership

Wetherspoon's partnership with Veolia began in 2018, when food waste-recycling was introduced across the estate, helping to boost the recycling rate by 20 per cent.

Veolia, the UK's leading resource company, helps to turn recyclable materials into new products and divert waste away from landfill by transforming it, instead, into energy.

This is achieved at an energy-recovery facility where non-recyclable waste is incinerated, for the purposes of energy capture, at around 850°C and above.

The incineration process superheats a boiler, which produces steam which then drives a turbine, producing electricity for power and hot water for local district heating networks.

Heating

These facilities can supply whole communities with heating and energy, contributing to a reduction in the UK's reliance on fossil fuels.

While Wetherspoon is aiming to waste as little as possible, the company is also proud to work with Veolia to regenerate resources for the benefit of local communities where Wetherspoon's pubs are located.

We should be wasting only those items which we really can't eat, such as coffee grounds, eggs shells and any leftover plate-scrappings.

Thanks to a process called anaerobic digestion, this organic matter can be broken down into new resources.

The food waste is sealed in closed tanks, called digesters, where microorganisms digest the organic fraction of the waste and convert it into biogas – a source of renewable energy.

Quality

What remains after this process is a high-quality, nutrient-rich fertiliser which can replace environmentally harmful synthetic fertilisers in farming – to grow new crops.

Using this by-product is not only better for the soil's health, but reduces the carbon emissions of the energy-intensive synthetic fertiliser production process.

Through Veolia's regular site visits and continual improvement interactions and engagement with Wetherspoon's teams across the land, almost 10,000 tonnes of food waste was recycled in one year (January – December 2024).

In that same period, glass-recycling processes have saved more than 21,500 tonnes of glass. This was recycled into new glass products, such as bottles and even fibreglass insulation to keep homes warm.

Wetherspoon's senior facilities manager, Mark Miller, said: "Wetherspoon aims to minimise waste and maximise recycling, across the entire business, with a company recycling target of 90 per cent of all waste.

"We are on our way to achieving this with our hard-working in-house teams, as well as through partnerships with companies such as Veolia."



Scan the QR code to watch a short video about the story of food and glass waste at Wetherspoon.

WITH THIS SPOON, I THEE WED

Wetherspoon was more than happy to play its part in the wedding of Ewan Gilfillan and Sharon Jones.

Described as a Wetherspoon superfan, Ewan married Sharon at a ceremony in Hampshire.

Leading up to the happy day, the couple spent many evenings in Wetherspoon's pubs across the UK.

Their good friend, Lorie Church asked Wetherspoon to forward PDFs of the food menus, so that the graphics could be used at the wedding.

Wetherspoon was more than happy to oblige.

Lorie said: "Sharon was in charge of most of the wedding-planning, but Ewan was allowed to choose the theme of their table names.

"While some couples have romantic holiday destinations or the names of favourite pets, Ewan decided to have some of his favourite pubs to direct guests to the correct table.

"And each one of the 10 was named after a Wetherspoon pub.

"As Ewan is also a big fan of Wetherspoon's carpets, the menu also featured an image of his shoe on the various carpets, alongside whomever he was with in the pub at the time."

Among the pubs featured were The Man in the Moon (Newport, Isle of Wight), The Palladium (Llandudno), The Sir Michael Balcon (Ealing) and The Caley Picture House (Edinburgh).



FAMOUS FACE RINGS A BELL AT THE BELL



The former presenter of the BBC show *Flog It!*, Paul Martin, popped in The Bell (Amesbury) to value customers' heirlooms and prized possessions.

An antiques dealer, Paul now works for a local auction house and spent time chatting to customers about their objects of interest.

These included an old cane which used to belong, it is said, to Lord Mountbatten.

Pub manager Marcus Rowland said: "Customers really enjoyed it – and it's something we are thinking of doing again."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Elle Chapman, pub manager Marcus Rowland, Paul Martin and customer Reg.



ALL'S WELL AT THE BOTWELL AS WINNING STREAK CONTINUES

Hayes pub listed in The Good Beer Guide for 17 consecutive years, including 2025 edition

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

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

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

More

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

Local CAMRA branch members judge and score pubs for considered inclusion in the guide. In the 2025 edition, there are 251 Wetherspoon pubs listed.

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

The Botwell Inn (Hayes), which opened as a Wetherspoon pub in July 2000, has now been listed in the guide for the past 17 consecutive years, including in the 2025 edition.

Amazing

Pub manager Sean O’Farrell (pictured), who has worked for Wetherspoon for 24 years and took over at The Botwell Inn two years ago, admitted: “I obviously can’t take the credit for the past 17 years, but it is an amazing achievement.”

Sean, who has also previously been pub manager at The Falcon (High Wycombe) and The Moon and Spoon (Slough), continued: “We have been very lucky that the previous managers at The Botwell Inn, together with the management teams, have all been passionate about real ale.

“The whole management team continues to be involved with the ordering and suggestions, and most of the team members have been here for a long time.

“Among them are shift managers Steve Doyle (seven years) and Sou Bel-Haj (five years), who assist with the real-ale-ordering.”

Best

Sean added: “But the whole team is drilled on best practice, when it comes to maintaining, serving and making sure that our real ales are in the best-possible condition.”

Among the particularly popular real ales at The Botwell Inn are those from Oakham Ales in Peterborough and Marlow-based Rebellion Beer Company, as well as Twickenham Brewery.

Alongside Wetherspoon’s three permanent real ale choices of Sharp’s Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles is a selection of three guest ales, at all times.

Sean said: “We always have one light, one medium and one dark ale, at all times, and that choice of three works for us, in terms of quality and freshness.

“We also like to listen to what our real-ale-drinkers want, engaging with them and asking for suggestions, including several CAMRA members who are regular customers.”

Sean concluded: “It’s a big deal for the pub to continue to be included in The Good Beer Guide and it’s always nice to be recognised... we must be doing something right.”

What The Good Beer Guide 2025 says:

THE BOTWELL INN

Named after the hamlet of Botwell, now the location of Hayes town centre, this large Wetherspoon pub, with several areas for dining and drinking, opened in 2000, following a shop conversion from furnisher S Moore & Son.

There is a fenced paved area at the front and a patio at the rear with large market-type parasols with heaters.

Several beer festivals are held annually.

● 25–29 Coldharbour Lane, Hayes, Hillingdon, UB3 3EB

What CAMRA says:

West Middlesex CAMRA branch chair, Roy Tunstall, said: “The Botwell Inn is an oasis in a real-ale desert.

“Drinkers come from miles around, joining the locals in this multicultural town, to enjoy the beer at a very good price.

“It is testament to the commitment of the staff that they are always able to keep the ales in excellent condition.”




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SARAH'S SMALL CHANGES MAKE BIG DIFFERENCE AT THE GLASS BLOWER



Pub manager Sarah Heppinstall is pictured with Steve Dale (left) and Steve Marriott from the local CAMRA branch

In February, Sarah Heppinstall marked 12 years as pub manager at The Glass Blower (Castleford).

During the past year, the pub also celebrated its inclusion in the publication by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) – The Good Beer Guide 2025.

Sarah said: “We returned to The Good Beer Guide for the first time in about eight years and are absolutely thrilled to be included again.

“It’s a massive achievement for us, as there are only two Castleford pubs included in the guide.”

The Glass Blower serves six real ales during the week and eight at weekends.

Alongside Wetherspoon’s three permanent real ale choices of Sharp’s Doom Bar, Greene King Abbot Ale and Ruddles is a selection of guest ales.

Sarah confirmed: “We serve three ales from three breweries throughout the week, then offer more choice at weekends, with five guest ales being served.

“These include ales from Acorn Brewery, Bradfield Brewery, Fuggle Bunny Brew House and Rudgate Brewery.

“There is always a choice of at least one light, one mid and one dark beer, although the dark beers are the most popular, and we often take customers’ suggestions – usually ales which they have seen and tried in other Wetherspoon pubs.”

Sarah concluded: “We have always served good beer, and interest has been steadily increasing, with our little changes obviously making a big difference to our real-ale customers and local CAMRA members.

“It’s a real team effort, keeping the ales in the best condition, and this return to The Good Beer Guide is testament to that hard work.

“It means a lot to the team in our real-ale community pub.”

LOCH LOMOND BREWERS DIVERT LAKE OF ALE TO THE JAMES WATT

Representatives from Loch Lomond Brewery dropped in on The James Watt (Greenock) to give customers a chance to ‘meet the brewer’.

They sampled The Gloaming, Silkie Stout and West Highland Way beers as brewery reps gave out leaflets explaining Loch Lomond’s brewing process.

Afterwards, they handed out beer mats and other souvenirs for customers to take home.

Shift manager Amanda McLellan organised the event, one of a regular series at the pub.

She said: “We had a great turn-out for the event – our kitchen manager, Julie Alexander, brought out pizza slices and curry dishes for customers to enjoy with the beers – and it all went down a treat.”

Customer Chris Rodgers is pictured holding a pint, with bar associate Ben Cochrane.



HISTORIC MOTOR FACTORY HAS BEEN ON A JOURNEY

The Rodboro Buildings, Wetherspoon's grand pub in Guildford, began life in 1901 as England's very first purpose-built motor vehicle factory, but has had a few twists and turns since then

Wetherspoon takes huge pride in the restoration and refurbishment of some wonderful and, in many cases, unique buildings, to create its pubs.

Numerous iconic local landmarks have been saved from dereliction or, worse, demolition and becoming lost for ever from their respective communities.

The premises' usage may now be changed, yet the history, in the actual fabric of the buildings, within the bricks and mortar still standing and meticulously preserved, lives on and continues to be enjoyed.

One local landmark building, in the Surrey town of Guildford, has a particularly remarkable history stretching from 1901.

The Rodboro Buildings first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in December 1998.

However, the almost 100 years before the first pint was served are of huge interest, as well as significant historical importance.



1895

Founded by brothers John and Raymond Dennis, Dennis Brothers Ltd was a major British coachbuilder, based in Guildford, specialising in commercial vehicles.



1899

Initially manufacturing bicycles, which they sold from their shop Universal Athletic Stores, the brothers assembled their first motor vehicle in 1899. The De Dion powered tricycle was first exhibited successfully at the National Cycle Show.

1901

The first Dennis car was produced, a De Dion powered four-wheeled 8hp vehicle. In that same year, Dennis Brothers commissioned the very first purpose-built motor vehicle factory in England (possibly the world), on the corner of Bridge Street and Onslow Street, Guildford, now Wetherspoon's pub – The Rodboro Buildings.

The original plans, by the architect John Lake, described the building as a 'cycle and motor factory', but, by the time the brothers moved in, their cycle-production had progressed to motorised tricycles and quadricycles, before they built their first true motor car.

1902

The Gentleman's Magazine described Dennis Brothers, in this year, as 'probably the principal pioneers of the motor industry in this country' and that 'the firm was one of the very first in England to devote its attention to automobilism'.



The three-storey factory building featured a large single internal lift connecting all of the floors, moving finished vehicles from the assembly line above to the showroom at ground level.

The stores occupied the basement, with the ground floor housing the company's registered offices, engine room (with a Crossley engine and dynamo to power the work area) and showrooms with space for 20 cars.



Located on the upper floors were the machine shops, polishing shops, the plating department and body shop, as well as the furnaces and appliances for smiths and fitters, painters' shop, upholsterers, carpenters and enamellers.

The factory, which occupied 27,000 square feet of floor space, at that time, employed 100 people (the largest employer in town) and produced 300 vehicles annually, including motor-driven tricycles and quadricycles.

1903

Dennis Brothers achieved great success at the Crystal Palace Motor Show, receiving orders for almost £30,000 of vehicles, ranging from a motor tricycle at 115 guineas to a 16hp tourer at 550 guineas.

1904

An extension to the factory (still visible in the change of roofline on the Bridge Street side of the building) was required to cope with the increase in business, taking six months to complete and costing £4,812.

This same year also saw early indications of a change of direction in the business, when commercial vehicles were first introduced to Dennis Brothers' range of products.

Their first box van was displayed at a motor show and subsequently sold to Harrods, while the first Dennis bus went into service between Kingston and Richmond.

1905-08

In 1905, the company acquired a 10-acre site at Woodbridge Hill to expand the business, although the original factory still had a role to play in the company's history, when, in 1908, the first fire engine left the factory, destined for the Bradford City Fire Brigade.

A large purchase of similar appliances by the London Fire Brigade followed shortly and, over the years, fire engines accounted for a sizeable percentage of the vehicles produced by Dennis Brothers.



1913-16

In 1913, the company ceased production of motor cars to focus on commercial vehicles, a decision meaning the end of production at the Bridge Street/Onslow Street factory.

The building was used as offices and storage space for a time, before finally being closed in 1916 and sold to the Bates family of the Guildford estate agent Crowe, Bates and Weekes.

1919-27

In 1919, the Rodboro' Boot and Shoe Company moved in, with the premises becoming known as the Rodboro' Building.

The footwear manufacturer continued until 1927, with workers coming from Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire.

1930-38

In 1930, the building was home to Webber's, manufacturer of hand barrows, and Blackburn Engineering of Godalming. Just before World War II, Dowdeswell's stationers and printers made it their home, as well as Taylor's Photo Finishers, a subsidiary of the Kodak Company.

From the 1930s, several businesses also occupied small units in the building at ground level, including Ernest Roberts the barber, a pet shop, Clare's Motor Spares and Stanley Godfrey's car showroom.

1938-45

The Red Cross used the premises to prepare parcels for sending to prisoners of war, while munitions were also manufactured here.

1945-59

Dowdeswell's and Taylor's returned to the site after the war, joined by Keefe & Lewis Knitwear, producer of team sweaters for county and international cricket.

1960-80

From the 1960s, the premises housed dancing schools and night clubs. By 1980, demolition of the building looked likely, because of a road-widening scheme.

1980-95

The building was boarded up and neglected for 15 years.

1998-present

Wetherspoon developed its pub, in the grade II listed building, opening in December 1998.

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



FROM FILM REELS TO BEER BARRELS VIA BINGO BALLS

Pub history spells out how The Avion, in Aldridge, began life in 1938



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

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

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

Artwork

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

In this pub histories spotlight, a regular Wetherspoon News feature, we focus on The Avion (Aldridge).

First opened as a Wetherspoon pub in July 2013, The Avion was originally the Avion Super Cinema.

A purpose-built, eye-catching premises, designed by the Birmingham-based cinema architect Roland Satchwell, the building has been a local landmark for more than 85 years.

Variety

It was opened officially in September 1938 as the Avion Super Cinema by the mayor of Walsall, with seating for 1,000 patrons and also staging variety performances.

On the opening day, promoting his latest film – I see Ice – there was a personal appearance by the ukulele-strumming entertainer George Formby.

The building remained largely unaltered until its closure in December 1967, reopening almost immediately as the Avion Bingo Hall, eventually closing again in August 2009.

The bingo hall was managed by 'Bingo Bob' Whitehouse for many years.

Prints and text about the building's life as a bingo hall are displayed in the pub, including artwork inspired by bingo numbers and Art Deco-style cinemas built in the early 1900s.

Bygone

Film posters, as well as black-and-white photographs, depicting film stars from a bygone age adorn the walls and panelling in an Art Deco-design-inspired pub interior.

Other artwork on display recalls the local area and its industry's history, including a painting entitled Barges, by David Bomberg, inspired by the canals opened during the 1800s to improve transport in the area for the development of local heavy industry.

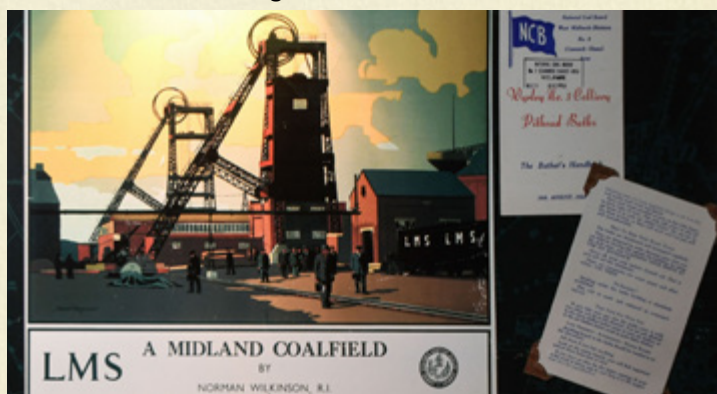
Poor road conditions meant that the canals, opened during 1803–47 to improve transport links, proved to be a vital factor which transformed Aldridge into an industrial village.

Aldridge Marina is a major waterways place on the Birmingham Canal Navigations. This provided the inspiration for the painting, which is a print of the original oil-on-canvas.

The local coal industry is also celebrated in a poster, produced for the London, Midland and Scotland Railway (LMS), showing a Midlands coalfield, with a pit-yard and miners scene.

The people of Aldridge once depended on coal and clay for their livelihood, with several collieries opened in the 1860s.

19 Anchor Road, Aldridge, WS9 8PT



APPRENTICES ASSEMBLE

Achievements of Wetherspoon's apprentices celebrated at 'skills for life' event in Manchester



National Apprenticeship Week 2025 (10–16 February) was a time to recognise and celebrate the effect which apprenticeships have on individuals, businesses and the wider economy.

This annual event highlights the importance of apprenticeships in equipping people with valuable skills, knowledge and experience – helping them to build successful careers.

The theme for this year's celebrations, 'skills for life', emphasised the long-term benefits which apprenticeships provide, ensuring that individuals are equipped with the tools required to thrive in their career... and beyond.

Event

To mark the occasion, Wetherspoon hosted an event at The Moon Under Water (Manchester), with those attending including representatives from the company's training providers Remit, Lifetime and Leeds Beckett University.

Also attending were 10 Wetherspoon apprentices at various stages of their apprenticeship journey, spanning various levels of learning and development.

Reflecting on the event, Wetherspoon's senior recruitment, training and qualifications manager, Chris Dennis, said: "The gathering was an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the apprentices, share experiences and reflect on the positive effect which apprenticeships have had on their professional growth."

Confidence

Apprentices reflected on enjoyable moments and achievements which have made their apprenticeship journey rewarding, such as making friends and networking, being promoted at work, gaining confidence and seeing their marks improve with each assignment submission.

In addition to enjoyable moments, apprentices shared valuable learning moments from their experience, including understanding different management styles, improving time management, setting smart objectives and the importance of self-reflection.

While there was plenty to celebrate, the event also provided a platform to discuss those challenges faced by apprentices, including moving pubs and the varying levels of support available, academic writing and balancing work, life and study.

Embrace

Advice was shared for new apprentices, offering guidance on enjoying the experience: make the most of the support available, take it one step at a time and embrace every opportunity.

Overall, the event was both informative and enjoyable, reinforcing Wetherspoon's commitment to developing employees' careers and supporting apprentices in gaining 'skills for life'.

Wetherspoon's recruitment, training and qualifications manager, Michelle Crooke, said: "It was a fantastic opportunity to connect with our training providers and apprentices, to share valuable insights.

"As we move forward, we will continue to develop opportunities where apprentices can thrive and succeed."

THE HUMPHREY BEAN • TONBRIDGE

SISTERS CLOCK UP 51 YEARS AT THE HUMPHREY BEAN



Siblings Bella Warner and Hana Winter (pictured left to right) have clocked up more than 50 years' combined service with Wetherspoon.

Part-time bar associate Hana has worked for the company for 26 years, while pub manager Bella marked 25 years with Wetherspoon in March 2025.

Both working at The Humphrey Bean (Tonbridge), they are pictured with area manager Anthony Jobe (back) and general manager Tim Hine.

Bella has only ever worked at The Humphrey Bean, initially joining the company as a kitchen associate when her youngest daughter was just two and a half.

Bella recalled: "Hana joined the team at the newly opened Opera House (Tonbridge Wells) as a bar associate, when it first opened in April 1997.

"She then moved to The Humphrey Bean when the pub newly opened in December 1998.

"She told me that they were looking for kitchen staff, so I applied.

"I had an interview, was accepted and started working in the kitchen three evenings a week. I have never left."

Bella remained as a part-time kitchen team member until her daughters (Jade, now 27, and Lucy, now 30) were a little older, when she decided to take on a full-time role in the pub's kitchen.

She progressed through the ranks and was promoted in 2014 to kitchen manager.

Bella, 48, said: "I was happy as a team leader, doing what I was doing, but the pub manager at the time was looking for a kitchen manager, so I stepped up.

"I stayed in that role until taking over as pub manager in November 2019."

She continued: "I've been quite lucky, as I have never felt pushed into anything – and this was a natural progression for me.

"I had been kitchen manager for a long time and was ready for a new challenge.

"The pub manager was asked to help in another pub and so this was my time."

Without too much front-of-house experience, Bella asked her knowledgeable management team to 'treat her like an associate for four weeks', to quickly learn the ropes.

Bella added: "I'm lucky to have such a good front-of-house team, and everything came together.

"I enjoy, and am good at, what I do and have no reason to want to go anywhere else. If I did want a change at any stage, there are plenty of opportunities within the company."

Hana worked her way up to shift leader, always working evening shifts, until her youngest of four children started secondary school.

Bella reported: "At that stage, Hana got other day-time work, but stayed on at the pub for one evening shift per week.

"She really enjoys it, has always worked front of house and is very personable. She knows a lot of the regular customers, has great knowledge and experience and still fits in her one shift with us."

NOW OPEN



Newcastle

THE MILE CASTLE

Wetherspoon's newest hotel has opened at The Mile Castle, in Newcastle.

The new hotel has been built in the grade II listed building – formerly Gibbs Chambers from 1861, adjoining the existing pub.

The Mile Castle's hotel side has 26 bedrooms, of which 19 can accommodate twin occupancy (including four family rooms and two accessible rooms), with seven double rooms also available.

Occupying four floors (lower ground, ground, first and second), the hotel has two rooms designed specifically for those guests needing accessible facilities.

Each of the rooms features an en suite bathroom, tea- and coffee-making facilities, hair dryer, flat-screen television with Freeview TV and unlimited free Wi-Fi, as well as digital air-conditioning and temperature control.

Pupils from Newcastle High School for Girls (junior school reception) provided the artwork in the hotel's bedrooms.

A new beer garden (almost 3,000 square feet) has also opened on the site of a former car park at the side of the building.

The hotel and beer garden's opening follows the reopening (September 2024) of the pub, which underwent redevelopment and refurbishment.

The overall cost of redeveloping the pub, hotel and beer garden, as well as refurbishment to the pub, was more than £5 million.

In addition, 70 new jobs have been created, taking the pub and hotel's staff number to 200.

Pub manager Kris Lee said: "We are confident that the hotel will be an asset to the pub, as well as to the city.

"The new beer garden is also a great new addition to the pub."

One of 56 Wetherspoon hotels, this hotel is available to book directly only – at jdwwetherspoon.com, on the app or by phone.



19-25 Grainger Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
Tyne and Wear, NE1 5JE

HOLIDAYMAKERS RAVING ABOUT BRAND-NEW PUBS AT HAVENS

Wetherspoon has opened a further three pubs at Haven holiday parks, with another set to open in April.

It follows the opening of The Five Stones, in February 2024, at Haven Primrose Valley Holiday Park, in Filey, North Yorkshire.

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

The three pubs which opened in March 2025 at a Haven holiday park are: The Humber Stone at Cleethorpes Beach (Lincolnshire), The Sir Thomas Haggerston at Haggerston Castle (Berwick-upon-Tweed) and The London Stone at Kent Coast (Rochester).

The fourth new pub to open (in April 2025) is The Red Rocks at Devon Cliffs (Exmouth).

The Humber Stone is managed by Ben Coulbeck (pictured).

He said: "We're thrilled to kick off the 2025 season by welcoming owners and holidaymakers to our brand-new pub, bringing our exclusive partnership with Wetherspoon to a new park for guests to enjoy throughout the year."

Wetherspoon's area manager, Christian Bainbridge, added: "We are confident that owners and holidaymakers will enjoy visiting The Humber Stone as part of their holiday."

The pub's name reflects its location in Humberston – a village which is believed to have taken its name from a large boulder, the 'Humber Stone', deposited during the last Ice Age.

The boulder may now be seen at the entrance to the village library, near St Peter's Church.

While the village was originally spelled Humberstone, the final 'e' was dropped to avoid confusion with its Leicestershire namesake.



NEW LOOK

Fareham

THE CROWN INN

Pub manager Lucy Dempsey is pictured at The Crown Inn (Fareham) – following refurbishment work at the pub.

Lucy has managed the pub since 2011.

A new carpet has been installed, together with new furniture.

The kitchen has also undergone an upgrade.

A new staff room and staff toilet facilities have also been added.

Lucy said: “The £300,000 investment highlights Wetherspoon’s commitment to the pub and to its staff and customers, as well as to the local area itself.”

40 West Street, Fareham, PO16 0JW



Poole

THE LORD WIMBORNE

Pub manager Kevin Young is pictured with the mayor of Poole, Cllr Peter Miles, and bar associate Jolie Herschy at the new-look pub – The Lord Wimborne (Poole).

Wetherspoon invested £850,000 on the refurbishment project.

An additional 10 full- and part-time jobs have been created at The Lord Wimborne.

The pub, which first opened as a Wetherspoon in May 2002, has been refurbished and upgrade work undertaken.

This is in addition to the new kitchen and open gantry completed earlier in 2024.

The pub has undergone a full redecoration throughout, as well as a new bespoke designed Poole-themed carpet and additional furniture being installed.

An additional coffee machine has been put in place, as well as new drinks-dispense equipment on the bar, for speed of service.

A full refurbishment of the male, female and accessible toilets has also taken place.

Behind-the-scene staff facilities have also been added.

Kevin said: “The Lord Wimborne has been a community pub in Poole for more than 20 years.

“This refurbishment work highlights Wetherspoon’s continued investment in the area, as well as the company’s commitment to its staff and customers, offering the best-possible facilities.

“We are also pleased to have created 10 new jobs.”

59 Lagland Street, Poole, BH15 1QD



Ramsgate

ROYAL VICTORIA PAVILION

Pub manager Chris Whitbourn is pictured at Royal Victoria Pavilion (Ramsgate), following a refurbishment project costing £750,000.

The pub first opened as a Wetherspoon in August 2017 and has been managed by Chris since its first day.

As well as some repair and redecoration to the building's exterior, the mezzanine-level area has been extended to encompass the entire top level of the pub, with a new bespoke carpet also fitted throughout.

An enclosed customer area has been added at the rear of the pub. The fully enclosed glazed area extends to the beach front.

Chris said: "Royal Victoria Pavilion is a very popular pub and a landmark building in the town."

Harbour Parade, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 8LS



Romford

THE MOON AND STARS

The Moon and Stars has a new-improved and redesigned roof-terrace space, following additional refurbishment work at the Romford pub.

Pub manager Dan Griffin and his team can now accommodate 120 customers in the accessible outside space among the rooftops via a lift, as well as two staircases.

Dan said: "We are delighted with the new-look roof terrace and hope that customers will enjoy the outside space for many years to come."

A combination of outside dining tables and chairs, as well as hi-top tables and stools, provides seating on the roof terrace, with large umbrellas for shelter and shade.

The space is also decorated with planters and festoon lighting.

Pictured (left to right), enjoying the roof terrace, are team leader Kylie Franks, bar associate Julie Solomon and cross-trained associate Kris Rangel Solomon.

99-103 South Street, Romford, RM1 1NX

NEW LOOK

Hanley

THE REGINALD MITCHELL

James and Megan Mancell, a husband-and-wife management team, are pictured at the reopening of The Reginald Mitchell (Hanley) alongside Wetherspoon's regional manager and employee director Debbie Whittingham (left).

The pub, which first opened in October 1998, underwent a £1.4-million refurbishment project, including a full internal redecoration, the creation of new staff facilities (staff room and changing rooms) and new step-free access.

Members of the police and the town's business improvement district (BID) attended the official opening.

Pub manager James and duty manager Megan met while working at The George Inn (Sandbach), 11 years ago.

James started his career in April 2013, as a part-time bar associate at The Welkin (Liverpool), whilst studying for a degree at Liverpool John Moore University.

He transferred to The Reginald Mitchell after uni, in October 2013, and returned as pub manager in March 2020.

Megan started with the company in 2014, at the age of 18, working her way up, over a period of two years, from bar associate to shift leader at Sandbach.

She had a maternity leave break from work, when she had her first daughter, before returning to Biddulph as a shift leader.

Megan transferred to Hanley, with James, in March 2020, becoming a shift manager shortly afterwards.

James said: "Megan and I are thrilled with the pub's new look.

"The Reginald Mitchell plays an important part in the town's social scene, and we trust that it will continue to do so for many more years to come."

The Tontine, 20 Parliament Row, Hanley, Staffordshire, ST1 1NG



Opening 30 July 2025

The Dictum of Kenilworth, 18-24 The Square, Kenilworth, CV18 1EB

DONCASTER

ENERGETIC ALE EFFORTS OPEN DOORS AT THE GATE HOUSE



Pub manager Ben Leese and his team at The Gate House (Doncaster) have won a Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) award, for the first time since 2013.

The pub has been named winner of the 'city pub of the season' award for winter 2024–25 by members of the local CAMRA Doncaster & District Branch.

Ben (pictured) confirmed: "I have been pub manager here for seven years – and this is the first time that we have been nominated, let alone won, so we are all thrilled."

He added: "We really listen to customers' feedback regarding any requests for their favourites and do our best to get them."

"We aim to have a variety of stouts/porters and pales/golds, as well as ruby beers and bitters, all on at the same time, so that there are options for all tastes."

"We also consider different strengths of ABV, when ordering, to also suit all requirements."

"Shift manager Max Howorth is our cellar champion. He has done an incredible job since joining us from The Red Lion (Doncaster) a couple of years ago."

Ben concluded: "A thankyou to customers for supporting the pub and enabling us to grow our ale range, as well as allowing us to interact with them to provide them with good-quality ale."

The Gate House serves eight ales at all times, including Abbot Ale, Ruddles Best and Doom Bar, as well as five ever-changing guest ales.

Lynn Attack wrote in the branch magazine, Donny Drinker:

"Congratulations on winning this much-deserved award go to Ben Leese, who has been at the helm for seven years now, ably assisted by Max, a cellar champion for nine years, and the rest of The Gate House team."

"This award is given primarily for the quality of the cask beer, which regularly features beers from local breweries such as Barnsley Acorn and Mexborough Gorilla."

"If you would like to request a specific beer, ask Ben, Max or Elliot, who will see what they can do."

AN RUADH-GHLEANN • RUTHERGLEN

YEARS FLY BY FOR KAT AND LARA



Pub manager Kat Scouler (left) and shift manager Lara McWilliams (right) have almost clocked up a combined 23 years' service at An Ruadh-Ghleann (Rutherglen).

They are pictured outside their pub.

Kat joined the team at the newly opened An Ruadh-Ghleann in December 2012 as a shift leader, having previously worked at The Sir John Moore (Glasgow), initially as a part-time bar associate for some extra money at Christmas time.

Kat took over as pub manager at the Rutherglen pub, her first as pub manager, a decade ago.

Kat recalls: "I would have been celebrating 20 years' continuous service with Wetherspoon, but I left The Sir John Moore after five years to work for a season in a Scottish bar in Ibiza.

"I came back to Scotland and returned to the pub to earn some money, before I was going to return to Ibiza, but stayed on in Glasgow."

Originally from Cumbernauld, Kat continued: "I never had it in my sights to be a pub manager, but, when the previous manager left, I didn't want anyone else taking over, so thought I would give it a go myself.

"I saw the opportunity and here I am."

Kat added: "An Ruadh-Ghleann is a lovely community pub, and I probably know 90 per cent of the regular customers.

"We are also not far from Hampden Park, so it's a busy time when there are concerts or football, so there is always plenty going on."

Lara started as a bar associate at An Ruadh-Ghleann in October 2014, working her way up to shift manager.

Lara recalled: "Kat took over as pub manager just before I started working at the pub, so she has always been my pub manager.

"We get on very well and have a brilliant working relationship.

"I love my job. It has given me a lot of confidence.

"I have met so many different people and made so many long-term friendships."

Lara, who lives in Rutherglen and is mum to a 16-year-old daughter, said: "I was a full-time mum when I took on the job – and it was great to be able to fit in the work around school hours.

"When I started to become promoted, having to work longer hours, my partner helped a lot, so I have been able to have a 10-year career which I love, with a great company."

K-POP HAS A LOT OF FANS, BUT K-FOOD SOUNDS EVEN BETTER

New sticky Korean fried chicken bowl dish proving popular with appreciative pub-goers

Wetherspoon's pubs are now serving the **NEW sticky Korean fried chicken bowl**.

South Korean culture, including pop music, film and comedy, fashion and style, has grown tremendously in popularity in the UK.

Hot on the heels of K-pop, K-food is the on-trend must-try – and, among foodies, one of the favourite dishes is Korean fried chicken.

Following the huge popularity of the limited-time offer, Wetherspoon's sticky Korean fried chicken bowl is now a permanent addition on the main menu.

The dish comprises chicken strips and chicken breast bites – with both strips and bites being 100 per cent chicken breast.

The chicken is fried to golden crispy perfection, tossed and coated in a sweet sticky Korean-style sauce, before being topped with coriander and sliced chillies.

The dish is served with a choice of coconut-flavour rice or chips – and includes a soft or alcoholic drink* as part of the price.

A **NEW** sticky Korean fried Quorn™ 'no chicken' bowl (a vegan option) is also available.

Asian cuisine has long been established in Europe since the 1950s.

The rise in popularity (helped via K-pop) of South Korean cultural influences, as well as the boom in Asian street food, has led naturally to the exploration of South Korean cuisine.

Korean fried chicken is among the dishes rapidly growing in popularity.

It is believed that the dish first came about on Thanksgiving (possibly at some point during the 1950s), when American soldiers stationed in South Korea wanted to prepare a meal which reminded them of home.

With no turkey available, they used chicken and fried it (steamed or boiled chicken was most common in Korea), sharing it with their fellow Korean soldiers.

The crispy meal, with its American origins in the southern United States, caught on and evolved into today's popular dish.



DISCOVER

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CENTURIES OF KNOWHOW IN TWO LAGERS ADDED TO RANGE

Poretti from Italy and 1664 Bière from France are the latest premium brews in a world-class line-up



Two new premium lagers have been added to the draught beer range at Wetherspoon's pubs.

Italian premium full-flavoured lager Poretti (4.8% ABV) and beautifully crafted French premium lager 1664 Bière (4.6% ABV) are now being served on draught.

Both drinks are also included as part of Wetherspoon's 'includes a drink' range, available with many main menu choices.

Brewing beers for over 140 years, the Poretti brewery was founded in 1877 by Angelo Poretti, in Varese, northern Italy.

Characterised by a pillowy white head, brilliant clarity and a polished golden colour, Poretti is brewed by combining four hop varieties to produce a great-tasting balanced beer.

Brewed with flavourful Strisselspalt hops from the Alsace region of France, famed for its rich gastronomy and brewing heritage, 1664 Bière truly delivers a taste suprême.

With more than 360 years' brewing heritage (since 1664), 1664 Bière is refreshing, crisp, golden and perfectly balanced, with floral notes and a delicate bitterness.

These two new premium lagers join the range of world beers available on draught at Wetherspoon's pubs, alongside beers from Belgium, Denmark, Mexico, Scotland and the USA.



THE FERRY BOAT • RUNCORN

SKIPPER EMMA SAILS FERRY BOAT SMOOTHLY AFTER A VARIED VOYAGE



When student Emma Ford first joined the company as an 18-year-old part-time bar associate, little did she imagine that she would be running her own pub a dozen years later.

Emma took over her first pub, The Ferry Boat (Runcorn), in May 2023 and is enjoying her role as manager there, as well as becoming a mum again in April 2024 to a baby girl.

She also has a seven-year-old son.

Originally from St Helens, Emma was still at college in 2011 when she joined the team at The Running Horses (St Helens) (no longer a Wetherspoon pub).

Emma recalled: "I was also working at an Indian restaurant, as well as studying, but, like a lot of students, needed the work for the money.

"However, within a year at the pub, I had progressed to shift-leader level – and that was when everything changed.

"I decided that I wanted to go for it, full whack, as a career."

In 2013, the company was looking for management staff for pubs in Scotland, so Emma moved to Fort William to become kitchen manager (as well as shift manager) at The Great Glen, a joint role for six months during the busy tourist season.

She said: "I wanted the challenge, so put my hand up for it.

"It was a really great experience and a good grounding.

"I returned to The Running Horses for a further year, before moving to the newly opened pub The Nine Arches (Newton-le-Willows) on the management team for a year and a half."

Emma left the company for almost two years, to pursue other opportunities, yet requested a return.

She explained: "I was still young and wanted to see what other opportunities might be out there, but the grass isn't always greener... as I discovered."

Emma came back as a shift manager at The Looking Glass (Warrington) (no longer a Wetherspoon pub) before another return to The Running Horses, in preparation for a step up to pub management.

Emma, 31, remembered: "The Running Horses then closed and I moved to The Moon Under Water (Wigan) – probably the biggest challenge I had had.

"It's a very busy pub and a five-minute walk from the football stadium, so match days are crazy busy.

"When the pub manager left, I spent five months there as holding manager, giving me more experience and a chance to get a fuller picture of the pub manager's role.

"It was at that point that I started to apply for my own pub."

Area manager Mike Morrissey encouraged Emma to apply for the position at The Ferry Boat – and, although reluctant at first, Emma has never looked back.

She added: "It is a lovely community pub, and all the staff are great. The management team works as hard as it can, and the kitchen team members are fantastic.

"Things are going well – and I'm enjoying it."

WAKEFIELD

ART AND ALE MIX BEAUTIFULLY IN WAKEFIELD'S SIX CHIMNEYS



Easels, brushes and canvasses come out every two months at The Six Chimneys (Wakefield), as the pub is a venue on the city's Art Walk project.

The unfunded project sees artists link up with local venues to exhibit their work.

The events take place on the last Wednesday of every second month, from 5pm.

Pub manager Laura Mason said: "We've been involved in the project since September 2024.

"We were approached by customers involved in Art Walk and were happy to help them to exhibit their work."

A recent event (pictured) saw more than 40 people turn up to the pub to view paintings by artists including Rob Clarke, Kate Wray, Jessica Rowbottom and Helen Field.

Rob Clarke ran a 'poetry corner' as part of the event.

Pictured among the easels (left to right) are artists Kate Wray, Rob Clarke and Jessica Rowbottom, with pub manager Laura Mason.

BRIDGEND

PLAQUE IN PUB HONOURS BRIDGEND LEGEND DAVID

When beloved local legend and pub regular David 'Dai' Dobbs passed away (July 2024), his many friends at The Wyndham Arms Hotel (Bridgend) came together to remember him.

David, who visited the pub daily and supported dozens of its charity events, passed away aged 82.

After his funeral, attended by hundreds of people who stood to watch his coffin being drawn through the streets, staff and fellow regulars passed the hat to raise money for a commemorative plaque.

The plaque now takes pride of place in the pub.

Hotel manager, Lisa Driscoll, said: "I was very fond of David. He had no family – we were his family. He was a true eccentric and a character – he never forgot anyone's name and was very much about people."

The mayor of Bridgend, Cllr Ian Williams, said: "Wetherspoon became his second home, a place he came to for friendship, where he was looked after by Lisa and her colleagues – where the regulars ensured that he was safe and could spend his days reading his newspaper and books... and where he chewed the fat with his many friends."

Pictured is hotel manager Lisa Driscoll with Cllr Ian Williams.



THE MARE POOL • MERE GREEN

HOW EMMA MADE A SPLASH IN MARE POOL



Pub manager Emma Proctor has been running The Mare Pool (Mere Green) since June 2023 and is enjoying success at her first pub as manager.

Originally from Sutton Coldfield, Emma joined the company 14 years ago as a 16-year-old part-time floor associate.

Emma recalled: "I was still at school and wanted a Saturday job, so worked at The Bottle of Sack (Sutton Coldfield) from noon until 4pm, clearing tables and serving food.

"I never imagined that a weekly four-hour part-time shift would become my career."

When Emma left school, she went on to study at university in Sheffield, successfully completing her business degree and graduating in 2015.

She explained: "I continued to work for Wetherspoon while at university, with two or three shifts per week at The Benjamin Huntsman and The Francis Newton (both Sheffield), as well as back at The Bottle of Sack during the summer and Christmas holidays.

"Once I graduated, I had no clue what I wanted to do for a career, so took up a full-time role at The Bottle of Sack, being quickly promoted to team leader, shift leader within three months and then shift-manager level in 2016.

"It was then I thought 'I can do this' – and haven't looked back."

Emma stepped up as relief manager on a couple of occasions, at The Bottle of Sack, when the pub manager was off and transferred in May 2023 to The Mare Pool, originally as a holding manager.

Emma continued: "When the position became available, I applied (along with around 14 other candidates) – not thinking I would get it, but I did.

"I thought I would be holding the pub for only a couple of weeks, but here I am."

Emma took over at The Mare Pool officially in June 2023 and is continually growing in her role.

She confirmed: "Things are going well, and the management team, already here, has been a great help.

"We have gained a five-star hygiene rating, which is so important, and the pub has improved.

We have also been included in CAMRA's publication The Good Beer Guide for two consecutive years – and I'm proud of that."

Emma said: "I do enjoy watching that improvement – of not only the business, but the staff too, as well as achieving my own personal goals."

Emma, 30, revealed: "I used to be quite nervous and found it difficult talking to people.

"This job has definitely boosted my confidence and I'm now more outgoing than I used to be."

Emma concluded: "I would like to thank pub manager Dave Morris, at The Bottle of Sack, who didn't know me at all when I returned from university.

"He saw my potential, trained me well and encouraged me to progress further."

NICKI AWARDED AFTER 20-YEAR JOURNEY FROM KITCHEN TO MANAGER'S DUGOUT



When Nicki Wadsworth joined the team at The Sir Thomas Gerard (Ashton-in-Makerfield) in October 2004, she was working as a part-time kitchen associate.

With two young children, she spent six hours a week in the pub's kitchen, preparing and setting up, while they were at nursery school. Twenty years later, pub manager Nicki is pictured with her 20-year long-service certificate, in a presentation at the pub.

Area manager Mike Morrissey is also pictured with a bottle of Champagne for Nicki to celebrate.

Nicki said: "I eventually took on a full-time role and became kitchen manager at the pub when Mike became area manager, and I have never moved."

Nicki stepped up, in 2020, to cover for pub manager Christine Krasocki, subsequently taking over from Christine, who still works at the pub as a shift manager.

Nicki added: "We have so many long-serving staff members on the team, including Christine, who has been here since the pub first opened in December 1997.

"The regular customers like that consistency, with the same faces behind the bar – and the stability is great for the staff too."

Some of the other long-serving staff members pictured (back, left to right) are team leader Cath Mort (23 years), shift manager Sandro Cann (six years), bar associate Paula Tucker (11 years), kitchen associate Bethany Kelly (six years), team leader Michelle Carty (14 years) and shift leader David Bartlett (12 years).

CAKE FOR CUSTOMERS AS BALLOONS GO UP IN CHORLTON

Cake was shared with customers as The Sedge Lynn (Chorlton-cum-Hardy) celebrated its 25th birthday.

The pub was decorated with balloons and bunting as staff and customers shared memories and reminisced about the past 25 years.

The pub's longest-serving staff member, bar associate Angela Starmer, has worked at the pub since it first opened.

Pub manager Kirstin Nicholls said: "Angela has been a very important part of our team over the past 25 years.

"It was wonderful to celebrate the pub's anniversary with her, fellow staff and customers."

Pictured (left to right) are duty manager Lex Archer, pub manager Kirstin Nicholls and team leader Eve Maguire.



THE FRIAR PENKETH • WARRINGTON

SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR FRIAR'S HIGH-FLYER



Pub manager Jess Bowman joined Wetherspoon a decade ago, as a 16-year-old college student.

She worked part time, on Friday and Saturday, as an under-18 floor associate at The Ferry Boat (Runcorn), while studying a level 3 health and social care course, as well as a hairdressing apprenticeship role at a local salon.

Fast forward (quite literally) 10 years – and Jess, still only 26, has been the pub manager at The Friar Penketh (Warrington), her first pub as manager, since July 2022.

Jess is a clearly focused and driven individual who knew, at the age of 18, what she wanted to do.

Jess confirmed: “Once I became a shift leader, at the age of 18, my goal was to be a manager and have my own pub.”

She continued: “From the very beginning, I enjoyed being on the floor, speaking to regular customers. I really loved the people aspect of the pub environment.

“In the hairdressing salon, I got to speak to people, but it was totally different from the jokes, laughs and banter of the pub.”

Jess admitted: “When I turned 18 and started on the bar, I didn’t like it at first. However, once I got into it and learned what I was doing, I loved it.”

On her 20th birthday, Jess was promoted to shift manager level – a very quick progression.

She said: “Once I’ve done something, I want to do the next thing, and this was true of the shift management levels. I really enjoyed the courses and wanted to do the next one every time.”

That progression as a shift manager included a year at The Glass House (St Helens) and a two-year stint at The Watch Maker (Prescot).

Jess said: “I was happy at Prescot and gained some great experience, with my pub manager allowing me, effectively, to take on all the pub manager’s responsibilities, for hands-on learning. That was invaluable to me.

“I missed out when I applied to be pub manager at The Nine Arches (Newton-le-Willows), yet the interview process was another great experience. Then, within a week, The Friar Penketh came up and, this time, I was successful.

“I was well prepared and had already been given the chance to show what I could do. Taking full responsibility, the jump was a big one, but my area manager Mike Morrissey (the same since I started work) helped me all the way.

“He has been a reassuring and guiding hand, calming me if I panic, and always telling me ‘you can do this’.”

Jess has assembled a great new management team, which includes shift manager Hannah Harding, who has worked at the pub for 10 years, having started at The Looking Glass (Warrington) (no longer a Wetherspoon pub) 11 years ago.

Jess confirmed: “Hannah and I hit it off straight away. Having her here has made things a little bit easier. She has been here a long time and has seen it all.”

Jess, who also works one day a week in the kitchen, concluded: “I would much rather be in the pub than the office and like to lead from the front.

“My goal is to be the best in this pub. There’s still a lot to achieve here, so I don’t plan on going anywhere until that is done.

“Only then could I think about a bigger and busier pub, to develop and progress, for my next challenge.”

BEVERLEY

RUGBY RAFFLE RESULTS IN BIG SCORES AT HULL PUB

Rugby shirts and a ball signed by Hull FC players were raffled at The Cross Keys (Beverley).

More than £200 was raised for a charity run by customer Dean Sharp called Life for a Kid.

The charity helps children under the age of 16 by offering funds and equipment to help them to lead a better life and to also help children who require life-saving or life-changing operations.

The charity sent ambassadors to the pub to draw the raffle.

Pub manager Emma Badham said: "We decided to raise money for this charity - and Dean was instrumental in getting the shirts and the ball from Hull FC."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Kieron Arundale, shift leader Sophia Bissolati, team leader Kai McKinnon-Bain, Dean Sharp and bar associate Robbie Harrison.



NEWTON ABBOT

LORRAINE FINDS NOVEL WAY TO BRING IN CASH

Cleaner Lorraine Avery has helped to raise money for charity - thanks to her recycling and upcycling efforts.

Lorraine, who works at The Richard Hopkins (Newton Abbot) is a keen recycler and bargain hunter who visits the shops attached to council waste recycling sites.

She brings the books she collects there back to the pub, where customers pay 50p for them.

Pub manager Lynda Arnold said: "As a result of Lorraine's efforts, the pub now has a permanent display of books, including those which customers have brought in."

"So far, we have raised more than £300 for our chosen charity - Young Lives vs Cancer."

Devon Re-use area co-ordinator Jacqui Winterburn is facilitating Lorraine and Lynda's work.

She said: "What a wonderful achievement, raising more than £300 for this worthwhile charity."



Lynda Arnold (right) with Dana Riddick from The Reuse Shop

SHEFFIELD

BLUE PLAQUE SPELLS OUT PALACE'S CINEMATIC PAST

A blue plaque now adorns the outside wall of The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield) to commemorate its former life as a cinema.

The pub, on Chesterfield Road, Woodseats, was named after the cinema which used to stand on the same site.

Local historian Martin Naylor runs a tour of Sheffield's blue plaques and approached pub manager Ricky Brown to ask his permission to mount one on the exterior.

Ricky said: "I thought that it was a great idea - and the plaque is now on display for customers and passers-by to see."

Referring to the year the movie theatre first opened, the plaque reads: 'The Woodseats Palace Cinema (1911) stood on this site.'

Posters inside the pub depict films screened back in the day.

The cinema closed in the 1950s.



Martin Naylor is pictured with floor associate and long-serving staff member Kay Slater

PUBWATCH, KEEPING US ALL SAFE ACROSS THE LAND

Wetherspoon's pubs participating in more than 530 UK schemes

National Pubwatch, the licensed trade's equivalent of neighbourhood watch, has been in existence for more than 30 years, throughout the UK.

The local schemes range in size from more than 200 premises in cities to small rural schemes with just a handful of premises involved.

As at March 2025, Wetherspoon's pubs were confirmed to be participating in 532 local pubwatch schemes, across the UK.

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

Pubwatch schemes are local, independent groups, comprising those working in licensed premises. They often take part in safety and alcohol-awareness campaigns.

The groups' objectives are to tackle and prevent antisocial behaviour and criminal activity, to promote safe drinking environments for customers and secure working environments for staff and to improve communication and information-sharing among licensees.

The basic principle involved in a pubwatch is that the licensees of the premises involved agree on several policies of action aimed at those who cause or threaten damage, disorder or violence and/or use or deal in drugs on their premises.

Usually, this action means refusing to serve those causing, or known to have previously caused, these types of problem.

Having agreed on these policies, the premises then publicise them and stick to them.

The publicity alone can have a very notable effect on such problems, yet refusing admission and service to those who cause trouble has proven to have a significant impact on antisocial behaviour.

To operate most effectively, any pubwatch scheme must work closely with the police, local authorities and other agencies.

By working together and keeping problems outside of their premises, licensees will make it easier for the police to identify troublemakers and deal with them.

Among Wetherspoon's pubwatch successes are Wembley pubwatch, where pub manager Lily Capillo (J.J. Moon's, Wembley) has created what we believe to be one of the country's largest pubwatch schemes.

Here, we highlight one pub and its involvement in a successful pubwatch scheme in Bedfordshire.



Pictured (left to right) at a pubwatch meeting held at The Old Sugar Loaf pub, in Dunstable, are pub manager Emily Applegate (The Gary Cooper (Dunstable)), Central Bedfordshire Council community safety's Steve Blake, pub manager Natasha Magnar (The White Swan Inn (Dunstable)), Central Bedfordshire Council community safety's Jacqui Blake, Bedfordshire Police licensing officer Leanne Turner and shift managers Ellie Mankin and Alaina Griffin (The Gary Cooper)

The Gary Cooper (Dunstable)

Pub manager Emily Applegate has been running The Gary Cooper (Dunstable) for the past three years, her first as pub manager.

She started as an 18-year-old bar associate at Wetherspoons (Milton Keynes), in her hometown, as a second job to earn more money and has consequently enjoyed a successful career with the company.

Emily said: "Things are going really well at The Gary Cooper, with the team and business all performing well."

"We have a great relationship with our local licensing officers and fellow local landlords and managers, especially through the pubwatch scheme."

Meetings

Emily explained: "Before I was pub manager here, no one from the pub attended the pubwatch meetings; so, with the help of my area manager, I contacted the licensing team and now attend all pubwatch meetings, held every couple of months."

"I am very active in the initiative and have a good relationship with other pub managers in the area, as well as being in regular contact with our local licensing officer."

There are currently 19 members who all work closely together, sharing information and passing messages via a WhatsApp group, as well as communication through the town radio and town CCTV office.

Improvement

Emily said: "We share details of anyone of interest and look out for any problems, and there has been a 100-per-cent improvement in the number of incidents and issues."

Shift manager Alaina Griffin has attended the pubwatch meeting with Emily, for experience and to meet the local police and council representatives, enabling her to act as a deputy if Emily is absent for any reason.

Emily confirmed: "I have tried to focus my team's approach on different styles of customer management."

Confident

"They are now more confident in tackling any issues or customer needs and are quicker to spot any potential problems."

"Our involvement with pubwatch has opened my eyes to more ideas to support community initiatives, displaying posters and passing on messages to the rest of the team."

"It's about having a particular mindset and positive attitude to actively engage."

EAT. SLEEP. SPOONS. REPEAT - SUPERFANS KNOW HOW TO LIVE



Wetherspoon superfan Peter Dobson has notched up another significant milestone in his bid to visit every Wetherspoon pub.

He completed his 600th visit at The West Kirk (Ayr), where he is pictured in mid January 2025 wearing his trademark T-shirt declaring: Eat. Sleep. Spoons. Repeat.

First featured in Wetherspoon News (spring 2020), we have tracked his progress ever since.

Peter's adventure began in October 2019 at The Eight Bells (Dover) and he has since travelled the length and breadth of the UK in his continued mission to record every visit on his YouTube channel 'Visiting Every Wetherspoon'.

Peter completed 200 pubs by April 2021 at The Angel Vaults Inn (Hitchin), had clocked up 300 at The Saxon Crown (Corby) in December 2021, celebrated 400 in September 2022 at The Velvet Coaster (Blackpool) and then 500 at The North Western (Liverpool) in December 2023.

Peter said: "Thank you, yet again, to all the lovely Wetherspoon staff members and customers I have encountered along the way who continue to support me in my challenge."

Seasoned Wetherspoon superfans Elaine and Ade Hubszer have also reached their milestone of 600 pubs visited.

Since Wetherspoon News last caught up with them, in the spring 2024 edition, the couple have added a further 100 pubs to the total they have achieved.

When we first published their story in the summer/autumn 2023 edition, Elaine and Ade had already been to 400 of the company's pubs. By spring 2024, it was 500 – and now they have reached 600.

Elaine said: "We have now passed our 600-pub milestone at The Playhouse (Colchester) (pictured), having squeezed in another 69 new pub visits throughout 2024.

"During the year, we strayed from our home in Cheshire as far north as Inverness and south to Penzance – as well as east to Clacton."

Their latest 100 pubs 'ticked off' included those at two airports (Birmingham and Edinburgh), a handful of Wetherspoon hotels (from Edinburgh to Devon) and another 15 pubs in and around London.

Elaine concluded: "Our 'thirst' for pub-visiting remains undiminished, and we look forward to planning our 2025 trips around the remaining pockets of the country we have yet to get to, including an epic south Wales trip to visit the remaining 11 pubs required to 'complete' Wales."



Pub manager and beer-judging organiser
Philippa McFadden (Trent Bridge Inn)

ALE UMPIRES BOWLED OVER AT TRENT BRIDGE INN





The beer-judging event at Trent Bridge Inn (Nottingham) for the Wetherspoon autumn beer festival was its usual great success.

The pub hosted the 19th bi-annual judging competition, with the first one having taken place for the autumn 2013 festival.

A group of almost 60 judges gathered to assess the festival beers, the highest number of judges attending the event to date.

They included brewers, industry professionals, Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) members, a group of Wetherspoon pub managers from across Yorkshire and several invited regular customers from Trent Bridge Inn.

The 30 festival beers were divided into five classes, four based on strength and one for dark beers.

Judging was carried out over three rounds, with the most popular beers in each class from the first round going forward to the second round, where a winner for each class was chosen.

The winner of each class then went through to the third round and was tasted again to decide the overall competition winner.

All those attending had a very enjoyable day and were served a buffet lunch after the second round.

Wetherspoon's marketing manager and beer festival organiser, Jen Swindells, said: "There were many compliments about the high quality of the beers sampled and not a huge difference among many of the final scores, so it was a very closely fought competition.

"A big thankyou to pub manager Philippa McFadden and her team for their extremely friendly and efficient service – everything went very smoothly, as usual."

Philippa added: "We were delighted to host the beer festival tasting session again.

"It is always an eagerly anticipated event and enjoyed tremendously by everyone involved.

"We also held a raffle and guess-the-sweets-in-the-jar competition, raising £179 for Young Lives vs Cancer. Thank you to everyone for their support."

The beers were divided into five classes, based on strength, with the winners in each class as follows:

Hogs Back Notorious P.I.G.	(3.8% ABV)
Loch Lomond The Gloaming	(4.4% ABV)
Greene King Blood Hound	(4.4% ABV)
Shepherd Neame Cold Snap	(5.0% ABV)
Burning Sky Aurora	(5.6% ABV)

In the overall final round, the winners were:

Shepherd Neame Cold Snap – gold medal
Hogs Back Notorious P.I.G. – silver medal
Greene King Blood Hound – bronze medal

● A separate group also judged the five international beers against one another, with the winner of this round being Yazoo All Dog Alert (5.5% ABV).



SHEFFIELD

SHEFFIELD VIPS HELP TO FUND VILLAGE FESTIVAL



The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield) has raised £195 to help to fund an annual local festival through a charity Race Night.

The event saw customers pay for a VIP table, including a glass of Prosecco and a finger buffet.

Pub manager Ricky Brown said: "The Woodseats Festival Group put on a great village festival each year – and we wanted to support it."

"We are glad to have been able to contribute and we thank customers for their generosity."

Pictured (left to right) are festival organisers Victoria Naylor, Denny Stephenson and Terri Naylor, pub manager Ricky Brown and the organising committee's Mike and Martin Naylor.

SOUTHPORT

SIR HENRY SEGRAVE'S STAFF SCALE SNOWDON TO SUPPORT LUNA ROSE



Staff from The Sir Henry Segrave (Southport) tackled Mount Snowdon to raise more than £1,000 for the Luna Rose Foundation.

The foundation was set up by 10-year-old Luna Rose and her family, after she suffered life-threatening injuries in July in the Southport stabbings.

A team of 12 undertook the ascent, completing it in just over five hours.

Customers and online contributors gave generously towards the total raised.

Luna Rose is known to pub manager Daniel Mercer through family work connections.

He said: "Everyone in Southport knows someone who was affected by the attack."

"We know Luna Rose and her family and, when we heard about her foundation, decided to support it."

Daniel added: "The weather was horrendous – and we were even more proud to have completed the walk in such conditions."

On her fundraising web page (gofundme.com/f/luna-rose-foundation), Luna Rose says: "My goal with this charity is to help as many people as I can and bring our community together."

"I want to spread love and kindness everywhere and eliminate the fear as I feel like this event has given me a purpose and determination to strive to help others."

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

HOLY ORDERS AS VICAR HELPS TO PLAN CHURCH BEER FESTIVAL



Every year, The Full House (Hemel Hempstead) sponsors a beer festival at local church St Mary's.

It was only appropriate that The Reverend John Williams was at the pub to attend an organising committee for The Hemel Old Town Beer Festival.

The meeting took place at The Full House, led by Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) Mid-Chilterns branch chair Jared Ward-Brickett.

Representing the pub was kitchen manager Alex Baker, who manages the bars at the festival.

He said: "It's a real community effort, involving the pub, Tring Brewery, St Mary's church and CAMRA.

"A lot goes on behind the scenes in advance of the festival."

Pictured (left to right) are Alex Baker, Jared Ward-Brickett, volunteer Wendy Wilkins, committee member Jon Humphries, volunteer Ray Munt, church caretaker Brian Crawley, ale magazine Tapler's editor Andy Harvell, social secretary Amanda Harvell and The Reverend John Williams.

STRET FORD

SUPER RED SUKIE FULL OF PRAISE FOR BISHOP BLAIZE

Manchester United superfan Sukie Sidhu has thanked staff and customers at The Bishop Blaize (Stretford) after they helped to raise more than £4,000 for the hospital which saved his life.

Back in September 2023, Sukie, well known at the pub as founder of the Red Devils Facebook group, was rushed to a specialist Birmingham hospital, where he was diagnosed with a rare life-threatening blood disorder, known as TTP.

Sixteen days and several blood transfusions later, Sukie left the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and started the long road to recovery.

He said: "The medical team at the hospital saved my life. I'm lucky to be here. I wanted to do something for them."

Sukie used his Facebook group to raise money and asked the pub manager at The Bishop Blaize, Ben Plunkett, for help.

He added: "Ben was great - he checked in on me, kept in touch and was incredibly supportive when it came to the fundraising.

"He is a true friend."

The pub staged raffles and collections which helped the fundraising total to £3,500 which, once Gift Aid was added, equated to £4,375.

Ben said: "Sukie is an amazing guy - he's been coming here for years and everyone knows him for his Man United support.

"We wanted to do what we could to help - and it's no surprise, with Sukie's energy, that he raised so much."

The money was donated to the hospital's haematology clinic. Pictured (left to right) are Ben Plunkett, Sukie Sidhu and Facebook group admin Phil Allen.



THE CROWN RIVERS • HEATHROW, T5

GRAHAM AND JENNY KEEP FLYING HIGH AT HEATHROW



Pub managers Graham and Jenny Farr (pictured with son Luke), have been managing pubs at London's Heathrow Airport for the past 20 years.

Currently at The Crown Rivers (Heathrow, T5), they first joined Wetherspoon in September 1998 as a management couple, working at The Hope Tap (Reading).

Jenny recalled: "I had just turned 20, had finished catering college only in the July and, by the September, we had started with Wetherspoon. Graham had had previous experience working for a pub company."

Jenny, originally from Bedford, and Dublin-born Graham first met at school in south Wales.

Their first Wetherspoon pub together, as pub managers, came in 2002 at the newly opened The Central Bar (Shepherd's Bush), before taking on their first pub at Heathrow.

Graham and Jenny were married in 2003 and, by September 2004, had moved to their first pub at Heathrow – called Wetherspoon, in the old terminal two building.

Jenny said: "We have certainly seen some changes, not only with Wetherspoon, but at the airport too.

"It's a vibrant and exciting place to work and has worked perfectly for our family. With the extended hours which we have to operate at Heathrow, it has been possible to have a good work-life balance.

"Wetherspoon is fantastic with maternity leave and support with childcare, deserving to be recognised for this."

Their son Luke, now 17 (turning 18 in May), joined the team at The Crown Rivers in August 2023 as a 16-year-old floor associate.

Jenny explained: "Luke finished his GCSEs and didn't want to stay on for sixth form. He wanted to experience work and chose an apprenticeship with Wetherspoon."

Still under 18, Luke can do everything at work, except serving alcohol.

He works at The Crown Rivers three days a week and also, as part of his apprenticeship, studies online courses with Wetherspoon.

Jenny continued: "It is lovely to see him developing at work.

"He is naturally quite quiet, but the job has definitely helped him to come out of his shell.

"At the airport, we get to meet and converse with people from all around the world and, as a floor associate, he is in the thick of it.

"He is getting to see the real world and gaining in confidence."

Luke is currently studying his level 2 food and beverage apprenticeship and, when he turns 18, will step up to level 3.

Jenny confirmed: "He's looking forward to moving up to the next level of his apprenticeship, which will be a more supervisory role and the opportunity to do more. He can't wait for that new area of training."

She added: "We have had quite a few under-18s working with us, all studying for different things, and it is a great opportunity for them to develop a good work ethic.

"They don't all continue with Wetherspoon, but it sets them up for a good career, wherever that might be.

"College or university doesn't work for everybody – and apprenticeships can offer a great balance of work experience, getting a wage and gaining a qualification."

Meanwhile, Jenny and Graham's daughter, Jessica, also has an eye on a job with Wetherspoon.

Jenny concluded: "Jessica sometimes hears us talking about the pub and the airport, and she definitely has an opinion."

The company will have to wait a little longer for the next Farr family member, since Jessica is still just 12.

THE KING AND CASTLE • WINDSOR

REIGN OF PUB QUEEN VAL CELEBRATED IN WINDSOR



In February 2025, pub manager Val Docherty marked 29 years' work for Wetherspoon.

Val took over as pub manager at The King and Castle (Windsor) in 2006, where she is assisted by her two deputy managers, Jasmin Cunningham and Barbara Pleace, both also long-serving staff members.

Val started her Wetherspoon career at The Savoy (Swindon), joining the team as a bar associate when it first opened in February 1996, working her way up to pub manager there within four years.

Val remembered: "From The Savoy, I moved to The Imperial (Exeter), where I spent five years as pub manager at what has to be my favourite Wetherspoon pub.

"My time in Exeter was wonderful, at an amazing pub – and the happiest of times for my children and me.

"I then had a very, very brief spell (10 months) as an area manager in the southwest, before moving to The King and Castle."

The pub's location, opposite Windsor Castle, sees many visitors from overseas coming through its doors.

The King and Castle has three bars, across four floors of the pub, and a huge garden.

Val, now 60, confirmed: "We have a core regular gang of customers, yet, during the summer especially, we are jam packed full of tourists from all over the world – with our biggest-selling meal being fish and chips."

Val has two grown-up children, William (36), who previously worked for the company, and Ashlie (26), who is a shift leader at The King and Castle.

She added: "I brought them both up, for the majority of the time, on my own.

"It was tough, but I did it and did it well. I am very proud of them both."

Deputy manager Jasmin was already a shift manager at The King and Castle when Val arrived.

She has worked for Wetherspoon for 22 years, starting at Lloyds No.1 Bar in Slough (no longer a Wetherspoon pub), before moving to Windsor.

Deputy manager Barbara started as a bar associate 18 years ago and worked her way up quickly to management level.

She arrived at The King and Castle in the recruitment drive following the pub's year-long closure for refurbishment in 2006.

The pub has a core team of staff members, numbering around 30-35 during the winter, rising to 60-70 during the summer months, depending on demand.

Val said: "We have a strong and dedicated core team of staff here, which helps with the new recruits every year. Without them, we just couldn't do it."

Val concluded: "I guess at 60, my next step would be to move to a part-time role, before thinking about retirement, but I've got a few more years left in me yet."



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SHEFFIELD

LOADS AMONEY IN THE HOUSE AS BANKERS DRAFT REVISITS 80s



Pictured (left to right) are Nicole Stokes and Jody Williamson

Jody Williamson, a crossed-trained associate who works at The Bankers Draft (Sheffield), organised a fundraising night for a local charity close to her heart.

Jody hosted an 80s-themed night at the pub, with the help of her daughter and shift leader Kennedy Williamson, in aid of Weston Park Hospital.

Jody explained: "Weston Park is a cancer hospital which treated me when I had cancer in 2018. I always wanted to show my thanks with a fundraising event, and this was my chance."

"It was also in memory of bar associate Nicole Stokes's father, Mark Stokes, who was also looked after by Weston Park."

The evening, which raised £770.59 through cash and 'tap' donations, included raffles and live music from staff members and family.

Shift manager Cora Dene's daughter El, bar associate Vinnie Nicholls-Lee and shift leader Nathan Dunn all performed a mixture of music, to entertain a packed pub.

Jody concluded: "It was a fantastic night, the pub was absolutely rammmed and we raised a lot of money for the hospital."

"A big thankyou to everyone who supported us and especially to pub managers Jonathan Atkinson and Terrienne McHale for letting us host the event at the pub."

HATCH END

THE MOON AND SIXPENCE SHINES A LIGHT ON DIWALI

The Moon and Sixpence (Hatch End) staged its first Diwali celebration.

The idea to take part in the annual festival of lights, a joyful and colourful event marked by Hindus, Jains and Sikhs, came from customers.

Shift leader Serena Talwar led preparations for the evening, bringing in costumes and jewellery for staff, following a Southall shopping trip with shift manager Shirose Khusal.

Serena said: "We all dressed up in traditional Indian clothing and jewellery which was also practical for us to work in."

The night also raised £350 for Young Lives vs Cancer, with the sale of raffle tickets for prizes including a £40 gift card donated by a local pan-Asian restaurant.

All of this was set to a backdrop of colourful battery candles and tea lights, as well as Indian music, including a musician playing the 'dhol' (Indian drums).

Serena added: "Everyone gathered to watch, enjoy and dance to the music."

"The pub had an amazing atmosphere, with everyone enjoying themselves with their families and friends."

Pictured (left to right) are kitchen manager Chernise Gaffney, shift manager Shirose Khusal, bar associates Kriss Pattni, Kevin Baskaran and Lola Biggerstaff and shift leader Serena Talwar.





The Hay Stook



The Hay Stook (East Kilbride) Bar associate Beth Balloch supporting the Scottish poppy appeal

POUNDS POUR IN FOR POPPY APPEAL

The annual Royal British Legion (RBL) poppy appeal was supported, once again, by Wetherspoon's staff and customers.

Wetherspoon's pubs across England, Scotland and Wales, each with a collection box on the bar, displayed poppies for customers to receive in exchange for a donation.

Wetherspoon's head-office staff, based in Watford, also supported the appeal, as they do every year.

Numerous pubs also created their own red poppy displays, the symbol of remembrance, to show their support for the armed forces community and to mark the annual remembrance period.

The armed forces make sacrifices every day, so that we can enjoy our freedoms and way of life, so wearing or displaying a poppy shows the armed forces community that its service is appreciated.

Wetherspoon's people director, Tom Ball, said: "Wetherspoon is a very proud supporter of the annual RBL poppy appeal.

"The poppies sold at the company's pubs across the UK, as well as at head office, help the life of many serving and ex-serving personnel and their families.

"Thank you to all of our staff and customers who continue to donate to the RBL, through the annual poppy appeal, helping us in our support of a great cause."

The Royal British Legion's head of corporate partnerships, Ben France, said: "The Royal British Legion would like to thank Wetherspoon's pubs for their continued support in helping us to fundraise for the armed forces community during 2024's poppy appeal.

"The donations received from Wetherspoon's customers during the poppy appeal enable us to provide practical, emotional and financial support to the thousands of service personnel, veterans and their families who turn to us in their time of need."



The New Crown (Southgate) Team leader Kerry Burrough (left) and shift manager Katie Beresford



The Fire Station (Whitley Bay) Kitchen associate Robert Ellsbury (left) with customer Richard Bulloch



The John Fielding (Cwmbran) Pub manager Carol Cooper, bar associate Megan Steel and shift leader Jess Anastasi (left to right)

PERRANPORTH

CORNISH PUBS ASSIST AIR AMBULANCE TO STAY ALOFT



Three pubs in Cornwall are supporting a local charity with donations and fundraising efforts.

The Green Parrot (Perranporth), The Packet Station (Falmouth) and Try Dowl (Truro) have donated £100 each in support of the Cornwall Air Ambulance #Heli2Heroes campaign.

In recognition of the donation, the pubs' names are displayed on the new air ambulance helicopter, which was launched in January 2025.

Chelsea Bolton, shift manager at The Green Parrot, said: "Our pub is almost on the beach, close to the frequent helicopter emergency landing site, so it's a very local charity for us."

"In Cornwall, we all know how vital our emergency services are and how they are pushed to the limit during peak season.

"We are keen to support the charity with donations, as well as additional fundraising activities at the pub.

"Locals have come to the pub specifically to donate to the air ambulance, as it is a cause which resonates so deeply with customers."

A collection bucket on the bar, along with a quiz, lucky dip, name-the-teddy competition and a successful raffle have added these extra funds.

Chelsea concluded: "Huge thanks also to shift leader and charity champion Izzy Hunt for all of her fundraising ideas and activities, as well as to cleaner Jackie Stevens for her art projects also sold to raise funds."

Pictured (left to right) are Cornwall Air Ambulance fundraising officer Jen Morgan, shift leader and charity champion Izzy Hunt, shift manager Chelsea Bolton, team leader Felicity Singleton and Cornwall Air Ambulance volunteer Chris Hastings.



STALYBRIDGE

LISA AND SOCIETY ROOMS' KNITTING GROUP DELIVERS HEARTS AND SOUL



Shift manager Lisa Fulham has been helped by a local knitters group to repay an act of kindness which her family received from the Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital.

Lisa, who works at The Society Rooms (Stalybridge), sadly lost her father-in-law last year and was comforted by a thoughtful gift at the hospital.

Lisa explained: "Our family lost my father-in-law last year, through a heart condition. It was a condition we didn't know he had until just two weeks before he passed away in hospital.

"On the day he died, the hospital gave us a knitted heart – and it was a very touching thing in a time of sadness."

Lisa thought this knitted keepsake was specific to heart patients at the hospital.

However, when her local Tameside Hospital sent out an appeal for knitted hearts, it soon became apparent that it is something which every bereaved family receives in hospital.

Lisa continued: "At The Society Rooms, we have a group of knitters, called the Crafty Spooners, which meets weekly, on a Monday morning, and I asked them to help to make our local hospital some knitted hearts.

"It was something very personal to me – and they came through with flying colours, knitting more than 50 hearts to donate to the hospital."

Lisa concluded: "I am keen to raise awareness of this sad, yet lovely, thing hospitals are doing for families and loved-ones of patients in their care, who sadly pass away.

"The fact that our knitting group rose to the challenge also shines a light on the amazing community spirit we have at the pub.

"When I told my husband, Eric, who works as a shift manager at The J. P. Joule (Sale), he was very touched that the pub and its knitters were doing something to honour his dad, as well as helping other families."

Shift manager Lisa Fulham is pictured (front) with the knitters.

DARWEN

OLD CHAPEL TAG TEAM SENDS GIFTS TO CHILDREN

The Old Chapel (Darwen) linked up with a local hospital charity to collect Christmas presents for children.

Gift tags were put on a Christmas tree in the pub for customers to collect and then buy a gift for a child in hospital over Christmas.

Shift manager Tammy Byron said: "We heard about the charity project and wanted to do something to help. Customers were very generous in either bringing gifts in for us or taking them directly to a local hub."

The project mission was run by ELHT & Me – the official charity of East Lancashire Health Trust.

Pictured are customer Tommy Hannon and charity champion and shift leader Caitlin Hollern.



BEAN MEANS ALES, AS BREWER FROM THREE ACRE BRINGS WARES

The Humphrey Bean (Tonbridge) hosted a meet-the-brewer evening featuring ales from Three Acre.

Customers chatted with head brewer Chester Broad as they sampled Extra Pale, Session Pale, Best Bitter, Skylark Stout and Christmas Old Ale.

The Uckfield-based brewery has been supplying The Humphrey Bean for most of its five-year history.

The company was invited to host the event by shift manager Chandler Waller, pictured left with Chester Broad.

Chandler said: "It was a good turn-out. We had a large group from West Kent Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), who were overjoyed with the ales on offer."

A mini cask of Christmas Old Ale was raffled on the night, raising £250 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



HISTORY FANS KEVIN AND SANDRA CELEBRATE THEIR 200TH SPOON



Wetherspoon fans Kevin and Sandra Best are pictured visiting their 200th Wetherspoon pub – The Foley Arms Hotel (Great Malvern).

The couple, living in Bexleyheath, Kent, stayed overnight as they celebrated the milestone, notched up since 2021.

They even had special balloons made and T-shirts printed for the occasion.

Kevin has taken pictures of all of the pubs to which he and his wife have been, including their 100th, The Queen Hotel (Aldershot) and their 150th, The Catherine Wheel (Henley-on-Thames).

Kevin said: "Three years ago, we started incorporating Wetherspoon pubs into our itinerary on trips to various places.

"The staff always seem happy to chat.

"The pubs have a nice atmosphere and an extensive menu with vegan options, which is important as Sandra is vegan.

"We also like to look into the history of the pubs, with our favourites being The Star (Hoddesdon), Royal Victoria Pavilion (Ramsgate), Hamilton Hall (Liverpool Street station, London) and The King and Castle (Windsor)."

Their 200-pub journey has taken them to Wales, Scotland, airport pubs and English counties and cities, including Norfolk, Suffolk and Liverpool.

In August, they plan a return to The West Kirk (Ayr) to celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary.

It was among the first pubs visited when they started their Wetherspoon pilgrimage.

SING, WREN, YOU'RE WINNING (AGAIN)



The Furze Wren (Bexleyheath) Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2024 winner

The Furze Wren (Bexleyheath) has been crowned champion of the Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2024 pub staff charity football tournament.

The team from southeast London, also the trophy-winner in 2023, retained the title by beating The White House (Luton) 1-0 in the national finals at Goals (Wembley).

The annual fundraising event, which first started in 2002, saw 14 teams battling it out in the 2024 final.

It had whittled down from an initial number of more than 400 competing sides, from pubs across England, Scotland and Wales.

In the runners-up plate competition, The Drabbet Smock (Haverhill) beat The Crown Rivers (Heathrow T5) 3-2 in their final.

The other finalists were The Dolphin & Anchor (Chichester), The Imperial (Exeter), The Counting House (Glasgow), The Moon Under Water (Cheltenham), The Bottle of Sack (Sutton Coldfield), The Golden Beam (Headingley, Leeds), The Mile Castle (Newcastle), The North Western (Liverpool), The White House (Leicester) and The Wagon & Horses (Chapelton, Sheffield).

Wetherspoon's general manager, Richard Marriner, said: "A big thankyou to Sarah Smith and Emilie Scholes from Young Lives vs Cancer for organising this year's event.

"More than 400 teams signed up to take part this year – and we have collectively raised an incredible £380,000."

Young Lives vs Cancer's partnerships fundraiser, Sarah Smith, said: "It was great to be at the final.

"Thanks so much to everyone at Wetherspoon for their part in organising this year's event.

"The fundraising total of £380,000 is absolutely fantastic – and the money will make a huge difference to the children and young people with cancer whom we support."

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

Its specialist social workers help families from the moment of diagnosis, with both emotional and financial support, from helping to access grants and benefits to liaising with schools and employers, as well as being someone to talk to and to listen to what they need.

The charity's Homes from Home also offer a free place to stay near to hospitals during treatment, meaning that families can remain together.

● **For more information about Young Lives vs Cancer, visit: www.younglivesvscancer.org.uk**



The White House (Luton) Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2024 runner-up



The Drabbet Smock (Haverhill) Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2024 plate competition winner



The Crown Rivers (Heathrow T5) Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2024 plate competition runner-up



Goals (Wembley) Kick for Young Lives vs Cancer 2024 finalists

MALTBY

FREE FOOD AND FESTIVITIES FOR MALTBY SENIOR SQUAD



Free Christmas party tickets were handed out to 35 senior citizens at The Queens Hotel (Maltby).

Money was raised by staff for several months through customer donations to fund a party at the pub, including a Buck's fizz on arrival, Christmas dinner with a drink, mince pies – and a Carol service.

The Maltby Churches Together Choir reeled off festive favourites, one after another, as the party guests joined in.

The event was co-hosted by The Combined Churches of Maltby.

Pub manager Beth Burns said: "It was a really great occasion; such a lovely atmosphere.

"We had groups of friends, people on their own... it was one of the best events we've ever done here."

Beth is pictured (centre) with some of the party guests.

OLDBURY

OLDBURY FOUR HAVE KIDS IN MIND AS THEY CLIMB YR WYDDFA

Plucky shift manager James Waltho led a team of four from The Court of Requests (Oldbury) up Yr Wyddfa (or Mount Snowdon) to raise more than £1,000 for a charity which helps child victims of domestic abuse.

James was joined by three former colleagues, Jessie Perkins and Lewis and John Firkin, all of whom worked at the pub as a kitchen associate.

The effort, in aid of Kids in Mind, was inspired by customer Bill Elliott who is involved with the charity.

Pub manager Jodie Harvey said: "They did it all in a day, including the drive from here to Yr Wyddfa and back, despite wet and windy weather. It was a great effort."

The intrepid group was recognised with a certificate signed by the local Rotary Club and Kids in Mind.

Pictured (left to right) are West Bromwich Rotary Club president Bill Elliott, pub manager Jodie Harvey and shift manager James Waltho.



PUB-GOERS REGALED WITH MORE TALES OF THE REGAL

The Regal (Gloucester) staged a second book launch in six months as author Ross Campbell unveiled the second volume of his history of the building.

Ross used the venue to launch Regal, Gloucester 'Now & Forever' Vol.1 back in May 2024.

The book documents the life of the former cinema on the site from the 1920s until 1962.

Vol.2 begins with The Beatles in 1963, coming bang up-to-date with Wetherspoon in 2024.

Ross said: "All the history has been gleaned from local newspapers. It's been thoroughly enjoyable and interesting, as I'm a cinema manager myself.

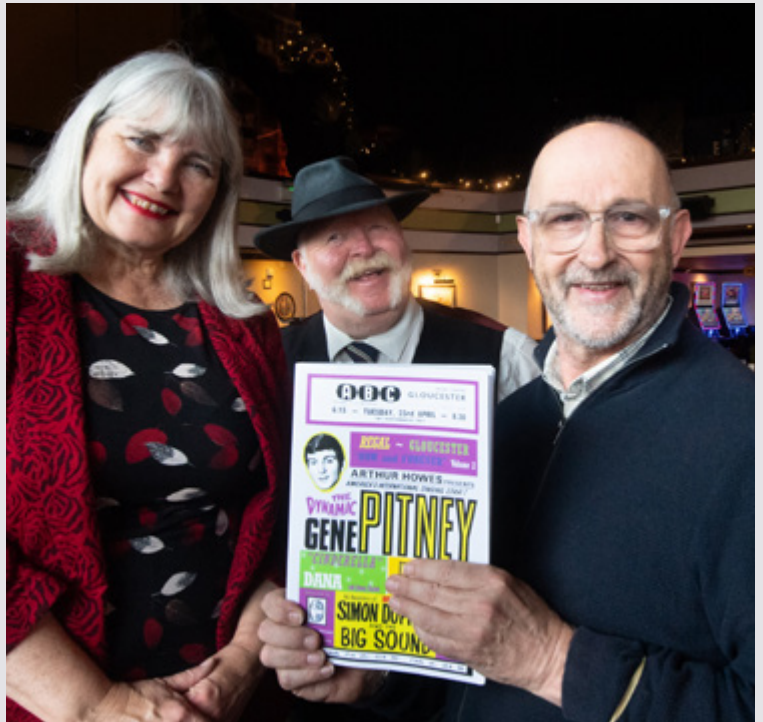
"I'm so grateful to the pub's staff for helping me to get the books out there."

Vol.1 has been nominated for the prestigious Alan Ball History Award, recognising outstanding contributions in local history publishing.

Ross and his wife, Cllr Lorraine Campbell, Mayor of Gloucester, are regulars at the pub, coming in to meet friends at the end of the week.

Pub manager Hatty Wright said: "We were happy to help Ross, as he's one of our regulars and always friendly and happy to chat. We wish him well with this second volume."

Pictured (left to right) are Lorraine Campbell, contributor and Gloucester's Guinness World Record-holding town crier Alan Wyatt and author Ross Campbell.



CASH LANDS WITH THUMP AT WISHAW MALT, THANKS TO SKYDIVE AND THE FREE-FALL OF HAIR

Shift manager Nicola Goldie is pictured shaving pub manager Gareth Fuller's head as part of a pub birthday celebration at The Wishaw Malt (Wishaw).

Staff spent six months planning the events to mark the Scottish pub's 25th birthday.

Gareth volunteered for the charity head-shave as part of a series of events which raised £3,760 for the pub's chosen charity – Young Lives vs Cancer.

Key to the effort was skydiver and bar associate Bobbi Kennedy, who jumped 10,000 feet above Strathallan Airfield, raising £1,700, while Ross Taylor contributed £204 by running the Edinburgh half marathon (see pictures).

Nicola said: "We started planning the event in March, even though the 25th birthday was not until October.

"We are delighted with the success of the celebrations and the money raised.

"Our customers celebrated the milestone with a birthday cake."

The pub, formerly a furniture store, first opened its doors in October 1999.

Its two longest-serving staff are kitchen manager Louise Lindsay and cleaner Anne Clinton, who started in 2003, within months of each other.





The Crossed Peels (Stirling) A wee St Andrew's Day dram for customers Arlene Preston (left) and Jan Palmer

SCOTS SPOILED FOR CHOICE ON ST ANDREW'S DAY

Wetherspoon's pubs across Scotland celebrated St Andrew's Day - with a three-day celebration of Scottish craft beer, gin, whisky and real ale.

Customers enjoyed the range of drinks at lower-than-normal prices.

The pubs served Belhaven 80 Shilling and BrewDog Punk IPA, as well as regional craft cans Fierce IPA, Loch Lomond Zoom Time and Stewart Brewing New Relic. The special offer's drinks also included Glenmorangie single-malt whisky, as well as Edinburgh Gin Rhubarb & Ginger liqueur.

Additionally, Loch Lomond The Gloaming, a dark red beer, was available.

Wetherspoon's general manager, Scotland, Helen Dumbreck, said: "The three-day celebration was a great opportunity for customers to enjoy some great-value Scottish drinks and to celebrate St Andrew's Day for longer than just the day itself."



The Corn Exchange (Arbroath) Customers Sally Beattie and Ian Reid enjoy a Scottish gin

The Carrick Stone (Cumbernauld) Regular customers John Semple (left) and Mike Nelson enjoy a St Andrew's Day pint



The Great Glen (Fort William) Customers Aidan Jenkins (left) and Phil Hughes have a pint and a chat

MARGIE CLOCKS UP 25 YEARS, SETTING SIGHTS ON 25 MORE



Full-time kitchen associate Margie McNally (centre) is pictured celebrating 25 years' service at Wetherspoons (Gateshead).

Hailing from Sunderland, Margie has worked at the pub in the Metro Centre, near Newcastle, happy in her role, for all of those 25 years.

Margie said: "It's quite an achievement really and absolutely fantastic. "I am proud of it.

"We have a fantastic team at Wetherspoons, a lovely kitchen manager in Megan Hughes and it is a very busy pub.

"There have been so many changes over the years, but, as times have changed, the company has adapted – and you certainly never get two days the same."

Margie, 52, added: "Here's to the next 25 years, hopefully, if I can and all being well health-wise."

Pictured with Margie (left to right) are her former pub manager (more than 20 years) at Wetherspoons Bill Alderson (now at The Wouldhave (South Shields)), kitchen shift leader Jill Brown, area manager Lauren Bell and pub manager at Wetherspoons Kelly Graham.

LINFORD ARMS' FOLK ROLL OUT THE BARRELS SO ALE FLOWS AT FESTIVAL

The Linford Arms (Cannock) has sponsored the local Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) beer festival for the ninth year in a row.

The pub, managed by Andrew Johnston, donates polo shirts for all staff and, along with other Wetherspoon pubs in the area, provides licensed managers to run the bars at the three-day event at the Prince of Wales theatre in the Staffordshire town.

Andrew said: "This is the ninth year in a row we have sponsored and participated in the festival – and it's always extremely enjoyable.

"As we are already licensed to sell alcohol, it saves the festival organisers the cost and time of organising that themselves."

The event featured 45 cask ales, 15 ciders and perries, five keg beers and a bottle bar. There was also live music and food.

Pictured (left to right) are Vicky Phillips, pub manager at The Hedgeford Lodge (Hednesford), Andrew Johnston, shift manager Jonathan Titley of The Plaza (Rugeley), bar associate Carol Pearson and shift leader John Bayliss-Fox of The Linford Arms.



BRIDGEND

SPOOKY FUN AT WYNDHAM ARMS HOTEL GIVES SCHOOL A LEG-UP

When hotel manager Lisa Driscoll was told of the plight of a specialist school, she and her staff stepped in to help.

Lisa, who works at The Wyndham Arms Hotel (Bridgend), was told that Y Bont School was in severe financial difficulties.

A Halloween fun-day at the pub was the culmination of three weeks' fundraising which raised £3,252 for the Bridgend school, whose primary-aged pupils have complex needs.

The town's mayor, Mayor Cllr Ian Williams, and his wife, Nicola, attended the fundraiser, featuring pumpkin-carving, apple-carving, fancy dress and face-painting.

Dozens of local children and their families came along.

Prizes donated by local businesses, including vouchers from hairdressers, tattooists and food retailers, featured in a raffle.

Lisa said: "I know how vital this school is for the children who attend it and their families.

"We were thrilled with the event and especially the total funds raised."

Cllr Williams added: "Lisa has turned The Wyndham Arms Hotel into a community-driven pub – now a central meeting place for many groups.

"I would personally like to thank Lisa and all of her colleagues."



Pictured (left to right) are former Bridgend mayor David Unwin, team leader Lilly Colarusso, hotel manager Lisa Driscoll, 'wizard' Josh Rogers, Bridgend mayor Cllr Ian Williams, his wife Nicola and bar associates Aaliyah West and Faith David.

STALYBRIDGE

A FULL HOUSE FOR HALLOWEEN BINGO AT THE SOCIETY ROOMS

Approximately 75 people packed into the conservatory at The Society Rooms (Stalybridge) for a Halloween bingo night.

Staff dressed for the occasion, with prizes up for grabs, including Halloween chocolates.

Shift manager Johnny Nicoll, who organised the event, said: "We do a monthly bingo night and it's a great community event.

"This time, we decided to theme it around Halloween – and it proved extremely popular."

The top prize for a full house was £50, with other prizes including wine.

Pictured (left to right) are shift manager Corrina Bates, bar associate Chloe Jackson, shift manager Johnny Nicoll and floor associate Ellie Harman.



MALTBY

PUMPKIN SOUP CAUSES STIR FOR MALTBY MINORS



During Halloween, 100 children carved faces into 100 pumpkins at The Queens Hotel (Maltby).

The event was planned by pub manager Beth Burns with the Maltby Community Hub, which provided funding for the event.

Beth said: "We gave away 100 free tickets to local children... and everyone turned up."

Duty manager Sophie Wilcox cooked pumpkin soup for the children to enjoy and stay warm.

The children were then given a bag of ingredients so that they could (under supervision) make their own soup at home.

Sophie is pictured with her children Charlie (left) and Archie.

DARTS PLAYER LOSES LOCKS AS TEAMMATES LOOK SHARP

The darts team at The Three Hulats (Leeds) raised £488 for Young Lives vs Cancer through a Christmas raffle – and a head-shave.

A remote-control car, wine and board games were raffled, before Andy Pattison volunteered to have his head shaved by fellow darts players Eric Papa (pictured left) and Andrew Stubbs.

All three are customers at the pub, and the darts team stages two fundraisers each year for the charity, one in the summer and one at Christmas. Pub manager Graham Church said: "They're a great bunch – and we'd like to thank all of them for their fundraising efforts – on this occasion, particularly Andy."



NO FEAR OF SNAKEBITES AS RATTLER UNLEASHED

Guest ale Ripley Rattler was on sale as The Red Lion (Ripley) celebrated its 25th birthday.

The pale ale taking centre stage on the day is brewed by Nottingham Brewery.

Customers also enjoyed a slice of birthday cake brought in by pub manager Vickie Collins.

She said: "We decided to give our guest ale prominence as it's a local brew which bears the name of our town."

Pictured are team leader Sinead Slater (left) with pub manager Vickie Collins outside The Red Lion on its 25th birthday.

VETERAN STAFF, AND CUSTOMER, CELEBRATE PUB'S 12TH BIRTHDAY

Four staff members at An Ruadh-Ghleann (Rutherglen) had special reason to celebrate the pub's 12th birthday.

The four, manager Kat Scouler, kitchen manager Steven Fountain and cleaners Alison McKeown and Bernadette Foyer, have worked at the pub since it first opened in December 2012.

Customer Ian Lewis also remembers that day, as he's been visiting the pub from day one.

Ian (pictured centre) and newer additions to the staff, bar associate Megan McNeil and shift manager Shaun Bowman, joined in the celebrations of the pub's anniversary, which saw it decorated with balloons as cake was shared round.

Shaun said: "It's a lovely pub to work in because the team members work so well together, and the customers are wonderful."



The Brockley Barge (Brockley)

Well done folks!
£7,060
...raised for our chosen charity.



A huge fundraising team effort at The Brockley Barge (Brockley) saw the south London pub raise more than £7,000 during 2024.

Pub manager Cesar Kimbirima's team members ensured that their pub finished second in the regional fundraising league table.

A host of regular fundraising activities throughout the year included a monthly bingo night and quiz night, weekly bonus ball events, raffles and tombolas, as well as seasonal fundraisers with hampers and Santa visits.

Shift manager and charity champion, Michelle Molloy and shift leader and event host Leian Jackman head up the activities, with kitchen shift leader Tony Osbourne (from The Watch House (Lewisham)) on hand to call numbers and pose questions at the bingo and quiz nights.

Leian said: "We try to come up with new ideas, get the whole team involved and keep our brilliant regular customers happy with cash prizes and opportunities to win gifts."

"It is a real team effort – and we are so proud of how much we continue to raise for the company's amazing charity."

Pictured (left to right) are Cesar, Tony, Michelle and Leian.

The Black Bull Inn (Bangor)

Well done folks!
£350
...raised for our chosen charity.



Staff from The Black Bull Inn (Bangor) walked 19 miles of the Welsh coastal path, raising £350.

They took in the scenery on the path from Llandudno to Bangor via the pretty pass at Penmaenmawr.

Shift leader Debbie Jones, who led the expedition, said: "We were lucky with the weather; it was very nice, so we were able to enjoy the beautiful scenery in this part of Wales."

A group of nine was joined at Conwy by shift manager Callum Schofield.

Pictured (left to right, back row) are team leader Kat Kelly, bar associate Oak Radford, kitchen team leader Luke Smith, kitchen shift leader Becca Goddard, shift manager Mary Benton and pub manager Stacey-Marie Taylor, with (left to right, front row) team leaders Jake Mastroilli and James Adams and shift leader Debbie Jones.

Well done folks!
£340
...raised for our chosen charity.

The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield)



A local brass band blew in the festive season brilliantly at The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield).

The local band, the Woodhouse Prize Band, played for almost 90 minutes as everyone joined in with the carols.

A bucket was passed around to collect funds for the pub's chosen charity, with a total of £340 raised.

Shift manager Hayley Martin said: "The band was superb, and parents brought their children to see and enjoy the music and carols."

Band members hold their instruments in our picture, with team leader Zane Bradley (elf's outfit), pub manager Ricky Brown (centre) and shift manager Hayley Martin (black shirt).

The Liquorice Gardens (Worksop)

Well done folks!
£180
...raised for our chosen charity.



The Liquorice Gardens (Worksop) hosted a Harry Potter party at Halloween, for children.

The party raised £180. Adults paid £1.50 for their children to enter a fancy-dress competition, while a quiz and tabletop treasure sale also helped to bump up the fundraising total.

Fancy-dress competition winner Piper Clay, aged four (pictured with sister Micah), made a Harry Potter Book of Spells from old copies of Wetherspoon News.

Kitchen manager Kate Nott said: "It was a great day – and we are very grateful to everyone who took part and contributed to the fundraising total."

Pictured (left to right) are team leader Michael Chambers, bar associate Hannah Nott, kitchen manager Kate Nott, shift manager Laura Jepson, bar associate Kelsie Hughes and team leaders Teoni Duke and Jade Mallon.



The Sir Nigel Gresley (Swadlincote)

Well done folks!
£625
...raised for our
chosen charity.



Mourners donated £625 to Wetherspoon's chosen charity, following the death of Christopher Wilkinson (pictured), the father of kitchen shift leader Robyn Winterton, who works at The Sir Nigel Gresley (Swadlincote).

When the funeral was announced, the family asked for donations to be made to the charity.

Pub manager Rob Winterton, Robyn's partner, said: "Christopher was my father-in-law and always loved to hear about the pub, what it was like working there and so on.

"He was very proud when Robyn started working for the company in December 2010.

"We are pleased that so much money was raised in his memory."

The Boot Inn (Burnley)

Well done folks!
£215
...raised for our
chosen charity.



Shift leader and charity champion Connor Birnie (pictured right), team leader Warren Stewart (left) and pub manager John Rogers took part in November by each growing a moustache.

The fundraising trio, all working at The Boot Inn (Burnley), collectively raised £215.

Connor went one step further and dyed his new moustache pink, while John shaved his off before the photograph was taken, because his partner hated it so much.

The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew)

Well done folks!
£150
...raised for our
chosen charity.



Blinged-up bottles, homemade coasters and cushions featured in a Christmas fayre at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew).

Local crafters ran stalls at the festive fayre, assisted by pub manager Donna Walker and charity champion Rob MacLauchlan.

Crafters paid £10 per stall and organised a raffle, with prizes including the goods on sale. Some of the stall-holders also donated takings.

A total of £150 was raised for the pub's chosen charity.

Pictured are some of the crafters with charity champion Rob MacLauchlan (second from left) and pub manager Donna Walker (third right).

The Coinage Hall (Helston)

Well done folks!
£420
...raised for our
chosen charity.



Shift leader Tiegian Haddon and her parents (also customers), Mark and Paula, pulled out all the stops by organising a bumper raffle charity fundraiser in the run-up to Christmas.

Among the list of prizes up for grabs at The Coinage Hall (Helston) were a children's ride-on motor car, slow cooker, pizza oven, dual airfryer, barista coffee machine and Harrods 2024 Christmas Teddy bears.

The draw took place in the pub, with £420 collected.

Shift manager Liam Pidwell said: "Tiegian, Paula and Mark (pictured left to right) worked incredibly hard in the pub most days, selling tickets and then sourcing prizes.

"We are very grateful to them and wanted to see them recognised with a huge thankyou."

Wetherspoons (Milton Keynes)



Well done folks!
£1,073
 ...raised for our chosen charity.

A team from Wetherspoons (Milton Keynes) made a long weekend of it as they travelled to Wales to conquer Mount Snowdon for charity.

The six-strong squad raised £1,073 through their efforts and scaled the 1,085-metre peak in just five hours and 15 minutes.

Shift manager Ryan O'Dell said: "It was gorgeous – such beautiful scenery. A few of us struggled, but the others helped them and made sure that they were OK."

The team set off for Wales on a Friday night, staying over Saturday and returning on the Sunday after lunch.

Pictured (left to right) are shift leaders Kiesha Cantliffe and Tom Stones, shift manager Ryan O'Dell, team leader Jess Leigh, shift manager Emily Saunders and team leader Joe Cowley.

The Horseshoe (Wombwell)



Well done folks!
£200
 ...raised for our chosen charity.

Brave young customers fearlessly defended a Christmas tree at The Horseshoe (Wombwell), when it came under attack from none other than... The Grinch!"

As the green-faced Christmas-hating Dr Seuss character mockingly threatened to push over the tree, about 30 children rushed to fend him off.

In the end, though, the spirit of Christmas prevailed – with The Grinch (in magnanimous defeat) even handing out presents to the children.

The battle of the tree was the finale to a morning of events which had begun with a craft session in which the youngsters made Christmas cards for The Grinch.

Pub manager Dani Semmens said: "It was a lot of fun. The Grinch put up a good fight, but was no match for a bunch of children who love everything about Christmas."

The £200 was raised, from ticket sales and donations on the day, for the pub's chosen charity.

Dani and nephew Henry Semmens are pictured with The Grinch (from Powered Up Parties).

The Winter Gardens (Harrogate)



Well done folks!
£180
 ...raised for our chosen charity.

Santa made an appearance at The Winter Gardens (Harrogate) to hand out books to children.

Floor associate Luciana Schimtd donned her Christmas outfit and ensured that every child received a book.

The event raised £180.30 for the pub's chosen charity as parents paid for their children to meet Santa and receive a book.

Pictured (left to right) are floor associates Luciana Schimtd, Evie Skinner and Daisy Bielby, with pub manager Will Thornton (as Santa).

The Central Bar (Carrickfergus)



Well done folks!
£220
 ...raised for our chosen charity.

More than 20 children were served a Christmas breakfast at The Central Bar (Carrickfergus).

And as well as the festive food, children were treated to an arts-and-crafts class and got to sing their favourite carols.

While the children were eating, Santa turned up to deliver a present to each one.

Entry fees paid by parents raised £220.

Pictured (left to right) are Remi, mum Lynda and Sage Bennett doing some festive colouring-in while having a meal.

Pictured at the event (left to right) are Santa with little helper Poppy Cook and Max and Darcy Dillon.



The Last Post (Southend-on-Sea) and The Elms (Leigh-on-Sea)



A team of nine adventurers from two Essex pubs raised £1,200 by taking part in a major obstacle race.

The team from The Last Post (Southend-on-Sea) and The Elms (Leigh-on-Sea) travelled to Brentwood for the Nuclear Fallout Race.

Obstacles included a six-metre free-fall deathslide, a 15-lane zip-wire into water, 120-metre permanent steel gorilla bars and a four-storey-deep secret nuclear bunker.

Shift manager Kye Skilton, from The Last Post, who led the intrepid team, said: "The race consisted of gruelling tests, obstacles, muddy swamps and challenges which we overcame as a team. It was by far the most challenging experience which a lot of us have undertaken."

Young Lives vs Cancer provided branded tops made for participants, while friends, families, colleagues and customers donated to the cause.

Eight of the team were from The Last Post. They were joined by kitchen manager Reece Castle from The Elms.

Pictured (left to right, back row) are kitchen manager Rory Cook, shift manager Kye Skilton, bar associate Kieran Chipps, shift leader Reece Clifford, kitchen manager Reece Castle and shift manager Marc Buckingham; (front row) shift leader Katie Countess and team leaders Tommy Gordon and Eleanor Dunn.

The Spread Eagle (Acocks Green, Birmingham)



A Christmas raffle at The Spread Eagle (Acocks Green, Birmingham) raised £367.

Prizes included a toy reindeer, a hamper, a case of red wine, other alcoholic drinks and a voucher for a meal for two (with a bottle of wine) at the pub.

Shift manager Helen Jackson said: "It was a lot of fun – and we're very grateful to our loyal customers for their wonderful support."

Helen is pictured (left) with pub manager Jayne Bick.

The Crown Rivers (Heathrow, T5)



In the fundraising year to July 2024, the team at The Crown Rivers (Heathrow, T5) raised more than £3,000.

The team is pictured with pub manager Jenny Farr at one of the Friday fundraising Pink Days, dressed in various pink clothing (the charity's recognisable colour), raising awareness and funds for the cause.

The weekly Pink Day, organised by shift manager Jordan Gomes, collected £3,029.13 during the year, through generous donations, as well as purchases of sweets and charity pin badges.

Pictured (left to right), celebrating their achievement, are bar associates Klaudia Siwec and Anna Keery, shift manager Kieran Bray, team leader Abbey Mitchell, bar associate Sola Bello, pub manager Jenny Farr, bar associate Daniella D'Souza, shift leader Tania Vieira (front), floor associates David Mascarenhas (back) and Pim Jones, shift managers Dimple Fernandes and Daniel Goncalves and bar associate John Vaz.

The Plaza (Rugeley)



Pub manager Sian Siddall and the team at The Plaza (Rugeley) took full advantage of the Staffordshire town's festive celebrations.

To coincide with the Rugeley Town Christmas lights' switch-on, the pub held a charity stall outside the front of the pub, raising £365.94.

Sian (pictured left) and bar associate Jade Gallier (right) sold homemade door wreaths, reindeer food bags, Christmas pin badges, knitted snowmen and other Christmas tree decorations, as well as some children's activity bags.

Sian said: "We also had a name-the-elf competition and a Christmas hamper raffle, which continued throughout December, as well as a Christmas quiz night."

With a festive fundraising target of £500, throughout December, The Plaza managed to collect £664.

The Bridge House (Belfast)



Well done folks!
£1,108
...raised for our chosen charity.

More than £1,100 was raised as The Bridge House (Belfast) ran a Christmas prize draw.

Top prize was a £60 Wetherspoon gift voucher, and there was also a sumptuous festive hamper to be won.

Pub manager Alice Treasure said: "We were thrilled to sell more than 400 tickets in the run-up to Christmas.

"Tickets were £1 each or £3 for a strip, so it was very affordable and we did really well, thanks to customers' generosity."

Pictured (left to right) is Santa (aka shift manager Rob Brazendale) with bar associate Aoife Hagan and pub manager Alice Treasure.

The Queens Hotel (Maltby)



Well done folks!
£750
...raised for our chosen charity.

A childhood friendship between a rock musician and a football club chairman helped The Queens Hotel (Maltby) to raise £750.

Keiran White is the chairman of Maltby Main Football Club, originally formed in 1916 as a miners' team.

He went to school with Matt Nicholls, drummer with award-winning band Bring Me The Horizon.

Kieran donated a signed football shirt for a raffle at the pub, while Matt announced that he and other band members would be present to meet customers and give the raffle a boost.

Pub manager Beth Burns said: "We've known Keiran and Matt for a while. They've been friends since school and are Maltby through and through.

"Customers rose to the occasion – and Kieran and Matt made a real difference to the raffle."

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Beth Burns with Maltby Main FC chair Kieran White, Bring Me The Horizon drummer Matt Nicholls and duty manager Eleanor Hill.

The Henry Bessemer (Workington)



Well done folks!
£1,364
...raised for our chosen charity.

Pub maintenance man and firefighter George Wilson set himself a target, for 2024, of running 2,024km.

George, husband of shift manager Sarah Wilson at The Henry Bessemer (Workington), ran the Manchester Marathon in April, the 70-mile ultramarathon The Wall in June, the Cumbrian Run in October and the Great North Run in September.

Despite being injured six weeks before, during and six weeks after completing the 70-mile ultramarathon, George (55) dug deep in December to run 260km in just one month – 105km of that in the final seven days of the year.

In doing so, he raised £1,364 for the pub's chosen charity.

Pub manager Kirsty Hands, pictured with George, said:

"The target which he set himself is the equivalent of 48 marathons.

"It really is a remarkable achievement."

The Court Leet (Ormskirk)



Well done folks!
£1,070
...raised for our chosen charity.

Pub manager Lisa Newton has discovered the benefits of a daily cold dip – while raising more than £1,000 for the pub's chosen charity at The Court Leet (Ormskirk).

Lisa, together with shift manager Nikita McMullan and kitchen shift manager Rachael Kershaw, took the Daily Dip challenge – which meant submerging themselves in a pod of iced water, in various locations, every day for a month.

Lisa said: "There's a lot to be said for it. Cold baths, showers and pod dipping gives you a really good feeling – it's revitalising, invigorating and great for the circulation."

Since Lisa completed the challenge, she's continued cold baths at home. "I take a cold bath before work – it really focuses the mind."

Pictured (left to right) are Nikita, Lisa and Rachael.

DIANE AND NEW DIAMOND BEER SPARKLE AT PUB'S 25TH BIRTHDAY

A commemorative beer was made to celebrate the 25th birthday of The Observatory (Ilkeston).

The beer, named Diamond, is a 4.2% IPA brewed by Nottingham Brewery.

Customers enjoyed the beer, together with a slice of birthday cake, to mark the birthday.

For some staff members, including kitchen manager Diane Humphries (pictured right), it was a time to reminisce.

She has worked at the pub since it first opened in November 1999.

Duty manager Anouska Abraham said: "We have been serving beers from Nottingham Brewery for several years – and the fact that it made a commemorative beer for the pub highlights that relationship.

"It proved very popular with customers."

Pictured (left to right) are cleaner and bar associate Sue Phillips, customer Roger Martin, pub manager Paul Ellgood, Anouska Abraham and Diane Humphries.



SPOOKY GOINGS-ON AT THE SPREAD EAGLE



Pub manager Jayne Bick has been bringing the Halloween wow factor to The Spread Eagle (Acocks Green, Birmingham) for more than 10 years.

Jayne spends a lot of time designing and making displays, using items which she buys or makes herself, including scary spiders, ghoulish ghosts and clanking chains.

Shift manager Helen Jackson said: "Customers absolutely adore Jayne's displays and appreciate the time and effort which she puts into them."

All of Jayne's work was on display at the most recent Halloween festival as customers, children and staff dressed for the occasion.

Pictured (left to right) are pub manager Jayne Bick, cleaner and floor associate Wai Kong and shift manager Helen Jackson.

FOLLICLES FALL FREELY AT WINTER GARDENS

Yorkshire's best barbers brought their skills to The Winter Gardens (Harrogate) to offer staff haircuts – with prices at a snip.

Cube Barbers of Bingley picked up the 'best barbers in Yorkshire' title at the annual Business Awards' regional finals.

Owner Joe Connolly went to school with the pub's manager, Will Thornton.

Will said: "After the awards, we started chatting about what we could do together.

"Ideas started to generate and it went from there."

Joe and fellow owner George Thomson offered staff the opportunity to have a haircut for just £10, with 24 taking up Cube Barbers on the offer – with all proceeds going to Young Lives vs Cancer.

As well as Will and Joe's friendship, there is another connection between Cube and Wetherspoon – trainee

stylist Nico Mori (see picture) is also a bar associate at The Myrtle Grove (Bingley).

Will said: "Rather than a charity head-shave, we decided to offer normal haircuts – our staff looked very smart afterwards."

Joe added: "The Winter Gardens is one of the grandest venues in Yorkshire, and hosting a pop-up barber shop there was not only a privilege, but also a groundbreaking moment.

"We're proud to be the first barber shop to partner with Wetherspoon.

"The pop-up wasn't just about haircuts. It was a chance to give back and to raise awareness and funds for Young Lives vs Cancer."

Pictured (left to right) are Cube owner Joe Connolly, manager Will Thornton, Cube owner George Thomson and stylist and Myrtle Grove bar associate Nico Mori.



Follow Cube Barbers on Instagram: @cubebarsbingley

JANUARY SALE
Round-up



The Henry Bell (Helensburgh) Customers Lizzie Hartley and Josh Cairney enjoy a meal during the sale

MORE THAN ALE IN THIS JANUARY SALE

Pub-goers enjoyed a January sale at Wetherspoon's pubs.

The drinks featured in the sale included real ale (Worthington's, Ruddles and Doom Bar), Coldwater Creek wine (Chardonnay, pinot grigio, rosé and merlot), a range of low-alcohol and alcohol-free drinks (Guinness 0.0, 0% cocktails, Gordon's 0.0 pink gin (served with a mixer), Corona Cero, BrewDog Punk AF, Stella Artois Alcohol Free, Heineken 0.0, Erdinger, Thatchers Zero %, Koppaberg Alcohol Free, Adnams Ghost Ship and Beck's Blue) and a selection of soft drinks, including Pepsi Max, Pepsi Max Cherry and R White's lemonade.

The pubs also offered Lavazza coffee, tea and hot chocolate, including free refills.

Customers enjoyed savings on food also, with three burger meal deals (including chips and a drink) – the 3oz

American burger, 3oz classic beef burger and crunchy chicken strip burger.

There were also three breakfast offers – a choice of any muffin (including one containing fried egg, sausage, bacon and American-style cheese), a choice of sausage/bacon butty and any breakfast wrap (including one containing a fried egg, bacon, sausage, hash brown and Cheddar cheese).

Wetherspoon's operations director, Martin Geoghegan, said: "Department stores and shops hold their sales in January, so it is the perfect time to have a sale in the pubs also.

"The range of drinks and food on sale in the pubs is aimed at suiting a wide variety of tastes.

"This year, we included our biggest-ever selection of low-alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks.

"As always, staff at the pubs served customers responsibly."



The Bluecoat (Rotherham) Regular customer Kevin Stinson toasts the sale with a pint of Sharp's Doom Bar



The Captain James Lang (Dumbarton) Enjoying lunch at sale prices are customers Jackie Barns (left) and Mary Marshall



The Bridge House (Belfast) Customers William Gibson and Eva Clarke enjoy a pint of ale in the sale



The Red Lion (Bedlington) Regular customers Alan Davison (left) and Kevin Laidlaw enjoy a January sale drink



The Godfrey Morgan (Newport) Bar associate Elin Anderson serves brothers John and Brian Williams (right)



The Harbord Harbord (Middleton) Shift leader Michelle Jenkins (right) serves customers Karen Rosales (left) and Michelle Flynn



The Manor House (Royston) Toasting the sale (left to right) are customers Margaret Doe, Margaret Manning, David Manning and Raymond Manning



The Penny Black (Bicester) Shift manager George McCrory and customer Kathrine Druce



The Royal Hop Pole (Tewkesbury) Shift manager Izzie Gillespie serves customers Chris Cripps (left) and Michael Green

LEEDS

LEEDS PUBS TAKE LEAD IN FUNDING SAFE SPACE



Five Leeds city-centre pubs have raised £2,000 for a project which works to create a safe space for women at night.

Women's Night Safe Space funds a hub where women can go to seek help, charge drained phone batteries and, among other services, get help in calling a cab.

Area manager Hudson Simmons tasked the pubs to fundraise for the project after hearing about the service on the news.

The pub's fundraising will now take place annually.

Hudson said: "I was impressed with the work of the Women's Night Safe Space and was made aware that it was short of funds.

"We run pubs which benefit from the night-time economy, so it's right that we help this superb project."

Stick or Twist, Beckett's Bank, The Cuthbert Brodrick, Wetherspoons (Leeds rail station) and The Hedley Verity all raffled hampers and other prizes during the Christmas period.

The Hedley Verity also devoted one of its regular Wednesday DJ nights to raising funds for the charity, called Disco for Dosh.

The successful event will now run every quarter to raise funds for a local charity.

Shift manager Oliver Topley, who works at The Hedley Verity, said: "This is an important local project. We are grateful to customers for supporting it."

Oliver is pictured (right) with (left to right) Stick or Twist shift manager Jack Beech, Women's Night Safe Space co-ordinator Shreena Gobey and Wetherspoons (Leeds rail station) pub manager John Tondeur.

WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON WONDERS COLLECT CLOTHES AND FOOD FOR HOMELESS

Clothes, food, toys and babygrows were collected at The Sir William de Wessington (Washington), for homeless people.

Car-loads of items were delivered to St Michael & All Angels church in the town in the run-up to Christmas.

The effort was organised by pub manager Ashleigh Whitwell and kitchen manager Mark Dunn, supported by colleagues and customers, in conjunction with Mickey's Place foodbank.

Mark said: "Every single member of staff was involved, bringing in presents for kids and all sorts of items, including toys, books and tinned food, in the two months before Christmas. They promoted it on social media and got friends involved as well.

"It was a huge effort – and we had excellent feedback and support from the community."

Enough money was raised to fund a 'breakfast with Santa' at the church, which runs a homeless shelter.

Pictured (left to right) are Ruth Bell and Rev Bethany McNeeley from Mickey's Place foodbank, with kitchen manager Mark Dunn, pub manager Ashleigh Whitwell and shift leader Donna Wright.



RETIRED JEWELLER ROBERT IS A DIAMOND, SAYS RENFREW BOSS

Cleaner Robert McLaughlin has done so well running a weekly pub quiz at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew) that he has now also taken on the role of charity champion.

Robert (pictured), a retired jeweller, joined the pub in 2022 as a cleaner.

Pub manager Donna Walker said: "I asked Robert whether he would like to host our Wednesday pub quiz – and he said yes.

"He then started helping with our craft fairs, so I promoted him to charity champion.

"He has taken the pub to new heights of fundraising and is an absolute diamond to work with."

Robert said: "I thoroughly enjoy hosting the quizzes – and they have proven very popular with customers here.

"I also enjoy helping with the pub's craft fairs and, as a former jeweller, enjoy seeing what is on offer.

"I sometimes bring things myself, but it's also fascinating what other people bring."



ALL HANDS TO THE PUMPS FOR GARAGE'S 25TH BIRTHDAY

The 25th anniversary of the opening of Cornfield Garage (Eastbourne) was celebrated by its staff, led by pub managers Ali Gurkas and his wife Sam.

Ali and Sam joined the pub in 2009 and are its longest-serving staff members. Their daughter Emel is the kitchen manager.

They had the pub decorated with balloons and shared stories with customers and fellow staff over a slice of cake.

Ali said: "We've had some great times here, and the pub is possibly the best known in the town now."

Pictured (left to right) are kitchen manager Emel, shift leader Callum Dixon, pub managers Ali and Sam, shift managers Maria George and Montel Muria.

SPREAD EAGLE SPREADS THE JOY WITH BIRTHDAY BONANZA

Free shots of Baileys Irish Cream and Bell's whisky were handed out to pub regulars as they celebrated the 25th anniversary of the opening of The Spread Eagle (Acocks Green, Birmingham).

Customers also enjoyed complimentary pizza slices, paninis and chips.

Pub manager Jayne Bick has worked for Wetherspoon for 23 years this year, starting as a shift manager and becoming a pub manager three years later. She took over at The Spread Eagle 16 years ago.

She said: "It was good to give something back to the customers and thank them for their support over the last quarter of a century."



A FOND FAREWELL AS FRED STANDS DOWN FROM THE STANDING ORDER

Kitchen porter Fred Cole (pictured centre) was given a good send-off as he retired from The Standing Order (Edinburgh).

Fred, who has learning difficulties, started working at the pub in June 2003.

Fellow staff handed him a signed card, as well as contributing to his retirement collection.

Pub manager Suzy English said: "Routine is an important aspect of Fred's life, and his job here was key to fulfilling that routine.

"Fred was able to work independently, with help from fellow staff on occasion, and was a great asset to the pub.

"He played an important role, ensuring that dishes were washed and that there was always a plentiful supply.

"Staff also ensured that they always brought him his morning tea during shifts.

"He will be missed at the pub – and we wish him well for the future."

Staff signed a card and contributed to a collection for Fred, posing with him for photos outside the pub.



TOMMY COLLECTS MOUNTAIN OF CASH BY CLIMBING KILIMANJARO

Staff at The Hope & Champion (Beaconsfield) have been supporting a former colleague who climbed Mount Kilimanjaro to raise more than £3,000 for The Down's Syndrome Association.

Former bar associate Tommy Warkcup took up the challenge because his brother Chris has Down syndrome.

Shift manager Danielle Healy said: "Tommy is a great guy.

"He worked here for two years, starting as a floor associate and then training as a bar associate.

"He is devoted to his brother, who is non-verbal.

"Tommy learned sign language, so that he could teach it to his brother."

She added that colleagues had donated to the cause, as well as doing their bit to promote it by word-of-mouth and through social media.

Tommy said: "Not only do I think this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, but the challenges of the climb were nothing compared with those faced by my brother and family.

"I'm so grateful to all of my former colleagues for their support."



TONIGHT IS THE NIGHT WHEN TWELVE TELLERS BECOMES 10

Customers and staff enjoyed a slice of cake as they celebrated the 10th birthday of The Twelve Tellers (Preston).

Shift manager Kim Parkinson has worked at the pub on and off since 2018, yet the longest-serving staff member is cleaner Gail Baines, who started working there in 2016.

Kim said: "We took a moment to share the occasion – and some cake – with regulars, who appreciated the gesture."

The pub was decorated with balloons and bunting.

Pictured (left to right) are shift leader Brandon Morris and shift manager Kim Parkinson, with the birthday cake.

STREAM TEAM ON HAND AS JOAN'S WISH FULFILLED

Care home resident Joan da Silva popped into The Blackwater Stream (Broadstone) to fulfil her wish – a pub lunch.

Care UK's Wishing Tree initiative allows residents to request special treats – and Joan was determined that hers should be a trip to the pub.

She tucked in to a hearty ham, eggs and chips lunch, served by team leader Ann Bell (pictured, left, with Joan).

Pub manager Natasha Jervis said:

"We are so pleased that Joan chose our pub to make her wish come true."



RAITH FOOTBALL FAMILY HAS FAITH IN FAR-FLUNG 'SPOONS



Raith Rovers supporters Colin, Carol and their son Gavin Mercer have 'collected' all 54 Wetherspoon pubs in Scotland.

Regulars at The Robert Nairn (Kirkcaldy), the family has notched up more than 130 of the company's UK pubs on caravan trips or following their favourite team away.

Although dad Colin has visited the most pubs, his wife Carol is the real driving force behind the family's hobby.

She said: "Whenever we go anywhere, I look up where the local Spoons is, so that we can go there."

"It's a hobby and we love it. It's taken us to places we wouldn't otherwise go to."

As well as the Scottish pubs, Colin and Carol have visited establishments in Manchester, Liverpool, Bury, Blackpool, Whitby,

Whitley Bay and London. Colin and Gavin have visited venues chiefly while following Raith Rovers.

Colin said: "My wife and I enjoy a katsu curry. The food is good pub food, yet I'm more interested in the pubs' architecture and history."

Singled out for particular praise was The James Watt (Greenock) for its "ornate ceiling, cornice work and chandeliers".

Colin also mentioned the "beautiful" Caley Picture House (Edinburgh) and The Paddle Steamer (Largs) – the latter for its glass frontage affording a view of the ferries bound for the Isle of Cumbrae or Millport.

"The Corryvreckan (Oban) is another one where you can watch the ferries come and go," he added.

Son Gavin said: "It's something we'll carry on doing, as we enjoy the pubs and seeing the places where they are based."



The Moon and Sixpence (Hatch End) Customer Robyn McIlveen, bar associate Rebecca Fernie, customer Joe Carroll, shift leader Serena Talwar, customer Erin Russell and bar associate Lucy Maddison (left to right)

NOTHING TIM'ROUS ABOUT BURNS' NIGHT CELEBRATIONS

Pubs celebrated the life and poetry of Robert Burns by hosting a seven-day celebration.

Customers enjoyed food and drinks to mark the occasion, including on Burns' Night itself.

The pubs served haggis (from Grants of Speyside), neeps and tatties, as well as a Caledonian burger (two 3oz beef patties, with haggis and whisky sauce, served with chips and six onion rings).

A selection of Scottish drinks was available, including Inveralmond Ossian (4.1% ABV) from Perthshire-based Inveralmond Brewery,

a golden-coloured beer with a hoppy, zesty, citrus aroma, served especially for the event.

There was a choice of more than 150 drinks, including Scottish gins, whiskies and beer.

Wetherspoon's marketing executive, James Vaughan, said: "The seven-day celebration offered customers the perfect opportunity to enjoy some traditional Scottish food and drinks and to celebrate for longer than just Burns' Night itself."



The Gold Cape (Mold) Shift manager Molly Lewis



The Bourtree (Hawick) Hawick Scout Pipe Band members and pub staff, with shift manager and event organiser Jamie Gent (fourth left)



The Wishaw Malt (Wishaw) Tucking in to a Burns meal are customers and friends Andrea Murphy (left) and Jaqueline Tudhope



The Brandon Works (Motherwell) Regular customers Jim McVeigh (left) and Tony Verricchia enjoy a Burns meal and drinks

FOOTBALLER DAVE FRAIN BATS IN VAIN AGAINST PALACE PLAYER ZANE

When former Sheffield United player and pub regular Dave Frain challenged team leader Zane Bradley to a table tennis match, Zane said: "You're on!"

Former Blades midfielder Dave and Zane had been chatting about ping-pong at The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield).

Shift manager Jake Dunn got wind of the match and brought in his own table tennis table – and what started as a challenge soon ballooned into a nine-player tournament.

Jake saw an opportunity to make some money for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Players paid £5 each – and some football cards were sold on the evening, raising £100 in total.

Zane was crowned champion after beating Dave in the final.

Pictured (left to right) are team leader Zane Bradley, Dave Frain and shift manager Jake Dunn.



MEMORIALE HELPS DORSET PUBS TO HONOUR WAR DEAD

A commemorative ale went on sale at The William Henry (Weymouth) and all other Wetherspoon pubs in Dorset in advance of Remembrance Sunday.

Memoriale, a 5.0% ABV beer brewed by Exeter Brewery, was available in the pubs during the first two weeks of November.

Weymouth's mayor, Cllr John Orrell, launched the town's poppy appeal at The William Henry, against a backdrop of a Spitfire fighter made from poppies.

Pub manager Jye Dixey said: "The pub is located by the seafront, so a lot of the parades go past here.

"We commemorate the event every year, but this year we went a bit bigger and bolder.

"We were delighted, among all of the pubs, to have raised a total of £959 for The Royal British Legion."

Pictured are customers Richard Salkeld and Elaine Harris





COLWYN BAY

COLWYN CHILDREN DING-DONG MERRILY IN THE PICTURE HOUSE

A school choir led the Christmas carol singing at The Picture House (Colwyn Bay).

Children from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School were conducted by deputy head Beth Copp.

Pub manager Sam Stafford said: "The children sang beautifully – and it was lovely to watch. Customers joined in the carols... everyone enjoyed it."

She added: "The choir has been visiting the pub annually since 2017 (apart from the COVID-19 lockdowns).

"A former staff member had children at the school and initiated it – and it has continued from then."

Beth is pictured (near the tree) with members of the choir.

SHEFFIELD

GRANDPA TOM DIGS HIS CLAUS INTO SANTA ROLE

Shift manager Hayley Martin's grandfather, Tom Walton, reprised his role as Santa as The Woodseats Palace (Sheffield) hosted a children's Christmas breakfast.

Twenty-six children were served by pub staff as their parents looked on, watching them receive presents from Santa.

Hayley said: "My granddad has now been playing Santa for us for a few years – he's great with all the children."

The family affair did not stop there – Hayley's 11-year-old daughter took part in the event too, which raised £200 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

She is pictured with her great-grandfather Tom Walton and floor associate Kay Slater.



HAVERHILL

BARNEY PLAYS SANTA TO SAVE SMOCK FROM SHOCK ABSENCE



Kitchen manager Barney Foreman took on the role of Santa to give children a seasonal treat at The Drabbet Smock (Haverhill).

Twenty-five children and their parents enjoyed a Christmas buffet as Santa toured the tables handing out presents and festive cheer.

The 10th annual event gave children the opportunity to have a group photo with Santa.

Shift manager Tammie Brown said: "A big thankyou to Barney for stepping in at short notice to be Santa, following the illness of our regular Santa."

"He was brilliant – and all of the children really loved the event, which attracted more children and parents than ever before."

The event raised £180 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

Pictured (back row, left to right) are shift leader Kiah Preston, shift manager Tammie Brown and regular customer Anne.

ILFORD

SANTA AND MRS CLAUS PARK THEIR SLEIGH AT THE GREAT SPOON OF ILFORD

Alan Higgins and Brenda Freeman visit The Great Spoon of Ilford (Ilford) each Christmas, dressed as Santa and Mrs Claus.

For the rest of the year, they are well known in the pub as regular customers.

Santa and Mrs Claus entertained children, handing out chocolate, candy canes and Christmas cards from Santa.

Shift manager Louise Stewart watched as children also took the chance to get a Santa selfie.

She said: "Alan and Brenda are two of our regular customers and they love to do this. It was lovely to see the children smiling."

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Angela Wood, Brenda Freeman (Mrs Claus), Alan Higgins (Santa), pub manager Christopher Thaxter and shift manager Sarah Levy.



SHEFFIELD

CHAPELTOWN PUB-GOERS ARE BLOWN AWAY BY BRASS BAND

The Chapeltown Silver Prize Band played carols at The Wagon & Horses (Chapeltown, Sheffield) in the run-up to Christmas.

The annual visit saw festive favourites performed by the community band.

The band, which formed in the 1870s, tours local venues to play all year round.

Pub manager Peter Bryan said: "The band has been performing here for several years and always attracts a good and enthusiastic crowd."

"It was great fun and really got everyone in the mood for Christmas."

Pub manager Peter Bryan is pictured (back right) with members of the Chapeltown Silver Prize Band.



RENFREW

CHOIR FINDS CASH IN GREAT PILES AT LORD OF THE ISLES

Carol singers from North Renfrew Parish Church arrived at The Lord of the Isles (Renfrew) for a Christmas performance.

A choir of 10 sang to pub customers, who not only joined in, but also put their hands in their pockets as a bucket went round for the local Accord Hospice, which provides end-of-life care to those with life-limiting conditions.

Pub manager Donna Walker said: "It was a great atmosphere, and people were very generous with their donations."

A total of £204 was raised.

Pictured (left to right) are Lynn Ferguson, Maureen Kerrigan, Adaze Giziem-Ibone, Cameron Jeffrey, Scott Jeffrey, pub manager Donna Walker, Valerie Wallace, Andrew Scott and Philip Scott, with (seated) Wendy and Rachel Walker.



NEWCASTLE

QUAYSIDE'S YEAR-LONG COLLECTING CHEERS CHILDREN AT CHRISTMAS

A 12-month effort at The Quayside (Newcastle) saw customers and staff donate thousands of pounds' worth of Christmas gifts to a local children's cancer ward.

Led by pub manager Tyler Hudson, the team began its work in January 2024, with planning meetings and early approaches to local businesses.

Children on the cancer ward at Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) received gifts including a PS5, a hoverboard, JD Sports vouchers, beauty products, clothes, Bluey characters, Baby Princess toys, arts and crafts kits, knitted clothes for babies and more than 100 selection boxes.

Tyler said: "We just ask what the children specifically want and then get it for them."

Chris Hodge, RVI rep from Young Lives vs Cancer (YLvC), spends a lot of time on the ward and delivers the kids' Christmas wish-lists to Tyler and her team.

Some of the donations come directly from local supermarkets, stores and businesses, including Aldi, JD Sports and Lush, but most of them come from customers at The Quayside and The Harry Clasper.

Tyler said: "We put up posters in the pub telling them what we're looking for – then customers come in with them."

Tyler's efforts at The Quayside were assisted by former colleagues from The Harry Clasper (Whickham), where she led similar Christmas campaigns, as reported in Wetherspoon News over the last four years.

She added: "They wanted to do something with me again this year, and we were grateful for their help."

"All of the team members here have been brilliant as well, and I'd like to thank all of our customers who helped, as well as all of the local businesses."

So numerous were the gifts collected that Chris had to take them to the hospital in a camper van, over several trips.

Pictured with some of the Christmas gifts (left to right) are pub manager Tyler Hudson, Chris Hodge (YLvC), shift leader Jason Purchase (The Harry Clasper), bar duty manager Jade Grant (The Quayside) and team leader Victoria Munday (The Harry Clasper).



DRIFFIELD

YOUNG CROWD SLEIGHED BY SANTA'S EARLY VISIT

Children at The Benjamin Fawcett (Driffield) enjoyed breakfast with Santa in the run-up to Christmas.

Nineteen children and their families donated to charities while Santa dished out presents.

The little-ones also got to make snowmen from craft materials supplied for the event.

Shift leader Claire Dennis, who organised the event, said: "The children all had a fantastic time – and we are very grateful to everyone who donated."

The event raised £150 for Young Lives vs Cancer, £100 for Kilham Girl Guides and £54 for Yorkshire Air Ambulance.

Pictured (left to right) are bar associate Amelia Taylor, elf Noah Sach, shift leader Claire Dennis, customer Paul Richardson (Santa) and shift leader Owen Hayden-Neil.



NOVELIST FINDS THRILLS APLENTY AT PUB TABLES



Author Gavin Bell has written eight thriller novels while sitting at his favourite tables in Wetherspoon's pubs.

Gavin's novels, which include *The Killing Season* and *The Samaritan*, have earned praise from Jack Reacher novelist Lee Child and from former US President Bill Clinton.

Another book due out in 2026 has been written largely at The John Fairweather (Cambuslang) and The Sir John Moore (Glasgow).

Gavin said: "I'm fortunate in that I'm able to write almost anywhere: planes, trains, hotel rooms, park benches, beaches and so on, but Wetherspoon is one of my favourite 'offices'.

"If I'm in a strange city, I know I'll be able to find a corner in a 'Spoons, order a bottomless coffee and get some words down."

He added: "I have my favourite tables and seek them.

"I need to be at a table with good light, near a power socket, preferably in a booth."

One of his favourite writing spots is an outside table at The Winter Gardens (Harrogate).

He added: "I know the numbers of my favourite tables in those pubs I use regularly – and it is slightly disappointing to find someone else sitting there.

"I go early in the morning, when it's less busy, so this doesn't happen too often."

Sometimes, Gavin finds himself in less familiar territory.

"I travel around the land going to book festivals and can usually guarantee that there will be a centrally located Wetherspoon with the facilities I need, so I head there," he added.

Gavin writes under the pseudonyms Mason Cross and Alex Knight, and his books to date have been published by Orion, but the next one (yet to be titled) will be published by Simon & Schuster.

CYMRIC CHOIR ON FIRE AT LORD CARADOC'S BIRTHDAY

Traditional Welsh hymns and songs were sung as The Lord Caradoc (Port Talbot) celebrated its 25th birthday.

The Port Talbot Cymric Choir, led by Stephen Partridge, sang popular favourites including *Calon Lân*, *Yma o Hyd*, *Land of Our Fathers* and *World in Motion*.

Many of the 250 customers who attended joined in the singing, in what pub manager Dean Jenkins described as "a brilliant night".

He said: "The choir is fantastic – and everyone at the pub thoroughly enjoyed their singing.

"It was a great way to mark our special birthday."

Through raffles and a craft stall, the event also raised £250 for Young Lives vs Cancer.



MUCH CAKE AND MANY CANDLES

Celebrations abound as nine pubs each clock up 30 years' existence

Throughout November and December 2024, as well as January 2025, nine Wetherspoon pubs celebrated a particularly significant birthday.

All nine pubs, which first opened at the end of 1994 or beginning of 1995, marked their 30-year anniversary.

Clocking up 270 years' service in their respective communities were The Red Lion (Gatwick Airport), The Good Yarn (Uxbridge), The Playhouse (Colchester), The Moon Under Water (Watford), The Falcon (High Wycombe), Golden Cross Hotel (Bromsgrove), The Masque Haunt (Old Street, London), The Moon & Stars (Penge) and The Square Peg (Birmingham).

Also marking birthdays of more than 30 years, during the same period and including February 2025, were J.J. Moon's (Kingsbury), celebrating 36 years since opening in December 1988.

Notching up 34 years each were J.J. Moon's (Ruislip Manor), The Moon Under Water (Colindale) and J.J. Moon's (Wembley).

Two pubs marked 33 years, being Hamilton Hall (Liverpool Street station) and The New Fairlop Oak (Fairlop).

Clocking up 32 years were five pubs – The Whispering Moon (Wallington), Wetherspoons (Victoria Station), The George (Croydon), The Beehive (Brixton) and The Village Inn (Rayners Lane).

Four pubs also celebrated 31 years since opening. They were The Fox on the Hill (Camberwell), The Moon on the Hill (Sutton), The Bell Hotel (Norwich) and The Red Lion & Pineapple (Acton).

That's a collective 758 years' service by Wetherspoon in those communities – quite a remarkable achievement.

The Moon Under Water (Watford)

Pub manager Kwame Tefe is pictured (centre) with bar associates Andrew Godfrey (left), Maise McGettrick and Olena Diachuk (far right), marking the pub's birthday.

The team also raised funds for Young Lives vs Cancer with charity fundraising activities on the day, including a raffle.

Kwame started his Wetherspoon career in October 1991 as a part-time cleaner at Hamilton Hall (Liverpool Street station).

He has been pub manager at The Moon Under Water since June 2009.

The pub first opened as a Wetherspoon on 21 December 1994, with its name recalling the ideal pub described in detail by George Orwell. The famous writer called his fictitious pub 'Moon Under Water'.

In Victorian times, 44 High Street was the home of the Sedgwicks – leading local lawyers.

In 1917, the premises became the Empress Winter Gardens, then the Bohemian Cinema.

For many years afterwards, it was used as a furniture store and various shops, until the pub opened in 1994.



The Square Peg (Birmingham)

The pub first opened as a Wetherspoon on 20 January 1995 on the site of the former Lewis's store. Pictured marking The Square Peg's 30th birthday are (left to right) shift manager Marlon Atkinson, customer Bill Smylie and shift manager Natalie Lammas.

The name is unusual for a Wetherspoon pub, whose names are often based on historical associations.

This one is derived from a comment from founder and chairman Tim Martin, who, when looking at the plans for the new pub, remarked that it looked like a square peg in a round hole.

Pub manager Dale Edwards organised numerous events to mark the birthday, including a two-week-long festival, showcasing 30 real ales, as well as a tap take-over and social event hosted by Fixed Wheel Brewery and a special birthday ale brewed by Silhill Brewery.

There was also a birthday party, with free buffet-style food and cake for customers, a charity raffle and quiz night and a staff fancy-dress party.

A 1995 newsletter was available and archive photographs of Birmingham old and new were displayed in the pub.

The Moon & Stars (Penge)

Enjoying the 30th birthday celebrations at The Moon & Stars are (standing, left to right) area manager Steve Meeke, shift manager Karen Hart, pub manager Clare Wragge, team leader Angela Wragge, shift leader Lisa Wragge, bar associate Chloe Abogye and regional manager Richard Marriner; (front left) bar associate Mya White and team leader Kaylie Rule.

There was a charity raffle draw on the birthday (also Christmas Eve), with 30 prizes for 30 years up for grabs, donated by local businesses and organised by shift leaders Lisa Wragge and Vicky Nulty.

It raised £500 for Young Lives vs Cancer.

The pub first opened as a Wetherspoon on 24 December 1994, on the site of the walled gardens of Norbury Villa.

Built in the 1840s, it was replaced by two semidetached houses and then the Art Deco-style Odeon cinema.

The Penge Odeon later became a bingo hall which closed in 1990 and was demolished.



30 YEARS



The Red Lion (Gatwick Airport, North Terminal, after security)

This pub, which first opened at the airport in November 1994 and has been upgraded several times since, has a very traditional name, whose roots are in heraldry.

In the 14th century, John of Gaunt was the most powerful man in England.

His heraldic device was a red lion – displayed, as a sign of loyalty, outside many buildings. Many other red lions have taken their name from the coat of arms of local lords of the manor.

Pictured (left to right) are kitchen manager Francesca Braund (17.5 years), shift leader Agata Oginska (seven years), kitchen manager Marco Rodrigues (14 years), kitchen shift leader Jhonny Rodrigues Da Corte (five years, eight months), pub manager Jonathan Braund (11 years, eight months) and shift manager Attila Kui (two years, eight months).

Also, shift manager Carrie Tate (almost 21 years), shift leader Emily Harris (five years, eight months), operations manager Laura Beal (19 years, eight months), kitchen manager Rodrigo 'Stefano' Moliario (13 years, three months), kitchen associate Sonia De Jesus Antonio (five months) and bar associate Anna Balkizas (18.5 years).

The Good Yarn (Uxbridge)

Pub manager Mensah Richardson (centre), who took over as manager at the pub in 2023, is pictured with team leader Rachel Anan and shift leader Adam Harper (behind the bar).

This high-street pub ran a charity raffle and tombola to mark its 30th birthday, raising funds for Young Lives vs Cancer.

It first opened as a Wetherspoon pub in December 1994 on the site of Pearson's menswear shop, which had, itself, traded for more than 25 years.

Pearson's moved to the address in 1968, having been elsewhere on High Street since around 1920.

The firm was originally founded as a tailor's, in 1837, making suits from cloth which started as good yarn.



MILESTONE BIRTHDAYS

30 YEARS



Golden Cross Hotel (Bromsgrove)

Celebrating the pub's 30th birthday, surrounded by balloons, are (left to right) kitchen shift leader Ty Hurley, kitchen manager Martin Checketts, shift manager Shona Woodcock and kitchen associate Mandy Lines.

Managed by Jemma Palmer, this pub first opened as a Wetherspoon on 22 December 1994 on the site of the former Golden Cross Hotel, rebuilt in 1932 on the site of one of Bromsgrove's oldest coaching inns of the same name.

Customers enjoyed a special birthday pint price on all guest ales, as well as reduced prices (on offer all day) on pizzas, burgers and sticky toffee pudding.

Three new cocktail pitchers, not usually served at the pub, were also available: Long Island Iced Tea, Ultra-Blue and Coconut & Lemon Cooler.

There was a charity raffle, with two Christmas hampers up for grabs (one for adults and one for youngsters) with £200 going to Young Lives vs Cancer.

The Masque Haunt (Old Street, London)

This pub first opened as a Wetherspoon on 22 December 1994, with its name remembering the nearby gatehouse of the former Priory of St John, which served as the office of the Master of the Revels.

The Master of the Revels was responsible for licensing plays, masques and other entertainment for the queen, in Elizabethan times.

As part of the 30th birthday celebrations, pub manager Ryan Gross and his team were serving real ale at 1994 prices.

All guest ales were priced at £1.49 a pint – the average price of a pint of ale in 1994, when the pub first opened. Shift manager Natasha Elliott is pictured behind the bar serving real ale on the birthday.



30 YEARS

30 YEARS



The Playhouse (Colchester)

Pub manager Jackie Dungey is pictured (left) serving a pint of exclusive birthday house ale to customer Deborah Shaw.

Ardleigh-based Jack Rabbit Brewing produced Break A Leg! (4.0% ABV) for the 30th birthday celebrations.

A reference to the pub's former life as a theatre, it was a hazy pale ale brewed with Citra and Simcoe hops to create a beer with a tropical fruit punch.

The pub first opened as a Wetherspoon on 18 December 1994 on the site of the Playhouse theatre which had first opened in 1929, yet, in the early 1930s, became a cinema.

In 1981, the building was turned into a bingo hall for a few years, then remained empty, until it reopened as the pub it still is today.

Jackie has been the pub manager at The Playhouse since September 1995.

The Falcon (High Wycombe)

Pub manager Sian Wardle is pictured (front centre) with team members (left to right) shift leaders Vicky Ozolniece, and Goncalo Santos, bar associates Kellis Cobbler and Nikkisha Patel and team leader Brianna Baker.

The pub first opened as a Wetherspoon on 21 December 1994 on the site of an historic inn situated alongside the guildhall, built in 1757.

The Falcon is a former coaching inn and is even older.

The three-storey section of this grade II listed public house is 'late 17th century and refronted in the mid 18th century'.

There were two hampers and multiple raffle prizes up for grabs to mark the birthday celebrations, with all proceeds from donations and fundraising going to Young Lives vs Cancer, to the tune of £250.



30 YEARS

WIN A £30

WETHERSPOON GIFT CARD

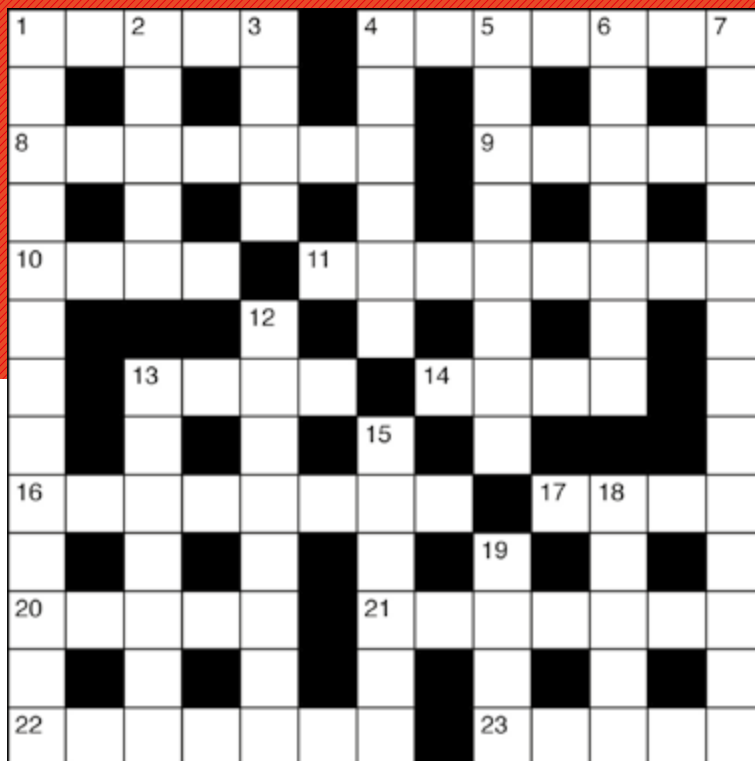
The first five correctly completed crosswords to be pulled out of the hat will win each of those entrants a Wetherspoon gift card worth £30.

Closing date for entries: 1 July 2025

Post to:

Wetherspoon News Magazine Competition
PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

5 x £30 PRIZES TO BE WON



Across

- 1. Capital of Afghanistan (5)
- 4. Province of Belgium whose capital is Brussels (7)
- 8. 1842 opera by Verdi set in Jerusalem and Babylon (7)
- 9. In certain plants, a swollen underground root or stem which stores food (5)
- 10. Samuel, American inventor of a type of revolver (4)
- 11. Sister of Meg, Jo and Beth in **15 Down** (3,5)

- 13. Water bird with a white patch above the beak (4)
- 14. --- China was a former French dependency consisting of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam (4)
- 16. Period of geological time, the middle period of the Mesozoic era (8)
- 17. 1816 Jane Austen novel (4)
- 20. Another name for mother-of-pearl (5)
- 21. Acute infectious disease also called lockjaw (7)
- 22. Salvador, Chilean Marxist politician killed in 1973 (7)
- 23. See **6 Down**

Down

- 1. Mountain on the border between Nepal and Sikkim (13)
- 2. The biblical Tower of --- was intended to reach from earth to heaven (5)
- 3. 1982 novel by Shirley Conran (4)
- 4. David, 1970 individual show jumping world champion (6)
- 5. Toxic metallic element added to alloys to increase their strength (8)
- 6, and **23 Across**. 1988 Winter Olympics men's slalom and giant slalom skiing champion (7,5)

- 7. Arm of the Mediterranean (10,3)
- 12. Region of Germany, in early times a German duchy of Saxony incorporated into Prussia in 1866 (8)
- 13. Feline mammal also called the desert lynx (7)
- 15. "--- Women", 1868 novel by Louisa M. Alcott (6)
- 18. In music, a note with the time value of half a semibreve (5)
- 19. In printing, a word or mark indicating that certain deleted typeset matter is to be retained (4)

SOLUTIONS (Winter/spring 2024/25 issue)

Across: 1 Gaslight; 5 Acol; 9 Farm; 10 Atlantic; 11 Wales; 12 Lurcher; 13 Doctor At Large; 18 Land crab; 19 Tang; 20 (Gioacchino) Rossini; 21 Unser; 22 Sean; 23 (Maureen) Connolly.

Down: 2 Arapaho; 3 Lambert; 4 Hotel Paradiso; 6 Catcher; 7 Lucerne; 8 Laurel; 13 Dolores; 14 Canasta; 15 Orchid; 16 Antonio; 17 Gunnell.

The winter/spring 2024/25 crossword winners were:

★ DA, Aberdeen ★ ME, Port Talbot ★ NW, Worcester ★ PS, Burton-on-Trent



Please complete the answers and your details, as shown, and send the completed page to:

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PO Box 2330, Watford, WD18 1NW

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I am over 18 years (signature):

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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 1/7/25. 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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Ash Corbett-Collins is chairman of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale

Cheers

BREW HA-HA: BIG BREWERIES ARE HAVING A LAUGH

Much work is needed to ensure that small, independent brewers have genuine access to the market and that publicans are free to provide what customers want, says CAMRA's chairman Ash Corbett-Collins

What makes a brewery independent? For many people, it's when the beer is brewed by people who genuinely care about what they are making.

It's when a business isn't owned by a faceless international conglomerate, churning out bland beers over and over.

It's emphasising quality ingredients and creating bold, unique flavours which they know drinkers want.

Having independent, quality beers available on the bar is a priority for CAMRA's members and other drinkers across the UK.

The lack of transparency is frustrating – over who really owns a brewery and which cask ales are simply brands trading on consumers' blind faith.

This illusion of choice is created by some macrobreweries which want us to buy the lie, when we choose their product, that we're drinking beer from independent breweries.

Let's dive deeper into this illusion and expose the blurred lines created by brand mergers and acquisitions.

More than eight in 10 beer-drinkers believe that they're being misled by brewers which trade on the name of formerly independent breweries bought and subsumed by global brewers.

This attempt to pass off their beers as independent stops drinkers from being able to make a genuine choice to support local, sustainable brewers.

That's why CAMRA is proud to support the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) and its Indie Beer campaign, highlighting to consumers when a beer is brewed by a genuinely independent brewer.

REVIEW

In the government's budget announcement last year, we were promised a review of the access which smaller brewers have to the market and how they get their beer into pubs and onto bars.

We don't know yet what exactly that review will look like, but CAMRA has already made contact with government officials to make its views clear.

We want smaller, independent brewers to have genuine access to the market, so that a better choice of locally brewed beers appears on the bar.

We also want to shine a light on the way that publicans often feel their hands to be tied in trying to provide what they know customers want.

Alongside the review, we want to continue raising awareness that a lack of financial support for independent breweries means that many just can't afford to keep their doors open.

STARK

In the first few weeks of 2025, West Yorkshire-based Magic Rock Brewing called time, with a stark message taped to its gates, saying: 'Sorry, we are closed till further notice. Thanks.'

Purchased by private equity firm Keystone, which has also recently acquired the likes of Black Sheep and Purity Brewing, this is a story which is sadly becoming more commonplace.

There are some good-news stories to tell, though – the reopening of Jennings Brewery, in Cumbria, after its closure by Carlsberg Britvic in 2022 is huge cause for celebration.

In its community, Jennings is a great source of pride – and the fact that it's been purchased by local owners is brilliant news for the northwest's beer scene.

Still, without the government making a firm commitment to support brewers through this difficult period, this is going to be the stark reality for others, and we may well see many more shutting up shop.

J D Wetherspoon is continuing to support independent breweries, with a great selection of beers on the bar, but real change is needed across the industry and in government to sustain any semblance of choice for beer-lovers in the UK.

Northern Ireland exemplifies some of the greatest issues affecting our pubs and breweries.

Alcohol licences there are issued differently from how they are across the rest of the UK – although our members are fighting to bring about change, the battle is far from over.

Problems for brewers are compounded by the fact that nearly all taps in Northern Ireland are owned by big breweries and global companies like Diageo, Heineken and Molson Coors.

Northern Ireland's lack of consumer choice is a clear example for the rest of the UK – a peek into a future which looks much like the scene with which the four founding CAMRA members had been faced in 1971 – the same beers, brewed by the same big names, with slightly differing pump-clips.

This is why CAMRA still has a huge amount of work to do in all four nations of the UK, each with its unique challenges, yet sharing a common goal: more choice for consumers and a fairer market for brewers.

However, protecting the future of our favourite beers isn't a case of just lobbying governments and making noise.

POSITIVE

It's also about being positive and talking about what makes beer great. All year round, CAMRA's members are celebrating the pubs, clubs, brewers and cider-makers which make up the scene we're fighting for.

Every May, CAMRA holds a dedicated celebration of mild beer. Milds were developed in the late 18th century as a slightly sweeter and more accessible alternative to porter and form a key part of our rich brewing history.

This is one of the beer styles which we recognise in our annual Champion Beer of Britain competition – with the mild category always stacked full of great beers judged to be some of the best in the UK.

During May, CAMRA's volunteers will be encouraging their locals to have at least one mild beer on the bar.

In recent years, as brewers have taken this heritage style and given it a twist, mild has had a resurgence – with big new flavours and ingredients.

May is a great time to find a mild you'll love, whether it's pale, dark or a malty Scottish 60 Shillings.

Looking ahead to summer, our flagship event, The Great British Beer Festival, is heading to the West Midlands!

At a new venue, the NEC Birmingham is the perfect place to host our biggest event of the year – and we're very grateful to J D Wetherspoon for partnering with us.

We're so chuffed to be back with more opportunities for punters to try more independently brewed beers, ciders and perries than ever before.

● **We hope to see you there during 5–9 August 2025. You can grab your tickets here: www.greatbritishbeerfestival.co.uk**



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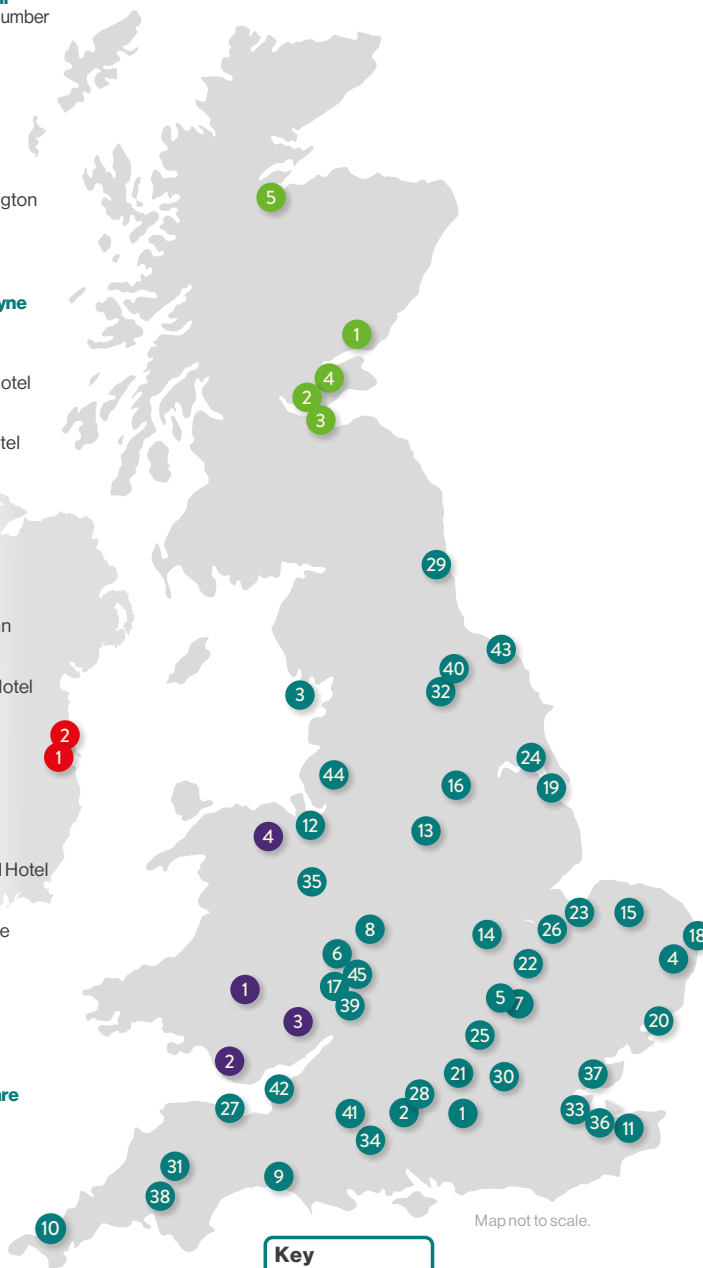
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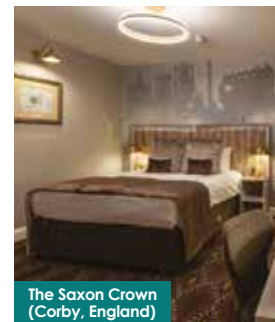
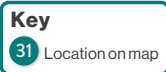
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The Kings Head Hotel
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01299 406970
- 7 **Biggleswade**
The Crown Hotel
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- 26 **March**
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The Unicorn Hotel
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- 33 **Rochester**
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- 34 **Salisbury**
The King's Head Inn
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The Crown
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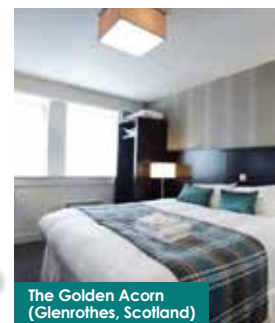
Map not to scale.



The Saxon Crown
(Corby, England)



Keavan's Port Hotel
(Dublin, Ireland)



The Golden Acorn
(Glenrothes, Scotland)



The Kings Head Hotel
(Monmouth, Wales)

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- 2 **Swolds**
The Old Borough
+353 1 808 4103

Scotland

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- 2 **Dunfermline**
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01383 724060
- 3 **Edinburgh**
The White Lady
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- 4 **Glenrothes**
The Golden Acorn
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- 5 **Inverness**
The Kings Highway
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