



# THE

Published by the Glasgow & West of Scotland branch of the Campaign for Real Ale



# GUZZLER

AUTUMN 2025  
FREE



**G-RAF**  
**2025**  
**RETROSPECTIVE**

**CAMRA Pub of the Year**



**STOATERS: Scotland's best home pub**

**ECUADORIAN CRAFT BEER**

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first issue of the brand new volume of **The Guzzler**; the magazine of the Glasgow & West of Scotland branch of the **Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)**.

We have returned after a long hiatus to bring you all the best in news, reviews, and cask-conditioned booze from around our branch area.

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## EVENTS DIARY

### September 8 (Mon), 1930:

Branch meeting at The James Tassie (63-65 Kilmarnock Road, Glasgow G41 3YR).

### September 13 (Sat), 1300:

Joint social with the Edinburgh branch (The Scotia Bar, 112-114 Stockwell Street, Glasgow G1 4LW).

### September 27 (Sat):

Coach Trip to Loch Fyne and Argyll (Time TBA - watch member emails and branch social media for details).

### October 2-4 (Thu-Sat):

Ayrshire Real Ale Festival (Troon Concert Hall, KA10 6EF).

### October Branch Meeting, 1930:

Location TBC - watch member emails and branch social media for details.

### October 23-25 (Thu-Sat):

Carlisle Beer and Cider Festival (Station Hotel, Court Square, Carlisle, CA1 1QY).

### November 7-8 (Fri-Sat):

Alloa Real Ale and Cider Festival (Alloa Town Hall, Marshill, Alloa, FK10 1AB).

### November Branch Meeting, 1930:

Location TBC - watch member emails and branch social media for details.

## JOIN CAMRA

**CAMRA** (the **Campaign for Real Ale**) is an independent, voluntary, consumer organisation whose vision is to have quality real ale, cider & perry and thriving pubs in every community.

Membership is open to all, and we currently represent around 146,000 members across the UK. We are governed by a voluntary unpaid national executive, elected by the membership. There is a local branch structure through which members can join a **CAMRA** branch and campaign and socialise locally. The Glasgow & West of Scotland branch currently has over 820 members.

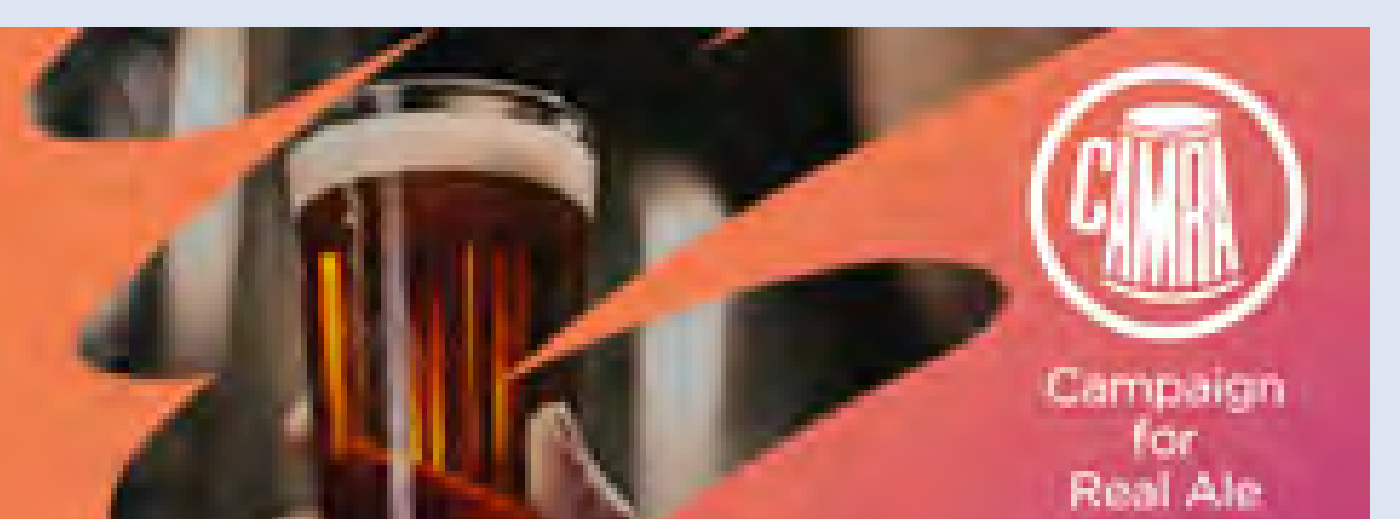
Membership gives you access to; our award-winning quarterly **BEER** magazine; discounts on **CAMRA** books including our best-selling **Good Beer Guide**; free or reduced entry to over 180 beer festivals; £30 (single)/£40 (joint) of **CAMRA** real ale, cider and perry vouchers; access to **The Real Ale Discount Scheme** where you receive discounts on pints at over 3,500 participating pubs with your membership card - and much more!

Join **CAMRA** today at <https://join.camra.org.uk/>

**Be part of the CAMRA story**

Real ale is just the start...

Join today



## JULY BRANCH SOCIAL

In July, the branch held its monthly social at the **Bon Accord** on Glasgow's North Street. We welcomed a number of new members who joined up during June's **Glasgow Real Ale Festival (G-RAF)**, and bought them their inaugural pint as **CAMRA** members - an offer the branch extends to all **CAMRA** newbies.

A few tables were reserved at the back of the pub, specifically for the event. However, the space proved to be a bit tight for the high number of attendees! For details of the next social, check our **Events Diary (Page 3)**.



The pub had all eight of its hand pumps in full swing, with a range of real ales (and one real cider) from across Britain on offer, at what seemed to be a flat price of £5.20 a pint.

From historic Manchester brewer **J.W. Lees** there was **Tropic Crush**; a fruity session IPA in the American style, clocking in at a modest 3.9% ABV. There were not one, but two Scottish stouts available; **Stewart's** Guinness-esque **Edinburgh Black** (4.2%) and **Loch Lomond's** ever-smooth, **Silkie Stout** (5%). For those inclined, the cider was **Weston's Old Rosie**, at 7.3%.

For me, the star of the show was the mini-tap takeover by **Eden River Brew Co.**, from Penrith. This constituted four pumps, showcasing quintessential British beer styles.

As usual, my first port of call was the best bitter; **Beacon** (4%). Although Eden purport this to be a classic English best, I actually found its herbal qualities to have something of a lager-y characteristic. Not what I'd usually look for in a bitter, but its refreshing aspect turned out to be just the ticket on a muggy Glasgow summer evening.

Their golden ale, **Eden Gold** (4.2%), also took me by surprise. The use of continental hops (Saaz and Savinsky Goldings) adds a citric quality which blends well with the sweetness of the caramel. It was also fairly hazy, which is something else I was not expecting. The overall result is a balance of rich honey and crisp hoppiness. Much like the bitter, this is a beverage which is well suited to a summer session.

For me, beer of the day has to go to their **First Emperor IPA** (4.6%). This is a true English IPA. I make no secret of the fact that American hop varieties don't really float my boat, so I love it when brewers produce IPAs in the traditional style. Using a blend of classic English hops and Maris Otter malt, the end result (named for King Edward VII, the first British Emperor of India) is an indulgent, deep, fruity and complex ale.

To finish, I went for the **Penrith Porter** (4%). This is a regularly brewed limited edition session porter, which (as far as I can tell) is not available in bottle format. It's a lovely beer, and extremely rich. However, I didn't pick up on any of the fruitcake notes or juiciness which I usually associate with the style. To me, it was very coffee-like and drying. Not a bad thing mind you, as it was remarkably flavoursome for a dark beer with an ABV on the lower end.

(by **Westley McCallum**).

## G-RAF 2025 RETROSPECTIVE

### Glasgow Real Ale Festival – The Hows, Whys and Wheres!



The **Glasgow Real Ale Festival (G-RAF)** first opened its doors to the public in The Briggait at 5:00pm on Thursday, 26th June 2014. Previously, The Glasgow & West of Scotland branch of **CAMRA** had organised four Glasgow beer festivals and three festivals held in the Dumbarton area. Our first festival in Glasgow was in 1987 - held in a disused supermarket at the old Anderson Centre in Glasgow. That was followed in 1994, 1995 and 1996, when we held a series of festivals in The Arches, underneath Glasgow Central station. The 1996 festival was not a great success, with fire alarms going off and visitors not allowed back into the building, problems with the cooling equipment and electrical system failures. After that it was decided to put the festival to rest.

Under the guidance of our branch chair, it was decided to resurrect a **CAMRA**-run Glasgow beer festival in 2014. A new venue was found at The Briggait and, in order to differentiate it from the disastrous 1996 festival, a new name was coined: the **Glasgow Real Ale Festival**. With the new name came a new identity. Someone noticed that if the initial letters of the festival name were said with the emphasis on the 'G', then they sounded quite like the name of a certain sub-Saharan African land animal, and so the **G-RAF** giraffe was born!

I personally became involved in G-RAF in 2016, initially as a volunteer helping to build the bars etc., and then as deputy organiser under Jonathan Kemp, the G-RAF Organiser and **CAMRA** Glasgow & West of Scotland chair. The festival got bigger and better every year and by 2019 we had almost 2,500 visitors to the festival over the three days. We were in the midst of planning the G-RAF 2020, with the venue booked, beer selections being finalised and volunteers being recruited when, on the 17th March 2020, we received notification from **CAMRA**



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As regards non-Scottish beer, we like to base the beer choice around a theme. For G-RAF 2024 we concentrated on beers from Liverpool and London. In fact, the first beer to sell out at the 2024 festival was from London. While planning the 2024 festival it was suggested we feature beers from the other Celtic nations of Cornwall, Wales, Ireland and the Isle of Man. We were too late to do that for the 2024 festival but for G-RAF 2025 we resurrected the idea, contacting CAMRA branches in those areas asking for beer suggestions. We then contacted the various breweries to find out what would be available. Two breweries in Wales, in Wrexham and Pontypridd, and one in Truro in Cornwall acted as hub breweries, collecting the various beers before getting them up to us in Glasgow. Without them the beer selection at G-RAF 2025 would have been a lot poorer. Initially we didn't have much luck with beers from Ireland and the Isle of Man. In fact, it wasn't until late May before those beers could be confirmed. Thanks go to everyone involved.



One of the best features about having a beer festival in The Briggait is also the cause of one of its biggest problems, the glass roof! While it is great having a bright and airy festival venue, we have to bear in mind that on warm sunny days The Briggait basically becomes a giant greenhouse. On Friday, 20th June 2025 the temperature in the venue during the afternoon reached over 30°C! As you can imagine this can cause a few problems in trying to keep the beers cool. The cooling system we use for cask beer is designed to keep the temperature stable. Before arriving at the venue our beer is stored in a cool container, away from sources of heat. One of the first things we do when preparing the festival is setting up the cooling system. When the beer arrives from the container it is put on the stillage (racking) and the cooling jackets are fitted. This works well most years. However, in 2023 and 2025 the temperature in mid-June was much higher than usual and the cooling system had difficulty coping with the heat. We are actively looking at alternative ways of keeping the beer cool for future festivals - watch this space!

The Glasgow Real Ale festival is entirely run by volunteers who give up their free time to plan, build and run the festival. The vast majority of these volunteers are CAMRA members, not only from our branch but from all around the UK. At G-RAF 2025 we had volunteers from as far afield as Glasgow, Cornwall, Wales and the Scottish Highlands serving behind the bars. Volunteering usually opens about three months before the festival and we normally get about 80 volunteers to help out. But we are always looking for more!

During G-RAF 2025 we managed to recruit 32 new CAMRA members, about half of them from the Glasgow area. As well as getting the chance to help out at the festival, members get vouchers that can be used as part payment in some pub groups and, according to CAMRA headquarters will, from 1st January 2026, get free entry to all CAMRA organised beer festivals in the UK. We put the success in recruiting new members this year down to a couple of

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things. All members recruited at the festival get the chance to ring the CAMRA recruitment bell, and some of them do it very enthusiastically, as you may have seen on our Facebook page! Secondly, we had a bit of help from the aforementioned G-RAF giraffe.



At the end of 2024, when G-RAF 2025 was in the early planning stages, we decided that it was time to update our logo. An iconic image of Glasgow is the Duke of Wellington with a traffic cone on his head, so it was suggested that we have a giraffe wearing a cone. Over the next month or so the design went through various iterations until it was finalised at the end of February. Once the logo was sorted out, one of our members had a flash of inspiration - he acquired a standing giraffe stuffed toy! She was given a name, which was kept secret and written on a card sealed in an envelope. Once fitted with the requisite traffic cone, it was time for her to make her public appearance. Her debut was at a CAMRA branch meeting after which she visited various pubs and venues in the Glasgow area. One of these venues was the Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice, our charity partner for 2025, where she had her photograph taken in the hospice grounds. She proved quite popular, with people wanting their photograph with her, so we decided to run a competition during the festival to guess her name. Visitors were asked to make a donation to the charity in order to enter and the winner would get two free tickets to G-RAF 2026. She helped raise £1,197 for the charity and while we were presenting the cheque the envelope was opened and her name revealed - Senga!

So, how to sum up G-RAF 2025? In numbers it is quite straightforward. We had 1743 visitors over the three days - down from the pre-Covid 19 days but on the rise - with over 400 people in the venue on the Friday afternoon. We had a selection of 88 cask conditioned beers and 13 real ciders. We sold 5,380 pints of cask beer, 3,300 Scottish and the remainder from the other Celtic nations. We also had over 40 different beers in bottles and keg along with a selection of gin, rum, wine and mead. The first beer to sell out was **Hafod Vanilla Porter**, from Mold, North Wales, which was finished by mid-afternoon on Friday. There was a tie for the most popular beer of the festival, voted for by the visitors, between **Dookit Balla-Mara** and **Seagate Monday Morning Mocha**. But mostly, we had a really enjoyable time.

As for G-RAF 2026, the planning has already started. At time of writing the dates have been pencilled in are we are arranging a meeting with the venue to see how we can improve things for 2026. We have a couple of ideas for a theme, but nothing is confirmed yet. We have met with **Two Towns Down**, who ran our bottle and keg bar, to discuss ideas for next year, which may include more foreign beer in draft. Senga wants to get out and about a bit more, so she may be visiting a venue near you to promote the festival. Once we get things sorted out we will announce them on our various social media pages, so keep an eye open for them and we hope to see you at G-RAF 2026.



(By Mike Goudie).

# 24<sup>th</sup> CAMRA AYRSHIRE REAL ALE FESTIVAL 2025



Main Festival Sponsor:

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SPECIAL PROJECTS LIMITED

Nominated Charity:



Featuring more than 150 real ales and 25 real ciders & perries

## OPENING TIMES

**THURS 2 OCT**

12 noon (CAMRA members)  
2pm - 11pm (Public session)

**FRI 3 OCT**

11am - 11pm

**SAT 4 OCT**

11am - 10pm

## ADMISSION

£6 (CAMRA members)

£8 (non-CAMRA)

Beer tokens (£10/card)  
purchased separately

Over 18s only

Assistance dogs only

Admission includes festival glass  
and programme

Free re-admission with  
this year's glass

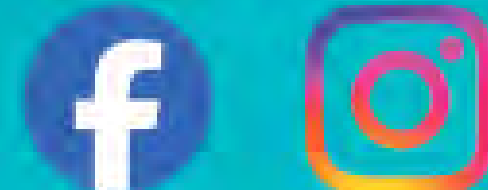
# 2-4 October 2025

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## ALE-DUCATION: BEER LEARNING ON A TASTING COURSE

"Hi. I'm Emily and I am the social media branch officer for the **Glasgow & West of Scotland CAMRA** branch. I've had a great year engaging with **CAMRA** and having some amazing opportunities happen, including Taste Training for Tasting Panels. This forms the beer judging for local and national competitions.

My training session was delivered by Ian Martin of **Ayrshire & Wigtown CAMRA** branch. Ian has been delivering a lot of the learn and discover sessions at various different festivals across the country, and at time of writing will be in the thick of it co ordinating learn and discover at **Great British Beer Festival**.

This was the first ever training session that he delivered. It took place at **The Bull Inn** in Paisley, Renfrewshire. I met with the group of others attending the session, with all of us coming from four separate branches. We had a private room booked and the room was well presented with course materials laid out and a screen for a slideshow. Ian proceeded to go through the training, explaining how tasting panels work. For example: how do you know things like off flavours and being able to detect them? We got to sample off flavours in various degrees of intensity, and were asked to know what the off flavor was - and could we notice it from subtle to profound.



We had discussions around beer styles and our own personal biases around certain styles of beer, and favourite breweries to disengage yourself from that - and to be able to score a beer objectively from what is in the glass you are currently holding in your hand. I have been a massive beer fan for nearly 15 years and I certainly was taken away with the depth that beer judging takes on to determine a final score. You have various different taste profiles that make up the judging score such as malt, caramel, hops, citrus, yeast, and others. You have the three stages of the judging first on the aroma scoring all the profiles then comes the taste followed by the aftertaste. This all gets marked on your score cards which contributes towards your overall score for **Champion Beer Of Britain**.

It was interesting to sit in a room of different people to hear what they had to say about the beers we judged. Some of us picked up on different things while others didn't. This is why it's important for judging to have a wide variety of people to judge beers. Everyone has a different drinking palate. I finished off the training session with my class, and we headed off to **The Last Post** for a few beers to round off the day with Ian. It was a successful event and exceptionally well delivered and managed by Ian. Cheers!"

(By **Emily Green**).

## STOATERS: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE LANDLORD OF SCOTLAND'S GREATEST HOME PUB



In 2023, East Kilbride resident Iain Mason embarked upon a grand undertaking: to convert part of his garage in to a fully operational pub, complete with real ale handpumps, refrigerated units, a fully stocked bar, seating areas, and even a loo. After extensive scouring of Facebook Marketplace, umpteen visits to secondhand shops, and a hell of a lot of DIY - Stoaters was born.

After being recently crowned "Scotland's biggest beer lover" by Aldi (and given a year's supply of Aldi craft beer for the bar, to boot!), **The Guzzler** spoke to Iain about his experience building Stoaters, his inspiration, and the challenges of keeping real ale in a home bar setting.

### **G: So Iain, what made you decide to build a pub in your garden?**

"I visited my brother, Dave, in Leeds in the middle of 2023 and he had a great pub in his garden shed, with a pump and draft ale etc. It had obviously had a lot of thought and love put into it and just felt instantly relaxing. I thought it was fantastic just to be able to walk the bottom of the garden, close the door, and have your very own bar where you could play what you want, serve what you want, and invite who you want.

It planted the seed, and when I got home I started thinking about it in earnest. Driving home from work one day, I stopped for coffee at an antique centre in the Clyde Valley and ending up buying an old pub ash tray and water jug. It just snowballed from there."

### **G: Was there a specific pub (or type of pub) that inspired the traditionalist aesthetic of Stoaters?**

"Right from the start, I was determined that it had to look like a traditional old man's pub. I grew up in Cornwall in the 1980s and loved the rustic pubs down there that looked like they hadn't changed in about 100 years. I love the same type of pubs in Scotland – places like **The Pot Still** in Glasgow and **The Jolly Judge** in Edinburgh – so wanted something with the same vibe; nothing modern, no flashing neon, just plenty of wood and plenty of character.

I also didn't want anything you wouldn't see in a real pub, so I did a lot of research online, looking at Scottish and Irish pubs and how they were put together, the look and feel etc. I also found an excellent article by a guy who designs Irish pubs who said that the bar should be the focal point of the room – the first thing you see when you walk in and the 'altar' around which everyone gathers. That was a real light bulb moment, so I sketched out the floorplan and began the build. It took about four months in all, doing it in the evening and at weekends. Resisting the urge to decorate it and add the pictures and breweriana as I went along was the hardest part – I did all that in two days, just before opening on Christmas Day 2023."

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**G: How did you manage to find the wooden features, fireplace and paneling? Were they hard to source?**

"To keep costs down, I'd set myself the challenge that everything inside had to cost £10 or less. Pallets were my saviour – I used them for the wainscoting around the room, the ceiling and the base of the bar. I became obsessed, literally stopping the car when I saw one abandoned and throwing it in the back. Facebook Marketplace and Freecycle were invaluable too – I must have used about 50 in total, all free. I also got two double pine wardrobes free from Marketplace and used every bit for things like shelving, skirting and cladding the front of the bar. The top of the bar is a broken old farmhouse table, cut down the centre and the gantry behind it is an old 1970s display cabinet with repurposed mirrors and lights added – both free. The fireplace and electric fire was from a house clearance. I wasn't going to have a fireplace originally but am so glad I did – it pulls everything together. Most of the other furniture and materials were being given away or were going cheap, for example, the table in the corner was from a cricket club that was being refurbished. Repurposing everything was a bit of challenge as I'm by no means a handyman – my dad, Jay, is the DIY genius in the family – so there was a lot of trial and error. Quite often I found myself thinking: "What would dad do?" When he visited for the first time and gave it the thumbs-up, I couldn't have been prouder. Dark woodstain and low lighting hides the things that aren't perfect anyway!"



Above: Landlord and father of the landlord. Iain and his dad.

**G: How many real ale pumps are there, and what do you usually have on them?**

"At the moment I have one pump – a beer engine from Pint 365. It really adds to the pub feel, plus guests like to have a go! Beer-wise, I've tried a few but the selection and quality from Ainsty Ales is really good – the **Flumoxed Farmer** 4% session blonde and **Cool Citra** 4.4% single hop pale ale in particular. The **Scarbados** 5% pale ale from Yorkshire Heart also went down well the last time we had a get-together. One of the regulars, Liam, also brought along **Away With the Fairies** 5.3% from Leatherbritches Brewery one night – 10 litres didn't last long! I tend to rotate beers from those three – there's a really good selection for the basic set-up I have at the moment. A similar supplier in Scotland would be good so I could buy over the counter instead of waiting days for a delivery, but I've not found one yet."

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**G: For the pump - do you use polypins or mini-casks, or something else?**

"As it's still relatively early days, I currently use a beer bag in a box from the three breweries above. A five litre bag is usually enough for an evening, as some friends are happy to drink their usual from a can or bottle. I've seen other home bars that have the full set-up with casks and coolers etc but I'm not sure I'm ready for that yet – I'm still very much a novice. I'd perhaps like to add another beer engine and have a stout on tap, particularly for things like the Six Nations. The Guinness Nitrosurge has done us OK so far, but having another pump would make a real difference."

**G: Is it a challenge to keep real ale at its recommended serving temperature in a home bar environment?**

"Absolutely. I usually store the box in the fridge until opening time, then have it in a cool place under the bar. As it's usually only a five-litre box, it stays an OK temperature until it's time to change it. I've explored other ways of doing it, like putting the box in a plastic tub with ice, but not found the right solution yet. I've seen people who have a small fridge under the bar with the box in it and a hole drilled through for the pipe. Not sure that's for me, so I'm always open to ideas from anyone with the same challenge."

**G: Do you have any tips for real ale-focused home pub enthusiasts?**

"Don't over-order! The first time I used the beer engine, I bought far too much. At the end of the night I was left with about 12 litres and there was no way I was going to drink that in a few days before it went off. A five-litre box at a time suits us at the moment, unless I know it's going to be a big night."

**G: What's your favourite piece of breweriana or pub memorabilia you've collected so far?**

"Tricky question. There are so many things to choose from, but I'm a sucker for water jugs and found a really nice yellow Cutty Sark one in a charity shop for £5. I also have a soft spot for the picture of the dogs playing pool – it's cheesy, but a pub classic."

(Interview by **Westley McCallum**)





# FORTH VALLEY • CAMRA

# DARK TRAIL

by rail



**DUNBLANE**

Tappit Hen, Village Inn

**BRIDGE OF ALLAN**

Allanwater Brewhouse

**STIRLING**

Settle Inn, No 2 Baker St, Nicky-Tams

**LARBERT**

Station Hotel

**FALKIRK**

Wheatsheaf Inn, Carron Works

**LINLITHGOW**

Platform 3, Four Marys

# 26-28 SEPT

## BEER REVIEW: STRANGERS BREWING CO. - COCKLEROI AMBER ALE



**Strangers Brewing** are a small batch craft brewery based in Narrowboat Farm in the West Lothian town of Linlithgow. Since commencing operations in 2021, their products have fast become a staple of many a hostelry in the Edinburgh and Forth Valley areas, and have now begun to gain a wider audience around Scotland, including pubs in Glasgow and its surrounding localities.

Although Strangers specialise in brewing unique, seasonal beers using local ingredients grown on the farm and in the surrounding Scottish countryside, **Cockleroi** is part of the brewery's core range, and as such is available for purchase all year round.

Whilst its appellation has recently been converted to the more modern "amber ale", the beer is a stellar example of its former categorisation - a best bitter. Named for the prominent hill overlooking Linlithgow (on which it is said William Wallace sought respite during his journey to the Battle of Falkirk in 1298), it is brewed with a blend of pale, crystal, Munich, and chocolate malts, and hopped with the archetypal British varieties Fuggle and East Kent Goldings. Wheat added to the grist provides body, and the resultant brew is a very sessionable 3.8% ABV.

The beer pours deep amber and is perfectly clear (a fact not evinced by my over-eager photo, which I took before it had fully settled), with a strong scent of biscuit and caramel.

These aromas are reflected in the taste; as far as best bitters go, **Cockleroi** leans toward the maltier end of the spectrum, and it wouldn't be out of place to describe the beer as a younger cousin of a dark Yorkshire bitter like Timothy Taylor's **Boltmaker**. The aforementioned biscuit and caramel are also present on the palate, but are there joined by a distinctive woodiness.

The malt blend interacts exceptionally well with the spiciness of the traditional British hops, which open up on the aftertaste to reveal a herbal and subtly floral bitterness.

If you are a fan of best bitters, then you will not be disappointed by this one. The beer's only real flaw is a slight thinness of body, which - if it was any more pronounced - would begin to teeter in to the realms of wateriness. However, this is completely excuseable; it is nice to see a modern brewery producing a classic, sessionable British bitter, and it would be a very hard ask to pack more flavour in to such a low ABV beer. I'd go as far as to say that **Cockleroi** is the finest example of the best bitter style that is currently being produced in Scotland.

**Rating: 4.25/5**

(By Westley McCallum).



Be part of the  
**CAMRA** story

Real ale is just the start...

Real stories, real people, real ale





## BEER SCORING FOR CAMRA: A GUIDE

**CAMRA** encourages all members to score any real ales drank in pubs around the country on the website at <https://camra.org.uk/>.

Whether you're on your smartphone or computer, this can be done in three simple steps:

**1) Sign in to <https://camra.org.uk/> with your membership number and password.**

**2) Select the pub you wish to score.**

**3) Select the relevant brewery and beer, and score your drink using the criteria below.**

HOW TO SCORE A BEER	
0	Should only be used if no cask ale is available at all.
0.5 - 1 POOR	Beer is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment. Add a comment why it's poor.
2 AVERAGE	Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way.
3 GOOD	Good beer in good form. You want to stay for another pint and may have the beer again.
4 VERY GOOD	Excellent beer in excellent condition. You stay put!
5 PERFECT	Probably the best you are ever likely to find. <b>A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.</b>

We have received a grand total of **3531** beer scores this year so far.

Our branch's top rated pubs over the last three months are:

**Glasgow**

The Ben Nevis  
The Bon Accord  
The Scotia Bar  
The Sir John Moore

**Lanarkshire**

The Hay Stook  
Hudsons  
The Wishaw Malt

**Argyll**

The Corryvreckan  
The Oban Inn

**Dunbartonshire**

The Kirky Puffer

And the top scoring beers from our branch area over the last three months are:

**Broughton Greenmantle** (70 Shilling)  
**Broughton Wee Jock** (80 Shilling)  
**Harviestoun Schiehallion** (Pale Lager)  
**Kelburn Pivo Estivo** (Blonde/Golden Ale)  
**Loch Lomond Lost in Mosaic** (American IPA)  
**Loch Lomond Silkie Stout** (Oatmeal Stout)

**Loch Lomond Southern Summit** (American Pale Ale)  
**Orkney Dark Island** (Strong Mild)  
**Orkney Raven** (Session Bitter)  
**Spey Valley Spey Stout** (Stout)

Pubs and social clubs encourage social interaction and help combat loneliness



 Amelia Claudia

Let's talk about it at the pub  
[www.camra.org.uk/wellbeing](http://www.camra.org.uk/wellbeing)



Campaign  
for  
Real Ale



Sign the petition to help cask beer  
earn UNESCO heritage status

## QUESTING FOR CRAFT BEER IN ECUADOR

So, one dreich standard kind of Scottish June day, I'm working from home and suddenly the wanderlust kicks in (happens to me frequently). Too much doom and gloom, ill-health and death around so I think, I am still relatively young and very healthy I must go forth and explore the vast world out there while time is still on my side. A few weeks later I find myself, along with my trusty crochet turtle companion Trevor, (don't ask, very long story!) booked on what is known as my 'bucket list' holiday or my 'f\*ck it hat' holiday. Early February, female solo traveller going to Ecuador, the Amazonian rainforest and two of the Galapagos islands, chilling in the sun, diving and drinking beer and cocktails over the spell of two and a bit weeks. For someone who is a scientist, an animal lover, a SCUBA diver, a sun worshipper and a beer drinker, all boxes are majorly ticked.



From then, time flew in and I researched many of the things I wanted to do and squeeze in, but funnily enough beer over there had not really crossed my mind. After a 13 hour flight from Schiphol with very little alcohol offered (not travelling with that airline again), I had an overnight airport hotel stop in Quito. \$10 a pint of wishy-washy lager but they gave me it in plastic tumblers so I could swim in the heated outdoor pool and drink at the same time. That's multi-tasking for you... and making up for lost time in the air!

My first proper three days I spent deep in the Amazonian rainforest in Ecuador, almost on the border of Peru and Columbia, which took an internal flight then around three hours in canoes to get there. Amazing calmness in the place with only birdsong, howler monkeys booming at the top of their voices and caiman staring at you idly from the creeks. Unusual experiences were had with eating bark and tree grubs that taste like bacon amongst others, but it was no surprise that the beer selection here was poor. Back-end of beyond springs to mind! Bottles of local Ecuadorian Club and Pilsener were the only offering. They actually tasted pretty good after eating crunchy tree grubs in the clammy heat, but when your one and only bored bartender Byron trusts you after a day to help yourself from the fridge and write down how many you had, they taste even nicer.

Anyway, after lots of canoes again and a flight, next step was Quito. Not a place where I had ever intended going but it's a hop-off point to the Galapagos islands so I spent a couple of days here. I had been warned that pick-pocketing was rife in the city centre, so after checking in to my hotel in the middle of a rainstorm that would make Glasgow look serene, and packing important articles in a bag tied tightly across my front I went to reception and said "Where can I get proper beer?". Luckily he knew his stuff and gave me directions to **Sinners Microcervceria**, only a few streets away. Fantastic place. 10 choices of real ale on tap, oh and I got there at 2pm when happy hour had started and lasted till 6pm. What a bummer.

At \$4.25 a pint, a **Cappuccino Stout** or three went down a treat. And wouldn't you know, by the time I left there I had booked another holiday! Of course, it was necessary to return to Sinners the next day after a lengthy guided city tour for some **Dark Soul** (robust porter) and **Red Evil** (amber ale). Even more bizarrely, in there I bumped into an English couple who had been in the Rainforest with me, so we had to have a couple of drinks and pizza together and reminisce! For writing this, I had a look on Sinners webpage and they are now selling a Scottish Ale called **Willy Wallace**. I might need to return to give it a try! With its amazing and sumptuous beers, Quito turned out to be quite a revelation!



Cont...

Next day I was whizzed off by plane, bus, ferry and taxi to Santa Cruz island on the Galapagos. Here you were greeted with “Please don’t step on the sealions!”. All too true - they are on every bench, every step and dotted over the beaches. Went out exploring in the blazing sunshine and lo and behold stumbled upon **Abysmo** brewery.



Sitting at a small bar on a corner in 34° heat, **Apolo** stout and **Afrodita** honey ale were order of the day. Slipped down easily (the beer, not me!).

Also on this island they had an outlet of **Santa Cruz** brewery which had about 20 taps on, with a good few sours, a couple of porters and IPAs from around the world. Came back here for decompression beer or two after a tiring day diving.

The next Galapagos island, San Cristobal was smaller and didn’t have quite so many beer options but you could buy bottles of craft beer in most shops for \$2 where they would also open them for you and you could drink while walking down the street. Okay... my arm was twisted.

Time to head back home to sunny Paisley, but time for some cheap craft beer at the airport also!

When I came home I looked up the craft beer scene in Quito and found out that Ecuador’s capital is the place where people from all over the country and the world come to make a fresh start or pass on through. Ecuador beer has long been a bugbear for Quito’s ex-pat community. For years the usual suspects of Ecuadorian **Pilsener** and **Club** not only dominated Ecuador’s beer scene, but were often the only choice. Then finally and unexpectedly, a decade or so ago, the Ecuador beer transformation began. Ex-pats started to brew their own craft beer, and Ecuadorians loved it. Fast forward today and Quito boasts a thriving craft beer scene, diverse range of beer labels, and atmospheric pubs to happily sup away. Interesting!

Had the holiday of a lifetime and could have (and probably have, bored the pants off people with my endless pictures of iguanas, sealions, herons, rays and hammerhead sharks, to name but a few. Trevor made so many new friends too. Would recommend to almost anyone and the amazing ale selection in Quito was the icing on the cake.

(By **Claire Brown**).





# 32ND CARLISLE BEER AND CIDER FESTIVAL

STATION HOTEL, CARLISLE

## 23 - 25 October 2025

Thursday 12:00 - 10:00 pm

Friday 12:00 - 10:00 pm

Saturday 12:00 - 10:00 pm

### Over 50 Beers and Ciders

£5 (CAMRA MEMBERS £3)

No advanced tickets





## TAPROOM VISIT: TWO TOWNS DOWN, PAISLEY

Tucked away in the heart of what some may call an industrial estate - where you'd more likely expect to pick up a bulk order of branded hoodies - **Two Towns Down** doesn't exactly scream for your attention. You'll find it nestled among cleaning firms, a children's soft play centre and - somehow - an indoor scuba diving experience. (Nope, I don't know either.) It's the kind of unit you could stroll past a dozen times without clocking that there's beer being brewed behind the roller shutter and metal ramp. Aside from a small chalkboard announcing "Great beer this way" and the brewery's distinctive intertwined logo bolted to the wall, there's not much to hint at the hops and hospitality awaiting you inside. However, with industrial-sized IBCs and traffic cones flanking the inner entrance, it's clear from the outset: this is unmistakably a working taproom.

The brewery was founded in 2019 by Sandy McKelvie, quietly making history as the first to operate in Paisley in over 125 years. It's a milestone that's easy to overlook, but one that reflects the town's steadily growing relationship with beer. The cans, wrapped in the iconic paisley pattern, offer a relatively unobtrusive reminder of where the beer comes from - a confident nod to a proud local heritage. Each release quietly re-stitches Paisley's name into Scotland's brewing landscape, with Sandy's personality woven through everything from the label design to the music-related beer names. Beers like the tropical IPA **Mango No. 5** and the rotating hop series **Stuck in the Middle With...** [insert hop] possibly reflecting Sandy's eclectic taste in music. It's also worth noting that before launching the brewery back 'home', Sandy built a solid career and experience base in Scottish craft beer mainstays, with stints at **The Hanging Bat**, **Fallen Brewing**, **Black Isle** and **71 Brewing**.



sits on a rough, untreated concrete floor that makes no apologies for its industrial setting. Behind the bar, a wood-clad wall hosts a set of beer taps that are topped with a large cask end, etched with the brewery's intertwined logo - one of the few decorative flourishes in an otherwise stripped-back space.

The on-site taproom opened in late 2022 and sits just a short walk from Paisley Gilmour Street train station - close enough that it feels connected to the town centre, but in a direction that you're unlikely to stumble across it by accident. The unit functions as both brewery and bar, with very little attempt made to separate the two. It's raw, functional, and completely honest about what it is: a place where beer is made and consumed.

Inside, the setup is simple. The singular room is dotted with four-person wooden picnic tables perched on contrasting black metal legs, flanked by matching multi-person stools. The furniture

Cont...



On the day I visited, there were nine of their own beers pouring, with a good balance of styles across the board—from sessionable pales to 6% black IPAs and stouts. Should you fancy stepping out of the Two Towns comfort zone, there's also a fridge at the back of the room offering cans for drinking inside the venue (or taking away), with a rotating selection of independent beers from across the UK.



Given the minimalistic stylings of the décor, I can imagine that on quieter days the taproom may feel a little cold to some visitors. A lived-in pub with soft furnishings and gentle lighting, this is not. But for those looking for it, that's part of the appeal. It feels like a working space - because it is one. Speaking of working - one of the highlights of my visit was the staff. Friendly, knowledgeable, and clearly passionate about the beer, they strike the right balance between laid-back and genuinely welcoming. They've created a space that leans into community; a dog- and baby-friendly environment, with a relaxed, open atmosphere that never tips into being suffocating.


At around £6 a pint, the pricing is in line with what you'd pay elsewhere in the town. There's also a small but well-considered selection of merch on offer: T-shirts and caps in various colours and styles. One detail, that it took me longer than I am proud of to recognise, was the music. The playlist on rotation in the taproom was made up of songs that have lent their names to the beers. A quiet, clever, thread that ties the beer list and atmosphere together.

During my visit, we chose to take advantage of the taproom's flight offering – giving us the opportunity to try most of the brewery's beers without requiring 'additional assistance' when exiting the taproom and making our way home. There were several beers which have made a lasting impression; however, the highlight of the night was undoubtedly the salted-caramel milk stout **The Day We Caught the Train** (6% ABV). Almost certainly a 'tip of the hat' to Ocean Colour Scene's classic track from the mid-90s.

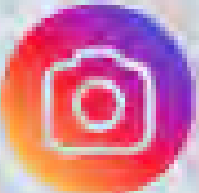
There's a stripped-back, functional charm to the Two Towns Down taproom. It's not trying to dazzle you with innovative centre-pieces or repurposed tractor equipment - it's practical, unpretentious, and keeps the spotlight exactly where it belongs: on the beer. The setting may be industrial, but it feels authentic. Honest. Like you've been invited into a mate's garage - if that mate just happened to brew genuinely excellent beer.


(By **Blair Stevenson**).

# TWO TOWNS DOWN BREWING PAISLEY



**SEE WHAT'S BREWING!**

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 47 Back Sneddon Street, PA3 2DD

**Taproom now open Fridays & Saturdays!**

[WWW.TWOTOWNSDOWN.COM](http://WWW.TWOTOWNSDOWN.COM)

## TAPROOM

With ten taps pouring our award-winning beers, brewed just steps away – our cosy taproom is ready to welcome everyone. Open Fridays 4-10pm, Saturdays 2-10pm, and less than 5 minutes stoaing distance from Gilmour Street Station. Beer flights, pub quiz, tabletop games, dog friendly.

## TAKEAWAY CANS

Having a few at home? Planning a gathering or need a gift? We have a generous selection of our own beers, as well as a diverse, rotating selection from other fantastic breweries from Scotland and beyond. There's something to suit every palate so come and try something new!

## BREWERY TOURS

Explore the inner workings of our family owned and operated brewery. The first in Paisley for over 125 years! Each tour includes a guided tasting paddle featuring samples of 5 of our own beers and a light lunch. Great for friends, clubs and work groups! Please contact us to arrange.

### BELTER

Belter is a 4.5% ABV unfiltered Helles-style lager, combining traditional and modern German hop varieties from the Hallertau region—Hersbrucker and Blanc—with a malt bill featuring Chit malt, Wheat, and Carapils. A classic crisp, refreshing lager with a luxurious foam and a balanced flavour profile. Vegan.



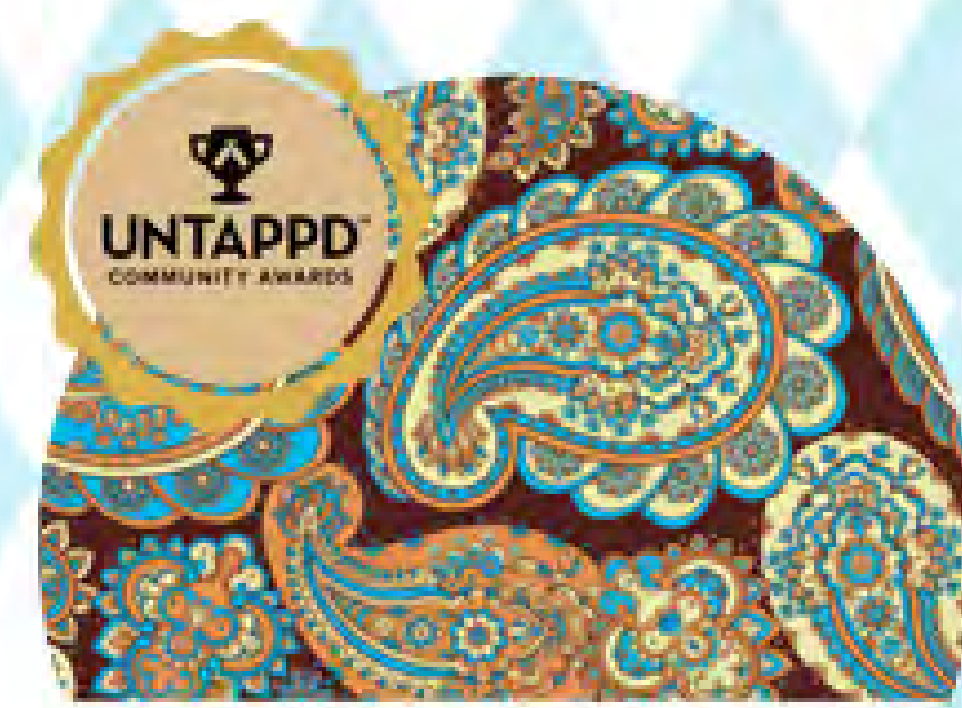
### MANGO NO.5

Packed with juicy mango and pineapple flavours, offering a full-bodied, totally tropical experience with a natural light tartness. Zesty and vibrant. We were absolutely delighted to receive a Silver medal in the 'IPA - Fruited' category at the Untappd Community Awards in 2024 for this beer. Vegan.

## MEET OUR CORE RANGE

### THESE STREETS

Our flagship pale ale comes in at a sessionable 4% ABV, These Streets is a light, crisp, and easy-drinking brew. Bursting with citrus and tropical fruit notes, thanks to the Citra and Mosaic hops. A smooth texture, medium body, and a clean, satisfying finish makes for a very quaffable pale that pleases every palate. Vegan.



### THE DAY WE CAUGHT THE TRAIN

Rich and indulgent, this milk stout is brewed with Belgian candi sugar and sea salt, delivering layers of sweetness, salinity, and roasted malty depth. Originally intended as a limited edition, its popularity has led to it becoming a staple in our lineup. Awarded Gold by the Untappd Community in 2023 and 2024.

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Tag us! @TwoTownsDown

## KEEP CASK ALIVE: GOVERNMENT UNESCO PETITION

As part of their "Keep Cask Alive" documentary series, the **Craft Beer Channel** on Youtube have started a petition to request that the government recognise the production and sale of cask beer in Britain as Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Inspired by the preservation of the German Reinheitsgebot, and a similar UNESCO preservation recently bestowed upon beer culture in Belgium, the **Craft Beer Channel** have already attained official **CAMRA** backing for their campaign.



**Craft Beer Channel** co-founder Jonny Garrett has said, "Cask ale is unique to the UK - a historic and traditional production and serving method. We believe its flavour and texture is unrivalled anywhere in the world, and can only be consumed in pubs with specific equipment and expertise."

The government have responded that they are "setting up an inventory to recognise intangible cultural heritage in the UK [and would] welcome a submission on cask ale." Designation of this status is vital to the continued existence of our unique and beloved method of brewing and serving beer.

The petition needs 100,000 signatures by the 1st of October 2025 to be considered for a debate in parliament, and at the time of writing sits at just over 33,000.

**Sign the petition here:** <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/716686>  
**Craft Beer Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/@TheCraftBeerChannel>




## THE WORLD FAMOUS BON ACCORD

**About us**  
 What began as a pub specialising in real ale and pub grub, has been cultivated carefully over the years into a specialist whisky bar, we've even won the UK Whisky Bar of the Year.  
 We have collected many such awards over the years including those for our excellent beer selection.  
 The Bon Accord is a haven for real ale enthusiasts and whisky drinkers alike. Or even just those who love our world famous steak pie. We are home to The Bon Accord Whisky Society and many other whisky societies in Glasgow. We also help run Glasgow's Whisky Festival. We also offer one off whisky tastings for groups, please give us a call if this interests you.

**A rare collection**  
 We sell more than 800 different real ales per year and we have more than 300 whiskies on our gantry. Yet the quality of our selection does not suffer. We have many old and rare whiskies; the pinnacle of our collection being our 70-year-old Glenlivet and the 72-year-old Macallan.  
 Food is served from 11am-8.45pm Mon-Sat and 12.30pm-8.45pm on a Sunday. We host a pub quiz on Wednesdays from 8pm.  
 The family and staff always strive to produce excellent standards and service at all times to down load our live whisky menu go to your APP store and enter Bon Accord whiskies and down load our whisky Menu.  
 So come along, and enjoy the harmony at The Bon Accord.

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## PUB OF THE YEAR: MAC'S BAR, ROTHESAY

In early July, a contingent of our branch visited **Mac's Bar** in Rothesay to award them with the trophy for overall pub of the year in the Glasgow & West of Scotland branch area. **Mac's Bar** has been in the same family for three generations, and current proprietors George and Kate Ross (as well as a few members of staff) were in attendance for the presentation. Our hearty congratulations on a well deserved win!



Derek Middlemiss, one of our branch members who traveled out for the presentation, had this to say about the day:

"It was a blistering weekend of weather which started with a good day out doon the watter to Rothesay for those **CAMRA** members who came down to see **Mac's Bar** be presented with the Pub of The Year trophy. **Mac's Bar** is a wee gem hidden behind the main thoroughfare of Montague Street, sitting right opposite the entrance to Rothesay Castle, and a five minute walk from the ferry terminal. The bar itself is small and very tight when you walk in, but it then opens up out around the corner to a spacious lounge.

Our host George Ross and his staff were very hospitable and welcoming and were very generous and provided all with a free beer for journeying down to present this trophy.

This is very much a 'local's local', but visitors are made very welcome and you soon end up chatting with the bar staff. They soon had out of me that I was born and bred in Rothesay, having left this beautiful isle over 50 years ago. They knew my father well and my sisters too, so it was special and a proud day for me.



Cont...

The pub is one of the few in Bute which provides cask ales, and generally stocks two Orkney ales, with **Corncrake**, **Man O' Hoy** and **Red MacGregor** being their regulars. Also on the island is the **Kingarth Hotel** at Kingarth to the south; the **Anchor Tavern** at Port Bannatyne to the north; and **The Black Bull Inn** in Rothesay. In addition there is now the **Bute Yard** - a new venue which supplies their own beers brewed in house, but sadly so far not in casks.



What a weekend this was, as I was also in Rothesay for my sister's 70th birthday gathering of the clans and we had rented a large country house at Loch Fad for the weekend, this was just the perfect start to that weekend. Good beer, scorching weather and good food.

Well done **Mac's Bar**, I was on holiday when the vote was taken so thanks to all the **CAMRA** members who voted. It is great to see small, privately owned pubs be recognised for not only the good ales but for their standing in the local area. Rothesay was and still is a tourist destination, and should a reader venture doon the watter to Rothesay, then the staff at Mac's will give you good welcome and you'll be made to feel at home. But it takes two, so engage with the bar staff and locals - they are often looking for a bit of banter too!"





# 32<sup>nd</sup> Alloa Real Ale and Cider Festival 2025

## Wine, Gin, Prosecco & Spirits Bar

**Dates:** Friday 7<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> November

**Venue:** Alloa Town Hall, Marshall Alloa. FK10 1AB

(only 5 mins walk from Alloa Railway Station)

**Times:** Friday 1pm to 10:30pm & Saturday 12 noon to 10:30pm

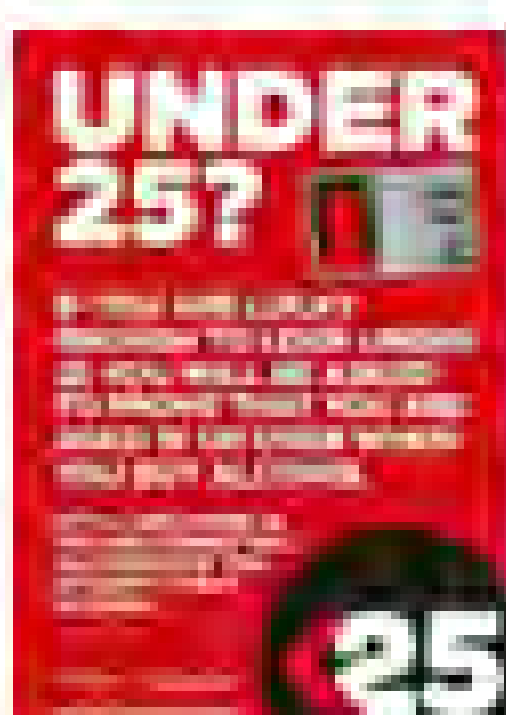
◆ Hot Food and Soft Drinks available

◆ Live Music

**Entry:** £8 at door (£6 to CAMRA members on proof of valid CAMRA membership card)

Entry includes a free glass and Festival programme.

FREE Readmission To all subsequent sessions on presentation of your admission glass and 2025 programme



@forthvalleycamra



forthvalley.camra.org.uk

## THE CASK THAT CAUGHT THE BUS

This year's **Glasgow Real Ale Festival** (see **Pages 6-8**) featured beers from some of the furthest corners of these islands; from Lerwick in Shetland, to St Ives at the far tip of Cornwall. Getting them all to you in Glasgow required the kind of logistical planning usually associated with a military campaign. Casks of ale from some of the smallest and most remote breweries in the land were assembled at regional hubs in Cornwall, South Wales and North Wales, before being put on pallets and shipped together up to Glasgow.

But even closer to home, getting beer to you from far-flung breweries presented plenty of challenges. Our branch alone stretches all the way from Biggar to Campbeltown and up to Iona. And many of the beers we wanted to feature came from beyond that. One of those beers was **Firemore**, a lovely ruby ale brewed by **Ewebrew** that takes its name from similarly red-hued Firemore Beach on the shores of Loch Ewe, a sea loch in Wester Ross. The brewery is located at the end of a steep, narrow farm track a couple of miles down the B8057 near the village of Naast. It's 'only' 250 miles away from Glasgow, which seems like nothing compared with Cornwall or Shetland...

### No Ale At the Inn

The plan was relatively simple. The brewery agreed to send a cask on to the **The Ferryboat Inn** in Ullapool, which doesn't normally sell **Ewebrew** beers but was happy to hold a cask in the cellar to be joined by others from the area for the journey to Glasgow. But during a busy weekend, some of the Ferryboat's regular casks ran dry and the shift manager was delighted to discover our cask of **Firemore** sitting in the cellar. This accidentally ended up on one of the pub's handpulls and was quickly supped by the pub's real ale drinkers.

So when our roving beer gatherers arrived in Ullapool all that remained of **Firemore** was a few pints left in the cask hooked up to the bar. Not to be deterred, our beer sourcing team contacted **Ewebrew** looking for another cask, but learned that they had nothing ready. There was still hope, however: there might be a spare cask of **NC Gold**, a golden ale they brew especially for the **Old Inn**, up the road in Gairloch. The problem now was that the beer was already there, and with all the other casks assembled in Ullapool well on their way to Glasgow we needed another transport plan.

It's a six-hour drive from Glasgow to Gairloch - so twelve hours there and back. We simply didn't have anyone available to take that on. Our resourceful chair, Stephen Murphy and beer orderer Craig Webster, called in a few favours with friends in the area, where Stephen used to work. And with a bit of time and a lot of creativity they hatched a plan to get the beer to the Briggait.

### Woody's to the Rescue

Woody's Express Haulage in Stornaway stepped into the breach with an elaborate rescue plan to get the missing cask on its way. This first involved getting it on to the scheduled Westerbus number 700 from Gairloch to Inverness. So the aptly named North Coast Gold embarked on its own trip along a good chunk of the North Coast 500. Once in Inverness, Woody's arranged for it to be shipped from their depot down to their depot near Glasgow and then on to its final destination at the Briggait for all to enjoy.



And now it's all been supped, the empty cask is on its way back to the brewery thanks to a couple of pals of our branch chair who have a holiday home up there and were happy to take it back.



And for those still eager to try the ruby nectar named **Firemore**, we're hoping there'll be a cask of that winging its way down to Glasgow soon where you'll be able to find it in the **Lismore** at Partick Cross.

One of the main reasons people come to **CAMRA** beer festivals is to try beers they can't get from the pub around the corner. And we hope you'll agree that in that sense, we definitely did not disappoint this year!

So here we send a huge thank you to everyone involved, especially Woody's Express Parcels who truly went the extra mile to bring this beer to us.

(By **Paul Whitehead**).

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**CAMRA story**

**Real ale is just the start...**

Real stories, real people, **real ale**





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The Prince & Princess  
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The Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice provides palliative and end-of-life care, free to those who need it from the Greater Glasgow area.

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As the health and social care needs of our population change, so do our priorities. We aim to ensure that we are providing care to those who need it, in the way they need it.

As a charity we need to fundraise approximately £3million each year to continue providing our vital care.

[ppwh.org.uk](http://ppwh.org.uk)



The Prince & Princess of Wales Hospice Scottish registered charity SCO12372



## CASK ALE AT THE PAISLEY FOOD & DRINK FESTIVAL 2025

The Paisley Food & Drink Festival made its triumphant return this year, taking place over the weekend of 25–26 April. With more than 50 traders in attendance, the event offered a spectacular array of options for the whole family - but for many, the undisputed highlight was the return of the **Renfrewshire CAMRA Beer Tent**.

Sandwiched between the iconic Paisley Abbey, the grand Town Hall, and the White Cart River, the free-to-attend festival has annually been a magnet for visitors from across Renfrewshire and beyond. While previous years have focused primarily on street food - offering everything from traditional Thai curries to wood-fired pizza - this year's expanded footprint allowed the drinks offering to be given equal billing. Bars like **The Bungalow**, **The Keg**, **Brew Hub**, **Fizzbuzz** prosecco van, and **Rum Shack** served up pints, cocktails, and fizz, whilst the brands **Two Towns Down Brewery**, **Paisley Drinks Co.**, and **Dark God Rum** hosted their own stalls.

Like many others, my personal highlight was the **CAMRA Beer Tent**, this year relocated to the newly incorporated Bridge Street car park. On first impression, what struck me was the sheer size of the tent: stretching nearly the entire length of the car park, it was impossible to miss.



I can personally vouch for the vast treasure trove of real ales and craft brews available on the day. From crisp golden bitters to complex dark ales, there was something for every palate. The casks were stacked three barrels high with a plethora of **CAMRA** volunteers on hand to guide and pour.

Just a tennis ball's throw from Paisley Gilmour Street station, the festival was easily accessible, and despite the typically unpredictable Scottish weather, the crowds were bustling through the streets. This buzzing atmosphere continued into the **CAMRA Beer Tent**, where punters could be seen struggling to balance a pasty stout, a freshly pulled pork bun, and the damp anorak slung over their arm.

It was a diverse crowd, with hop-enthusiasts mingling freely with tourists and the uninitiated; opening their fountains of knowledge and sharing them generously with anyone who needed a little assistance differentiating the casks on offer to them. With the friendly atmosphere - and a vast sea of casks in front of me - there was a real danger of getting carried away and letting the day run off the rails. However, thankfully, we kept things respectable and opted for just a few of the beers on offer.

We began with Otherworld Brewing's '**Plain Sailing**' Pale, which was sitting at approximately 4% ABV. Pouring a lightly hazy, golden hue, this citrus-forward but well-rounded pale was a perfect jumping-off point to begin our tasting journey. The subtle stone fruit character made it both refreshing and balanced - a sessionable opener that still offered plenty of interest.

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Next up was Cromarty's award-winning **'Whiteout'**. Listed as a "speciality" and offered at 3.8% - the white IPA was definitely an interesting next step on the day. From the outset, the aroma hit: strongly herbal, with a green edge that some noses might have interpreted as vegetal. However, on the palate, there was a much more tropical taste present, finishing with a citrus zing that lingered longer than expected for its ABV.

From there, we took a significant jump south on Scotland's brewing map to Tempest Brewing Co, where we tried their **Lowlander Export Ale**. Sporting my Tempest baseball cap on the day, it would have been borderline treason not to make a stop there! As you would expect, the Lowlander poured a darker deep amber colour - almost copper in the natural light of the day. On the palate, it offered a smooth, medium-bodied mouthfeel, with notes of biscuit, toasted malt, and a touch of burnt caramel.

Finally, we closed out the day with something a little darker. Dundee's own Holy Goat Brewing and their **Date Porter**. Known primarily for mixed fermentation and big, expressive, beers, this was my first porter from the brewery, a comparatively restrained style from the Goat. However, registering in at an ABV of 5.8%, it was no slouch. Pouring black as night in the glass, this porter led with a dark, dried fruit flavour – dates, naturally – followed by a finish of bitter chocolate and roasted coffee. Another addition to my ongoing personal mantra; 'Holy Goat don't do bad beers'.

It was a great day all round and I await the announcement of next year's festival dates with anticipation!

(By **Blair Stevenson**).



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## PUB SPOTLIGHT: THE LAST SHIFT, BRAEHEAD, SOUTH LANARKSHIRE

Since taking over the premises in 2023, owners Marcus and Jenny have built a gem of a traditional country pub deep in the heart of Lanarkshire.

Sitting at the crossroads of the village of Braehead's main thoroughfare, The Last Shift is a long stone cottage (complete with beamed ceilings and wood burning fireplace) which has been divided in to a restaurant and public bar.



Marcus is passionate about real ale and ensures that there is one handpump on at all times; a pin, kept in the cellar and regulated by means of a cool bag. "You can't have a country pub without real ale" is his attitude, and longterm plans involve expanding the bar to add another cask ale line.

Selection changes about every five days on average, and usually features beer from Harviestoun, Orkney Brewery, and Belhaven/Greene King. On my visit, I had a pint of Greene King's **Amplified**; a 4% ABV citric, American-style pale ale which had a surprising amount of biscuity backbone to it. The beer was perfectly kept, and at £4.60 a pint was an absolute bargain.

(By **Westley McCallum**).

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## JOINT SOCIAL WITH AYRSHIRE & WIGTONSHIRE BRANCH

In June 2025, I was approached by Matt Miller, Social Secretary at Ayrshire and Wigtownshire Branch to organise a Joint Social for both them and Glasgow & West of Scotland Branch on Saturday 26 July. In total, over two dozen members from both branches joined us on the day in at least one of the pubs we visited.

We decided on a four-pub Social taking us from Partick to the Western City Centre with each pub being within reasonable walking distance of each other, while still being on the 3 and 77 bus routes, allowing our older and less mobile members to join in fully.

First stop was the **Lismore** in Partick (206 Dumbarton Road, Glasgow G11 6UN). This fairly recent entrant to the Good Beer Guide had two excellent ales available, of which I selected the delicious **Common Green V2 4.7% ABV** Pale Ale by **Up Front Brewing**, named for the **Weavers**, a previous Branch and Lanarkshire Pub of the Year in Strathaven, the brewery's new home (see **Page 37** for our social media officer **Emily's** review of this **luscious hazy pale** - ed.). The pub has a constantly changing selection of ales from all over Great Britain on its 2 hand pumps, with local ales sourced as and when available.



Our second stop was the excellent **Ben Nevis** in Finnieston (1147 Argyle Street, Glasgow G3 8TB). This was the first of two pubs with extensive whisky selections, and they often have two real ales available on their hand pumps, one of which is usually from the wonderful **Fyne Ales**. I chose the refreshing **Afternoon in Chico** by **Weekend Project** (5.2% ABV) which was in excellent condition.

We then moved onto my local, the **Bon Accord** at Charing Cross (153 North Street, Glasgow G3 7DA). This is one of the country's best whisky pubs with drams to suit every budget from about £5 to £5000! They also regularly have eight real ales available on hand pump. I unfortunately forgot to take note of what I drank, but I am sure it was decent as usual! (I had **Cinder Toffee stout** by **Blue Monkey** [5%]; accurately described by **Full Pints'** editor **Stuart McMahon** as "a Crunchie in a glass". I'm sure some will love it, but... not really to my taste! - ed.)

Cont...



Our final stop of the afternoon was at the **State Bar** (148-148A Holland Street, Glasgow G2 4NG) which has won both City and Branch Pub of the Year several times over the years. Of the several ales available, I selected **Ossett Ghost Rat** (4.2% ABV) which was tasty enough, however it wasn't in as good condition as some of the beers I tasted earlier that day.



All in all, everyone enjoyed themselves and I will be in contact with Matt soon to organise a further joint social, this time somewhere in Ayrshire and Wigtownshire!

(By James Marshall).

## BEER REVIEW - UP FRONT BREWING, COMMON GREEN V2 HAZY PALE

**Up Front Brewing** is one of the most well recognised breweries in the Glasgow beer scene. The brewery creates some amazing beers that aren't the usual norm with brewer and owner Jake coming up with some amazing saisions to stouts, and even taking a step into being a mead producer.

With Jake moving operations out of Glasgow into his own site in Strathaven, he decided he would make a beer to link into the town with naming a beer Common Green after The Common Green in the town.

He also decided that he would make an accessible beer for all to enjoy without being too discerning which is why he went for a 4.7% ABV pale ale.



I enjoyed the **Common Green V2** pale ale at a recent scoring trip in Strathaven. It's a V2 of the pale ale as, Jake plans to evolve the beer over time maybe changing the hop variety and honing his brewing skill to create an even better beer than the last iteration.

I'm used to hazy pales being carbonated keg beers but with this being on cask the natural carbonation meant that it was a well conditioned cask beer which paved the way for a really tropical fruity ale. The mouthfeel was very soft and light on the palette, with the hoppy aftertaste making me want to go back for another sip until sadly the glass was empty. Had I been staying a while I definitely would have enjoyed a good few pints of this in a row before heading home.

I'll look forward to seeing how **Common Green** evolves over time and maybe enjoy it again in **The Weavers** in the future.

**Rating: 4/5**

(By **Emily Green**).

Want to visit social clubs in your area?



Look for the welcome sticker!

## REAL ALE, VIRTUAL ALE: FOUR CASK ALE YOUTUBE CHANNELS WORTH YOUR TIME

Mate late to meet you at the pub? In bed with a hangover? Here are four real ale focused Youtube channels with plenty of content to help you pass the time.

### **The Craft Beer Channel - <https://www.youtube.com/@TheCraftBeerChannel>**

Officially Youtube's biggest beer channel, CBC founders Jonny and Brad have been providing quality beer content for the best part of a decade. Their recent focus has been directed toward UK cask ale revival, and has led them to produce a multi-part, CAMRA-sponsored documentary series about real ale. The docu-series, entitled "Keep Cask Alive" (see also **Page 6 of this magazine - ed.**), provides an in-depth, insider look at the process real ale production, and highlights the challenges faced by brewers today.

### **Real Ales, Real Pubs - <https://www.youtube.com/@RealAlesRealPubs>**

A member of the West Riding of Yorkshire branch of the Society for the Preservation of Beer from the Wood, Ethan takes the viewer along on the regular SPBW pubcrawls across the UK (although with a particular focus on Yorkshire and the North of England). Handpumps are always filmed, and beer is always thoroughly reviewed, thus allowing the videos to provide an insightful and relaxing glimpse in to the state of cask ale in the modern market.

### **Tweedy Pubs - <https://www.youtube.com/@TweedyPubs>**

Based in London, Tweedy visits historic pubs in the UK capital and embarks upon a deep dive in to their history and origins, often citing Victorian and Georgian documentary evidence to support his points. His passion is split equally between the preservation of traditional British cask ale, and that of period pub architecture. If you want to know the difference between a saloon and public bar (or a history of the sale of crisps in pubs) then this is the channel for you.

### **Big Six Inn, Halifax - <https://www.youtube.com/@wandojames>**

James Kirkham is the co-owner of the Big Six Inn; a traditional, real ale focused, terraced house pub in Halifax, West Yorkshire. His channel documents the day to day running of a real ale pub, including cellarcraft, cleaning, deliveries, and setup. When not filming the pub itself, James takes the viewer on **CAMRA** Good Beer Guide rated real ale pubcrawls in the Yorkshire area.

## Did you know?

Research commissioned by CAMRA found that people who have a 'local' are happier and have higher levels of life satisfaction than those who don't.



Source: Dunbar, R., "Friends on Tap" (2016)



## REAL ALE ROUNDUP

**Kickback (457 Sauchiehall Street, Charing Cross, Glasgow, G2 3LG)** is a new sports bar with a much better beer range than most. There is no cask ale per se, but five of the fonts now offer live beers in keykegs. These are usually Overtone beers, but the odd guest ale has been spotted. There is also a wide choice of keg beers available, and no shortage of TV screens showing the football. Prices are around £5.40 a pint. Members are encouraged to score the live keykeg beers on **CAMRA's** website.



The former Black Bull pub (111 High Street, Merchant City, Glasgow, G1 1PH) has now been reopened under the name **Kentigern's**. It has a single handpull which sells "Kentigern's Golden Ale"; a rebadged Greene King Golden Ale. The pub's website speaks of shared ownership and business connections with the nearby Babbity Bowser, so it is possible that a little gentle encouragement from **CAMRA** members could result in an increase in their real ale offerings.



The newly opened **Rabbie** pub in Rothesay (20 Gallowgate, Rothesay, PA20 0HR) sells real ale. Although it only sports one handpump at the moment, the owner is said to have experience running a cask ale focused pub - so this may be one to watch in the future. Definitely worth a visit for our members in the Argyll and Bute area.



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