

BEER MATTERS

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NOV 2025
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The heritage gems that have survived



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NOV 2025

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4 FARGATE
Thornbridge & Co unveil new flagship bar

INN BRIEF
Foresters, Dog & Partridge, SIVA

6 CROSSPOOL SOCIAL
New evening café-bar service

INN BRIEF
Rambler Inn, Ladybower Inn, Angler's Rest, Anglers Rest, Scotsman's Pack, George, Plough Inn, Miners Arms, Hyde Park Inn, Coach & Horses, Manor House Hotel

7 RED TAPE CUTS WON'T SAVE PUBS
CAMRA's response to announcement

CAMRA'S 'FAB FOUR' PUBS REVEALED
Last pubs in the running for Pub of the Year

8 GHOST PUBS OF SHEFFIELD'S EAST END
The heritage gems that have survived

12 PUB OF THE MONTH
Congratulations to the Dog & Partridge!

13 PUBS OF THE YEARS GONE BY
Past winners still going and those sadly not

14 LITTLE MESTERS RELAUNCH
More mesterly brewing from new home

18 ABBEYDALE BREWERY
Latest brews and shortlisting news

19 BREWERY BITS
Blue Bee, Intrepid, Eyam, Loxley, Little Critters, Thornbridge x St Mars of the Desert

20 BEYOND CRAFT
Study considers independence over craft

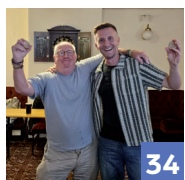
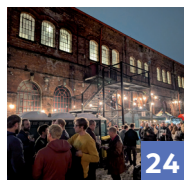
22 BEERS IN BANGKOK
Dan Rowe's return to Thailand

24 THAT WAS STEEL CITY 49!
Looking back another fantastic festival

30 FESTIVALS & EVENTS
Upcoming local festivals and branch events

34 FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS' SOCIAL
High-stakes shuffleboard at the Harlequin

THE COMMITTEE
Contact details for our committee members





FARGATE

Thornbridge & Co (a joint venture between Thornbridge Brewery and Pivovar that has already seen success with the Market Cat in York, Bankers Cat in Leeds and The Colmore in Birmingham) are delighted to announce the launch of their flagship new bar, The Fargate, opening in one of Sheffield's most prominent city centre locations. Doors will officially open at midday on the 22nd of October.

The new venue brings together the storied elegance of the former Yorkshire Bank (previously the Yorkshire Penny Savings Bank) with a carefully designed pub interior created to feel timeless. Dark polished wood, elegant leather seating, herringbone floors, brass accents, chandeliers and curated artwork create the impression of a bar that could have stood here for over a century.

At its heart is a striking horseshoe bar serving ten cask ales, half of them Thornbridge, as well as 16

draft beer lines. The ground floor also features screened booths, a snug, banquette seating, and full-height glazing to the front, offering a light and inviting space.

A spiral staircase leads to the first floor, where a different atmosphere awaits. Here, a pizza kitchen with an impressive Italian corner oven takes centre stage, visible through glazed screens. The design combines reclaimed timber walls, decorated ceilings, and original architectural details to create a brighter, more contemporary setting. Seating includes both leather banquettes and informal benches, ideal for larger groups. With views across Fargate and towards City Hall, it promises to be a unique spot to enjoy a pizza and a pint while people-watching in the heart of the city.

Jamie Hawksworth, Thornbridge & Co Director and Pivovar Co-President, said:

"The Fargate is on track to become a defining feature of Sheffield's pub scene, thanks to a large investment in its unique design. We're delighted to help shape the vibrant new era of the City Centre."

Simon Webster, CEO and Co-Founder of Thornbridge, continued:

"We're eager to open our doors to the people of Sheffield and contribute to the continued growth and character of the area."



INN BRIEF

A change of management has taken place at the **Foresters**, Division Street, Sheffield city centre (although regulars will recognise the new landlord!). The pub will be temporarily closed for a short period in November for a bar refit. Plans include an increased cask-ale range and the return of late-night opening.

Dog & Partridge, also in the city centre, is hosting another Dogfest (their sixth) on 29 November, with plenty of live music. They are also now serving food on Sundays.

A number of Sheffield venues that feature live music have teamed up to form the Sheffield Independent Venue Alliance (SIVA), with a principle of collaboration to make the grassroots scene stronger and more sustainable. A map of member venues includes the **Washington, Hallamshire Hotel, Sidney & Matilda, Alder, Crookes Social Club, Hagglers Corner, Dryad Works, Yellow Arch Studios, Forge Warehouse, Gut Level, Cafe No 9, Southbank Warehouse, Delicious Clam, Panke Bar** and **Plot 22**.



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CROSSPOOL SOCIAL

Crosspool Social is a vibrant community café on Sandygate Road, Crosspool.

Known for its great coffee and cakes by day, the venue has now expanded its offer. From 9 October, it opens Thursday and Friday evenings (6–10.30pm), serving beers from several local breweries alongside wines, spirits and soft drinks.

A new Lindr unit has been installed to serve two keg beers — on the opening night these were Mesters Rouge (5.5% Red IPA) and Hollis (3.8% IPA), both from Little Mesters.

A well-stocked fridge also features beers from other breweries, including Thornbridge. The launch night was well attended, and the café-bar combination looks set to be a great success in the area.

Paul Crofts



INN BRIEF

Rambler Inn, Edale, held a relaunch party to celebrate Jo and Chris taking the reins as managers. Canapés, live music and a quiz featured on the night, while the bar offered cask ales from Torridge, Abbeydale, Timothy Taylor's and Theakston.

Batemans Brewery are seeking new tenants for the **Ladybower Inn**, near Bamford, and held a recruitment open day on 20 October.

Angler's Rest, Millers Dale (near Buxton), has introduced a Winter Warmer Menu offering two courses for £15. The offer includes a choice of four mains and four desserts and is available Monday to Thursday, 12–2pm and 6–8pm.

Anglers Rest, Bamford, will be taking an outside bar to the Bamford Christmas Market at Thornhill Recreation Ground on Saturday 15 November. The community event raises funds for Bamford Play Park, with local makers' stalls, Sunshine Pizza, pie & peas, tea & cake, plus a bouncy castle and hook-a-duck for the kids. Two fell races — including the Beast of Bamford — run alongside the market.

Scotsman's Pack, Hathersage, now offers a 15% discount on food for Blue Light card holders, Monday to Thursday.

George, Hathersage, will be serving festive afternoon teas from 28 November and also offers a loyalty card for coffee drinkers. As a Longbow-owned venue, it was represented in the company's Young Chef of the Year competition.

Plough Inn, Leadmill Bridge (near Hathersage), is hosting a wreath-making workshop on 18 November.

Miners Arms, Dronfield Woodhouse, has new management and held a launch party on Saturday 18 October.

Hyde Park Inn, Dronfield Hill Top, briefly closed after Tom and Vee retired at the end of August. The Stonegate-owned pub reopens under the management of Lee and Zoe on 24 October, with a launch party featuring a cheesy karaoke disco and finger buffet!

Coach & Horses, Dronfield — owned by Sheffield FC but previously leased to Thornbridge Brewery — has seen the lease end, with the club now running the venue themselves. Initially, it will open only on matchdays. To coincide, the **Dronfield Arms** has announced a permanent Thornbridge cask line on its bar.

Manor House Hotel, Dronfield High Street, now offers afternoon teas, Sunday lunches, bottomless brunches and cheese boards. Live music is also expected on some Saturday afternoons.

RED TAPE CUTS WON'T SAVE PUBS

Responding to the Government's announcement of a 'red tape review' of the licensing system to better support pubs across England and Wales, CAMRA Chairman Ash Corbett-Colins said:

"Making it easier for pubs to stay open later and apply for outdoor seating areas is all well and good, but it is frankly insulting for ministers to suggest that cutting red tape in the licensing system is going to support pubs and boost economic growth when our locals are being taxed to the hilt and are struggling to keep the lights on and the doors open.

"When making the announcement the Prime Minister said that pubs are 'the beating heart of our communities'. If he means that, and if he is really serious about saving our locals, then he needs to urgently commit to cutting the tax burden on businesses in the Budget next month.

"Without bold action on VAT, energy bills, National Insurance and duty to support publicans, consumers and breweries then we simply risk losing more of the nation's locals for good."

CAMRA'S 'FAB FOUR' UK PUBS REVEALED

CAMRA has announced the four best pubs in the UK with the race to take home the National Pub of the Year 2025 crown now in the final stretch.

The final round of judging is now underway with the result set to be revealed at the start of 2026. Beating thousands of entries and showcasing their commitment to quality and their communities, they have been judged on their atmosphere, décor, welcome, service, inclusivity, overall impression and, most importantly, quality cask beer, real cider and perry.

The final four pubs for 2025 are:

- **Blackfriars Tavern**, Great Yarmouth
- **Pelican Inn**, Gloucester
- **Tamworth Tap**, Tamworth:
- **Volunteer Arms (Staggs)**, Musselburgh

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GHOST PUBS OF SHEFFIELD'S EAST END



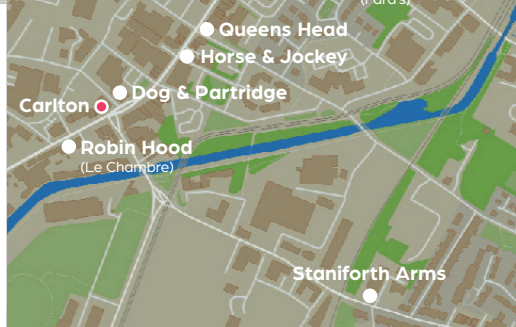
East Sheffield has changed greatly over the years. Once booming with heavy industry, the area was home to workers who lived in the surrounding housing close to the steelworks and factories – and, of course, to many traditional pubs where they could slake their thirst and find a social hub.

With the decline of industry and later slum clearance, many pubs were lost to demolition or conversion. However, several heritage gems have survived.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, part of the district became the centre of Sheffield's LGBTQ+ scene, with some of the classic pubs continuing as bars and clubs on that circuit – though none of those venues now survive as pubs.

This article highlights some of the lost pubs that still stand today. If you're interested in the pub heritage of the area, download *Sheffield's Real Heritage Pubs* at sheffield.camra.org.uk/rhp.

A small number of pubs in the area are still trading – for example, along Attercliffe Common you'll find the **Carlton**, **Don Valley Hotel**, and **Wentworth House Hotel**. See CAMRA's online pub guide at camra.org.uk/pubs for details.



Queens Head 660

Attercliffe Rd, S9 3RP

Closed by 1990.

Planning permission granted for conversion to retail use and flats.

Horse & Jockey 638 Attercliffe Rd, S9 3RN

Received planning permission to become a restaurant in 2018.



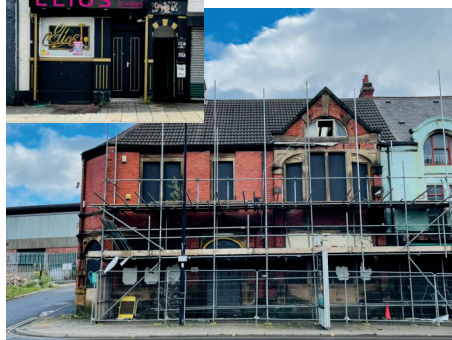
Dog & Partridge

575 Attercliffe Rd, S9 3RB

In its final days, this pub was known for adult shows with strip-pers. After closure, the building was extensively renovated and reopened as a shisha lounge.



Station Hotel Attercliffe Rd, S9 3RQ
Sold at auction in 2013.



Robin Hood (Le Chambre)

548 Attercliffe Rd, S9 3QP

Converted into a swingers' club in 1998, which closed on the owner's retirement in 2019. The building still stands unused.



Britannia

24-26 Worksop Rd

Built in 1772. Closed in 2014 after a period of part-time opening, and later converted to residential use.



Greyhound 822 Attercliffe Rd, S9 3RS

Built in 1884, this former Gilmour's/Tetley's pub features a ceramic greyhound image outside. Now used as offices.



Cocked Hat

73-75 Worksop Rd

A classic corner pub leased from Marston's Brewery, and one of the few Sheffield pubs to have a bar billiards

table. Run by the same family for many years and a Good Beer Guide regular, it closed in 2014 following a rent rise and the closure of Don Valley Stadium. Sold by the brewery and later used as a shop and café.

Cutlers Arms (Fara's) 74 Worksop Rd, S9 3TN
Closed in 2014 and converted to housing in 2016.

Sportsman Inn (Bar Celona)

Attercliffe Rd, S9 3QN

Closed in 2008 and converted to retail use.



Norfolk Arms (Boiler Room Sauna) 208

Savile St East, S4 7UQ

One of the few where you can technically still get a drink inside – the last remaining

gay venue in the area. Its final incarnation as a pub was Cavaliers; it's now the Boiler Room, featuring a sauna, steam room, hot tub, coffee lounge/bar and "adult facilities." Back in the day it was a Stones Brewery pub serving steelworkers – with pints poured in advance to meet the post-shift rush!



Norfolk Arms

(Club Xes) 195-199

Carlisle St, S4 7LJ

This former Tetley's pub is a three-storey brick corner building with brown glazed stone-work and decorative tiled signage reading The Norfolk Arms Hotel. It became a Joshua Tetley Heritage Inn in the 1980s, and later Club Xes. Now converted to residential use. The original Heritage Inn plaque is currently displayed in the rear garden of the Gardeners Rest, Neepsend.



Staniforth Arms

261 Staniforth Rd, S9 3FP

Closed in 2004 and now a restaurant.



Corner Pin 231–233
Carlisle St E, S4 7QN
First licensed in 1840.
This former Tetley's
pub closed in 2013
and is now used as of-
fices, though its stone
exterior remains.



Carlisle Hotel 5 Car-
lisle St E, S4 7QN
Closed in 2014 and
converted to residen-
tial use.



Crown Inn 87–89 Forncett St, S4 7QG
Now Crown House, offices of T.H. Michaels
Construction Ltd. Original S.H. Wards signage
and windows remain.



Carbrook Hall 537
Attercliffe Common, S9 2FJ
Purchased by West
Street Leisure in March
2017 and closed
immediately after
over 150 years as a

pub. Following a spate of arson attempts and
reports of interior fittings being sold, planning
permission was granted to create Starbucks
Carbrook Hall – a 60-seat drive-through.
Nearly £1 million was invested, and the build-
ing reopened on 9 August 2019.



Old Blue Bell 81 West
Bar, S3 8PS (not on map)
Now the Quba Educa-
tion Centre. Carved
stonework – D Gilmour
& Co Ltd Windsor Ales
– lies hidden beneath

boards, with intricate designs above the cen-
tral doors.

Stumble Inn 436 Attercliffe Common, S9 2FH
Converted to a restaurant in 2008. This ex-
Duncan Gilmour pub was rebuilt around 1926
on the site of an earlier pub dating from 1833.



New Inn 211 Carbrook
St, S9 2TE
Opened in 1871 and
acquired by Chambers
& Co (Brunswick Brew-
ery) in 1898. Closed in
1984. An impressive

tilework façade remains, including arched win-
dows, golden brickwork, and plaques with Wm.
Stones and Cannon Ales inscriptions and the
1912 completion date. Now offices for Howco,
an international manufacturing company. The
front of the building follows a gentle curve.

Andy Cullen & Dave Pickersgill



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PUB OF THE MONTH

November 2025



DOG & PARTRIDGE
Trippet Lane, Sheffield City Centre

With full disclosure in mind, the Dog & Partridge has long been a friend to the local branch, with licensees Sarah and Conor Smith offering the snug as a meeting room for our committee and the pub receiving deliveries of *Beer Matters* each month. It's great to see them recognised by our membership with this award.

The pub itself dates back to 1796 – one of the oldest still operating in Sheffield – and appears on the CAMRA Local Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. It retains a fairly traditional layout, most notably featuring a relatively unaltered snug (the venue for our committee meetings) with an old fireplace, a more modern hearth, a serving hatch, and original bell pushes for table service – now purely ornamental. Three larger rooms and a central bar complete the layout. The exterior still boasts raised lettering for Gilmours Windsor Ales & Stouts above the entryway.

On the bar are four cask lines, usually including at least one Abbeydale beer, with a choice of a bitter, a stout, and two paler options. There's also a central column of four craft keg lines, plus eight additional keg lines for lagers, ciders,

and the "Holy Trinity" of Irish stouts – Guinness, Murphy's, and Beamish (at the time of writing, this is believed to be the only pub in South Yorkshire offering *Beamish*). These offerings earn the Dog & Partridge a proud place on Sheffield's legendary "Irish Triangle."

The pub hosts a wide range of events, including a quiz night every Tuesday at 7pm, followed by Irish Bingo at around 8.30pm. There are music sessions every Monday, Wednesday, and Sunday, plus two Thursdays a month, a bi-monthly "Dogfest" music festival (the next on 29 November), and live gigs every other Saturday night. For up-to-date information, check the pub's socials and website.

Food-wise, there's an Irish pub menu featuring a "spice bag" (inspired by Ireland's Chinese takeaway menus), chicken fillet rolls, and various specials.

Dan Rowe

JOIN US...

...on **Tuesday 11 November**, at around **8pm** (after the quiz finishes – or join in and see how you do!), for the presentation of their award.



PUB FEATURES

PUB OF THE YEAR

THE RED HOUSE, SOLLY STREET

After the Fat Cat in 1982 and the Shakespeare last year, the Sheffield branch of CAMRA have voted the Red House to be their third Pub of the Year. Hopefully this will also be the third year as it voted Pub of the Year. Shannon's

PUB OF THE YEARS GONE BY

This year the Sheffield & District branch of CAMRA turns 51 years old, while *Beer Matters* magazine celebrates its 50th anniversary (if you include its predecessor, the *Parish Pump* newsletter!).

We've also run 49 annual beer festivals – though the festival took two years off during Covid. In fact, the branch has been involved in even more events over the years, having organised beer festival bars at student union and music festival events in the past.

Over time, we've also presented a Pub of the Year award, with winners listed on our website dating back to 1982.

NO LONGER WITH US

(former Pub of the Year winners)

- **Hillsborough Hotel** – 2002
- **Norfolk Arms**, Suffolk Road – 1990
- **Royal Standard**, St Mary's Road – 1989
- **Yellow Lion**, Apperknowle – 1988
- **Cocked Hat**, Attercliffe – 1987
- **Devonshire Arms**, Ecclesall Road – 1986
- **Red House**, Solly Street – 1984

STILL GOING – AND WELL WORTH A VISIT!

(former winners still trading today)

- **Kelham Island Tavern**
- **Fat Cat**, Kelham Island
- **Gardeners Rest**, Neepsend
- **Shakespeare's**, Gibraltar Street
- **Bath Hotel**, City Centre
- **Fagan's**, City Centre
- **Cask & Cutler** (now **Wellington**), Shalesmoor
- **Rutland Arms**, City Centre
- **Three Stags' Heads**, Wardlow Mires
- **New Barrack Tavern**, Penistone Road
- **Rising Sun**, Nether Green



VOTING AND NOMINATIONS

Nominations for awards usually open after the first Tuesday of the month (branch meeting) and close on the fourth Tuesday (committee meeting). You can nominate in person at meetings, via a committee member, or through the website.





LITTLE MESTERS RELAUNCH

More mesterly brewing from new Attercliffe home

Locally based Little Mesters have relaunched. They first brewed in 2020 in the premises previously used by Mitchells Hop House (S8 7UJ) and have recently seen investment, expansion, and relocation.

In 2023, they opened their first bar, the **Little Mesters Tap** (Woodseats, S8 OSD). Then, in late 2024, the brewery moved to Solpro Business Park in Attercliffe (S4 7WB), close to compatriots St Mars of the Desert.

The relaunch event took place in late September, featuring onion bhajis and samosas, all accompanied by a range of cask and keg beers from the adjacent brewery. There were also several brewery tours.

The new brewery site occupies the footprint of the 18th-century Royds Brewery. This large operation later became the Burton Weir Brewery of Thomas Marrian & Co. Ltd (1850–1904). In Victorian times, Marrian's were among the biggest breweries in the area. Their No. 2 beer store, which held 10,000 barrels, claimed to be the largest cellar in Sheffield.

In 1903, brothers F. A. and James Kelley acquired Marrian's. The brewery was closed, with their 66 pubs divided between Whitworth, Son & Nephew Ltd (Wath upon Dearne) and Whitmarsh, Watson & Co. Ltd (South Street Moor, Sheffield).

Marrian's best-known pub was probably the Bull & Mouth on Waingate (S3 8LB), acquired in March 1854 and later part of Tap & Spile chain.

By 1937, the Mesters brewery space was part of the Effingham Steelworks and Mills. As recently as last November, it was a derelict shell. Now, it houses a mix of new and relocated brewery kit – including equipment from both Broadtown Brewery (Swindon) and Lost Industry (Wadsley Bridge, S6 1NA), who brewed from 2015 until last summer.

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The five 1,000-litre (6 bbl) fermenting vessels allow brewing to take place twice weekly, with each brew comprising roughly 40% cask, 40% keg, and 20% cans. Two new conical fermenting vessels have just arrived, which will increase capacity.

Head Brewer Sam Bennett, the driving force behind the highly rated Grizzly Grains Brewing (2020–24), leads the operation. Grizzly Grains was a one-person setup producing award-winning beers, first from his house in Walkley and later (from March 2021) from a 4.5 bbl plant near Bramall Lane. He is assisted by Tom Naylor.

The move and relaunch have brought a rebrand, with design input from Nick Law (Emmanuel Brewery). The logo has been tweaked but retains the familiar Little Mester figure advertising their Mesterly Beers. A “Little Mester” was a self-employed craftsman in the cutlery trade; **The Last Mester** IPA

(4.6%) and **Stan’s Stout** (4.8%) are tributes to the last Little Mester, Stan Shaw (1926–2021). The brewery chose its name to honour those who helped put Sheffield on the map – skilled workers producing quality products, just as they aspire to do with beer.

In addition to the stout, the core range includes **Mester’s Royd’s Bitter** (3.8%) and two hazy pales: **Argent** (4.2%) and **Mesters Mate** (4.5%). The red IPA, **Mesters Rouge** (5%), is named after jewellers’ rouge, a fine red polishing paste used for buffing high-quality knife blades. Other plans include a Kölsch, a lager, a Christmas beer, and more. Co-owner Neil Adgie explains:

“The idea is to do some beers that aren’t necessarily experimental but to perhaps do things that haven’t been done for a while. We want to do some fruit beers. We’ve got five really big cherry trees on site and we’ve got permission to harvest all the cherries, so at some point it’s likely we’ll do a cherry IPA.”

Little Mesters beers are increasingly seen across Sheffield and the local area.

Two of their beers were recently showcased at the Barnsley CAMRA Beer Festival. One of their larger customers is Sheffield Cathedral Events. Neil explains:

“We supply them with cans and kegs for all the events they have in the cathedral, so they sell lots of beer.”

The brewery has also worked with Sheffield Home of Football (SHoF), providing canned beers for their events. This charity promotes Sheffield as the home of modern-day football.

Little Mesters are clearly on the up – we wish them every success with their relaunch as the brewery continues to grow and develop.

Dave Pickersgill



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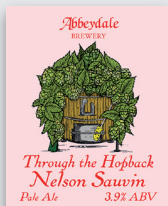
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ABBEYDALE BREWERY

Blue Mist is the latest addition to our beautiful range inspired by vintage botanical prints, and this time we've created a 4% pale ale with Chinook and Centennial hops. Sweet floral notes and juicy citrus are backed up with a tasty, assertive finish.

Doctor Morton's Socks Appeal is our second beer release of the year in partnership with local charity Ben's Centre. A 4.1% pale ale with soft notes of tangerine and lime, brewed using Vic Secret and Amarillo hops. For each cask sold we're donating a pair of socks to Ben's Centre – please do check out their wishlist if you're able to support this incredibly worthy cause.

A festive release in our Mythical Creatures series, **Glugg** (4.2%) has artwork inspired by the Yule Lads of Iceland. Hopped with Belma and Cashmere, expect delicate melon flavours which come together deliciously with a spicy, earthy character.

And we've used one of our very favourite hops for **Through the Hopback Nelson Sauvin**. A deliciously sessionable pale ale (3.9%) with delicate Sauvignon Blanc-esque flavours of white grape and gooseberry coupled with a floral finish.

And talking of showcasing ingredients we love – from the Brewers Emporium we have a single hopped **Simcoe IPA** (5.8%) coming up from our Obsession series, celebrating the 25th anniversary of this glorious hop! A clean malt backbone allows the Simcoe to truly shine, bringing zesty grapefruit, resinous pine, a hint of fresh berries and an hearty, bitter finish.

Finally on the opposite side of the beery spectrum, look out for an **Irish Cream Stout** (5.4%) which is a seasonally appropriate addition to the Salvation series. Deliciously deluxe vanilla notes combine with soft caramel flavours and just a hint of roasted character for balance. Rich and oh so creamy with a full mouthfeel and a mellow finish.

SHORTLISTED!

Abbeydale Brewery, Sheffield's longest established brewery, are celebrating, having been announced on the shortlist for three prestigious nationwide awards.

Firstly, they've scooped a spot in the top three in the Best Drinks Producer category in the famed BBC Food & Farming Awards. The three finalists in each category were chosen from thousands of nominations by a judging panel of experts, headed up by renowned chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. Abbeydale are the only brewery to be recognised on the shortlist this year, alongside sparkling wine company Nyetimber and the Yorkshire Wolds Apple Juice Co in this highly competitive category.

In addition, they've been nominated for the title of Brewery of the Year in the 2025 Brewers Choice Awards, organised by industry magazine the Brewers Journal, where their much-loved beer Black Mass has also been shortlisted in the "Beer of the Year" category.

Founded in 1996, Abbeydale Brewery are well known for producing a huge range of beers (in particular their flagship pale ale, Moonshine),



blending innovation with heritage and reflecting these values across their beers. These nominations all come as the brewery heads towards the first anniversary of becoming 100% employee owned, a pioneering change in ownership which has seen them gain a reputation as industry trail-blazers, including winning the Employer of the Year title from the Society of Independent Brewers & Associates (SIBA).

Co-Managing Director Dan Baxter says of the nominations "I'm so proud of the team and what we have achieved in making the short-list for these fantastic awards. Since becoming an EOT last year, our core values of working within our community, championing our employees, doing business the right way and doing it all with a sense of humour – as well as, of course, making excellent beer! – have been made ever more visible for more people to see, and it's wonderful to see that recognised." His fellow Co-MD, Toby Grattidge, echoes these sentiments, adding "We're incredibly proud of our first year of employee ownership and how hard everyone has worked. Publicans and drinkers alike have been so supportive, and it feels fantastic to see this reflected by being shortlisted on a national scale".

BREWERY BITS



Among the early October brews at **Blue Bee** was an IPA featuring Centennial and Simcoe hops.

Meanwhile, at our Steel City Beer & Cider Festival, there were some oak-aged special editions, including their export stout and dark mild.

New from **Intrepid** is *Black Gold*, their Schwarzbier, based on the classic European black lager recipe. It was available in cask at the festival.

Eyam Brewery have launched merch in the form of t-shirts and hoodies, which will soon be available to order from their webshop.



An updated brew of **Loxley** Brewery's Pride of the Valley hazy pale ale was also featured on the bar at the festival.

Little Critters won our Champion Beer of Sheffield & District competition with Chocodile, a chocolate milk stout. This proved very popular at the festival, with several extra casks delivered – all of which sold out!



Also featured at Steel City 49 was a cask ESB brewed as a collaboration between **Thornbridge** and **St Mars of the Desert**, which turned out to be the quickest cask beer to sell out at the festival!



BEYOND CRAFT

Study highlights how independence, not craft, defines Sheffield's drinking heritage

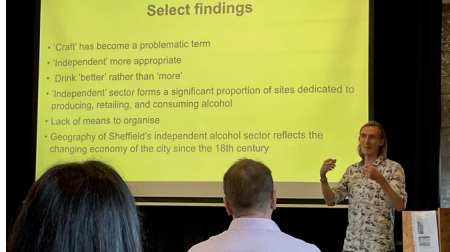
An event at Portland Works in early October saw the formal launch of a new report by Prof. Phil Withington and Dr. Nicholas Groat (University of Sheffield), which explores the place of "craft" alcohol in the city's past, present, and future. The research was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Sheffield was chosen as previous reports have established the city as the "UK capital of beer." A high density of independent breweries is mirrored by a large proportion of independent pubs, bars, and specialist off-licences.

A key early finding – one not expected at the project's inception – is that the word craft has been devalued. It is now a problematic term, one which has been adopted by multinationals.

Independent is seen as more appropriate. It captures a commitment to small-scale, autonomous artisanship, passion, skill, and community (see, for example, SIBA's Indie Beer campaign). Independent is part of Sheffield's heritage.

Since 2021, Sheffield & District CAMRA publications have defined craft beer as "a meaningless phrase, often used in marketing," or an enigma: "undefinable and misunderstood." It seems the



University researchers agree with this definition.

The study also shows how the independent sector's geography reflects Sheffield's long history as a "city of neighbourhoods," and how the values and working practices of the sector can contribute to a sustainable and vibrant future. The independent sector forms a significant proportion of sites dedicated to producing, retailing, and consuming alcohol. The survey found that 42% of their sample (464 sites) were independent – a high percentage that directly reflects the city's unique history of distinct, interconnected neighbourhoods.

Other findings include a local emphasis on drinking "better," not "more." In addition, the quality of ingredients, the culture of drinking environments, and responsible and considerate habits are all seen as important.



The report also noted a lack of means for the independent sector to organise. There is no city-wide forum, no liaison with city authorities, and a lack of marketing and other strategies to enhance the sector.

Recommendations include:

- Use *independence*, not *craft*
- Form a **Sheffield Indy Drinks Hub** as the collective voice of the sector
- Explore how other places with concentrations of independent producers organise and market themselves
- Promote Sheffield's unique local heritage
- Strengthen partnerships with local authorities

The full report and a summary are available online – search for "**Place, Craft and Alcohol.**"

Dave Pickersgill



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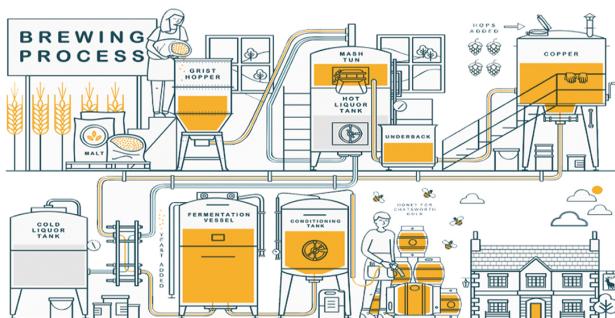
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BEER IN BANGKOK



This August I revisited Bangkok after several years, catching up with friends and visiting old favourites – and some new venues

Brewing and alcohol laws in Thailand are complex and have changed (for the better) a fair amount in recent years. I believe that until recent law changes only a brewpub and a mass-production licence were available. This resulted in illegal brewing, or legally brewing in a neighbouring country with brewers then having to import their beer into Thailand to sell it. Duties and taxes are still high, but there are now more legal routes to brew and distribute in-country.

There is also a large import market and lots of craft beer venues, but the duties and taxes keep prices very high. The most expensive beer I saw on this visit was about £14 for 350ml – an imported 8.9% Vault City & Over-tone collaboration. The cheapest local craft beer was around £4.50 for a similar measure. Local lager can be found for around £2 (or more or less, depending on where you are).

My first stop after landing on a Saturday afternoon was **Hair of the Dog** in Phrom Phong. They were founded in 2015 and have two locations just off Sukhumvit. Their first bar was my local when I lived in Phloen Chit in 2017. Their

Phrom Phong bar opened a year later and is slightly larger, with a gin bar mezzanine floor. They offer 13 taps of craft beer at each location – all recently kitted out with Czech side-pour taps. Both bars also offer cocktails and a large beer fridge for drink-in and takeaway. Canadians Mike and Pete originally worked in Bangkok's Mikkeller bar, the first international craft beer bar in the city, before opening Hair of the Dog.

I also visited **Duke of Beerington**, a small bottle shop with three taps in Thong Lor, opposite a Japanese izakaya which you can order food from. Since my last visit I was pleased to notice that Japanese breweries appear to export and can far more than they did several years ago, and that those cans are making it out of Japan. Duke often has a full fridge of UK beers from breweries like Verdant and Track, alongside a lot of American beers and, more recently, the legal Thai brews and Japanese imports.

I had a start to my Tuesday evening which turned out to be controversial with at least one friend – visiting a house bar called **Om's Living Room**. It turns out it may not be the most licensed of establishments – though as mentioned, Thailand's beer rules haven't always been the easiest to work under. Om serves exclusively Thai beer and, as the bar style and name suggest, is literally the ground floor of a residential building.

I moved on to **Finger Heart** (named for the finger and thumb heart gesture I believe was popularised by K-Pop) – a small bottle shop

offering a mix of local and imported beer, including impressively priced (for Thailand) bottles of 3 Fonteinen.

I then visited a **Chit Hole** for the first time. Chit started out as Thailand's most infamous home brewer, often being shut down by the authorities for short periods. His original bar is located on the artificial island of Pak Kret in the Chao Phraya river, which can only be visited by boat. I didn't get a chance to make that journey on this trip; however, there are now a series of bars named the Chit Hole across the city, often cohabiting with a restaurant or other business. These bars serve exclusively Thai beer, and I enjoyed Chit's own *Hipster IPA* (7.2%) and *Top Hill* (6.5% porter).

On Wednesday I rejoined my former quiz team at an 'English'-style pub, the **Royal Oak** on Sukhumvit Soi 33 – where we won the quiz! Beers in here are the often-found local lagers, as well as *Guinness* and *Punk IPA*.

On the following Saturday I arranged to meet

with old friends to visit a couple of bars in Chinatown. After meeting for lunch and visiting a couple of coffee shops along the way, we ended up at **Tai Soon**, a very nice old building full of exposed brick and concrete, with a high entryway adorned with Chinese lanterns. Fully half the taps were Thai beer, so I tried an amazing *Yuzu Mead* (Sanghok Brewing, 5%) and *Humble Flow* (Lollihops Brewing, 6.4% IPA), among others.

We then took a short walk up the road to a brand new bar in the rear grounds of an old mansion, **Two Palms Taproom**. About half their taps were Two Palms beer, and they offered flights, so I made significant inroads into the menu with two flights of various Two Palms, Maalstroem and Sunrise Brewing beer – all Thai brewers. We then took a long and traffic jam-hindered Grab taxi back to Sukhumvit, and a final beer (ok, several final beers) at Hair of the Dog Phrom Phong.

Dan Rowe



The advertisement features a background image of a glass of beer and a can of Abbeydale Brewery's 'Sunshine' beer. The text is centered and reads:

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THAT WAS STEEL CITY 49!

SPECIAL BEERS

We had three special commemorative beers from local breweries.



This year the charity collecting donations at the festival was the **Children's Hospital Charity**, and the beer marking this was **Pride of Yorkshire** from Bradfield Brewery. The name refers to the upcoming Pride of Yorkshire Sculpture Trail, taking place in 2026 to celebrate the charity's 150th anniversary. It will feature 150 large lion and lioness sculptures, and 150 smaller lion cub sculptures positioned across South Yorkshire – each telling a unique story and designed by professional artists and community groups. For details, visit prideofyorkshire.org.



We're celebrating 50 years of our **Beer Matters** magazine, and Abbeydale Brewery helped to mark the occasion with a dry-hopped special edition of a regular beer, badged up with an actual magazine cover!

Finally, Neepsend Brewery produced a special pump clip for a cask version of their **Alcis** session IPA in memory of **Kevin Thompson**, our social secretary and press officer who sadly and unexpectedly passed away recently.



FESTIVAL OPENING

The festival opened with organiser Paul Crofts, Holly Newton-Steele from the **Children's Hospital Charity**, and **Jon McClure** from **Reverend & The Makers** (whose recent single *Haircut* reached no 1 in the iTunes download chart) behind the bar, pulling the first pint of *Pride of Yorkshire*.



Attention then moved to the stage where, after welcoming everyone, Paul introduced Megan Lindop from **Beer Central**, who announced the winners of our **Champion Beer of Sheffield (& District)** competition and presented certificates to the winning brewers.



BRONZE
Triple Point
Sheaf



SILVER
Abbeydale
Black Mass



GOLD
Little Critters
Chocodile



▲ Little Critters receiving their award



◀ Beer judging tables

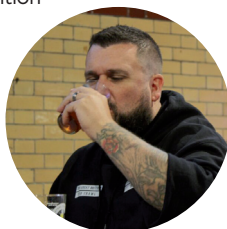
The competition had been judged earlier in the afternoon by six teams of invited guests at a blind tasting.

Back at the bar, Dann and Martha from **St Mars of the Desert** tapped their **Fledermaus** beer from a German Stichfass cask. A long queue soon formed, and the beer sold out quickly!



Also present at the festival opening and judging was Dale from the **Great British Pub Crawl**, a social media content creator whose videos chart his progress visiting pubs across the country. With a large audience built up online, he champions the British pub and recently launched a petition

calling for the government to give pubs a fairer deal – something that complements CAMRA's own lobbying nicely.



THURSDAY – FIRST FULL DAY

On Thursday morning, 19 lucky ticket holders embarked on a **guided walk** around locations in Kelham Island featured in the "Little Chicago" local history booklet (available to buy at the festival), with a pub stop at the **Crow** along the way. The tour finished at the festival itself.

Thursday also marked the first full day of the festival, with all food traders open alongside the bars and games.

A number of ticket holders enjoyed a tutored tasting event with **Bradfield Brewery** in a private room at the festival. The brewers talked their audience through five beers, including the best-selling *Farmers Blonde* and the whisky barrel-aged *Belted Galloway* stout.





LIVE MUSIC AND DANCING

Thursday night saw the live music programme kick off with **The Retrobates** starring **Kitty Noir**, while Friday night featured **Soul Battalion** playing to a packed house. On Saturday, **Loxley Silver Band** performed in the afternoon, followed by **Kelham Island Rapper** dancing outside, then **Blyth Power** taking to the stage at teatime.



Bonnie & Clyde ▲

FOOD TRADERS

The festival featured a range of street food vendors outside in the courtyard, including:

- **Caribbean Fusion**, serving authentic Jamaican street food such as jerk chicken wraps and mutton curry.
- **Yuleys Bratwurst**, with a range of German sausages on the BBQ.
- **Yorkshire Crêpes**, offering sweet and savoury pancakes including cocktail-themed options.
- **Sunshine Pizza Oven** and
- **Bonnie & Clyde**, serving deep-fried Italian snacks.
- Inside, **The Cheese Factor** from Chesterfield Market offered a refrigerated display of cheeses and pork pies, with Ploughman's platters and sandwiches available.
- Also inside were **Fairfax Chocolatiers**, with a range of handmade chocolates and signature spirits – plus the option of a boozy hot chocolate!
- The museum cafe, **Joni at Kelham**, was open and serving very nice chilli and chips.

The Cheese Factor ►

Sunshine Pizza Oven ▼





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Marquee ▲

BARS

The festival boasted over 250 different beers in cask, keg, bottle, and can, plus cider, perry, and mead, spread across four areas.

The Upper Hall featured cask ales from breweries A–L, while the Marquee featured M–Y. Both main areas also included a cider bar and a bottle/can bar.

New this year was the Guest Brewers' Room, with three brewery-hosted bars serving both cask and keg. Pouring here were **Radio City Beer Works**, **Turning Point**, and **Ossett**.

A wander through the Hawley Gallery (with its exhibition of knives and tools) led to the dedicated Keg Bar, pouring a wide range of craft beers from a wall of 27 taps.



Keg Bar ▲

Upper Hall ▲



OTHER DISTRACTIONS

A highlight of Kelham Island Museum, the River Don Engine was fired up for demonstrations each day from Thursday onwards – always a popular attraction!

We also had our tombola ("every '1' is a winner!"), classic pub games, a CAMRA membership stand, and a book shop.



GLASSWARE

All drinks were served in commemorative glasses featuring this year's festival logo, with a choice of two designs – a classic pint glass with **Henderson's Relish** artwork, and a stemmed half pint glass featuring **Bradfield Brewery's** 20th anniversary artwork.



UNOFFICIAL FESTIVAL FRINGE

We get plenty of beer tourists coming to Sheffield for the festival who are keen to experience the city's famous pubs – many within walking distance of the venue, including the **Fat Cat** and **Kelham Island Tavern**.

Several pubs ran fringe events during festival week: **Shakespeares** hosted a tap takeover, while the **Harlequin** put on live music.

THANK YOU!

Thanks to all the visitors who came and enjoyed the festival (and drank all the beer and cider!), to those who donated prizes for the tombola, and to our sponsors for their support.

An even bigger thanks to all our volunteers who gave up their time to organise, build, run, staff, and pack up the festival. We move into an empty venue several days before the festival opens, build it all from scratch, and then dismantle it again after closing on Saturday night – ready for the museum to reopen to the public!

There are also months of preparation and publicity beforehand, with a small army of volunteers distributing promotional beer mats, posters, and flyers.

TOMBOLA THANKS!

The festival organisers would also like to thank the following for donating items to the tombola, and to sell, in support of Sheffield Children's Hospital Charity:

Wayne Brierley RIP, Abbeydale Brewery, Blue Bee Brewery, Kelham Island Tavern, Paul & Tina Crofts, Ossett Brewery, Terry Palmer, Fairfax Distillers & Chocolatiers, Paul Manning, The Wellington, Dave Pickersgill, Nigel & Emlyn Tasker, Bernie Hunter, Crown & Glove, Loxley Brewery and everyone who donated anonymously. Apologies if we have missed anyone.

Andrew Morton

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

FESTIVALS

Local beer and cider festivals we're aware of. Email the Editor if you know of any more!

EVENTS

Branch meetings, socials, heritage talks, RambAles and other activities. Email our Social Secretary for more info and bookings.

NOVEMBER



Hull (CAMRA)

Thu 30 Oct – Sat 1 Nov

Hull & East Yorkshire CAMRA's real ale & cider festival returns on a smaller scale after a six year absence to a new venue – **Minerva Masonic Lodge**, which is located in the historic old town near Hull Minster. The event will feature a range of over 30 cask ales along with a range of cider & perry and a food vendor. More info at hull.camra.org.uk.



Norwich (CAMRA)

Thu 30 Oct – Sat 1 Nov

Norwich beer festival, with the usual venue still closed, sees a slightly different format this year spread across three venues in the Castle Quarter but still featuring over 200 beers (cask & keg), cider & perry and festival food. More info on their website.



Branch meeting

8pm Tue 4 Nov

All our members are welcome to come along, share pub, club and brewery news, discuss campaigning updates, get involved and more importantly enjoy a beer with us! The venue this month is the **Lord Nelson** in Sheffield City Centre (TBC)



Pub of the Month

8pm Tue 11 Nov

Join us at the **Dog & Partridge** in Sheffield City Centre for the award presentation, a few beers and optional Irish Bingo! Our presentation evening is preceded by their regular quiz and food service so you may choose to get down early, grab a table, order food and join in the quiz!



Beer Festival wash up meeting

7:30pm Tue 18 Nov

We look back at our 2025 Steel City Beer & Cider Festival and review what went well and what less so. The meeting is held upstairs at the **Gardeners Rest**. Get there on bus 7/8 which stop outside the pub, alternatively it is a 5–10 minute walk from Infirmary Road tram stop.



Rose & Crown (Chesterfield)

Thu 20 – Sun 23 Nov

The **Rose & Crown** in Brampton, Chesterfield CAMRA's Pub of the Year, celebrate their 16th birthday with a beer festival featuring two bars filled with a variety of beer and cider along with food and music.

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Newark Winter (CAMRA)

Fri 21 – Sat 22 Nov

The winter edition of Newark beer festival is held at **Newark Town Hall** and features around 50 real ales, ciders and perries.



Sheaf View

Fri 21 – Sun 23 Nov

The **Sheaf View** in Heeley hold the winter edition of their regular programme of beer festivals. All the festivals involve the main pub bar being supplemented with extra beers spread across a pop up bar in the conservatory and the shed bar outside plus live music at times. The winter ales festival tends to see a few strong warming beers along with other interesting brews!



Committee meeting and BEER MATTERS distribution

8:30pm Tue 25 Nov

The monthly business meeting for the committee. The venue is the Dog & Partridge on Trippet Lane in Sheffield City Centre. We also aim to have the new issue of **BEER MATTERS** from the printers ready for distribution volunteers to come and collect from the afternoon onwards. Note it is quiz night on Tuesdays.

DECEMBER



Branch meeting

8pm Tue 2 Dec

Shakespeares on Gibraltar Street.



Pig's Ear, East London (CAMRA)

Tue 2 – Sat 6 Dec

Their 41st event features over 200 cask ales, ciders and kegged beers! Always with the best selection of dark beers around plus extra special one-off casks from a great range of breweries. The **Round Chapel** on Glenarm Road in Hackney, walkable from Hackney Central Overground.



Christmas Social

2:30pm Sat 6 Dec

We enjoy Christmas dinner and a beer at the **Ball Inn**, Crookes, followed by a wander around a few other pubs in the area. Advance booking with deposit required.

2026



First Friday Social

7:30pm Fri 2 Jan

Our annual first Friday of the new year pub crawl around the City Centre at a time when the pubs are less busy than a normal weekend. Meet at the **Bath Hotel** (TBC).



Branch meeting

8pm Tue 6 Jan

The venue this month is TBD.



Chesterfield (CAMRA)

Fri 6 – Sat 7 Feb

The annual CAMRA beer festival held at the **Winding Wheel Theatre** in Chesterfield town centre featuring three rooms of cask ale plus other craft beers, cider, spirits and food. The evening sessions also feature live music. Website.



Bradford (CAMRA)

Thu 26 – Sat 28 Feb

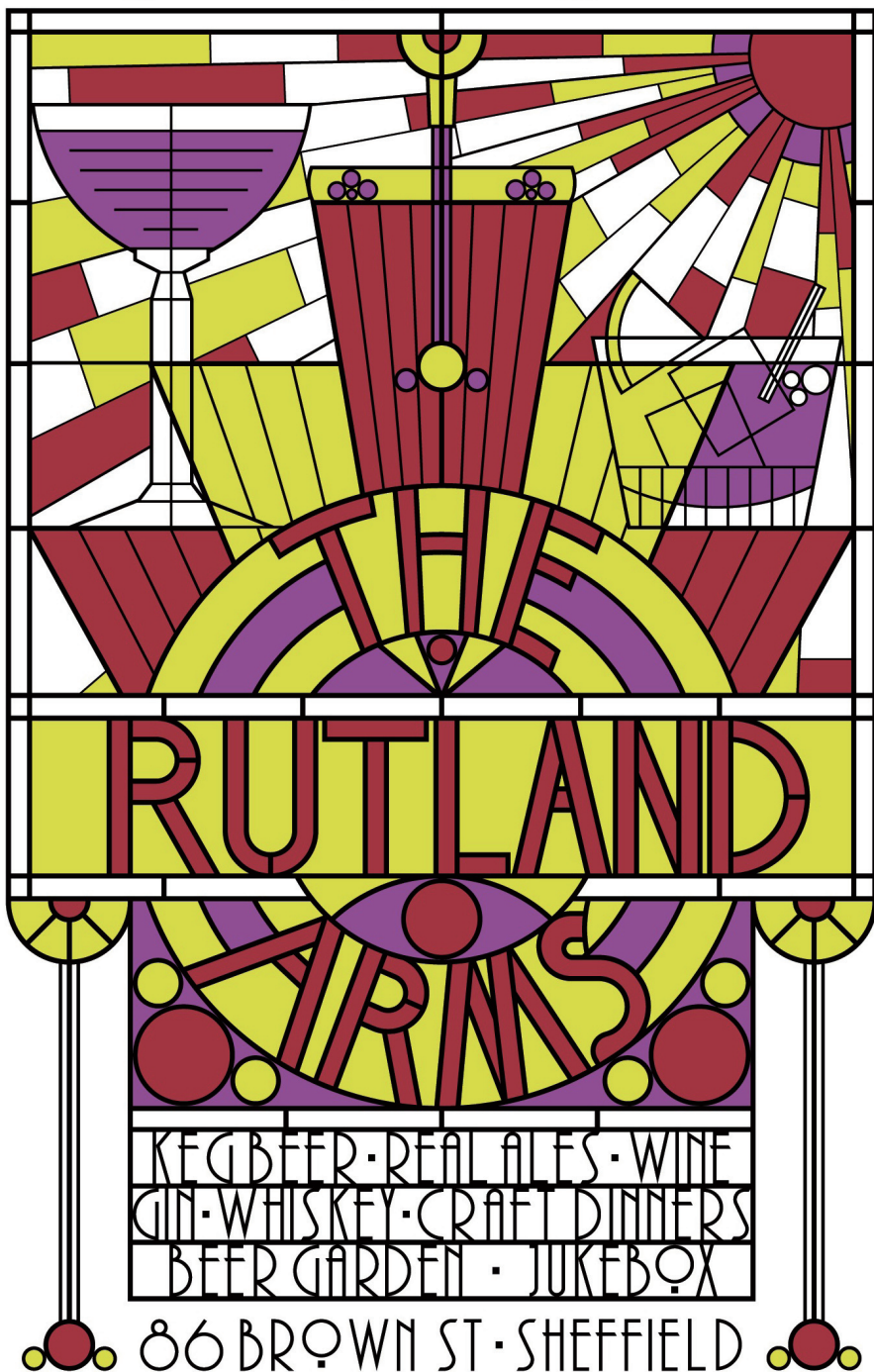
This festival is held at the **Victoria Hall** in Saltaire and features around 110 cask ales plus ciders and world beers. Advance tickets advisable. Website.



Burton on Trent (CAMRA)

Thu 19 – Sat 21 Mar

The long established annual beer & cider festival at **Burton Town Hall** featuring over 100 different cask ales plus cider, kegged craft beer, gin & wine bar and food. More details on their website.





FESTIVAL VOLUNTEERS' SOCIAL



A number of our beer festival volunteers had a get-together recently to try their hand at Dutch shufflerboard – or *Sjoelen*, to give it its correct name.

The game involves sliding wooden discs along the board to try and get them into the numbered compartments – not as easy as you might think, as all the failed attempts start to build up!

In the upstairs room at the **Harlequin** on Nursery Street, over 20 of us took part in a highest-score competition and a quickfire play-off version – all over a few of the Harlequin's excellent beers, of course.



The pub also kindly donated £25 worth of vouchers for our two winners. Lee Vallett won the high-score competition, and Jamie Smith won the play-off.

It was a great success, and a repeat afternoon is planned for sometime in the spring.

Paul Crofts

THE COMMITTEE



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Committee Meeting Secretary

Pub of the Year Coordinator

Good Beer Guide Coordinator



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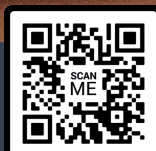
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