

THE UK'S BEST SELLING
BEER AND PUB GUIDE



THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2024

FOREWORD BY
BRUCE DICKINSON



Campaign
for
Real Ale

IRON BREW

MAGAZINE OF SCUNTHORPE & DISTRICT
CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

AUGUST – OCTOBER 2023



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE



Picnic in the Park Event A Success!

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT



Welcome to this latest issue of our branch magazine. Some good news among all the gloom – the latest Society of Independent Brewers Association (SIBA) report on independent UK breweries, shows that numbers have remained stable, actually increasing by two in the period covering April to June. Despite a number of brewery closures and changes of ownership this is a sign that confidence in the sector remains.

The new Alcohol Duty Rates and Relief scheme came into force on 1 August. A new duty relief is given to draught beer and ciders sold in pubs to support hospitality businesses. There is also extended duty relief for small and medium producers. An anomaly in the scheme means with draught relief it won't be legal for beer festivals to offer takeaway draught beer as this is charged at a higher duty level. More details on the scheme can be found in this issue.

MARK ELSOME

CRAFT BEER CONNOISSEUR WHAT'S IN A (BEER) NAME?



Many years ago the naming of beer was quite a simple process. With fewer beer styles to be concerned about - usually Mild and Bitter or occasionally Stout and Porter were all that was available - the symbol "X" was used as an indication of strength. Hence beer could be named as XX for strong beer and X for small or weak beer. This is popularly thought to originate from its use by excisemen from the middle of the 17th century when beer was first taxed, although another school of thought is that X and XX were signs of quality adopted by monastic brewers (Ref 1), but for the purposes of this article let's not go there and confuse the issue even further!

The system still exists today in the names of beers such as Batemans XB and XXXB, Greene King's XX Mild and Belgian brewer De Ranke with their XX Bitter – there may be more but I can't think of any off the top of my head - although not applied in the same rigorous manner as previously. In the mid-1970's when the appreciation of real ale in the UK was reinvigorated by CAMRA and others, beers and beer names started to become much more varied and adventurous. Of course there were missteps along the way with smutty names such as Cupid Stunt and Four King Ale (apologies to any readers of a sensitive disposition), but after a few suppressed playground giggles, we thankfully grew up and moved on. In the years that followed breweries such as Roosters, who were one of the first to brew with American hops, themed a range of beers influenced by language and icons from the USA such as Yankee, Cogburn (named after Rooster Cogburn, the US marshal in the film True Grit), Fort Smith, Buckeye (a type of American chicken) and so on. More recently when Magic Rock first appeared, they did so with a fanfare

of circus-themed beers such as Ringmaster, High Wire, Cannonball, Strongman and Clown Juice - they now seem to have abandoned this idea with their newer beers, to the detriment of their branding in my view. In this way, instead of having a random selection of beer names, the brands became strongly associated with the brewery, helping the consumer to tap into the products and projected ethos of the company. Now craft beer brewers have taken the naming of beers to a whole new level.

Pomona Island of Salford are one of the best (or worst depending on your point of view), in giving beers long, obscure names. Check these out from their current range; The Enemy of the Perfectly Adequate (5% ABV West Coast Pale); When People Wore Pyjamas and Lived Life Slow (6.8% IPA); Are We Gonna Let the Elevator Bring Us Down (6.1% Grape & Gooseberry Sour); Aquarius and My Name is Ralph (6.5% IPA). You get the picture? I sometimes wonder how they manage to fit these lengthy names on the can! Cloudwater from Manchester, who many in the craft community acknowledge as one of the leading UK craft breweries, are not afraid to

get on board. How about the existential The Interior Life and the External World? (5% DDH Pale). Heist Brewery of Sheffield are also not averse to giving their beers long, nonsensical names such as Glitzy Crystal Mafia King (7.5% sour smoothie) and Malt Bag Ghillie Suit (6.4% New England IPA). And how about Sureshot, also from Manchester, with their Tim the Human Fish (6.5% IPA) and Tall Man's Wetsuit (8% Double IPA)?, or the pièce de résistance, Let's Go Somewhere There's Cheese (6.5% New England IPA)!



I could go on (and on), but I won't. Suffice to say that these strange and sometimes plain daft beer names do perform an important function. Along with the accompanying creative artwork, they announce to

the waiting world that they're something different to other more mundane beers and add an element of unexpectedness and excitement for the consumer, particularly the younger demographic. Yes it's all tied up in marketing of the product, but I much prefer this to a rather dull choice of Mild or Bitter at the bar as in the not so distant past. Some of the beer names often include an element of humour (always welcome in today's world) and to this old craftie help to reinforce the notion of responsible beer drinking with friends as an enjoyable, social occasion. Wacky beer names may not be your thing, but as you've probably realised by now, I'm a fan of them and long may they continue.

See you in my local The Hanging Bat for a pint or three of Pomona Island's Have You Seen This Chicken? a 5% West Coast Pale – I've already put my order in with the landlord!

A BEERGEEK

Reference: [Cornell, Martyn, Zythophile Blog, 28/02/2008](#)



BOTTESFORD TOWN COUNCIL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

Beer Festival & Picnic in the Park

To help celebrate the 50th anniversary of Bottesford Town Council, we were asked by the council if we would repeat the beer & cider bar that we provided for the Queen's Jubilee in 2022. For such a prestigious occasion we were happy to agree.

Having done it once it was slightly easier to put together and to ensure we didn't run out this year (as last), we ordered more beers and ciders.



We needed extra stillage for the four additional beers and this was loaned from St Peter's Church and put together for us by three members of the church beer festival committee (thanks guys!).

By Saturday we were ready to welcome customers to the beer

festival which was housed in the Civic Hall at Valley Park in Bottesford. The weather forecast for the day was for rain showers for most of the afternoon (disappointing after the long stretches of hot weather we'd had recently), but that didn't put people off and we were busy from the start.

On a couple of occasions in the afternoon the bar became extremely busy as short-lived showers drove people indoors, and extra bar staff had to be hastily mobilised to reduce the queues, which by now were



snaking into the adjoining corridor! The first beer to go (not unexpectedly) was the Thornbridge DDH Jaipur

and the Ainsty Killa Kiwi, Firebrand Patchwork Rocket and Titanic Iceberg were also very popular. On the cider & perry front the two flavoured ciders – Lilley's Raspberry Mojito and Seacider White Peach were well liked as was the Broadoak Perry. By the end at 7 pm there was not a lot left of anything. The prosecco and wine bar

adjacent to us in the Civic Hall, also did some brisk business and other attractions on the day in the other halls seem to have been well supported.

All monies raised from the event will go to the Mayor's chosen charities of Lindsey Lodge Hospice and Hope House.

Thanks to everyone who came along – we're glad the rather gloomy weather forecast for the day didn't put you off.

Thanks also to all those who helped out with transporting equipment, putting it all together and taking it down and working on the bar. A real team effort!

Our next involvement in a local beer festival will be the 3rd St Peter's Church Beer Festival in September. More details in this issue.

MARK ELSOME

PUB & BREWERY NEWS

Carlsberg Marston's Brewery Company (CMBC), owner of **Ringwood Brewery**, has put both the brewery and its beers up for sale. CMBC said the decision to close Ringwood was taken because it's situated in a residential area, making expansion difficult. Ringwood was

acquired by CMBC in 2007 and production had steadily grown to 50,000 barrels a year and it supplied 750 accounts with its beers. CMBC has already closed **Jennings Brewery** and sold the former Charles Wells **Eagle Brewery** to the Spanish brewer Estrella Damm, where it now only brews lager. As leading beer writer Roger Protz says in his Protz On Beer online blog, "It seems clear that Carlsberg, a global brewer and the dominant partner in CMBC (owner of 60% of the CMBC company), has little or no interest in ale. There must now be real concern for the future of the Wychwood Brewery in Oxfordshire (*also owned by CMBC – Ed*) that produces both Hobgoblin and Brakspear ales."

<https://protzonbeer.co.uk/>

More breweries have reacted to the current cost-of-business crisis by entering into administration. The biggest of these was **Black Sheep** of Masham, founded in 1992 and employing some 150 people, who announced in May its intent to appoint administrators "to explore funding options with a view to take the business forward amid prevailing economic conditions".

However they have since been

acquired by London lending and advisory firm Breal Group, so will still be able to produce beers from the Masham Brewery and (most of) their pubs will continue to trade, although their shareholders and creditors will have lost out financially.

They subsequently closed three of the pubs in their estate following an "extensive review of the businesses". These included the much-loved **Mr Foleys** in Leeds and the **Last Drop Inn** in York, which "had not returned to pre-Covid levels of trade".

A similar outcome arose for London craft brewery **Brew By Numbers** who said in a statement, "The hospitality industry has been facing significant challenges over the past few years, due to increased costs and changes in consumer behaviour ... moving forward, we are now pleased to report that we are in the final stages of securing a deal as part of a restructuring process that will bring in new investors with financial



expertise to ensure our future success.” The company has relocated its business to a new site in Greenwich “to expand and address the financial impacts of the pandemic”, but closed its original site in Bermondsey, where it was part of the popular “Bermondsey Mile” group of brewery taps .

<https://beertoday.co.uk/>

Thirst Class Ale of Stockport, **Red Cat Brewery** of Winchester and **Revolutions** of Castleford are other breweries that we know of who’ve bitten the dust. At the time of writing we are not aware of any rescues packages being put forward for them.

Brick Brewery of Deptford also went into administration, but was acquired by the Breal Group (who also took over at Black Sheep), saving the jobs and futures of the people who work there.



Dog of Barrow. Owner and brewer

More new beers from one of our local micros, **Little Big**

Geoff McCaughtrie recently brewed **Far Cry**, a strong 7.2% ABV Double IPA (DIPA) – his 100th brew since start up, **Rolled Gold**, a 4.0% golden summer thirst quencher and **Petit Schnaison** a 4.5% dark saison (seasonal) beer which is a session strength version of their stronger **Schnaison** beer. **Petit Schnaison** was featured on cask at the recent Barton Lions Beer Festival and is also booked for the **3rd St Peter’s Church Beer Festival** in September.

The beer festival at **Cafe Independent** in Scunthorpe, which was scheduled to take place on 22 & 23 July was cancelled, due apparently to a change in management.

The **King William IV** pub at Scawby Brook was again put up for sale recently. We contacted Scawby Parish Council about the possibility of setting up a community group to bid for the pub and even contacted a leading Lincolnshire brewery about buying it, but neither approach was fruitful. Although our previous successful efforts to get the pub listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) contributed to a stay of execution of just over a year, where

the pub stayed open and continued trading, now it’s up for sale it looks like hospitality businesses are just not in the market to buy closed pubs in the current dire economic climate.



If the pub is sold for conversion into housing (as the planning permission allows), it means that the residents of Scawby Brook will lose their only remaining pub.

Greene King recently released the latest beers in its seasonal range – **Ale Fresco**, a 4.3% ABV golden ale brewed with Centennial hops and **New Tricks**, a collaboration with Suffolk-based Nethergate Brewery, which is a 4.0% golden ale with



added ginger and lemon. These beers were available to the trade in smaller 4.5 gallon pins throughout

July and August.

(Look out for them in a local Greene King pub near you! - Ed)

<https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2023/07/05/Greene-King-sends-out-first-pins-of-beer>

The average price of a pint of beer has risen by 50p in just over a year, According to new figures from the Office for National Statistics. Over the 12 months the average price of a **pint of bitter** has risen from £3.50 to £3.80. The average price of a **pint of lager** has leapt by 11% over the year, and if that trend continues it could pass the £5 mark next year.

“It is clear just how much households will struggle to afford a night out at their local pub, social club, or taproom,” said Nik Antona, national chair of CAMRA.

“With energy bills for businesses spiralling and the cost of goods and employing staff rocketing too, pubs — and the breweries that service them — have no choice but to put prices up to make ends meet, despite doing everything they can to continue to welcome their loyal customers.”

<https://beertoday.co.uk/2023/06/28/average-price-pint-0623/>

It was a sad day in November last year when the aforementioned Carlsberg Marston's Brewery Company closed **Jennings Brewery**, ending 150 years of production in Cockermouth. But the good news is that a new brewery is about to start up in the town. Mark Cockbain, landlord and owner of the **Bitter End** pub, has installed a brewery at the pub and intends to start producing cask ales this summer.



Initial plans are for a light, golden ale, a traditional bitter and a stout. The Bitter End had a brewery installed in 1995 under a previous owner, but this was closed down in 2011 and the equipment sold.

(One to visit if you're in the Cockermouth area – Ed)

<https://wb.camra.org.uk/2023/06/27/cockermouth-brewing-revival-at-the-bitter-end>

Carlsberg Marston's Brewery Company *(yes, them again! - Ed)*, has

stopped selling its Pedigree as a bottle-conditioned beer due to declining sales and rising costs. A CMBC spokesperson said: "CMBC takes pride in brewing our beers to the very highest standards. The recipe for brewing Marston's Pedigree has not been changed, and in all other ways this is the same, excellent ale that drinkers have enjoyed for over 70 years.



"Bottle-conditioning is technically complex and, as the demand for bottle-conditioned beer has declined and the challenges associated with production have increased, it has become no longer viable to continue to bottle-condition Marston's Pedigree."

CAMRA national chairman Nik Antona said: "It is a great shame that CMBC has come to the conclusion to no longer sell Marston's Pedigree as a bottle-conditioned beer. The appeal of bottle-conditioned beer is that the brewing process doesn't

end at the brewery, instead your beer is a fresh, living product that gets better with age".

<https://wb.camra.org.uk/2023/06/27/bottle-conditioned-pedigree-axed>

A new pub for **Brigg**, where the **Hop Inn** micropub opened in July. They



don't have enough space for a cellar to stock real ale, but

have an enterprising range of craft kegs and cans, including beers from **Atom Brewery** when they first opened. Worth a visit we think!

Those jolly pranksters at **Brewdog** are planning a move into the ale category (Bitter to you and I) with the launch of **Shore Leave** in September. This amber brew is said to deliver "delicious, biscuity, toffee American hoppiness" to the category. Of course Brewdog CEO James Watt had to disingenuously refer to the bitter category of beers as "a little bit stuffy and kind of dated" in order to position Brewdog as the instigator of something new and exciting, but that's the Brewdog way!

ROYAL OAK, SNITTERBY Branch Spring Pub of the Year Winner

We've all at some point returned home having made a significant purchase that had not been our intention on leaving. Maybe the lure of a car in a showroom as we passed, or the central aisle of a well-known supermarket designed to exploit this very weakness (the middle of LIDL, other supermarkets are available!). Few of us I suspect can include the purchase of a pub in this category, particularly when neither partner had any experience in the trade.

This is exactly what happened to Dave & Angela Murray some sixteen years ago, when they popped into The Royal Oak, Snitterby, with time to kill between house viewings. Though down at heel (the pub that is, not Dave & Angela!) and in desperate need of some TLC, Dave in particular saw hidden potential, and on learning the pub was on the market, persuaded Angela to give it a go.

A complete refit followed, though not of the modern variety. Out went the 1970's and in came the eighteenth century as they

attempted to restore the pub's character and charm. A recycled bar was fitted, fireplaces reopened and replaced, and perhaps the greatest character introduced by lifting the 250-year-old 11" floorboards from upstairs, and relaying in the main bar. One of the few items to remain was the previously unused 1948 three pump beer engine. Now fully restored, it is one of the oldest in use in the country.

Dave & Angela were determined to create a pub that they would want to come to. One where company and conversation were the focus, and the beer or wine, or whatever your tipples, were the fuel of the conversation.

From day one real ale was re-introduced. First Brewsters Hophead, Wold Top Bitter & Wold Gold. As slowly the trade grew year on year, up to 100 real ales and ciders per annum adorned the bar. An extension was built, in keeping with the original main bar, utilising reclaimed stained glass, church pews and altars.

Then COVID and spiralling energy costs hit. Time to remodel and reflect changing habits. Currently the regular beers, Stencil Barnsley Bitter, Roosters Buckeye & Draught

Bass are joined by a couple of guests and real ciders. There is also a range of low and no-alcohol beers on offer for those who have to drive.

The pub is in a stunning location. An extensive beer garden has been added, taking advantage of the peaceful stream-side location with a ford under the shade of the weeping ash.

Whilst the Royal Oak does not currently offer food cooked in house, a monthly award winning fish & chip van is popular, and other themed pop-ups are planned. The priority remains company and conversation. Occasional good food adds to the experience.



We were delighted to acknowledge the ongoing success of the Royal Oak, by again presenting Dave & Angela with our Spring Pub of the Season award on 10 May. They have also previously been awarded Pub of the Year. For those seeking a

traditional pub with fine ales, the Royal Oak, Snitterby is more than worthy of a visit. Please check opening hours; see www.royaloaksnitterby.co.uk for details.

PAUL WILLIAMS

WHAT ON EARTH?

No. 41: Black IPA

A black India Pale Ale (IPA)? Surely that's a contradiction in terms Beermeister? In a literal sense you're quite right dear readers, but all craft brewers like a challenge and Black IPA was the result! As we shall see, Black IPA enjoyed a brief moment in the spotlight before its popularity fell off the proverbial cliff, but there are signs that it's now coming back into fashion.

So, first of all what is a Black IPA? Put simply it's a beer with the dryness, hop-forward balance, and flavour characteristics of an American IPA, only darker in colour – but without strongly roasted or burnt flavours. The style uses dehusked roast malts to give colour and flavour but also to try and eliminate harsh and burnt qualities. Hop choice is generally American or New World hops that don't clash

with roasted malts. Strengths range from 5.5 – 9.0% ABV.

Alternative names for similar beers include Cascadian Dark Ale (denoting the use of Cascade hops), Export India Porter or American Black Ale (in the USA).



Well that's the nuts and bolts of the style sorted, but how did such an oxymoronic beer come to be? As is often the case it originated in the American craft beer scene of the late 1990's when brewers in Vermont wanted new ways to showcase the hops that were getting so much attention in the new wave of IPA's. The new beer that they brewed was black – typically a colour associated with rich, malty, cocoa and roast forward stouts and porters – but still

emphasised the fresh citrus and pine flavours from American hops. The style took hold, and brewers all over the USA and elsewhere have tried their hand at the style ever since. Black IPA's have gone in and out of fashion, but despite their image problem have clung on and are starting to be popular again. It can be argued that the first Black IPA was brewed sometime in the mid-1800's when British brewers such as Bass, Whitbread and JW Lees were sending their highly hopped porters to India. The first modern example of a Black IPA however was brewed by Greg Noonan at the Vermont Pub & Brewery in 1990, but took its inspiration from Scotch Ales. It wasn't brewed again until 1995 when a protégé of Noonan's called John Kimmich joined the team. He came across the recipe in the brewery archives and was intrigued as he considered it a bridge between Porters and IPA's. The notion of combining toasted malt character and citrusy or piney hop aromatics continued to spread. Stone Brewery came up with Sublimely Self-Righteous Black IPA, Rogue brought out Blackened Brutal Bitter and Firestone Walker released Wookey Jack among other examples. But by

2012 in America the craze for Black IPA's was just about over as craft beer drinkers rated the beer on online forums and moved on. Kimmich considered the style too aggressive for a lot of the younger generations' tastes and he may have been right.

In the UK black IPA was championed by those breweries involved in the start of the craft beer revolution such as BrewDog, Kernel, Beavertown, Magic Rock and Buxton. To British breweries opening in the early 2010s, having a Black IPA was proof that you were taking this "craft" thing seriously, with Thornbridge's Wild Raven being a strong influence for many of them. But by 2017 Black IPA was virtually drowned out by an incoming tide of juicy, hazy IPA.

But what goes around comes around and Black IPA is gradually making a comeback. Although once an indicator of a failed trend, Black IPA is also shorthand for experimentation and passion without the influence of commercialisation. It's an embodiment of that old craft cliché that brewers brew what they like and are just delighted when it sells. Nostalgia for that carefree way of

operating may be driving the revival of Black IPA's and hopefully we'll see more of them from now on. They're definitely worth drinking!



A BEERGEEK

Based with thanks on the following:

<https://www.blackflannel.com/black-ipa/>

<https://www.goodbeerhunting.com/blog/2021/4/5/darkest-before-the-dawn-the-unlikely-return-of-black-ipa>

3RD ST PETER'S CHURCH BEER FESTIVAL

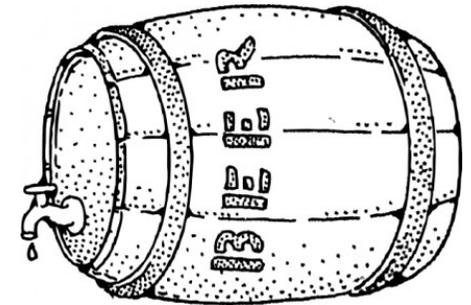
Taking Place 21-23 September

The 3rd St Peter's Beer Festival will take place at St Peter's Church in Bottesford in September and this year will be featuring 20 real ales and 8 ciders.

Scunthorpe & District CAMRA have again been employed to select the beers and ciders and we'll be furrowing our brows over suppliers' drinks lists come the end of August.

We will also be erecting the beer and cider bar (with help from church personnel) and looking after the beers.

Six beers will be served via handpump dispense, with the remaining 14 dispensed by gravity straight from the cask. All beer casks will be cooled using wetted cotton muslin covers. The ciders and (possibly) a perry will be served direct from their bag-in-a-box containers.



Other drinks will include small bottles of wine, pre-mixed gin and tonics and for the first time low alcohol beer in cans (mainly for drivers or those who don't wish to drink standard strength beers). Food will be available at all sessions, including a barbecue on Friday and Saturday evenings. Sessions run from 530 – 1030pm on Thursday 21 September then 12 noon – 1030pm on Friday 22 & Saturday 23 September.

Why not come along and enjoy great drinks, food and good conversation with friends against the stunning backdrop of this beautiful Gothic church? Hope to see you there!

MARK ELSOME

DAVE HOGG

An Obituary

Sadly we have to report the recent death of local licensee Dave Hogg. Steve High pays tribute to a popular local figure - Ed.

Dave Hogg took over the George Hogg pub in Winterton in 2010 after a period of closure and turned it into a thriving hub of the community and a multi CAMRA award winning pub. Dave and Jaxx transformed the George to include regular beer and music festivals with a focus on families and helping with many community projects.

He hosted children's parties at Christmas and Easter and was always happy to help out with numerous local projects.

A larger than life character with personality to match, he was a great advocate of real ales and was happiest being the convivial host. His passions away from the bar included his dogs, shooting and bee-

keeping.



Dave made everyone feel welcome and at home in the George and will be sorely missed by many friends and work colleagues who say he was the best boss you could work for. Sammy will continue to run the pub and The Soldiers Rest will continue to provide quality food upstairs. A true gentleman in every sense of the word, his great sense of humour and beaming smile will never be forgotten.

STEVE HIGH

A VISIT TO GRIMSBY BEER FESTIVAL 2023

What Was It Like?

On Friday 21st July 2023, we took ourselves off to the Grimsby CAMRA beer festival and at a new venue to boot, the home ground of Grimsby Town, Blundell Park.

We took the train to Cleethorpes,

then walked the 1.1 mile to the ground. We made a slight error in walking along Cleethorpes sea front to the back of the ground as none of the fan entrances were open, so we had to walk all the way around the ground to get to the front entrance - walking through Cleethorpes' main streets to the ground would have been a better option! Not a real problem though.

Inside the venue, in what is the Mariner's Trust own bar and armed with glass and festival guide, we settled in for the afternoon. With 8 ciders/perries and 24 ales to choose from, with varying styles and strengths, I was personally impressed to see 9 of the ales were dark stouts and porters, unusual for a summer festival.



Breweries such as 8 Sail, Dancing Duck, Docks Beers, Fat Cat, Milestone, Shadow Bridge and Thornbridge amongst others were a delight to sample. The ciders and perries, though not sampled by us, were represented by

Broadoak, Snail's Bank, Seacider, Newton Court, Sheppy's and Farmer Jim's.

Hot food was served at a seated, covered outside area overlooking the pitch, though could be taken into the venue if required.

Saw some familiar faces and met up with old friend and former Scunthorpe CAMRA chairman, Mike Sayers. Great beers and old friends, what a combo !



My personal favourite beer of the festival was Xtreme Brewery's "Strawberry Xtreme" a sweet dark ale with strawberry fondant flavour. Superb!

BEVERLEY BRANTON

NEW ALCOHOL DUTY SCHEME COMES INTO FORCE

A Quick Summary

A new UK alcohol duty scheme came into force on August 1 and although (ironically) a dry subject for most,

here's a quick summary of the changes.

Before we get into it, Steve Dunkley of Beer Nouveau in Manchester considers the scheme as an attempt by the Government to stop people drinking so much and improve people's health influenced by pressure groups such as the Institute of Alcohol Research, funded by the Temperance Movement.

In a way this was the result they wanted, as the duty limit for low strength beers has risen from 2.8 to 3.5% ABV, which the Government claims will encourage the growth of health-conscious consumption. The higher strength limit has gone up from 7.5% to 8.5%.

This opens up the possibility of brewers paying a lot less duty by reducing the strengths of some beers to 3.4%. For example, Carlsberg have already reduced the strength of their Pilsner from 3.8% to 3.4%.

Elsewhere CAMRA has cautiously welcomed the changes which include:

- the retention and extension of the sliding scale of duty for Small Brewers Relief on alcohol products under 8.5% ABV (which

is also now applied to Small Cider Makers as well), where they'll pay reduced rates on qualifying products if they produce less than 4,500 hectolitres per year

- all alcoholic products now taxed on their alcohol by volume (rather than the previous four separate taxes covering beer, cider, spirits and wine), meaning higher alcohol products will be taxed at a higher rate
- a lower rate of duty applied to draught beer and cider sold in pubs to support the hospitality industry and "recognise the vital role played by pubs in our communities"
- an end, to takeaway sales from draught containers at beer festivals etc (unless CAMRA can get the Government to grant some kind of exemption or the additional duty is paid on each draught container), as the lower rate of duty does not apply to takeaway beer and cider dispensed from a draught duty cask or bag-in-box container.

So, some good changes, some not so good, as ever! There has been a backlash from industry bodies who

claim the new system treats wine and spirits unfairly as the tax on most of these will rise by 10.1%. The change in draught duty is also a Government sleight of hand, as this will not alter while nearly all other alcohol taxes go up.

Clearly CAMRA beer festival organisers will need to carefully review their beer and cider orders from now on to avoid substantial quantities of leftover products. Although every cloud ... leftover beer *can* be consumed by volunteers on the premises or *sold for consumption on the premises*, making the end-of-festival staff party an intriguing prospect!

MARK ELSOME

With thanks to:

<https://boakandbailey.com/>

<https://camra.org.uk/>

<https://thedrinksbusiness.com/>



POSTSCRIPT:

And finally the Craft Beer Connoisseur wanted to impart one of his favourite craft beer jokes, so here it is:

How do you know if someone likes craft beer?

Don't worry, they'll soon tell you.

Good joke CBC. If you have any more craft beer rib ticklers, do share with our readers. Until next time! (Ed)



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