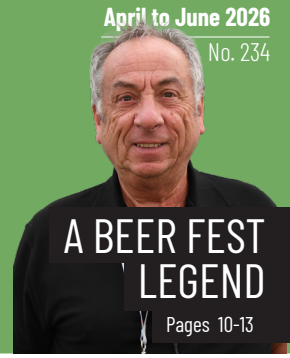


# BEER AROUND 'ERE



A BEER FEST  
LEGEND

Pages 10-13

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# YARD ACT

**YARD OF ALE IS OUR PUB OF THE YEAR!**

BREWERY &  
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# CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

By Steve Bersey



Welcome to the April–June 2026 edition of Beer Around 'Ere. In the last issue, I highlighted the forthcoming budget and the urgent need for the UK Government to offer more meaningful support to the hospitality sector. Unfortunately, November's budget proved disappointing, and although additional measures were announced in January 2026, they fall well short of what is required.

As we move into April, all of us will face further increases in our utility bills, squeezing disposable incomes even more. Wages are simply not keeping pace with rising costs. The mechanism used to calculate Business Rates remains outdated and fundamentally unfair, regardless of the tweaks announced in January.

Meanwhile, the pub trade has never fully recovered to pre-COVID levels. Pubs are grappling with higher bills and wage costs, while customers have less money to spend — a perfect storm. According to The Morning Advertiser, as many as one-third of pubs could become unprofitable unless

the government steps up with more substantial support.

On a brighter note, Steve Dunkley has now been elected as our Beer Festival Organiser. In early February he presented his plans for the 47th Peterborough Beer Festival, taking place in the last week of August 2026, to an audience of around sixty members.

His proposals include a new cooling system to ensure consistent beer temperature, a revised site layout, the reintroduction of a hospitality bar available for hire, and a more diverse range of beverages to broaden the festival's appeal.

The feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive, with many leaving the meeting feeling energised and eager to volunteer.

Remember: this is your Beer Festival. If you have ideas or suggestions, please do share them with us.

Finally, congratulations to our award-winning pubs. The Yard of Ale on Oundle Road has been crowned both the Branch City Pub of the Year 2026 and the overall Branch Pub of the Year 2026.

The Ship in March has been named Branch Town Pub of the Year 2026, and The Bluebell in Maxey takes home the title of Branch Rural Pub of the Year 2026. Well deserved, all of them.

Steve

## BRANCH CONTACTS

### BRANCH COMMITTEE

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**Campaigns Officer:** Position Vacant

**Press Officer:** Steve Dunkley

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**Melbourn:** Don Rudd

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**Nene Valley:** Bill Taylor

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**Oakhams Ales:** Dave Allett

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**Rocket Ales:** Don Rudd

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**Tydd Steam:** Dickie Bird

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**Xtreme Ales:** Mark Wroe

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# A Yard-earned victory!

Our branch Pubs of the Year have been named - and a huge congratulations go to the Yard of Ale, which won the city and overall branch titles.

The Ship, in March, was the winner of the town pub of the year, while the

Bluebell, in Maxey, won the rural pub of the year.

Branch vice-chairman Chris Harris presented the team at the Oundle Road pub with their awards recently, with the other two venues due to receive their awards shortly.

The Yard, which always has a great range of ales on, and is a fantastic community pub, will now go on to represent the Peterborough & District Branch in the next round of the Pub of the Year competition.

## Bumble Rocked by latest tap takeover

The Bumble Inn continued its journey through the alphabet with its tap takeovers by ticking off C with Castle Rock.

Recent times have seen an increase in new, exciting beers, designed to complement the staple brews, such as Harvest Pale.

A firm favourite was definitely the collaboration Session Coffee Baltic Porter.

A real winner as Titanic Brewery and Chartley Coffee supported this 4.8% belter of a beer.

With eight beers, the hand pumps were ever changing through the week. The merch giveaways were also well received by customers.

June sees this mighty micro hit 10 years.

Planning is underway to bring even more new beers to Peterborough, and tickers will be in their element.

You may also notice the new acquisition of the Bumble Van, in its livery. Give Darren a wave if you see him out and about, sourcing great beer.



## Phillip Pilipovic August 1961 to January 2026

Many of you will recognise this face from anywhere in the city where there's beer to be had!

Phillip was a stalwart of the brewing industry, with a thirst for knowledge, as well as for real ale.

He was known and welcome in all his regular pubs, including the Hand & Heart, the Palmerston Arms, the Coalies, the Bumble and more recently the Wonky Donkey, which is where he was happy to debate any profound issue of the day, provided it was beer-related!

His recollection of the names of ales he'd sipped and the voices of people he'd met was uncanny.

He would astound other drinkers by quoting them word for word, from some chance meeting



many years ago.

For some 20 years or more, before the days of smart phone tech, Phillip would convert our Beer Festival beer list to Braille and distribute about 30 copies or so to his friends and others. That's true dedication to the cause!

He leaves behind his long-time partner and the love of his life, Cathy.

Rest in Peace, Philip - as we raise one more glass to your memory!

## Community award to be presented to the Wonky Donkey

The Wonky Donkey, in Fletton High Street, has been awarded a Peterborough City Council Community Civic Award.

Landlord Dave Williams and the team at the micropub have

been honoured with the prize in recognition of their contribution to the community and fundraising activities.

The award will be presented to the pub at a ceremony in May.

## Another distribution resolution

For some time it had been clear that having the entire print run of over 5000 copies of Beer Around 'Ere delivered initially to an address in Stamford, right on the Branch's periphery, wasn't making logistical sense!

So, at the Branch Monthly Meeting in February, I asked if anyone living in the Peterborough area would be prepared to take the delivery and hold onto the boxes for a couple of days while distributors collected them.


Martyn and Cath Hunt of Xtreme Ales immediately volunteered their premises (I know they don't live at the brewery, although it may well seem like it!) as the new "hub" and we were very happy to accept. Initial delivery apart, nothing is expected to change.

The team is also grateful to Trevor and Debbie Ellis, who, unbidden, have offered to deliver BAE to the seven Werrington pubs. Trevor and Debbie take over Mike Lane's old round; we naturally commend Mike for the many years he distributed to pubs in the north of the city.

Thanks all! It has saved me – and Dave and Alan Binnington - time and possible stress.

At

## These pints don't drink themselves

Had to be there button ----->  1,467



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# BREWERY NEWS

Who's been brewing what across the Peterborough branch...



## NENE VALLEY BREWERY

[nenevalleybrewery.com](http://nenevalleybrewery.com)

By Will Fry with additions by Bill Taylor (BLO)



This year's seasonal brews have gone down well. The particular favourite of the BLO was Lone Star, until the appearance of Anything Goes, which is delicious!

Wharf, a session IPA, and Anything Goes, a London Porter, have been selling really well.

We have just brewed an American Imperial Stout. This will be available in April in cask and bottle, but we are also going to barrel-age some of the brew in Tequila, Rum, Bourbon and Crème Brûlée oak barrels for nine months. Can I wait that long? Guess I'll have to!

At the SIBA East Indie Beer Awards, Simple Pleasures was the Gold Award Winner in Cask British Bitter (Up to 4.4%) it will now go forward to the National Finals at SIBA X in Liverpool in March.

Both the physical and on-line shops continue to be busy. It's great seeing our beers being sent as far away as Cornwall and Scotland and everywhere in between!

Scan the QR code here to sign up for Camra today!



## DRUM AND MONKEY



By Rupert Gibson

A friend asked AI to look through all my personal Untappd history and analyse my favourite beer. A few follow up questions and it had created my perfect beer and a brew sheet.

Although riddled with errors and missing essential information this went on to become #153 Filthy Animal, a 9% DIPA with strata, vic secret and citra.

I've played with this recipe via 'Mucky Puppy' and two versions of 'Scruffy Monkey'. Whirlpooled with citra, mosaic and nelson savin then double dry hopped with azacca and nectaron, (22g/l of hops in total), these have a massive punch of peach and pineapple.

For more news and updates please follow the brewery on Instagram @ drumandmonkeybrewing or get in touch via drumandmonkeybrewing@gmail.com.

To drink my beer head to the King's Head or Blonde Beet in Stamford.

## ROCKET ALES

[rocket-ales.com](http://rocket-ales.com)

Donald Rudd

# ROCKET ALES

Rocket Ales is closing down after nearly 10 years of brewing. No one thing is driving this, apart from all the little things telling owner, Dave, that "you're too old to keep doing this". The brewery is for sale

Dave is still actively looking to sell on the brewery and hopes that a buyer will be found in the not too distant future.

## KING'S CLIFFE

[kcbales.co.uk](http://kcbales.co.uk)

By Don Rudd

1 KCB

Jez O'Neill is continuing to brew and supply the core beers of 5C, 66 Degrees, B5, No 10 & P51. There are plans for an additional beer to be added to the range at some point.

Generally beers are available in pubs across the area including several regular outlets in Northamptonshire.

Beers are sometimes available direct from the brewery (See the brewery Facebook page for details) Also, Jez is able to provide beer and wine at events from his Brewery Bar. Contact the brewery for details.



## XTREME ALES



[xtremeales.com](http://xtremeales.com)

The Xtreme Team

Greetings from the Xtreme Team... What a start to 2026!

Following an unusually busy January and February with Straw Bear, Elysian Winter Beer Festival, Chappel Beer Festival, Loughborough Beer Festival and Chequered Skipper Spring Festival, we are now full into the festival mode. We have been frantically brewing, while we have some time, and along with our core and seasonal ales you will be treated to a number of new and special brews to celebrate the upcoming festivals through April and May:

- Alconbury Weald Beer Festival at The Pavillion, Friday 10th to Sunday 12th April
- Ely Eel, Jubilee Gardens, Ely, Saturday 10th May
- Ely Food & Drink, Palace Green, Ely, Sunday 11th to Monday 12th May
- Cambridge Summer Beer Festival, Jesus Green, Monday 18th to Saturday 23rd May

Also some future dates for the diary are:

- Booze in Fenstanton Pews, Parish Church, date TBC
- Ely Homes & Garden Festival, Ely Cathedral, Friday 19th to Saturday 20th June
- Yaxley Vintage Festival, Yaxley Scout Centre, Saturday 20th to Sunday 21st June
- City of Peterborough Sports Club Beer Festival, Friday 26th to Sunday 28th June
- Armed Forces Weekend, St Marys Church, Whittlesey, Thursday 25th to Sunday 28th June
- Ely Aquafest 2026, Jubilee Gardens, Ely, Sunday 5th July

On a more celebratory note we would

also like to share some great news that we have received from CAMRA...

“On behalf of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), I am pleased to advise Xtreme Brewery that cask BlaX Forest has won the Gold award in the Speciality Ales – Flavoured category of the 2026 East Anglia/East Central awards for Champion Beer of Britain.”

This fantastic accolade can now be added the plethora of awards that BlaX Forest Stout has received from, Peterborough, Ely and Norwich to name but a few...

On this pleasant note it is time to sign off, other than to ask that you keep supporting Xtreme by supporting your local independent pubs. You can find our ales in the local hostelrys including: The Chequered Skipper, Ashton; The Bumble Inn, Westgate; The Crown, Lincoln Road; The Butcher's Arms, Werrington; Charters, Town Bridge; Ramsey Mereside Club; Nassington CC and The Ostrich, North Street.

## MELBOURN BROS

By Don Rudd

Beer brewed at the All Saints Brewery is then shipped, by tanker, to Tadcaster where different fruit juices are added.

The four bottled beers produced are Organic Raspberry, Apricot, Cherry and Strawberry, all at the strength of 5.1% ABV. It would appear that, as far as we know, there are no plans to change the range of beers from Melbourn's Brewery.

## OAKHAM ALES

[oakhamales.com](http://oakhamales.com)

By Dave Allett



Oakham Ales recently welcomed two guest brewers to create a beer for the overseas brewer feature at the recent spring Wetherspoons Beer Festival. Jessica Martinez & Sergio Hernandez

joined the team to create Maltezer Session IPA at 4.8% with three USA hops & an addition of Hibiscus flowers. A second beer, a red rye beer at 4% called Soul Synergy was also brewed. Hope you found them and enjoyed them.

Available from mid-March is the year's first collaboration brew with Hook Norton from Oxfordshire, a 4.1% golden beer with three USA hops called Hooked Up. Other spring beers available see returns for Ernest at 4% and White Dwarf at 4.3%, plus something new, Thunderhawk - a 4.3% beer brewed with three Kiwi hops. A style of beer not usually associated with the brewery, Dark Mild, is available for Mild May month, with a long-awaited return for Midnight Mild, at 4% a black beer first brewed some years ago I believe when Oakham acquired the Barton Arms in Birmingham. A second collaboration brew with Thornbridge of Derbyshire is due in June, a 4.2% beer called simply Hoppy Pale.

At present, on the brewery website there are nine cask aged beers available, so imagine my delight at finding three of them available on entering the Barrel Vault on St Pancras station recently- Harmonia, the untried Infinity Loop and Final Cut. Infinity Loop is a lovely tri English hopped beer at 5% and John Bryan's last brew, Final Cut, is surprise, surprise a heavily hopped deep golden beer at 6%. Both were in top form. And then the train home.

## Contact breweries to order beer

### Bowler's/Hopshackle

[bowlers.beer](http://bowlers.beer)

### Digfield

[digfield-ales.co.uk](http://digfield-ales.co.uk)

### Drum and Monkey

[drumandmonkeybrewing@gmail.com](mailto:drumandmonkeybrewing@gmail.com)

### Elgoods

[elgoods-brewery.co.uk](http://elgoods-brewery.co.uk)

### Kings Cliffe Brewery

[kcbales.co.uk](http://kcbales.co.uk)

### Nene Valley

[nenevalleybrewery.com](http://nenevalleybrewery.com)

### Oakham Ales

[oakhamales.com](http://oakhamales.com)

### Rocket Ales

[rocket-ales.com](http://rocket-ales.com)

### Tydd Steam

[tyddsteam.co.uk](http://tyddsteam.co.uk)

### Xtreme Ales

[xtremeales.com](http://xtremeales.com)

# Cheers for everything!

There will be a familiar, and very important, face missing behind the scenes at Peterborough Beer Festival this year, with 2026 being the first time in over 40 years that Mike Lane has not been festival organiser. Here we take a look at his extraordinary time at the helm...



It would take a far cleverer person than me to work out just how many pints of beer have been sold during Mike Lane’s tenure as beer festival organiser, but it will certainly be well over a million.

Over a million pints of beer served by thousands of volunteers to hundreds of thousands of customers.

From humble beginnings at Peterborough Rugby Club, Peterborough Beer Festival has grown to become the country’s biggest event of its kind, and the premier social event in the city each year.

And Mike has played a pivotal role in helping the festival expand to what it is now as the branch’s festival organiser for more than 40 years, managing to keep it going where similar events have reduced in size, or fallen by the wayside

completely, including navigating a two-year absence enforced by the Covid pandemic, and its ongoing effects, such as massively increased costs.

But how did Mike get involved in PBF for the first place?

“I remember it quite fondly because my future brother-in-law, Paul E Wright, was one of the local CAMRA team volunteering at the first beer festival,” Mike explained

“For me, more importantly, was the option to go fishing at the LBC brick pits in search of a peaceful Saturday morning. Arriving at 6:00 am and watching my float sitting still in the water for five or five hours without so much as a nibble, my thoughts turned to my wife who was also volunteering at the beer festival and I

thought, ‘why not?’

“So, I packed up and went to see what this beer festival malarkey was all about. I can’t remember if it was the first PBF or the second, far too long ago, but it was enjoyable and I had my first pint of ‘real ale’ at a beer festival.

“It was a rounded session-strength ale from Fullers of Chiswick and called Hock and the rest as they say is history. I have volunteered at every Peterborough Beer Festival since that time in a number of roles including build, takedown, serving, cellar work, beer ordering, finance and administration etc.”

After five years at the rugby club, the festival needed a bigger venue, and relocated to the Guildenburgh Rooms next to the Wirrina for the following



Outside the beer festival with volunteers in 2005, above, and in his trademark shorts at the festival, left. Pictures courtesy of the Peterborough Telegraph

two events. But even that venue proved too small for the ever-growing festival, with a one-in-one-out policy operating at peak times.

Mike explained: "In 1985 again it was time to move on. My brother-in-law Paul was becoming increasingly involved with his business commitments and was looking to reduce his involvement and asked me if I would be prepared to take on the role of Festival Organiser, which I agreed to.

"The new venue was to be The Worrina, a stone's throw away from The Guildenbergh, again just off Bishop's Road.

"Negotiations with The Worrina were successful and our new home proved a great success, so much so we had five festivals each growing year on year."

The festival continued to grow at the Worrina, and with Mike's job taking him overseas more, he felt it was time to form an organising committee for the event. He said: "I always disliked the term Beer Festival Organiser because I was never such, but was Chair of

the Beer Festival Organising Committee.

"I am pleased to say that many of those early committee members (you know who you are) are still involved with Peterborough CAMRA even after all this time, though sadly we have lost a few along the way."

In 1990, the festival was forced to leave the Worrina, and after spells on the nearby clay football pitches, and another site on Bishops Road, it eventually ended up on the Embankment in 1994, where it remains to this day.

The event continued to grow after the move, with almost 40,000 visitors in 2000, including 11,000 in one day - a record attendance for the festival.

While numbers have not remained at such extraordinary levels, Mike has managed to keep PBF going where others have failed, consistently leading the organisation of what is still one of the biggest beer festivals in the country, and always making a profit.

But all good things have to come to an end, and this year, someone else will be



Mike and David Murray are presented with a certificate in thanks of the money by the RNLI in recognition of the thousands of pounds raised for the charity at the beer festival.

“Under his stewardship the business cases flew through the scrutineering of Francis Lock at head office with only a few occasions having to make compromises.

“He leaves a lasting legacy, one of the biggest successes the city of Peterborough has had, with attendances in the 10s of thousands and the hordes who have flocked to that piece of grass by the river summer after summer. Best wishes on your retirement, and good luck to Steve in trying to fill those massive shoes.”

Nick Jones, from Peterborough brewers Oakham Ales, commented: “Mike Lane has always championed locally based brewers, and right from our early days encouraged Oakham Ales to participate at the Peterborough Beer Festival.

“Our presence at the Festival over the years has played a key part in raising our profile, and Oakham staff past and present have fond memories of Oakham’s

leading the organisation of the festival.

Mike said: “During Autumn 2025 I made it known to the Beer Festival team and to the Branch Committee that I would be retiring from my position as BFO after the 2026 festival.

“As age creeps up on all of us, the work commitment maintaining a key role in the festival is just too much for these old limbs to consider. Not just the hard work during the year, but 17 non-stop days of physical hard work during the build, operation and takedown of the festival.”

Although Mike would have liked to have done one more year as festival organiser, things did not work out that way, and 2025’s festival will be Mike’s swansong.

He said: “For me 2025 marked the end of an era and, I suspect, for many other like-minded colleagues from the local CAMRA branch, much the same. So in conclusion... what can I say, maybe from one dolphin to another, SO LONG AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH. (credit to DA

and CH)”

Former branch chairman Matt Mace paid tribute to Mike, saying: “Many thanks to Mike for the 40-plus years he has led the Peterborough Beer Festival committee through good times and bad. Taking over as Festival Organiser from his brother-in-law, the late great Paul E Wright, he will always be remembered for moving the festival to the Embankment and single-handedly organising the entertainment.

“We will never again see those tanned arms and legs patrolling around the members area or his confused expression looking at the computer screen in the office.



Mike with beer festival volunteers in 2005.



Enjoying a pint with organising committee member Harry Morton in 2002.

themed participation at the festival centred around our 'Festival Special' beers.

"Thanks Mike for the work you put in over four decades to make the Peterborough Beer Festival such a standout event in the beer calendar."

Steve Dunkley, who has taken over as the head of the festival organising committee, also praised his predecessor, saying: "Mike managed something no-one else could, by growing a local festival into a regional one, and keeping it going while others have taken breaks. A truly remarkable achievement."

Branch vice chair Chris Harris said; "Mike Lane's extraordinary dedication to the Peterborough Beer Festival over nearly 40 years is nothing short of remarkable.

"To have guided and

overseen the organisation of such a prestigious event for so long speaks volumes about his commitment, passion, and resilience. Having been involved myself for several years - and more heavily on the organisational side post-Covid - I've come to truly appreciate just how much hard work goes into making the festival a success.

"It isn't just the week of the event; it's the many months of preparation beforehand and the wrap-up afterwards that often go unnoticed, but are absolutely essential.

"On a personal note, I've always admired Mike's sense of humour throughout the busiest, most chaotic moments, even when things appear to have gone slightly awry—and perhaps now he'll finally have time to treat himself to a pair of

## More of Mike's memories...

Mike has kindly provided BAE with over four decades of history of the beer festival for our readers to enjoy. There is far too much for us to put it all in one edition, so we're going to serialise it over the next few issues in our new feature Down Memory Lane.

slightly longer shorts!

"A huge thank you also goes to all of the hardworking volunteers who return year after year. Their dedication, time, and enthusiasm are the backbone of the festival."

"Well done, Mike, and thank you for everything you've poured into the festival. I hope you can now enjoy a very well-earned retirement from the organisational helm."

Former landlord of the Ploughman, where Mike drank for many years, Andy Simmonds, who was awarded a CAMRA Golden Award alongside Mike, said: "I have the privilege of volunteering for Mike and the festival family since 2011 thanks to the LocAle officer at the time, the legendary John Rice.

"Mike's dedication to CAMRA has been second-to-none - 39 years at the helm, with some 42 as a volunteer. Happy retirement M."



# Belgian beers, Eurostar cheers

Chris & Ems Take on Brussels, Bruges, Ghent & Leuven  
By Chris Harris

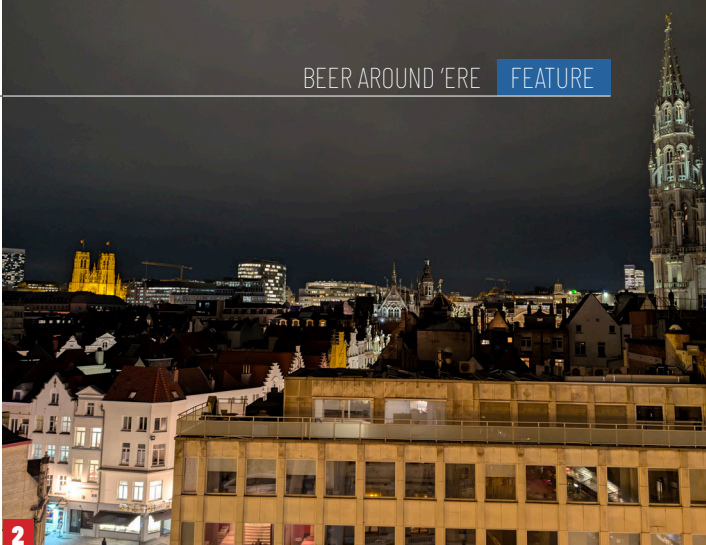
If January insists on being cold, wet, and grumpy, the obvious solution is to flee to Belgium — a place where even the grey skies seem cheerier when paired with good beer, grand squares, and trains that sell refreshments (or at least don't stop you from bringing your own).  
So off we went —

myself and Ems — armed with Eurostar tickets, an irresistible upgrade offer, and a firm belief that birthday weekends should be celebrated with beer, trains, and more beer.

**Eurostar Plus to Brussels: Legroom, Red Wine & Smug Contentment**  
We made the most of a

recent offer and upgraded to Eurostar Plus — which, for the uninitiated, means extra legroom, complimentary meals, and some genuinely lovely red wine. It also grants that subtle air of smugness as you glide under the Channel.

Arriving in Brussels, we kicked off with something

**1****2**

new: the Belgian Beer Experience on Anspach. The rooftop bar is fantastic — big views, big beer list — but the venue has embraced the baffling new trend of forcing everyone to queue in neat little lines at the bar. Lines! At a bar! A modern misery that needs stamping out before it spreads further.

Fortunately, our next stop restored balance to the universe.

### Le Corbeau: Beer, Jazz & TableTetris

Le Corbeau is one of those bars that instantly reminds you why Belgian drinking culture is so adored. Rammed, noisy, warm, chaotic, with over 40 beers available.

I opted for a Bière du Corbeau 9, and even Ems — never shy of a sensible choice — enjoyed a couple of fruit beers. We wedged

**3**

ourselves onto a tiny table just in time to watch a group of jazz musicians attempt an Olympic-level manoeuvre through the crowd to reach the stage. Impressive stuff.

### Bruges: DoubleDeckers & Monastic Moments

The next morning we boarded our SNCB doubledecker to Bruges — smooth, easy, scenic — and of course followed the ancient rail tradition of enjoying train beers

**4****5****6**



7

8

(it’s the law).

Bruges was its gorgeous self, cobbles and canals and chocolate shops everywhere, and The Monk proved a cracking stop. A brilliant sports pub with more than 50 beers, where I naturally sampled the house blonde and brown. Delicious.

**Ghent: Brown Café Bliss & Gentse Strop Salvation**

Ghent was buzzing — full of tourists, trams, and lively energy. We avoided the crowds and did the most Belgian thing imaginable: sat outside a brown café with beers and simply watched the world wander past.

Our rest stop at Café Den Turk — Ghent’s oldest bar — was a delight. After a relaxing hour, we strolled the waterways, dodged trams with varying degrees of grace, and discovered that Café t Galgenhuis was sadly closed for building works.



9

But just around the corner salvation awaited: Het Waterhuis aan de Bierkant, where a crisp Gentse Strop revived us perfectly.

**Leuven: The Longest Bar in Europe & A NearBlackout Party**

Back aboard the SNCB, with the app making navigation effortless, we headed to Leuven — one of our favourite Belgian cities.

A short stroll down vibrant Dietsestraat took us to our base at the Pentahotel. Bags dropped,

we made a beeline for the legendary Oude Markt — “the longest bar in Europe” thanks to its endless run of cafés and bars.

Leuven’s nightlife is a glorious mix: trendy bars, brown cafés, pubs with character, restaurants, and even the Blauwe Kat, complete with indoor smoking room that feels like stepping back in time.

We enjoyed De Weerelt, Farao, Café Allee, and then wandered to Den Delper, where staff were busy blacking out the windows for a “blackout party”. Considering the volume of tripels and quads we’d enjoyed by that stage, we suspected the blackout theme might become unintentionally participatory.

**Final Brussels Dash: Delirium, Bier Central & Biertempel Restraint**

On our way back to London we paused once more in Brussels. It would’ve been



# Conquering the Guinness Open Gate Brewery

Because no good beer tale should end without a little Irish magic, here’s a bonus story from a jaunt with my friend Colin.

We visited the newly opened Guinness Open Gate Brewery in London — a sleek, shiny playground for stout lovers. Though the black stuff isn’t brewed on-site, we enjoyed a tour, sampled freshly poured Guinness, and dove into a tasting flight of six London-brewed experimental beers: **Imperial IPA** – bold and punchy; **Hazy IPA** – modern and fruity; **The Brewer’s Lager** – suspiciously Harpish...; **Covent Classic Session IPA** – dangerously sessionable; **Old Brewer’s Yard Porter** – roasty and warming; **Piazza Pale Ale** – light and very quaffable.

The highlight? Pouring our own Guinness and we now consider ourselves fully qualified to help pour pints of the black stuff on St Patrick’s Day at the Peterborough & District CAMRA Pub of the Year 2026. But the true witchcraft was the Stoutie - a selfie printed onto the head of a pint. Seeing one’s face floating in foam is... an experience.

Afterwards, we wandered to The Marquis, where we laughed uproariously with locals at the classic Only Fools and Horses chandelier scene, then on to The Harp for an immaculate Harvey’s and some nostalgic pumpclip sightseeing.

Finally, we dodged the rain to Kentish Town’s iconic Southampton Arms — roaring fire, superb beers (Howling Hops Export Porter, Two Flints Hazy, Deya Steady Rolling Man), and sadness only that we missed their famous roast pork baps. A fine day out, even by London standards.

- 1. Bruges Square.
- 2. The view from the Belgian Beer Experience.
- 3. A Tripel D Anvers.
- 4. The Monk.
- 5. The beer menu at the Monk.
- 6. The house beer at the Monk.
- 7. Leuven Oude Markt.
- 8. Meats and cheeses always pleases at Bier Central.
- 9. The infamous stairs at a bar in Leuven.
- 10. A sign explaining opening hours!

rude not to.

Delirium Village was its usual whirlwind — touristy, chaotic, pink elephants everywhere — but a couple of Delirium Tremens and a Paranoia Exotica set us up nicely for our final meetup with friends at Bier Central.

To my excitement, they had finally updated their monster beer menu from 2023, and we enjoyed classics and curios alike: Gouden Carolus Tripel, Oude Kriek, Super 8 Flandrien, and more.

A final browse at Biertempel saw me attempt to buy more glassware — until Ems reminded me (sternly) that we already own enough to open a small museum. So I limited myself to a couple of bottles for the journey home.

And so we wrapped up a brilliant, beery Belgian birthday weekend — the perfect antidote to January gloom.

10

# Full steam ahead for PBF 2026!

New Peterborough Beer Festival Organiser **Steve Dunkley** writes about how things are progressing as we get set for the 2026 edition

As we head into April there's still almost five months before the beer festival opens, but there's a lot to organise before then.

We've had our first open meeting for all the hard-working volunteers that put so much into making it the event that it is, and our first festival committee meeting where we've set out what we're aiming to achieve.

And now we have a lot of work ahead of us. But it is definitely worth it. Each year thousands of people from across the land come to our city to experience what is arguably the best and largest beer festival in the country, and we're aiming to take that beyond argument.

We'll be expanding some things this year, the range of keg beers and the range of rums, plus we'll be introducing a dedicated lager bar promoting how great UK-brewed lagers can be. We're also getting in some more brewery bars to showcase their beers of all styles, and

an expanded range of foreign beer on draught. We're even in early negotiations to host what will be the largest range of US cask beers in the country!

We're once again working with SIBA (the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates) to host their regional competition, as well as hosting the regional round for the Champion Beer of Britain, plus our own beer of the festival meaning there will be a lot more award-winning beers available to try.

We also have a great new logo for this year's festival, see right, designed by Aaron Batchelor, who won our competition to create this year's design.

This is all built on top of the superb work done by the previous organiser, who truly achieved something special with our beer festival. The baton has been passed on, and I hope that, with the help of everyone who's involved, that I'm up to the task.

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favourite beers you can pull yourself, to a quiet seat at a table guaranteed for the evening.

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## Sign up now for great sponsorship opportunities!

With running costs rising each year, sponsorship has become absolutely vital to the success and long-term viability of the Peterborough Beer Festival.

The festival is one of Peterborough's flagship social events, attracting around 22,000 visitors from across the region and beyond. For more than a decade, our Sponsor a Barrel scheme has played a key role in keeping the festival sustainable, and the income it generates is now an essential part of making the event possible.

The cost of sponsoring a barrel is £120+VAT - a level we've kept accessible for both large companies and individual supporters. You get admission tickets, free beer, your logo over the barrel, in the programme and on the website.

In addition to barrel sponsorship, we also offer several other opportunities for businesses looking to raise their profile at the festival. You can sponsor the festival glasses - a hugely popular keepsake that thousands of visitors take home each year. You could also sponsor the main stage, giving your brand prominent visibility throughout the event, or sponsor the T-shirts worn by our volunteer staff, ensuring your logo is seen across the site for the entire week.

■ If you're interested in sponsoring, or would like more information about any of the available options, please contact [sponsorship@pborobeerfest.camra.org.uk](mailto:sponsorship@pborobeerfest.camra.org.uk)

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Advance booking is essential to include priority admission, a souvenir glass, a festival programme and any number of drinks tokens to use for your choice of beers, wine, gin or cider.

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Warren Allett and the team at the Ostrich were handed the prize by branch chairman Steve Bersey and Daryl Ling in recognition

of the North Street pub's excellence in maintaining a great range of top quality ales in perfect condition. Well done!

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## TASTING NOTES

Verdict

## GERMANY

## Dessau

## Tafelspitz Restaurant

**Augustiner Edelstoff** (5.6%) A pale slightly hoppy beer from Munich with a fair malt kick and minimal bitterness in the finish. **Not bad**  
**Augustiner Dunkel** (5.6%) A nice enough malty dark beer, slightly lacking in rich flavour, with a sweetish finish. The flavour improved as it warmed up. **OK**

## Torgau

## Zum Alten Zollhaus

**Ur-Krossitzer Pilsner** (4.9%) A classic, clean tasting German pilsner. Hop led with a slight malty balance and subtle bitter finish. **Nice** (See bottled version below)

## Dresden

## Watzke Brauhaus

**Watzke Pils** (5.0%) An unfiltered beer with good hop aroma and taste balanced by slight maltiness with a strong bitter finish. **Nice enough**

**Watzke Dresdener Hell** (4.7%) Moderate hoppiness up front, good malt balance and bitter finish. **Not bad**

## Freiberger Schankhaus

**Freiberger Pils** (4.9%) A clean, crisp pilsner, hop led with slight malty flavour to balance the bitterness. **Nice**

## Freiberger Schwarzbier (4.9%)

Another dark beer that doesn't seem to have the expected depth of flavour for its strength. Slightly bland, malty but still rather bitter. **OK**

## Bottled beer - Germany

**Ur-Krossitzer Pilsner** (4.9%) Bottled version of the above beer. Same great taste but slightly sharper. **Nice**

## Allgauer Buble Weizen (5.3%)

Decidedly a wheat beer. Hazy and moderately hopped with a characteristically wheat flavour coming in and lasting until the finish. **OK**

**Ur-Krossitzer Schwarzbier** (4.9%) A black beer with a malt led taste giving way to slightly hoppy back taste. Not as rich in flavour as I had hoped. **OK**

**Feldschössen Pilsner** (4.9%) A beer from Dresden with a good hop to malt balance. Very slightly sweeter than some pilsners but has a trace of bitterness in the finish. **Very nice**

## Feldschössen Schwarzbier Steiger (4.9%)

A black beer with a malt led foretaste but with a bitterness coming through to the end. Lacks the depth of flavour for a beer of this strength. **OK**

**Stenberg Export** (5.2%) A minimal hop note at first with quite sweet maltiness coming in and a very slight bitterness finish. **Not bad**



Above, the castle and cathedral at Meissen. Right, Schlossplatz in Dresden. Below right, lamb shank at the Watzke Brauhaus in Dresden.

# Czech it out!

David Weaver continues his cycling journey up the River Elbe towards Dresden and Prague, sampling some excellent beers along the way.

The story so far: from the Hook of Holland I cycled to the start of the Elbe at Cuxhaven via Amsterdam, before following the river through Hamburg and Magdeburg, enjoying great scenery and beer.

After leaving Magdeburg I cycled south to Dessau. The campsite initially looked unappealing until I found a

fridge selling 500ml bottles of Ur-Krossitzer Pilsner for €1.50. Later, at the Tafelspitz Restaurant, I sampled Augustiner Edelstoff and Dunkel from Munich's oldest independent brewery.

A couple of days later I stopped at Zum Alten Zollhaus in Torgau for Sunday lunch with a draught Ur-Krossitzer



Pilsner. That evening in Mühlberg I tried bottled Allgauer Büble Weizen, a typical wheat beer, followed by Ur-Krosstitzer Schwarzbier, which was enjoyable but lacked the richness I expected.

The next day I briefly explored Meissen, famous for its pottery, before arriving in Dresden. Despite heavy wartime bombing, the city is now a lively blend of old and new. At the campsite I tried Feldschöschchen Pilsner from Dresden and Sternburger Export from Leipzig.

The following day I toured the city before enjoying a huge lamb shank at Watzke Brauhaus with their Watzke Pils and Dresdener Hell. Later at Freiburger Schankhaus I sampled Freiburger Pils and Freiburger Schwarzbier, though again the dark beer lacked the intensity expected from a 4.9% brew.

Leaving Dresden, I cycled through the most scenic stretch of the Elbe with cliffs and gorges before crossing into Czechia. This also marked the start of several convenient sausage lunches from street vendors.

My first stop was Děčín, where the campsite bar



served refreshing DĚČINSKÝ Kaptán on the hottest day of my trip — 36°C. Here I first encountered Czech beer degrees (stupňovitost): this beer was 11°P, roughly 4.5%.

That evening at Restaurant Corso I tried Břežňák Pale, now owned by Heineken, followed by two beers from the local Falkenštejn Brewery — Svižnej Emil (American Pale Ale) and Dittrich Tmavé



Silné, both pleasant enough.

The next day I stayed in Mělník, enjoying a lighter Výčepní version of Budvar Original at the campsite bar and later Budvar 33 Ležák.

Lunch the following day was klobása with mustard and horseradish, accompanied by an excellent Svižný Svijanský Máz, one of my favourite beers of the trip.

Soon after, I faced the most difficult cycling of the journey. About six miles from Prague the riverside trail was

## TASTING NOTES (continued)

### CZECHIA

#### Děčín

##### Campsite bar

**DĚČINSKÝ Kaptán** (11°P) (4.5%) Not as hoppy as I was expecting but still very pleasant with malt sweetness balancing the hop foretaste through to the finish. **Spot-on**

##### Restaurant Corso

**Břežňák Pale** (11°P) (4.5%) An amber beer with a bitter taste and dry malt flavour in the background with a bitter finish. **Not bad**

#### Mělník

**Budvar Výčepní** (10°P) (4%) Weaker than the well known Budvar Original, a pleasant slightly hoppy beer, good malt balance, slight bitter finish. **Nice**

#### Libčice nad Vltavou

**Svižný Svijanský Máz** (4.8%) A clean tasting hoppy pale beer with slight malt flavours coming in before a bitter finish. **Very nice**

#### Prague

##### Campsite bar

**Unětická 12°** (5.0%) A slightly disappointing beer from Prague. Refreshing but rather bland. Hoppy to a degree but no real depth of flavour malt wise. **Average**

##### Vojanův dvůr brewery tap

**Malostranský Ležák** (5.0%) A hazy pale beer with good hop character and a fairly pronounced malt balance giving a good depth of flavour leading to a slightly bitter finish. **Rather nice**

**Malostranský Rubin** (5.8%) A decidedly malt led beer without being too sweet. There's a slight hint of bitterness in the finish. **Rather nice**

##### Beer Geek Bar

**Černý Potok Hellion** (6.0%) An American IPA that was true to the style. Well hopped and powerful if a little sweet for me although bitter in the finish. **Too sweet**

**Kročehlavý Kladenshě Světě** (4.2%) A pale beer like I have never tasted before. A hop aroma and foretaste giving way to a malty almost woody taste and very slight bitter finish.

##### Not my favourite

**Zichovec Little Banger** (3.0%) A New England IPA with a big taste for a low alcohol beer. Very hoppy with a minimal maltiness and a pretty bitter finish. **Not bad**

##### Keesman Bamberher Herren Pils

(4.8%) A pleasant, light tasting German beer with a generous hoppiness balanced nicely with a malt back taste then bitter finish. **Lovely**

##### Richard Wagner Dunkel

(5.5%) A dark, rich beer with a decidedly malt foretaste and slight bitterness coming through, so not too sweet. **Very nice**



**TASTING NOTES (continued)**

**Nad Šárkou & Liboc brewery**  
**Liboc Sarka** (11°P) (4.5%) A hazy pale with modest hop taste and reserved maltiness leading to a slight bitter finish. **Not bad**  
**Liboc Černý Patek** (13°P) (5.5%) A rich dark beer with strong aroma of dark malt and a taste. Rich maltiness in the foretaste carrying through to the finish but not too sweet. **Lovely**  
**Liboc Summer Ale** (9°P) (3.5%) A hoppy, refreshing beer with a light but well balanced taste. There is a slight malt sweetness in there giving way to a very slight bitter finish. **Nice**

**Bottled and canned beer in Czechia**

**Falkenstein Svížnej** (3.4%) Low strength American Pale and, to some extent, low tasting. Nice enough hoppy beer with a good malt balance but not a blow your socks off beer. **OK**  
**Falkenstein Dettrich Tmavé Silne** (5.5%) A strong dark beer with bags of maltiness and a hint of bitterness in the finish. **Nice**  
**Budvar** 33 Ležák (4.6%) Stronger than the Original Budvar we are used to, this slightly darker and sweeter beer has a pleasant bitter finish. **Not bad**

**GERMANY (return trip)**

**Nuremberg**  
**Campsite bar**  
**Kulmbacher Edelherb Pils** (4.9%) A nice pilsner with plenty of hop flavour up front while malt notes come in strongly lasting until the finish. **Nice**  
**Schanzenbrau Brewery Tap**  
**Schanzenbrau Pils** (4.9%) A fine hop aroma before diving into a wonderfully hop led beer with plenty of malt back taste finishing with a slight bitterness. **Very nice**  
**Schanzenbrau Schwarzbier** (4.9%) A really malty aroma to this beer which starts and finishes with powerful malt flavour and just a hint of bitterness in the finish. **Little on the sweet side for me**  
**Schanzenbrau Helles** (4.9%) A lightly flavoured beer with a hoppy foretaste and a slight maltiness coming in before a faint bitter finish. **Average**  
**Bierwerk**  
**Huppendorfer Völbier** (5.0%) A pale moderately hopped beer, slight malt balance and minimal bitter finish. **OK**

**Cologne**

**Campsite Bistro 681**  
**Mülinen Kölsch** (4.8%) Fine example of the Kölsch style - bittersweet, almost sour, bitter finish. **Pretty good**  
**Bottled beer - Germany (return trip)**  
**Mönchshof Schwarzbier** (4.9%) A good example of a black beer. Rich and malty without being over sweet. Luscious roasted malt flavours lasting until the finish. **Very tasty**





Above, Prague from the cathedral. Left, memories of a wonderful trip.

closed. A rough diversion led up a steep wooded hill where the path vanished entirely, forcing me to push my heavy bike over rocks and roots with a two-metre drop into a stream beside me. It was only ten metres long but took ten minutes of effort. For the next two miles I struggled uphill before finally descending back to the river.

Eventually I reached Prague, pushing my bike through crowds for the obligatory photo by the astronomical clock. I had completed my goal: 1,165 miles in 31 days.

After a complicated five-mile journey to the campsite — with hills too steep to cycle

— I finally rested with pizza and two Únětická 12° pilsners.

Having last visited Prague in 1995, I spent the next days sightseeing. Lunch at Vojanův dvůr brewery included Malostranský Ležák and Malostranský Rubín. Later at Beer Geek Bar I tried Černý Potoka Hellion IPA and Kročehlavy Kladenské Světlé.

That evening I discovered Nad Šárkou & Liboc Brewery, a microbrewery far from the tourist areas and full of locals. I enjoyed a Šárka Hazy Pale, Černý Pátek dark beer, and Summer Ale, with the dark beer the standout.

The next day I returned to Beer Geek Bar for Zichovec Little Banger NEIPA,

## TASTING NOTES (continued)

**Mönchshof Hell** (4.9%) A very pale beer with a good taste of hops, almost floral, very little malt balance and muted bitter finish. **Nice**

**Benediktiner Weisbier** (5.4%) A strange wheat and hop aroma with an initial taste leading to a sweet yet slightly bitter finish. Wheat is the predominant flavour. **Not really for me**

## NETHERLANDS (return trip)

### Eindhoven

#### Eatcafe

**Dommelsch Pilsner** (5.0%) (AB InBev) Pretty typical pilsner style - hop flavours to the fore to start with a slight malt balance following on with a minimal bitter finish. **Not bad**

#### Café 100 Watt brewpub

**100 Watt Craft Pils** (5.0%) A hazy, unfiltered lightly hopped beer with a pleasant malt back taste and slight bitter finish **Easy drinking and low on fizz**

**100 Watt Chocolate OD 3 Stout** (11.0%) Wafts of roasted malt in the aroma and foretaste with a sweeter flavour coming in instantly followed by a very slight bitterness.

### Bit too sweet for me

#### Van Moll Bar (ex brewpub)

**Van Moll Simcoe Pilsner** (5.0%) A deliciously hoppy yet well rounded beer veering towards an IPA. Malt flavours in the background and a slight bitter finish. **Very nice**

**Van Moll Doerak IPA** (6.3%) A powerfully hopped IPA in the American style. Malt flavour coming through in the aftertaste, a bitterness finish. **Slightly over the top for me**

### Drinkers Pub

**Budels Unfiltered Pils** (5.0%) A slightly hoppy yet sweetish beer. Supposedly a pilsner but not like one. Too sweet, almost syrupy and no bitter finish. **Thumbs down for this one**

### Tilburg

#### LOC Brewery brewpub

**LOC Dinky** (4.8%) A very hazy pale ale with an abundance of hop flavour balanced with a hint of malt sweetness and a bitter finish. **Not bad**

#### LOC Lord Nelson NEIPA

(5.8%) A hazy IPA with pronounced hoppiness typical of the style. A hint of malt flavour and strong bitter finish. **OK**

**LOC Train Hopper** (7.2%) Another extremely hoppy, slightly hazy beer with good malt balance lasting until the bittersweet finish. **Nice**

#### LOC Little Devil

#### Hop Hooligans Kingsworthy

(5.0%) A Romanian beer from Bacharest. Bloody expensive, supposedly Czech style pilsner that was nothing like it. A sour aroma led to a sweet tasting, almost sickly, beer with no taste of hops. **Disgusting**





### TASTING NOTES (continued)

#### Breda

##### **Boterhal Brewery and Restaurant**

**St Joris IPA** (6.0%) A slightly hazy, hoppy beer with good malt flavours in the after taste and a slight bitter finish. **Not bad**

##### **St Joris Weerloos Blondje** (6.0%)

Another hoppy little number, slightly more subtle than the IPA. Malt flavours are strong in the aftertaste and there's no bitter finish. **Not bad**

#### Dordrecht

##### **Café de Lachende Monnik**

**Káld Kletske Hoppich** (6.5%) A powerful, hoppy IPA with a deep maltiness coming in afterwards and through to the finish. **Very nice**

**Westmalle Duo** (7.2%) Apparently a mix of Extra and Tripel. A pale beer with a minimal hop flavour, bags of maltiness with being too sweet.

##### **Interesting**

**Rochefort Tripple Extra** (7.6%) A superb, rich hoppy yet sweet beer with a huge depth of flavour and very slight bitterness to finish.

##### **Wonderful**

##### **Stadscafe Rijeka**

##### **Vandestreek Hop-Art IPA** (5.0%)

A major hop aroma and foretaste to this hazy US style IPA. Minimal malt flavour seeps in late and a pronounced bitter finish. **Not bad**

##### **Kampala Backyard Californian**

**Common** (4.8%) An amber malty little number from the Hague. A minimal hop flavour but bags of maltiness without being too sweet. A hint of bitterness in the finish but mainly sweet. **Little too sweet for me**

##### **Noordt Pomelo IPA** (6.0%)

A sweet IPA from Rotterdam with a far less hoppy aroma and taste than expected. Pretty strong malt sweetness and an usually sweet aftertaste. Not really an IPA. **OK - needs more hops!**

#### **Bottled beer in the Netherlands**

**'t IJ IPA** (6.5%) A magnificent hop aroma and foretaste to this American style IPA. There's a malt balance and mellow bitter finish. **Rather nice**

##### **La Trappe Dubbel** (7.0%)

A sweet, almost strawberry flavour to this Trappist beer from start to finish.

##### **Not to my liking**



Above, Lovely Dordrecht. Above left, some luxurious overnight accommodation.

Keessmann Herren Pils, and Richard Wagner Dunkel, before finishing my final evening back at Nad Šárkou & Liboc.

My journey home began with trains to Nuremberg, where I sampled Kulmbacher Edelherb Pils and bottles from Mönchshof — a fine Schwarzbier and Hell. At Schanzenbräu Schankwirtschaft I enjoyed an excellent Schanzenbräu Pils, along with a Schwarzbier and Helles.

From Cologne I cycled back to the Hook of Holland via Eindhoven, Tilburg, Breda and Dordrecht, sampling beers along the way including Dommelsch Pilsner, 't IJ IPA, La Trappe Dubbel, several beers at Van Moll Bar, and

others at breweries and pubs across the route.

In Dordrecht, at Café de Lachende Monnik, I enjoyed Káld Kletske Hoppich IPA, Westmalle Duo, and a superb Rochefort Triple Extra.

On my final day I cycled back to the Hook of Holland for the ferry to Harwich, stopping at Café Prins Hendrik for a couple of Texels Skuumkoppe.

This was the most beer-filled of all my cycling tours and showed once again how many great European beers exist beyond the standard international lagers.

**Favourite beer:** Schanzenbräu Pils

**Favourite pub:** Nad Šárkou & Liboc Brewery, Prague



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# QUARTS & THOUGHTS

Alun Thomas's round-up of his travels around the pubs of Peterborough and beyond...

**A** shorter than usual Quarts and Thoughts this issue (who said Hooray?) as old age means I am spending an increasing amount of time hibernating during the winter months!

First up – the resumption of the annual Beer Festival at the Feathers in Castor, the first since its reopening following the departure of Simon and Kay a couple of years ago. A decent mix of cask, craft and cider, with LocAles to the fore: Green Devil and Inferno from Oakham; and Simple Pleasures and two strongies, Bang Goes String Theory and Midweek Bender from Nene Valley. Unfortunately the event was held in tandem with a birthday celebration, and noise levels were such that Noel Ryland and I were forced to take refuge well away from the bar in order to continue our conversation!

There were two presentation nights with a common theme on successive evenings in early December. On the Wednesday, the Blue Bell in Maxey received a CAMRA Gold Award, and it was heartening to see this old-fashioned village inn packed to the rafters for the occasion. My Adnams Broadside was relished, and I enjoyed a chat to fellow Stamford resident (and Blue Bell regular) Clive Elfrod.

The following evening I was at another Blue Bell, this time in Belmesthorpe, with my 90-year-old friend, Brian Palmer, who kindly offered to drive! The presentation was for Rutland CAMRA

Pub of the Season, and Rutland chairman Kevin Thompson (no relation to Blue Bell landlord Matt Thompson, by the way – no nepotism here!) did the honours before his predecessor, Rich Harris, presented erstwhile chairman John Howwell with a special award. My ales on the night were Bass, Bishop's Farewell and Adnams Old.

That weekend I was at a Barnack Rifles reunion in Stamford's Millstone and ran through the card of Broadside, Boltmaker, Citra and Tribute, all highly drinkable in this bustling boozier. To the Lime Tree in Paston a couple of nights later for the

Branch AGM and an interesting meeting – to say the least! I was impressed by both the ales on offer, which were Bass and Proper Job.

A few days later, and a mini Beer Festival at Empingham Cricket Club. My swallows were Nene Valley Magic Numbers and Chevalier Meraki Stout, plus offerings from Baker's Dozen, Round Corner and Wilde Child. The next day my sister

kindly presented me with a bottle from the Waterworks brewery of Rye, in East Sussex – Uryenal! A new low, as it were.....

I was out delivering BAE to Peterborough distributors early in January, and my refreshment stops were the Hand and Heart, in Millfield, and the Five Horseshoes, Barholm. In the former, halves of Chin Chin Hidden In Plain Sight and Tydd Steam Stargazer, and in the latter, a quite splendid Fat Cat Porter. A couple of days later I called at a pub I hadn't



A great read and a good pint at the Lord Burghley!

been in for a while: the Lord Burghley in Stamford's Broad Street. So impressed was I with the Grainstore Ten Fifty that I made several subsequent visits!

I was then out with an old workmate as Christmas approached. He lives about five minutes' walk from the Duck and Drake in Yaxley, so there was no quibbling about our destination. The pub was encouragingly busy for a Friday afternoon, with our pints of NVB Simple Pleasures and Tydd Steam Barn Ale served by enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff. Early in February I attended a lecture on "Celtic Paganism in Stamford". Disappointingly it had an historic theme and didn't apply to the present day! However, my pints in the Green Man afterwards (Bass and Electric Landlady) proved that some ancient customs are still alive and well in the town.....

The following day I was at a school reunion, held in the Tobie Norris, Stamford. I wasn't sure what to expect, really - I hadn't seen some of the lads for half a century – but a good time was had by all as tongues were loosened by the excellent ales, including Wharf, the new offering from Nene Valley Brewery. A 4.3% ABV Session IPA, this got a firm thumbs up from the assembled throng!

Also on handpump were ales from Oakham and Round Corner. Plus, I enjoyed a natter to the pub's owner Mick Thurlby, whom I hadn't seen for a long time.

A treat a couple of days later – an Open Day at King's Cliffe Airfield Museum, with its fascinating memorabilia and inevitable Glenn Miller (who was based there) themes. Another treat followed – pints in the Railway, Ketton, of Round Corner Down The Road, Farm Yard Chaff, Ten Fifty and Church End Irish Coffee.

I'd like to think that there aren't many pubs within a 25-mile radius of my house that I have never been to, but the



A warm welcome at the Duck & Drake, in Yaxley.

Berkeley Arms, in Wyomndham, near Melton Mowbray, was one of them until the 22nd February. A real find, an evocative sixteenth-century rural house with a classic wood-beamed interior which has won numerous awards. Ales on were Bass, Ten Fifty (both excellent) and Black Sheep Bitter.

A few days in Thorpeness, Suffolk, in late February. The stand-out pub during our stay was the White Hart in nearby Aldeburgh, now happily restored to its former glory under new management following a period of mediocrity. The Hart is an Adnams house; my pints of Broadside and Old were

lipsmacking, and we were surprised to see Tally Ho on handpump.

We asked what strength it was and were told: "Between seven and eleven per cent"! Took some back to the ranch for sampling purposes and, erm, I think it's fair to say that it was nearer eleven.....

Finally to the Anchor in Bourne, where I drank Abbeydale Moonshine, Bateman's XB and the house ale Bourne Particular. It's not often that I'm in the right place at the right time, but my visit was twelve years to the day that Taras and Dawn took the reins at this idyllic riverside boozery! Hearty congratulations – and here's to the next twelve.....

Mind how you go.  
Al



Enjoying a pint at the Green Man

# DIARY DATES

**APRIL**

**Monday 6**

**April Branch Meeting**

*The Brewery Tap, 8 Westgate, Peterborough, PE1 2AA*

Everyone welcome as ever, please bring your membership card.

**Friday 17 to Sunday 19**

**Members' Weekend 2026**

*Alban Arena, Civic Centre, St Albans, AL1 3LD*

Includes the organisation's AGM and Conference, this is a members only event. See camra.org.uk/members-weekend for further details and to register to attend.

**Saturday 18th at noon to 4pm**

**Breweriana and Playing Card Collectors Meeting**

*Blue Bell Inn, 6 The Green, Werrington, PE4 6RU*

To book a table and/or for further information please contact:

Maxine Chantry on 01733 239585 / 07506 296801

or email maxinechantry@virginmedia.com

The pub serves breakfasts and good food, as well as a range of real ales and ciders.

All welcome.

**MAY**

**Tuesday 6**

**May Branch Meeting**

*The Lime Tree, Paston Lane, Peterborough, PE4 6HA*

Everyone welcome as ever, please bring your membership card.

**Thursday 7 to Saturday 9**

**Biggleswade Beer & Cider Festival**

*Biggleswade & District Conservative Club, St Andrews Street, Biggleswade, SG18 8BA*

More than 45 real ales, ciders and perries. Free Entry. Visit biggbeerfest.org for more details.

**Monday 18 to Saturday 23**

**Cambridge Beer Festival**

*Jesus Green, Cambridge*

More than 180 real ales, plus 80+ ciders and perries, international beer, mead, wne and cheese.

See [cambridgebeerfestival.com](http://cambridgebeerfestival.com) for more details.

**Thursday 21 to Saturday 23**

**Lincoln Beer Festival**

*Southside, Colegrave Street, Lincoln, LN5 8DW*

More than 180 real ales, plus 80+ ciders and perries, international beer, mead, wne and cheese. See [lincoln.camra.org.uk/lincoln-beer-festival](http://lincoln.camra.org.uk/lincoln-beer-festival) for more details.

**JUNE**

**Monday 1**

**June Branch Meeting**

*The Crown, 749 Lincoln Road, Peterborough, PE1 3HD*

Everyone welcome as ever, please bring your membership card.

## PUB MERIT & GOLD AWARDS

Does your pub have excellent beer, friendly staff, a great atmosphere, community spirit, or have they introduced additional hand pumps? If so, nominate them for an award. Gold Awards are for pubs that make exceptional efforts to improve. The Merit Awards is for pubs that continue to maintain high standards. If you know of a deserving pub within the branch area, please complete the form below indicating Gold or Merit and post to the secretary or email nominations to [info@peterborough.camra.org.uk](mailto:info@peterborough.camra.org.uk)

**Pub name**.....

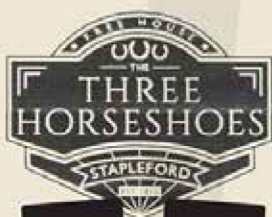
**Pubaddress/town/village**.....

**Reason for award**.....

**Your name**.....

**Your phone number or e-mail address**.....

**Your membership number**.....



# BEER FESTIVAL

3RD - 6TH  
APRIL  
2026

16 CASK ALES  
GUEST CIDERS  
& MORE



BEER - FOOD - MUSIC - BINGO - GAMES

GO TO OUR WEBSITE & FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MORE INFO

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