

MerseyAle

CAMRA Liverpool & Districts Magazine

Autumn 2018

FREE



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

CAMRA Liverpool & Districts Awards for 2018



Incorporating: Isle of Man News and WirrAle Drinker

Liverpool & Districts CAMRA

LIVERPOOL BEER FESTIVAL 2019



THURSDAY 21ST – SATURDAY 23RD
FEBRUARY

Following our initial Beer Festival Planning meeting, we can now confirm that next year's beer festival will take place in the Crypt from Thursday 21st to Saturday 23rd February. Tickets will be available on Eventbrite from the end of November. Once the on-sale dates have been finalised, they will be advertised via an email to branch members, social media and the website. Staffing forms will be available soon.

www.liverpoolcamra.org

MerseyAle

CAMRA Liverpool and Districts Branch

MerseyAle Editor

Dave MacBryde

Liverpool Branch Chair

Sonia James-Henry
chair@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

MerseyAle Contacts

Comments/news/letters/photos
merseyale@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

MerseyAle Advertising Manager

Howard Perry
howard.perry@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Distribution Manager

Andre Fu
andre.fu@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

MerseyAle - Read online at
www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Liverpool and Districts CAMRA Main Branch Contact

Sue Daniels
contact@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Contact for Coach trips only

Ian Macadam 07521 741 586
by email
social@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Websites

Liverpool and Districts
CAMRA Branch
www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk
[www.facebook.com
/CAMRALiverpool](https://www.facebook.com/CAMRALiverpool)
@LiverpoolCAMRA
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The opinions expressed in MerseyAle are not necessarily those of the Editor, the CAMRA Liverpool Branch or CAMRA Ltd.

Message from the Editor



CAMPAIGN
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Welcome to the Autumn edition of MerseyAle.

This issue, we take a closer look at those pubs that were honoured at our Awards Night in June, which again took place in the scenic surroundings of the KIND charity premises in Liverpool's Georgian Quarter. Congratulations to everyone that took part – all of whom were more than worthy of the recognition. For more details, see pages 20 and 21.

We also doff our cap to The Augustus John, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in June. More about this unique, award winning University campus pub can be found on pages 14 and 15.

On a personal note, this issue will be my last as Editor of MerseyAle, having been at the helm these last two years. In that time, I've done my

best to be part of delivering a publication we can all be proud of. Suffice to say, I could not have done this without the help of others.

Subsequently, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped in any way, shape or form with the production and distribution of the magazine; there are too many to mention, but you know who you are. Without the assistance of our dedicated contributors, supportive committee and keen readership, none of this would be possible.

As ever, I sincerely hope you enjoy reading MerseyAle and continue to support our wonderful pubs across the region.
Cheers.

Dave MacBryde
MerseyAle Editor

Notice of Liverpool & Districts CAMRA EGM October 24th

On October 24th, an EGM will be held to discuss a new system for deciding the Branch Pub of the Year (POTY). All Branch members are invited to attend and vote. The EGM will take place in Sanctuary Bar, Lime Street, Liverpool, at 8.00pm. Please bring your membership card.

THE WIRRAL AUTUMN BEER FESTIVAL

18TH OCTOBER - 21ST OCTOBER 2018
HULME HALL - PORT SUNLIGHT

250+ ALES,
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KING**

**AD
HOP**

YEAH, YEAH, WE DO KEGS ALSO.
THERE IS A MARKET FOR IT...

MerseyAle PUB NEWS



Northern Club, Crosby

A reminder that CAMRA members can use the club as customers every Wednesday evening. This has now been extended to any day when any of the Northern Cricket teams are playing at home; this will certainly make for a great opportunity to watch some cricket. CAMRA members can enjoy club member rates on cask ales on the production of a valid CAMRA card.

Fixtures may change, so the most reliable source to check is the website calendar northernclub.uk/upcoming-events



There may also be snippets on the cricket Twitter account:

twitter.com/northernclub

The club is involved in several league and cup games, so there is scope to sample the beers on sale, here at our current Club of the Year.

JD Wetherspoon

Those of you who frequent JD Wetherspoon pubs in the

city centre may have noticed that **Higsons Amber** has



been available over the last few months. It would be fair to say that the reaction to it has been mixed - dare I say it, a 'Marmite' beer - a term which some CAMRA members a 'few' years older than me previously used to refer to the original Higsons Bitter. What's more, these same outlets are now selling **Higsons Pale** as well. Having tried it a couple times already, I can say with confidence that this tastes more like a traditional bitter, since it uses both Goldings and Fuggles hops and can be considered a 'session' beer at 3.9%. There are plans to sell both beers at other JDW outlets in the suburbs.

Corner Post

The Sunday opening times at The Corner Post in Crosby have changed (as of August 19th). The micropub will now open from 14:00 to 19:00.

A Meet the Brewer event

was held at **The Queen's Picture House** on South Road, Waterloo in July, featuring **Titanic Brewery**. As well as tasting some of all the well-known beers from Titanic (such as **Iceberg, Plum Porter and Captain Smith's**), customers were also able to sample the new permanent beer, **Avalon**.

There are plans to host another Meet the Brewer



night soon, featuring **Beartown beers** from Congelton.

Cricketers Arms

The Cricketers Arms in St Helens has been named as **Merseyside & Cheshire Regional Pub of the Year for 2018**. The presentation will



take place on **Saturday, September 22nd at 3pm**. All welcome.



Beer Engine

The Beer Engine (formally Bumper) on Hardman Street is now open for business. There are three handpumps in use; on a recent visit, they were dispensing **Higsons Amber**, **Higsons Pale** and **Wainwright**, which is now brewed at **Bank's Brewery** in Wolverhampton, as part of the Marston's group. This new venue is open until 6am at weekends and 4am in the week. The building has had a complete refurbishment and now serves food.

Bread & Butter

The venue that was **The Clove Hitch / No 23 Club**



has now re-opened, but isn't currently selling real ale.

Brewery News

Karl Critchley and Jaime Greer (Crosby Bottle Shop) have collaborated to produce **Brigantine**, a 5.8% American styled IPA, using Mosaic and Ekuanot hops.

The beer was on sale during Liverpool Beer Week in July, while there was also a tasting session at the **Crosby Bottle Shop** (College Road, Crosby). Customers had the opportunity to take some away with them (provided they brought a suitable container), as it was served directly from the cask. **Rock the Boat** also produced a Summer Ale for the **Lady of Mann**, Dale Street, as part of the same celebrations.



Summer Ale is a 4.4% golden ale made with elderflowers. Karl has now left Rock the Boat Brewery.

Mikhail Hotel and Leisure Group



As reported in the Liverpool Echo, **Cain's Brewery** is coming home to Liverpool

as part of a £7m refurbishment of the iconic red-brick brewery building that could create 200 jobs. Cain's beers haven't been brewed for over five years,



but now **Mikhail Hotel and Leisure Group** has taken on the brand, as well as most of the Grade II-listed building, and plans to brew the famous ales again.

The group owns a string of establishments across Merseyside and is planning to create a series of venues inside the famous old building. These include a new brewery, food market and music venues inside the old cellars (reminiscent of the Cavern Club), as well as a sky bar on the roof of the building near the famous tower, and a hotel on the upper floors.

The chairperson of the group has strong links to Liverpool, but is now based in St Helens. He has talked about having a Liverpool version of the Guinness brewery in Dublin, albeit on a smaller scale.

Work has already started on the ground floor of the building in Grafton Street, where they have just opened

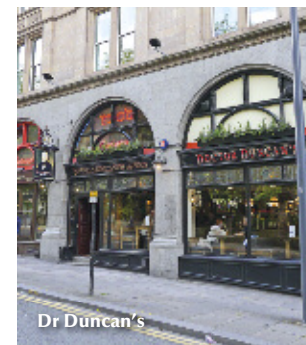
a **Punch Tarmey bar**. Phase one of the project will also include a bar called **The Quarter Hoop**, as well as a large brewery hall. Next



year, in phase two of the plan, there are hopes to open a food market modelled on **Altrincham Market**.

Further in, there are two atmospheric tunnel-shaped cellars, with plans afoot to turn them into a music venue and space for hire. The final phase of the scheme - which could take up to three years to complete - will be the hotel and sky bar.

As mentioned in a previous edition of this magazine, the group's eight other venues include Punch Tarmey's bars in Southport and St Helens, **Eccleston Arms** in St Helens and the forthcoming Lord Street Hotel in Southport. They also bought **Doctor Duncan's** in May and took over Cain's Brewery Tap last month.



The Punch Tarmey brand is named after the chairman's great-grandfather, bare-knuckle boxer **Michael 'Punch' Tarmey**.



Whereas Doctor Duncan's has already undergone a mini refurbishment, there is also a bright new future for iconic Liverpool pub, **The**



Brewery Tap, which is being managed by **Dominic and Fiona Hornsby**, who are local, regional and national award winners in the licensed trade.

Fiona is a former Cain's licensee and Area Manager, having spent 15 years with **Okell's Brewery** as licensee of Rigby's. Meanwhile, Dominic is well known to



many local members from his time spent at **The Grapes (now The Dispensary)** and then **Fly in the Loaf** on Hardman Street.

The latest batch of **Yellow Submarine Special** from Rock the Boat Brewery has gone all American, as it is brewed with **Ekuanot and Mosaic hops**. This 3.9% golden ale is only brewed in small batches and usually sells out quickly. On another note, despite the summer 'heat wave', Dave Barker has continued to brew and sell both of his dark beers, **(Sittin' on) The Dock**, 3.5%, and **Dragon's Teeth**, 4.3%. Remember, dark beer - it's not just for Christmas!

Contributors: Andre Fu, Tony Morgan, Steve Downing.

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for the facts

More Pub News



The Dragon about to be slain

The Green Dragon (Dragon Lane, Whiston) will soon be no more. In the last few weeks, this crude scrawling (see photo) has appeared on the outside of the building and the wall surrounding the once loved bowling green to the rear. RIP.

Baltic Fleet Summer Patio

The Baltic Fleet (Wapping) now boasts a rather splendid beer garden, which has been much appreciated during this summer's great weather. However, as the colder weather looms, you can warm yourself inside by the real wood burning stove.



WANTED

Club of the Year (COTY) Coordinator Volunteer

- Do you regularly visit clubs?
- Are you passionate about clubs serving good quality real ale?
- Be able to attend committee meetings during COTY competition time (this equates to two meetings per year).

If the answer to either of these is 'Yes', you could be the person we're looking for to fill this post.

To take up this position, you must:

- Be willing and able to visit different clubs in the branch area.
- If you require further details (including full job description), please email mel.james-henry@liverpoolcamra.org
- Applications for this post can be sent to mel.james-henry@liverpoolcamra.org

- Be a member of Liverpool and Districts CAMRA.

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Inter-Branch Bowls Match



The bowls match between Liverpool & Districts, St Helens and Southport & West Lancs CAMRA branches had been due to take place on Saturday 4th August. Unfortunately, this had to be cancelled very close to the date in question. However, a chance encounter in Stamps Bar, Crosby, between a Liverpool

Committee member and some members of the Northern Club (the initial venue for the match in Crosby) resulted in an informal game taking place. Eight people turned up at 1pm on the Saturday, which fortuitously split nicely into four CAMRA members versus four Northern Club members, with two doubles games subsequently taking place. As this was an informal get together, it didn't really matter which team won, but I do think that some of us CAMRA members need to practice more!

A great afternoon of bowls was had by all; this was finished off with a few pints of LocAle from Rock the Boat Brewery and Red Star Brewery, whilst watching



the end of the Northern Second XI cricket match from the Northern Club terrace.

By Tony Morgan

CAMRA Mass Lobby Day - Tuesday 30th October 2018

CAMRA will be holding a Mass Lobby Day in Westminster, London on Tuesday 30th October 2018. This will be our opportunity to bring pressing campaign issues to the attention of up to 650 Members of Parliament. The purpose of the Lobby Day will be to ask MPs to commit to the following CAMRA campaigns:

- **Axing plans to increase beer duty in the upcoming Autumn Budget (UK)**
- **A permanent business rate relief for pubs in the upcoming Autumn Budget (England)**
- **An urgent review of the Pubs Code, so that the Market Rent Only option becomes a genuine choice for tenants (England and Wales)**

We are still looking for people who will feel comfortable speaking with their MP, be a presentable and positive ambassador of CAMRA and be prepared to give up their day to travel to London and take part. They will also need to be willing to liaise with other member(s) attending from their constituency via email if there's more than one member attending.

Members will need to arrange a meeting with their MP (or an MP's staff member) ahead of the Lobby Day. This is essential - and if a meeting has not been pre-arranged - then CAMRA advice is not to travel to London, as there is no guarantee a meeting can be arranged on the day.

Nationally, CAMRA will pay up to £50 expenses for travel, meals and incidental expenses. However, no further expenses can be claimed from CAMRA (nationally) via our Branch.

Although the deadline for branch nominations has passed, individual members can still nominate themselves. Anyone interested in attending should contact any branch committee member (details of which can be found on Page 3 of MerseyAle) or the branch website www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk

Please let us know your current CAMRA membership number, as well as your address and parliamentary constituency. Those attending will receive a briefing note from the Branch.

By Tony Morgan



**CAMPAIGN
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Welcome to the Vernon Arms

Cheers from Jimmy and Barbara Monaghan
The Vernon Arms, Dale Street, Liverpool

7 Handpumps (4 ever-changing, 1 cider)

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Local MPs call for further support for pubs

More than 100 MPs have backed an Early Day Motion (EDM) in parliament, which calls on the government to take further steps to reduce the tax burden on pubs in a



bid to halt closures. Tabled by Chair of the All Party Group on Pubs, **Toby Perkins MP**, the motion has received crossparty backing. The EDM recognises that recent changes in planning law and taxation have helped the industry, but asks for more to be done, and “calls on the government to take further steps to support pubs, which reduces the tax burden and will enshrine the valuable role the great British pub plays in UK society.”

CAMRA has kept pressure on government to implement tax measures that recognise the contribution pubs make to personal and community wellbeing.



CAMRA's national chairman Jackie Parker said: “We know 18 pubs are being forced to close each week and welcome the EDM calling for more support for pubs, and the backing from those MPs who have signed it already. “A number of factors contribute to these closures,



including a ‘triple tax whammy’ of high beer duty, business rates and VAT. It is only by changing government policy on key issues that we will be able to protect the British pub, and ensure it remains at the very heart of our communities. We would urge all MPs to consider signing this EDM.”

Toby Perkins said: “There is concern that the overall burden of tax on our pubs is excessive and MPs across the house will continue to make the case to do more to support.”

We are pleased that six MPs covered by this publication have signed EDM 1233 and we thank them for doing so, but are aware that not all of our MPs may be able to sign it due to parliamentary rules. You can see the full list of MPs and the details of the EDM here: www.parliament.uk/edm/2017-19/1233 If your MP is missing from the list, it might be worth contacting them and asking them to do so. Details of how to contact your representative can be found here: www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/

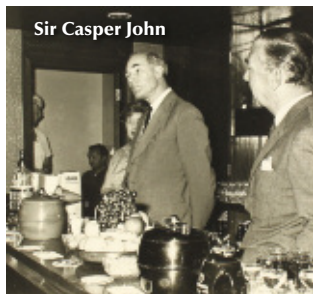
So, do some armchair campaigning for CAMRA today!

By Tony Morgan



50 Not Out for The AJ!

The Augustus John (aka 'The AJ') pub on the University of Liverpool campus celebrated its 50th anniversary in June. Augustus John himself was an artist with an extravagant Bohemian nature, who spent some time in the art department of the University during the



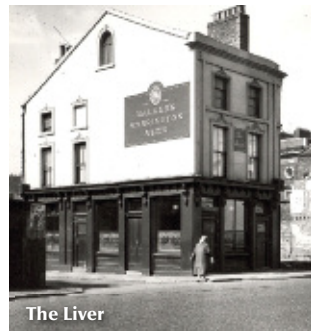
Sir Casper John

early 1900s. He died in 1961, so we can only assume this is why the pub is so named. His son, Admiral Sir Casper



Sir Casper John outside the AJ

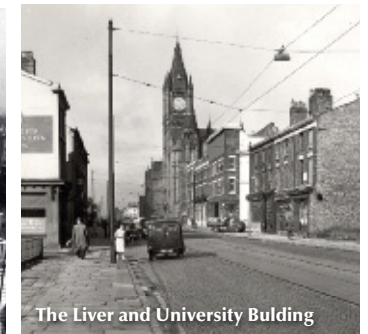
John, was invited to conduct the opening in 1968 (see pictures left). Although the surrounding area has changed considerably, The AJ can be easily identified from these old photos. Around the streets of terraced houses on Peach St were two pubs - The Liver (on the corner of Brownlow Hill) and The Walnut. Instead of being paved over, the railway cutting was a walled opening and is now The AJ beer garden. Other pubs in the area



The Liver



The Walnut



The Liver and University Building



The Mulberry Bush



Dragon Vaults

Pubs long gone

were demolished to make way for the University buildings. For as far back as I can remember, The AJ has had real ale on hand pump; from Tetley in the early years, but nowadays often from local breweries such as Rock the Boat and Neptune. Jim at the AJ was awarded our CAMRA Liverpool 'Bar person of the Year', which is testament to the quality of beer served. The AJ has won both the branch and regional CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year and is the current



Steve Mullholland (AJ) receives Cider award from Steve Berks (CAMRA)

holder of that particular award. So, here's to the next 50 years - in the hope that the University realise the essential part The AJ plays in the campus culture and don't decide to knock down any further pubs to create more student residences.



By Steve Downing

HARP INN

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12pm - 11pm Sunday

Food Served 12pm - 3pm daily

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PUB OF THE YEAR 2018



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WirrAle Drinker

- **The Rose and Crown** (Bebington) has reopened, with James and Isla at the helm. It's great to see the return of this central Wirral pub, serving good beer once again. Wirral CAMRA will be having their next Committee and branch meeting here at 8.30pm on September 13th, when there will also be a presentation in the form of the Autumn Pub of the Season.
- **Brimstage Brewery** has launched a new lager called 'Woollyback'. It's not yet clear whether this is to be a real ale.
- **Oxton Liberal Club** is now selling a real ale from Peerless.
- **The Lady Hamilton** in Little Neston has a new licensee. We wish them well.
- Wirral Branch recently enjoyed a trip to Heswall. Beers were generally in fine

fettle and the crew visited **The Dee View, The Jug and Bottle, The Johnny Pye** and the 'new kid on the block', **Beer Lab**, with its interesting mix of real ale and craft/keg beers. The day's only negative note was that **The Black Horse** in the lower village remains closed.

- **The Fox and Hounds** (Barnston) has shut for refurbishment and will be open again sometime in the autumn. The Branch hopes that any upgrades are performed with sympathy and that the splendid bar and snug remain unspoiled.
- There are new licensees at **The Stork** (in Price Street, Birkenhead) and early reports as to beer quality are positive. We wish the newcomers all the best in this Victorian gem. And finally...

Here is a picture from our Summer Pub of the Season award evening at the **Farmers Arms**, Wallasey Village. The Farmers has been a jewel in Wirral's real ale crown for many a long year and it was only fitting that we recognised its good beer and service.



MerseyAle Needs YOU

Can you volunteer to help us distribute MerseyAle?

We need volunteers to deliver MerseyAle to pubs in places such as **Huyton, Garston and Old Swan**. Or if you could to take some copies to pubs anywhere on Merseyside where you know they would be appreciated, please contact me on the email address below.

Andre Fu
MerseyAle Distribution Manager
andre.fu@liverpoolcamra.org.uk



“ ...the outstanding feature was the staff. What a great crew. ”
 They made our experience so enjoyable I want to send them out to other places to show how it should be done. I definitely want a return visit.

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Rock the Boat Brigantine Makes Maiden Voyage in Crosby



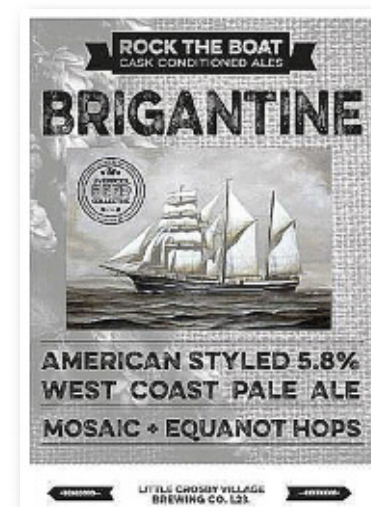
On Saturday 28th July, the Crosby Bottle Shop (in College Road, Crosby) hosted a 'Meet the Brewer' event with Dave Barker from Rock the Boat brewery.

This showcased the brewery's first ever collaboration beer, brewed for Liverpool Beer Week (20th to 29th July), with the assistance of Jaime Greer from the Crosby Bottle Shop (which is a partner in the Liverpool Beer Collective, organisers of Beer Week).

The beer, Brigantine, is a 5.8% American style IPA, made with 170kg of English pale malt and a touch of torrified wheat, as well as equal amounts of Mosaic and Ekuanot hops.

At the Meet the Brewer session, there was a steady stream of bottle shop customers only too happy to sample the new brew. One of these was Patrick Fenner from Waterloo, pictured here on the left, with Dave Barker from Rock the Boat (centre) and Jaime Greer (right).

By Tony Morgan



Liverpool & Districts CAMRA Awards Evening 2018



Michelle receives Pub of the Year Award from Liverpool CAMRA Chair Sonia James-Henry

The sun shone yet again for our annual awards ceremony held in the grounds of the KIND Centre, a true oasis in the heart of the city. Rather than presenting the same awards every year (except for our Pub of the Year, Pubs of Excellence and Cider Pub of the Year), all other awards are only presented if we feel there is a worthy candidate. However, our Bar Person of the Year award is



Lee Cook from the Ale House, Old Swan Bar Person of the Year

becoming a regular feature, with branch members invited to submit their nominations once again this year.

I'd like to give a special mention to the recipient of our 'Special Recognition' award, Steve Berks, who prior to standing down from the committee last year was both our Cider Officer and Beer Festival Cider Bar Manager. Steve has also previously held the post of Regional Cider Coordinator. For many years, Steve has been a tireless and enthusiastic campaigner for cider and a valued active member of this branch.



Steve Berks Special Recognition Award presented by Steve Downing of Liverpool CAMRA

Although Steve has stepped down from his official roles, we hope to continue to see him at our social events and on the other side of the bar at our beer festival.

Finally, I would like to thank local breweries, Ad Hop, Big Bog, Neptune and Rock the Boat for the beer and once again to Steve Yip and his team at KIND for their hospitality.

By Sonia James-Henry

The rest of the winners



The Awards Ceremony left to right:
 Pub of Excellence - Frank Hornby
 Pub of Excellence - Lime Kiln
 Cider Pub of the Year - AJ
 Club of the Year - Northern
 Best Refurbishment - Head of Steam
 LocAle Pub of the Year - Lion Tavern
 Best Newcomer - Sanctuary
 Those unable to attend awards pictured on the right

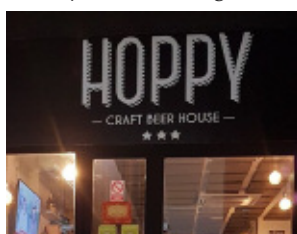


Cerveza Artesana



Home to the one of the oldest 'Denominación' of wine in all of Spain (Cariñena), Aragón is rightly famed for the quality of its tinto. Yet there is another revolution underway in an area that has often been the literal crossroads between the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Castilian and Catalan political, economic and (most importantly) gastronomic influences.

along with the prices at 200ml and 400ml measures. The variety is something akin to



Two bars at the forefront of the 'cerveza artesana' movement here in northern Spain are Hoppy, and Beer Corner - not names one might think sound particularly Spanish, but the beers served within



most certainly are. There isn't an Estrella, Cruzcampo or San Miguel in sight, which is fine as far as I'm concerned.

Each bar has a regularly updated digital screen displaying which beers are served,

what you might see in the Ship and Mitre, though the bars are relatively tiny. My friend Toño Domingo previously worked for a vineyard nearby, but the variety and quality of beers available in these bars has been a revelation to him and he now has his own favourite Spanish-brewed IPAs. Toño recommended his usual method of getting a plank of five 200ml beers of varying tastes; we were thirsty, so we ordered totally different planks and tried each other's, then repeated the trick with more

beers. Yes, there were some misses, but mainly hits.

There are now dozens of microbreweries threaded across Asturias, Basque Country, Navarre, Aragón and Cataluña. The most amazing way to try many of them is at Zaragoza's own beer festival towards the end of August - Birragoza (see what they did there?).

I have been twice, so can wholeheartedly recommend it; check out their website for updates on this year's

edition. It's an open air festival in a renovated historic square next to a gallery where Steve Gibson, a Liverpool artist who has been painting in Zaragoza for many years, regularly holds exhibitions. A good number of the breweries use casks at

Reaching Zaragoza from Liverpool isn't as straightforward as some other Spanish cities, but this adds to the appeal, as it is probably the biggest 'Spanish' city in Spain, shorn of many of the homogenous traits seen in cities elsewhere. As one

might imagine, there is no end of places to eat and it's difficult to go wrong, though cheese and wine is terrific at Domino in Plaza Santa Marta. I can't wait for my next visit, so I'll see you there!

By John McGrath

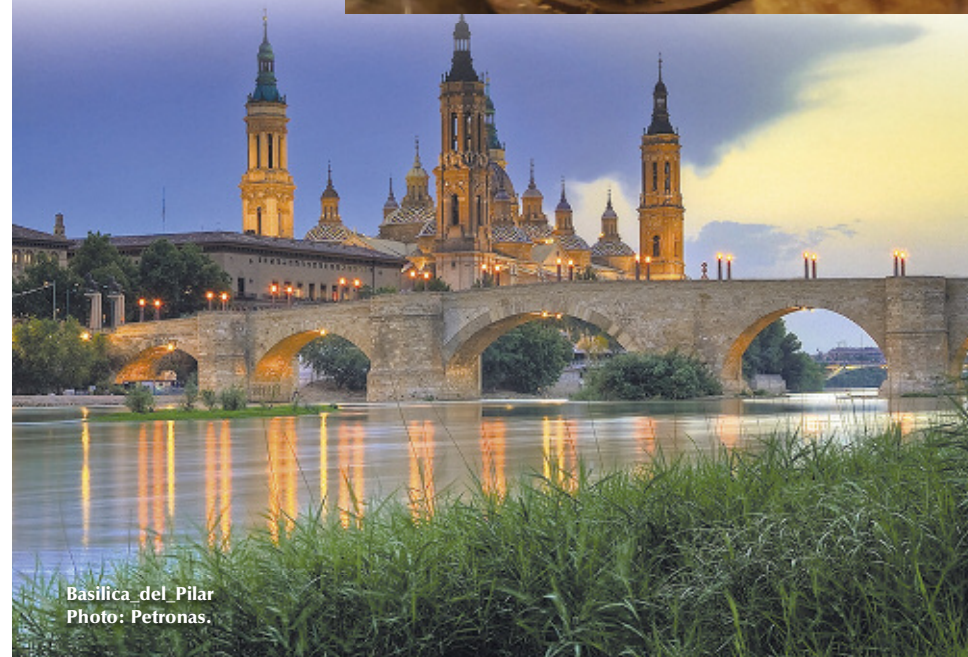


A plank of beer

this festival, though cellar-manship needs to improve before they become seen more frequently in these parts.



Domino



Basilica del Pilar
Photo: Petronas.

Hop Harmony in Harrogate

Having booked a three night trip to Harrogate, I decided to check out the real ale scene, which turned out to be decent. Harrogate is not a cheap venue for beer, with the average price of a pint being in the region of £4. However, all the ales sampled were of good quality. Arriving at the **Boutique Brasserie Hotel**, it was pleasing to note that although the ubiquitous Landlord was available, I was able to sample the full flavoured **5.8% Timothy Taylor Cook Lane IPA** for the first time. I then visited **The Old Bell**, an



Okell's pub with six hand pumps, from which I sampled the tasty **Rooster's Cream (4.7%)**. Just around the corner was **Major Tom's Social** - an upstairs bar with quirky vintage décor. Four hand pumps and a good range of craft ale were on offer. I subsequently tried the hoppy **American Pale (5.8%)** from **Two by Two brewery** (Wallsend). This proved to be something of a rock bar, where I made friends with two local black Labradors - Jimi Hendrix and Thin Lizzy! Situated below an Indian restaurant, **The Little Ale House** is a very friendly bar, with a wide range of beers (five on pumps and five craft options), where I sampled numerous beers. Amongst the most

interesting were **Great Heck Navigator at 3.9%** and a classic winter ale from **Harrogate Brewery, The Pump Room (5.7%)**, which was reminiscent of Old Peculiar, but slightly less sweet.

Another interesting venue, **The Tap** (formerly Tap and Spile) is a mixture of modern and traditional ambience. A very friendly and welcoming pub, I enjoyed a **Rooster's 25th anniversary Little Darlings Pale at 4.3%**, made with Charles Faram hops.

Next up was the nearby **Coach and Horses**, an old pub with a strong community feel. **Timothy Taylor Landlord** was accompanied by seven guest ales, though I went for the **Punch in the Face** (be careful how you order!), a full flavoured IPA from **Totally Brewed** (Nottingham) at 4.8%.

During my stay, I made an afternoon visit to **Starlings Beer and Coffee House**, which featured six hand pumps and 10 kegs. I had to go for the



Rooster's / Beavertown collaboration **By Heck Clementine**, a strong IPA at 6.8% (to celebrate their 25th anniversary, Rooster's are making collaboration ales with 17 other breweries), which certainly hit the spot! I finished off with a **Brew York Tonkoko Milk Stout**, packed

with vanilla, coconut and cacao. Wow! Notably, this is a venue for enjoying a mix of entertainment, including street artists.

Next to the train station, **The Harrogate Tap** offers a wide selection of beers, ranging from 3.6 to 5.7% ABV. A number of **Great Heck Brewery** (Goole)



beers are available on the 12 hand pumps, including **Nelson Sauvín at 5%**, with grapefruit overtones.

Finally, I just had to visit **Hales Bar**, reputedly the oldest pub in Harrogate, featuring a fairly dark interior, with the original gas lights still in use. The beers on offer were a bit weak for me, but I did sample **Daleside Old Leg Over** (the brewery being in Starbeck, close to Harrogate), a ruby session beer at 4.1%, which was surprisingly tasty.

All the venues listed are within a mile radius and well worth a little pub crawl. If you feel the need to explore further, there are some other decent pubs serving good ale, including **The Winter Gardens**, a very ornate JD Wetherspoon outlet.

By Dave Mernock

Real Ale in Corfu



Corfu Brewery

In June, I travelled to Kassiopi in Corfu and was pleasantly surprised to find that real ale was available in many bars and restaurants. The beers are



the double fermented **Ionian Epsos** at 7.5%, with the addition of flower honey. All beers in the range can be supplied on draught or in bottle conditioned form.



made from caramelised malt (5% ABV) and **Dark Ale Bitter**, with roasted barley bitterness (also 5% ABV). Both beers were sampled on draught and in bottles.

In bottles, I also tried the **Contessa IPA**, intensely flavoured at 6.2%, as well as

brewed in a traditional manner (with no preservatives) by Corfu Microbrewery, which is based in the village of Arillas, in the north west of the island.

Around seven beers are in the brewery repertoire; I sampled the unfiltered and unpasteurised **Real Ale Special**,



The brewery offers tours on a Saturday, including beer to taste at the end. Also, from the 26th to 30th September 2018, they are hosting a festival with beers from British companies also on offer. See the **corfubeer.com** website for more details.

As they say in Greece...Yamas!

By Dave Mernock

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The majority of people in Britain could be struggling to afford drinking beer in pubs. This is according to new research by YouGov [1], which reveals that 56% of those surveyed (who expressed an opinion) believe the price of a pint of beer in a UK pub is unaffordable.

Prices are continuing to rise, with a third of the cost of a pint now made up of various taxes, including Beer Duty, Business Rates and VAT. Pubs are very often at the centre of local communities, playing a key role in supporting personal wellbeing and combating loneliness. However, rising prices are driving consumers out of pubs, subsequently putting them at risk of closure.

CAMRA is extremely concerned that there is no end in sight, with the Government planning to increase the tax paid by pubs in the November Budget. Current plans will see Beer Duty rise by around 2p per pint, with pubs set to lose £1,000 in Business Rates Relief, increasing pressure on pubs and driving away consumers. CAMRA's National Chairman, Jackie Parker, said: "It's no surprise that most people are finding pub pints unaffordable, given the tax burden they're facing. Beer drinkers will naturally look to more cost-effective ways to enjoy a drink, such

Majority of Britons find the price of a pint unaffordable

as buying from off-licences and supermarkets for home consumption.

"The result is incredibly detrimental to our local communities and to our own personal connectivity. Having a good 'local' makes people happier, better-connected and more trusting. Furthermore, pubs help bring communities together and support the local economy. The reality is that there are very few places that can replicate the benefit provided by our nation's pubs, and once they're gone, they're gone forever."

It would be interesting to have the views of the MerseyAle readership on this matter. Is your beer unaffordable? Do you not worry too much about price if the beer is unusual or from a small brewery which likes to experiment with different flavours and styles? Are the big pub companies to blame for high beer prices?

Earlier this year, EI Group (Enterprise) put up the price of cask beer from small producers, as part of a 3.5% price increase. At the same time, EI cut prices it pays wholesale to small brewers by 2.5%, meaning micros now get 15% less from Enterprise than they did a year ago. This works out at a cost of around £45 per barrel to the brewer, but £110 or so to the publican, who has to buy from the PubCo. So, who pockets the rest?

For those of you who enter beer scores into the WhatPub website whatpub.com, do you also enter the price of your pint in the section titled 'Show advanced options'? Information like this helps CAMRA keep track of changes in the price of beer nationally.

By Tony Morgan

[1] All figures unless otherwise stated are sourced from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,070 adults - of which 1,473 expressed an opinion. Fieldwork was undertaken between 6th and 9th July 2018. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

The YouGov survey asked: "In your opinion, is the price of a pint of beer in a UK pub affordable or unaffordable - or is it about right? (Please select the option that best applies)". Of all the UK adults who responded (excluding those who responded "don't know"), 2% said "very affordable", 16% said "fairly affordable", 26% said "about right", 45% said "fairly unaffordable" and 11% said "very unaffordable".

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ManxAle

From Dave Halliwell, MerseyAle Isle of Man Correspondent

This issue, we report on the TT race beer tents, another new pub opening on island in Castletown, as well as a Douglas closure. A further series of nationally known pub tickers have visited the island, and we reflect on their impressions. After ten years of reporting in MerseyAle, we consider the island's pub stock, with one eye on the next ten years. We also chance upon a couple of rare finds from yesteryear, spotted on sale at August's Great British Beer Festival in London.

White House wins Pub of the Year award

The White House in Peel once again won the CAMRA Isle of Man Pub of The Year award in 2018 (by a close margin), making it the most prolific



winner over the last decade. Under new management stewardship on a day to day basis, the pub retained the award and continues to heavily support a range of local brews, as well as guests. It subsequently went on to represent the Isle of Man against the best judged pub in Cumbria (Drovers Rest, Monkhill) and Lancashire (Little Bare, Morecambe). As MerseyAle goes to press, The Little Bare has just been announced as winner of the next round. A new micropub open only eighteen months, this outstanding new

start-up is close to the north end of Morecambe's seafront.

June sun shines on TT race tents

With the change in tenure of the famous promenade TT race tent site from Bushy's to Hooded Ram, there was (as reported last issue) much prior speculation as to how things would pan out under the new format. It's not unfair to say that TT represents a huge and vital income stream for the vast majority of the island's pubs and breweries. Quite unexpectedly as it turned out, there was superb weather throughout the fortnight, which helped make for a fantastic event, boosting all three tent sites as people lingered longer



into the evening, due to the unusually warm June nights. Hooded Ram took up their position on the promenade,

packing the site on big name band nights. The tent itself was different to what had originally been billed, but looked fantastic, with a bar fashioned from casks and an immaculately presented optics bar. There was also a separate premium lounge area, advertising the Oddbins name - a first in conjunction with Hooded Ram, with such a profile on island. Hooded Ram ales were available throughout the period, but served from



behind the bar, which had no hand pumps on it. Technical cooling for the beers (to keep them in good condition in the heat) was superb; just as well given the unexpected weather and exposed promenade site! All in all, as anticipated from Hooded Ram, this was a professional and competent first showing at the TT.



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Expansive views of Peel bay, harbour and Castle

As reported in our previous issue, Bushy's has moved to the Villa Marina. Here, the much larger site and Villa Gardens were used to full effect. The tent proved not to be needed for full capacity, as folk wandered around the gardens in bright



sunshine, supporting the bands at the top of the gardens on a large, impressive stage. The whole site had a relaxed pop festival feel to it - quite different to the tent of the last twenty years - and worked well. The site was close to capacity on many occasions, but with generally low waiting times to gain entry. Expectations here were exceeded all round, after what had been a difficult readjustment period for the Bushy's camp.

Further afield at The TT Race Grandstand, Heron & Brearley (Okell's) significantly upgraded their offering, with a two sided bar and overlooking premium balcony, named 'The Trackside'.

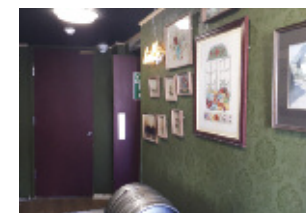


Accompanied by bands, this went down particularly well with a number of seasoned regulars, who spent many hours at the Grandstand and Okell's

Trackside, which was also heavily praised on Radio TT - the voice of the races during the fortnight. Anecdotally, a number of pub landlords reported being less busy, but more than anything else, this was probably a reflection of the late evening heat slowing people's progression indoors.

Opening of the Compton Vaults

Situated in the basement of the large Compton House in Castletown, a new bar quietly opened with little fanfare around mid-August. Certainly a new concept for The Isle of Man



market, the **Compton Vaults** comprises a small bar and two roomed area. As well as one hand pump (stocking Bushy's beer initially), a range of craft bottled beers are available - many of which will be ever changing. There is deliberately a policy here of creating a bar where people interact with each other. As such, there is very little advertising behind the bar (as to what is stocked), prompting visitors to ask about the beers available. There are no televisions and no Wi-Fi in order to promote conversation.

However, despite the rather traditional looking entrance hallway above, the Compton Vaults is markedly different below and not what one initially

expects. The intimate candlelit nature of the small bar areas makes for a vibrant and lively atmosphere at weekends - particularly when live music is on. At other times, it's ideal for a relaxed drink after work. A range of **Okell's bottled beers** are available from the fridge, including the prodigiously award winning **Okell's Aile**. The Aile on a recent visit was



served in a beaker - very rare for the island - a heresy to some, though increasingly common in UK craft ale bars these past few years!

Opening times are limited, with the Vaults being closed on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. It opens on Thursdays (5pm till 11pm), Fridays and Saturdays (5pm till late) and Sunday (12 noon till 8pm). MerseyAle wishes the venture well. Swiftly following on from the Two Fellas first micropub opening on island over in Peel, the Compton Vaults once again provides the island with a completely new style of venue.

News Roundup

The Victoria Tavern (Victoria Street, Douglas), close to the sea terminal, has closed. Run by Robert McAleer in recent years, the lease had been for sale for some time, and the unit now faces an uncertain future. ☞

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A few hundred yards up the street, the family still run **The Thirsty Pigeon** - a bustling and lively venue, serving several real ales. It is still the most recent addition to the traditionally recognised pub stock on island, having opened in the last decade.



Okell's - who rebranded their pump clips some years ago in an all-white format - are now starting to revert to some seasonal ales in an alternative format; the new Steam pump clip being pictured here. The



white pump clips remain in general use, but the odd rare Okell's Bitter traditional signage can still be viewed on occasion -



notably in **The White House** and on the wall of **The Peveril Hotel** (both in Peel).

The Glen Mona is now under new management and has been open throughout the summer on revised hours, opening lunchtimes and evenings for



food. The pub is closed on Mondays.

In late September, the **Society for Preservation of Beers from the Wood (SPBW)** is holding its annual members weekend on island. Founded in 1963, the group (a forerunner to CAMRA) was concerned at the time about the perceived demise and lack of choice of traditional real ale.

Real Ale destination

The Isle of Man is increasingly being seen from across the water as a prime destination, high on the radar for visits and holidays for those who enjoy touring the country and taking in the local hostelries along the way; there are many such groups like the aforementioned SPBW visiting the island. The attraction here (not always obvious to those on island who don't travel widely in the UK) is both in the pub stock and number of breweries and beer styles available. It's very rare - if not unique for an area of the

island's size - to have four breweries as well as a vibrant real ale scene, whilst simultaneously retaining such a remarkable pub stock.

In the UK's more populated areas, many pubs over the last twenty years have been opened up or turned into gastro food venues, where the drinker is perceived as not being welcome or not well catered for in terms of the pub design. This is very much not so on island, where there is a superb mix of venues (modern and traditional) very sympathetically refurbished where needed, which retain the character often lost elsewhere; this is of great appeal to those from across the water.

Examples here would include **The Crosby Hotel** (Heron & Brearley), where the pub operator has refitted without losing games areas or separate modern day saloon bars, but also made provisions for diners in the modern age. Elsewhere, free house pubs such as **The Albert** (Douglas) retain original



features, barely changed over the decades, but at the same time maintained to a high standard in terms of furnishing and decoration. In addition, smaller pubs such as





The Central (Peel) - nestled amongst the housing over split floors in the narrow streets of the town - are now very rare in British Isles terms, as are pubs



like **The Plough** on Ramsey's main shopping street. Such examples are replicated island-wide to the delight of visitors.

Ale wise, there are similar attractions, with a superb blend of the modern and traditional. This was recognised recently by a number of national beer tickers, who particularly admired the **Bushy's 1874 mild**, still available in a number of venues and a rare traditional style. In addition, the high quality of Okell's ales at the point of dispense was noted throughout the Heron & Brearley estate (not always the case in some of the UK pub chains). **Hooded Ram's Mosaic** - permanently available in Hooded Ram (Clinch's) on Douglas Quay - was singled out



as being a superb brew. Two weeks later, it was judged as a competition finalist at the Great British Beer Festival, representing the Isle of Man brewer, already with a number of other awards under its belt. It is this unique blend of island pubs and ales that attracts visitors.

What for the future?

The last ten years have seen great change on island pub wise, which have truly been a golden era for real ale. Uniquely, cask ale has appeared at all



traditional venues. While beer festivals have come and gone, **The Sulby Glen** has been an ever constant in holding an annual festival. Meanwhile, a CAMRA island festival has become a regular feature, alongside an ever successful and growing food and drink festival; this year, the beer tent was run by the event itself for the first time, separately from CAMRA volunteers.

New pubs styles to the island have started to appear, and a



favourably strong wet led (drinks only) pub sector remains; this applies to both the free house sector, such as **The Royal** (Peel) and the managed estate sector, where H&B continue at present with sympathetic refurbishments, as they did some years ago with **The Central** in Ramsey.

However, threats remain from the high taxation rate on beer and the licensed premise trade (both in comparison to the supermarkets and in their own right). Breweries are operating in a severely oversupplied market in the British Isles, meaning only the fittest will survive. Readers will recall the Isle of Man saw **Doghouse brewery** (Jurby) come and go, sadly in a very short time period. However, perhaps the greatest threat comes from social patterns amongst the young, who appear to be venturing out far less often than the previous two or three generations; this may be the island industries greatest threat, lurking just around the corner in the decade to come.

Innovative solutions could be the key to combating this, such as the limited overheads micro-pub, limited opening hours (as at the Compton Vaults and many others), as well as H&B's current renewed focus on

improved dining facilities in various outlets. The state of play in August 2018 is roughly this: four on island breweries, approximately 86 regular traditional cask outlets - of which 49 offer food and 37 are wet led. H&B retain 15 or so of the wet led pubs, while around 16 of the cask ale outlets offer accommodation.

Finally, to a couple of rare finds on sale at the 2018 Great British



Beer festival, which exemplify the island's great brewing heritage: firstly, to **Falcon Number 1 Strong Ale**, an Okell's brew from the former Falcon brewery site; secondly, to a bottle of **Castletown Liqueur Barley Wine from Castletown Brewery**, taken over by H&B in 1986. Both are six fluid ounces each, but with no strength or health warning labels being required in those days!

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Coach trips are run every month to a variety of destinations.

Coach trips depart from opposite the Ship and Mitre, Dale Street, and return there around 9pm. Cost is £12 for CAMRA members, £15 for non members – so it pays to join CAMRA!

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For full details of upcoming trips and how to book, please check out the coach trip page on the branch website. To book, contact social@liverpoolcamra.org.uk or phone Ian Macadam 07521 741 586 The web page is updated after the 1st of each month with details of the next trip being launched.

September 8th: Derby. 9.50 depart

October 6th: Oakengates (Telford) Beer Festival and Market Drayton 9.50 depart

November 3rd: Cheshire (probably Sandbach and Congleton). 10.50 depart



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Dave MacBryde MerseyAle Editor

A thank you from Liverpool and Districts CAMRA

On behalf of Liverpool and Districts CAMRA committee, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Dave MacBryde for editing MerseyAle for the last two years. He volunteered for this role at a time of transition for the magazine. From his first issue, he has worked tirelessly to take MerseyAle forward. His professionalism and his experience have been invaluable.

It has been a pleasure to work with Dave, who is always willing to go that extra mile to help with articles, often having to deal with late submissions (usually from me!), but he never complained and always ensured the magazine went to the printers on time to meet our release date. As Dave moves on to pastures new, we would like to wish him all the very best and hope to see him from time to time at branch socials.

By Sonia James-Henry, Liverpool Branch Chair

Branch Diary

Liverpool CAMRA
 See website www.liverpoolcamra.org.uk

16th Sept: Ferry 'Cross the Mersey Pub Crawl.
 12 noon ferry from Pier Head to Seacombe. Then walking via waterfront pubs (and those in side roads) to New Brighton.

20th - 30th Sept: Cask Ale Week. Branch Get Together. Meet the Brewer session with Ad Hop brewery - 8pm. Hard Times & Misery, Maryland Street, L1 9DE.

Other events to be arranged. See branch website for details and possible changes liverpoolcamra.org.uk click on *events coach trips.

22nd Sept: Minibus trip to Leek, Staffordshire. Spaces are limited to 32.

Pick up points: Maghull Central Square Bus Stop, Westway, L31 0AE at 09.45am (expected return 19.00); Ship and Mitre, Dale Street, L2 2JH at 10.15am (expected return 18.30). Tickets: liverpoolcamra.org.uk click on *events coach trips.

24th Oct: EGM to decide a new system for choosing the branch Pub of the Year (POTY). All branch members invited to attend and vote at 8pm. Sanctuary, Renshaw Street, Liverpool.

Contact: Steve Downing
contact@liverpoolcamra.org.uk

*then follow link to Eventbrite which lists all CAMRA events and coach trips

Isle of Man CAMRA Branch Diary
 Visit: isleofmancamra.org

<p>MerseyAle Article and Photo Contributors</p> <p>Andre Fu Dave Halliwell Dennis Jones Sonia James-</p>	<p>Henry Mel James-Henry Gareth Owen Tony Morgan Dave Mernock Steve Downing John McGrath</p>	<p>Thanks to all our contributors and apologies if we have left anyone out.</p>
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Liverpool CAMRA



MerseyAle

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