



Issue 85

Winter 2025

FREE

PINTS of VIEW

*Campaign
for Real Ale
Edinburgh &
South-East
Scotland*



STAGGS BAR
**National Pub of
the Year Finalist!**

On the Dark Ale Trail



**Pulling Pints on the
Costa del Porty**

**Heritage Pubs of the
Future:
Standing Order and
Caley Picture House**

Pints of View is published by the Edinburgh & South-East Scotland Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), an independent, voluntary organisation campaigning for real ale, community pubs and consumer rights.



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Editorial

This issue's front cover features Nigel and Katie of Musselburgh's Staggs Bar being presented with their CAMRA Scottish Pub of the Year award. Even better, they now have made it through to the final four pubs in the National Pub of the Year competition! Speaking of Pubs of the Year, the Jolly Judge in Edinburgh also won the Scottish Cider Pub of the Year (again!) in July.

Craft brewery taps seem to have been a theme of the pub news this year, with Pilot Beer opening their Vessel bar, Leeds-based Northern Monk taking over the Hanging Bat, Bellfield acquiring Nobles and now Otherworld taking over the Black Fox. I wonder if this trend will continue in 2026?

We were very sad to hear of the death of Jon Addinall in August. Jon was an long-standing member of CAMRA and held the role of Branch Pubs Information Officer for many years. He will be very much missed by his friends in CAMRA. A full obituary can be found on p6.

Scott

Cover photo: Ron Elder

Advertising Rates

Our standard fees for advertisements are as follows:

- Full page: £285
- Half-page: £190
- Quarter-page: £115
- One-eighth page: £75
- Back cover: £POA

Please note these are subject to change: contact us for the latest rates. We normally also give a discount for multiple inserts in a single publication, and to CAMRA members.

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CAMRA Calling

Branch News

Twixmas Social

Last year a member came to me suggesting a social on the Saturday between Christmas and New Year. Although some people still have other plans, it seems quite a few of us enjoyed having a few pints in a few pubs. So this year, I've put one in the diary again. Starting at **Leslie's Bar**, then heading to **Steel Coulson Southside**, then finishing at **Dagda Bar**. So if you're looking for some company, or a way to spend your afternoon on Saturday 27th December, come and join us from 2pm!

H Bloomfield, Social Sec.

All venues for branch events are in Edinburgh unless otherwise noted.

Friday Pints

4pm 28 November 2025
Bennets Bar, Leven St

Fountainbridge Two-Pub Social

7:30pm 11 December 2025
The Fountain, then **The Golden Rule**

East Lothian Social

2pm 13 December 2025
Tower Inn, Church St, Tranent

Branch Social Meeting

2pm 20 December 2025
Nether Abbey Hotel, Dirleton Ave, North Berwick

Twixmas Social

2pm 27 December 2025
Starting at **Leslie's Bar** (see above for more information)

Tollcross Two-Pub Social

7:30pm 8 January 2026
The Hanging Bat, then **The Blue Blazer**

Forthcoming Branch Events

Occasionally we may need to cancel or re-arrange events after we go to press. Please check edinburgh.camra.org.uk/diary (or use this QR code) for the latest information.



Cheers to 21 Years

From our very first pint in 2004 to today, we couldn't have done it without you.

To everyone who's raised a glass of Stewart's over the years, thank you for your support, your stories, and your love of great beer.

Here's to the next chapter.

Jo & Steve Stewart
Founders, Stewart Brewing

STEWART  BREWING

CAMRA Calling

(continued)

Branch Social Meeting

2pm 24 January 2026

The Artisan, London Rd

Friday Pints

4pm 30 January 2026

Kay's Bar, Jamaica St

Waverley Two-Pub Social

7:30pm 12 February 2026

The Malt Shovel, then **The Booking Office**

Friday Pints

4pm 27 February 2026

Malt & Hops, Shore, Leith

Leith Two-Pub Social

7:30pm 12 March 2026

Teuchters Landing, then **Dreadnought**

National Pub of the Year 2025

On 13th October, the four finalists of the CAMRA National Pub of the Year competition were announced. As featured on this issue's front cover, **Staggs Bar** (aka the **Volunteer Arms**), in Musselburgh was one of the four, alongside the Blackfriars Tavern, Great Yarmouth, the Pelican Inn, Gloucester, and the Tamworth Tap, Tamworth. Congratulations to the Staggs team! The winner is set to be revealed in the New Year.



Regional Director Stuart McMahon presents Staggs Bar with their Pub of the Year Finalist certificate.

Blackfriars Tavern, Great Yarmouth, the Pelican Inn, Gloucester, and the Tamworth Tap, Tamworth. Congratulations to the Staggs team! The winner is set to be revealed in the New Year.

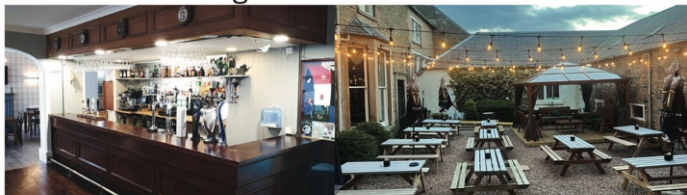
Champion Beer of Scotland 2025

The result of CAMRA's Champion Beer of Scotland 2025 competition, decided by blind judging at the Ayrshire Real Ale Festival in Troon in October, was:

- Gold: **Five Kingdoms Dark Storm**
- Silver: **Five Kingdoms McGregor's Mild**
- Bronze: **Cairngorm Wildcat**



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On the Dark Ale Trail

by Chris Miller and H Bloomfield

The Forth Valley CAMRA branch arrange this annual trail every September, persuading local pubs near train stations to put on a dark beer or two, over at least three days.

Dunblane

Setting out on Saturday from Edinburgh Waverley station, we travelled by train to Dunblane – where there were three establishments on the list to visit. We chose the furthest first, a gentle walk to the **Sheep in Wolf's Clothing brewhouse**, where – we had been warned – all the beers were on membrane-keg dispense and not cask conditioned. We tried an interesting porter, sitting in their tap room. Then a walk back through the interesting streets, uphill to the **Village Inn**, where we enjoyed a Chocka Mocha Milk Stout (try saying that after a few!) from Durham brewery. Several Branch members were already here, obviously ahead of us! We didn't bump into them again, until H found them at the end of the trip!

Then it was back downhill to the **Tappit Hen**, another pleasant pub where already some customers were lunching. Dark beer this time was the familiar and tasty Edinburgh Black from our local brewery, Stewart.

Bridge of Allan

Whew – three down and... who knows to go! So it was a quick step to the station and just one stop on the train to Bridge of Allan, followed by a bit of a walk through the increasingly heavy rain to the **Allanwater Brewhouse**. This was a welcome haven, cosy and with a real fire – we found the closest seats to warm up and sampled the Allanwater Stout. Brewed on the premises, it was an interesting taste, a little different from what we had sampled earlier. However, we couldn't stay long, as we had to venture out to catch the next train to Stirling. As we left we saw a group of young men starting the serious job of sampling flights of many different beers! Guess they would be here for some time.

Arriving in Stirling, it was a challenging chug up the hill to the **Settle Inn**, where H was already ensconced at the bar, chatting with a CAMRA member from another branch.

Chris

It may seem strange for me (an avid non dark beer drinker) to attend a 'Dark Ale Trail' but I was convinced by Chris that the pubs would have something else that I may enjoy, and I'd never been to any of these pubs, so I thought, why not?



Stirling

Joining in Stirling, I eagerly ventured up the steep hill to my first pub, the Settle Inn. A very cosy pub, with a few locals propping up the bar. Chris had a cherry stout, Unbound Dark Elixir, while I had a pint of Island Life by Orkney.

We then walked down the hill (the wrong one but we found it eventually) to **Nicky Tam's**. Not actually taking part in the Dark Ale Trail this year but Verdant's Lamanva bitter was on, so we each had a quick half.

Crossing the road onto **No.2 Baker Street**. Silkie Stout by Loch Lomond was their dark beer – a favourite of many I know. I had a Wadworth 6X.

Falkirk

We only went to the **Wheatsheaf Inn**, clearly a very popular pub as we only just

managed to squeeze in and get to the bar for a Kowabunga by Cromarty. Others had Egyptian Cream from the Nene Valley Brewery – a milk stout which had travelled well.

Linlithgow

I then decided I wanted to head to Linlithgow, even though Chris was heading home. Especially given that the Forth Valley branch's Pub of the Year was here, **The Four Marys**. Although a Greene King/Belhaven establishment, this pub didn't feel like a chain pub. No space for me to sit but a plethora of beers to choose from, I decided to have half a Mosaic by Loch Lomond - and found a quiet corner to stand, and read about why the pub has its name.

Walking back towards the train station you find **Platform 3** - a very small pub with lots of character. I found a Harviestoun I'd not seen before called Heaven Cent, found a seat, and noticed very helpfully they have the train times on a screen so you can dash for your train when needed. I bumped into a few other Edinburgh members who had done the trail slightly differently, and we enjoyed our last pints before heading home.

H

Jon Addinall

by Colin Valentine

In August the Edinburgh branch of CAMRA lost a giant and, quite possibly, the most significant individual we have ever had. Jon Addinall died at the age of 68 in the Western General Hospital after a short illness.

Originally from Hull, Jon went to university in Bradford where he met his wife Ruth and became friends with, among others, Richard and Tamsin Candeland, a friendship that lasted for the rest of his life. Richard and Tamsin eventually persuaded him to join CAMRA but he remained, like most people, a sleeping member – happy to pay his annual subscription and let others join committees and do the other things that made CAMRA such a vibrant organisation in the 1980s.

All that changed when Jon and Ruth moved from Tewkesbury to the Edinburgh branch area – first to Penicuik and then to their forever home in Lasswade. He started coming to branch meetings and getting more involved in branch affairs such as visiting pubs (what a chore!) to check the quality of the real ale they sold and helping out, first serving beer and latterly looking after the beer in the cellar, when we started running beer festivals at Meadowbank Stadium.

He was the branch's pubs officer for over 30 years which, in simple terms, meant that he made sure we picked only the best pubs in the branch area for the *Good Beer Guide* (GBG), the UK's best selling book on pubs. However, there was much more to the post than merely (*sic*) picking pubs for the GBG. Our selection meetings used to last up to five hours as we labouriously went through all 200-odd pubs in our branch area to pick the best 60. We all thought there must be a better way to do this but we couldn't figure out what that would be...

Then up stepped Jon who, along with Richard Candeland, came up with the then revolutionary idea of scoring the beers we drank in pubs (from 0 for absolutely dreadful and take it back, to 5 for the best beer you have ever had and you're not leaving until you throw me out) and then ranking them in order depending on the scores they received from us. In the mid-2000s, CAMRA nationally introduced what we called the National Beer Scoring System which, although not exactly the same, was as near as made no difference to the casual observer to the system Jon and Richard invented 10 years previously. This was a perfect example of his ability to look ahead and make things better for all concerned.

These days this might seem like a fairly routine task given all the technology at our disposal but in the mid-90s it was much more labour intensive and Jon spent countless hours compiling the scores we sent to him or passed to him at branch meetings. Our selection meetings went from being long, fractious and somewhat drunken to fairly short, business like and comparatively abstemious, allowing us time to head home for dinner or, more likely, visit other pubs in the vicinity of where we held our meeting.

Jon also had a deep interest in beer tasting, the art of cellarman'ship and small breweries. Beer tasting sounds a bit bleedin' obvious doesn't it, but it is actually about putting beer descriptions together for the GBG independently of the breweries who produce them to ensure the drinking public know what to expect when they drink said beers in the pub. As soon as he could, Jon immersed himself in the art of cellarman'ship, learning quickly from some of the best in CAMRA and ended up putting his expertise to good use in all of the Scottish Real Ale Festivals we ran in various venues in Edinburgh, the two CAMRA National Conferences we ran in Dundee and also at the Great British Beer Festival in London's Olympia. He was our liaison officer for Stewart Brewing from the day it started until the day he died, forming a close friendship with founders Steve and Jo Stewart, who kindly provided some beer and a special pumpclip for his wake in the Laird & Dog in Lasswade.

Last year, during the celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of CAMRA in Scotland, Jon received an outstanding achievement award. While there were many people who received this accolade, I'm willing to bet no one can think of a more deserving recipient.

On a personal note, Jon and I were close friends as both of us loved the outdoors. We did a few bothy walks along with fellow enthusiasts Ted Sharp and Lesley Muirden, but we did many more Munros together – a bothy is a remote highland shelter consisting of four walls, a roof, door, fire place and little else and a Munro is a Scottish mountain over 3,000 feet. We did at least 60 and probably closer to 100 together, including the Aonach Eagach in Glencoe and the Inaccessible Pinnacle on Skye.

We, however, spent a lot more time together in pubs than we ever did on Scottish mountains - far too many to even begin to attempt to work it out. This included numerous London pub crawls – our only adventures where I was more knowledgeable than him and he was happy for me to take the lead.

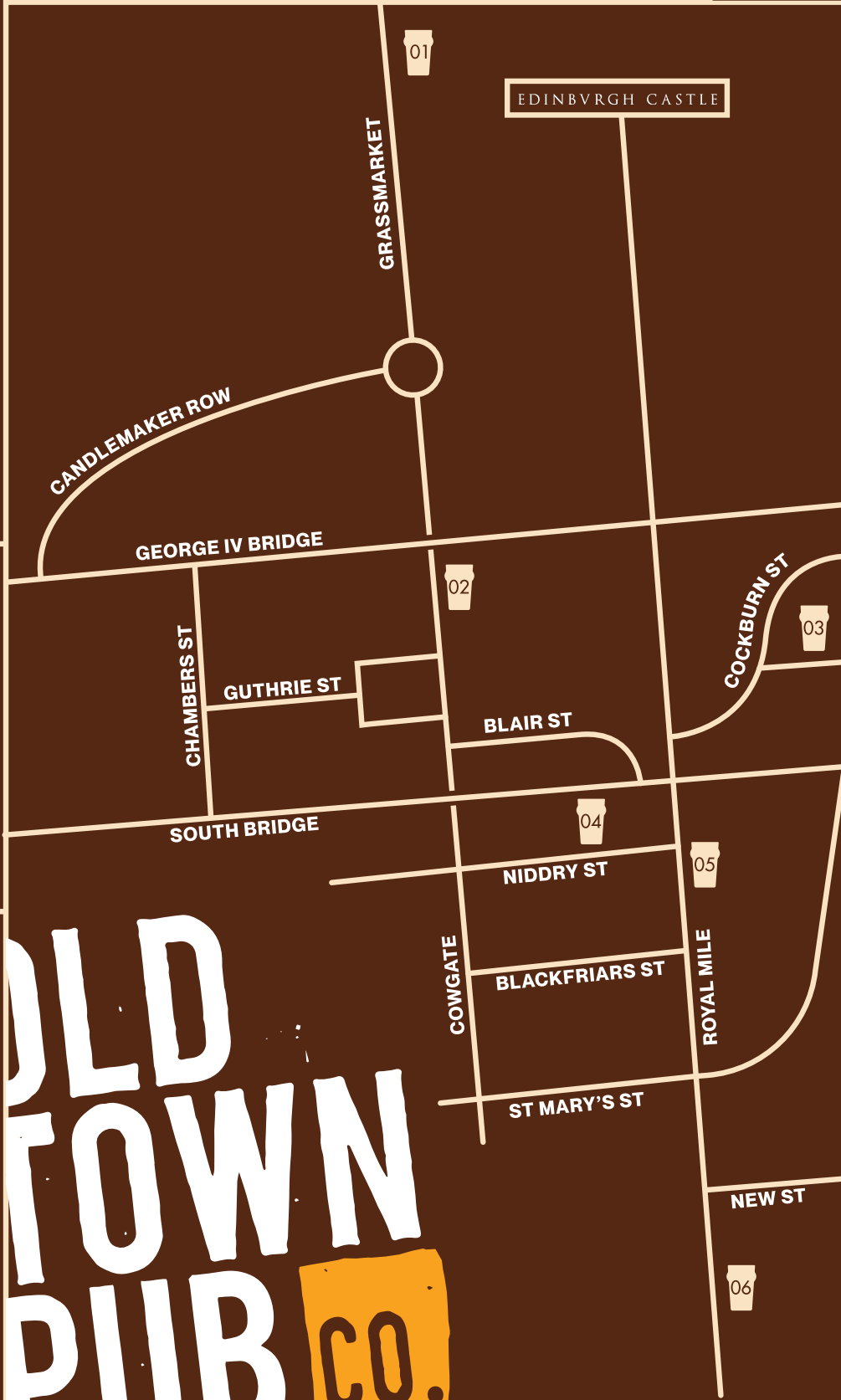
Finally, the aforementioned Ted Sharp and I paid tribute to Jon at Staggs in Musselburgh just after he died and I later mentioned to Ted that it was unlikely that any of the 50 or so attendees would ever have seen either of us as emotional before. Ted agreed and added, "No, I don't think anyone has seen either of us struggle as we did at Staggs and probably never will again. But then again there never was, and never will be again, another Jon Addinall!" What a fitting tribute!



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SOUTH

Pulling Pints on the Costa del Porty

by David Parmee

In mid-May 2008 Amanda Caygill viewed the boarded-up Esplanade pub on Portobello promenade, which had been closed for the previous 18 months. Later that day she signed the lease and was handed the keys.

Restoration work started only days after the lease signing and was largely done by Amanda, her then chef Mary Walker and assorted friends. Two weeks later on 29 May The Esplanade (aka **The Espy**) was ready for business – despite the beer cooler exploding (so no beer on draught) and the men’s toilets doing the same on the morning of opening day. Amanda

flung open the doors of The Espy for the first time to the knocking of locals asking ‘You opening?’ and welcomed them in with a smile and a promise of beer on draught. A highlight of the opening night was a game of Twister in the middle of the pub while diners tucked in to their tea.

Since then The Espy has become a revered institution on the Portobello seafront. But in those first few years it flirted with disaster; a storm and a ‘master tide’ in March 2010 flooding the cellar which was then damaged again by fire in June 2010. As smoke seeped through floorboards Amanda recalls some customers heading for the street with their plates in hand, determined to finish their meals.

Today, Amanda’s team of twenty-four provides a 7-day-a-week food and drink service from 11.00am to 1.00am, with a steady turnover of three to four casks of real ale per week from assorted breweries through two handpumps (see the [CAMRA Pubs & Clubs Guide](#)). The food and drink offerings are supplemented by regular quiz nights, fundraisers and live music events. Dogs are always welcome, being greeted by Amanda’s own dog Boo, so named because Boo arrived near Halloween.

Amanda herself has been pulling pints on the ‘Costa del Porty’, as she personally branded the Portobello seafront, for all of

the past 17½ years and has seen many changes. When she looks back she sees the Covid lockdowns as “awful” but, as all licensees will know, life post-Covid has been difficult too. Significant increases in inflation, interest rates, and staff and business costs have taken their toll and customer focus is clearly on value for money.

But Amanda has also seen and participated in the positive strengthening of the Portobello community during her time living there and The Espy itself continues to thrive and make its contribution to that community through its charitable and social activities. [Staffie Smiles Rescue](#) is a favoured charity for Amanda, and no doubt for Boo too.



So how did Amanda, born in Cobar in the New South Wales outback some 450 miles north-west of Sydney, ever get to the Costa del Porty? Cobar’s economy is based mainly upon base metals and gold mining and her family travelled extensively around Australia working in that sector, which meant that Amanda was Caravan-schooled throughout her early years. She moved into the hospitality sector as a teenager and at the age of 25, by virtue of her grandparents being “Ten Pound Poms”, British citizens who migrated to Australia and New Zealand after the Second World War, she was eligible for an Ancestry visa and made the UK her home.

Notable jobs include two stints at the Mussel Inn on Rose Street in Edinburgh and helping launch the catering operations at Alnwick Garden Café. In the two years prior to taking on The Espy

she jointly ran **The Roseleaf** in Leith, which has special ties to Edinburgh & South-East Scotland CAMRA as the venue for its first branch meeting on 11 January 1975, the fiftieth anniversary being celebrated there in January of this year (see [Pints ofView 84](#), p.8).

There is no doubt that under Amanda’s care The Espy will continue to thrive and evolve and provide a warm welcome to Porty promenaders no matter the weather or time of year. The next step in its evolution is a makeover from 26 November to 10 December 2025. As it says on the notice in the window, the pub will be ‘closed for two weeks while we glow-up’. Long may Amanda and The Espy prosper, Portobello benefits from them both. Drop by, have a drink and a bite to eat, and say hello to Boo, who now appears on the new logo.

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City Ale Tales

Pub News

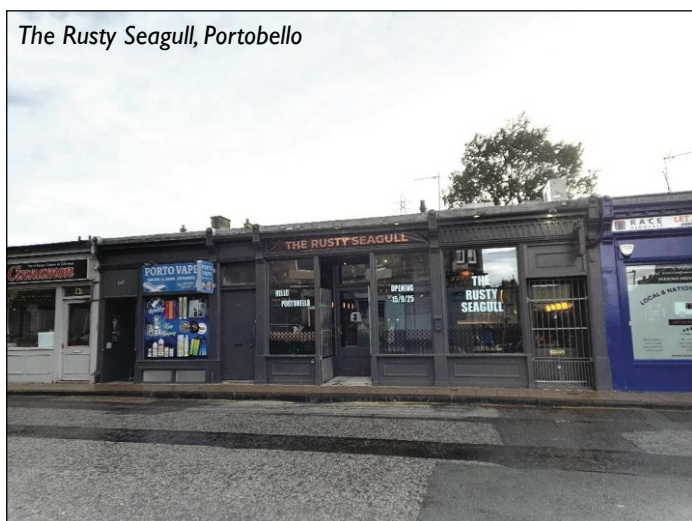
We are delighted to report that Nobles in Leith, in all its Victorian beauty, has been taken over by Bellfield Brewery and is now **Nobles by Bellfield**. The pub, which had stopped selling real ale, now has two of Bellfield's real ales on handpump. Look out for regular street food pop-ups. There was more good news in Leith when the former **Bullfinch** reopened in June as the **Finch**, with a single rotating real ale. A further development is that the former **Black Fox** on Leith Walk has been taken on by Otherworld Brewing and was to re-open in November.



The Finch, Leith

Clark's Bar reopened in September after a short closure and has initially also been selling one rotating real ale. It has thankfully reverted to a more normal pub layout. Not far away in Stockbridge the former **Rag Doll** is now **Crybaby**, but there is a more interesting development just over the road where the **Stockbridge Tap** has been due to undertake a refurbishment and rebuilding.

After we went to press the **Espy** in Portobello was due to shut for a two-week refit. Also in Portobello, the closed **Porty**



The Rusty Seagull, Portobello

Vault was brought back to life by Winton Brewery as the **Rusty Seagull**, with a single real ale (usually from Winton) tucked away at the back of the bar.

Some reopenings and renamings that should be recorded:

- The **Hampton Hotel** is now the **Edinburgh Whisky House**
- The former Forage and Chatter restaurant is now **Evergreen Bar and Kitchen**
- The former **Bunker** is now **Folly Spirit Labs**
- **Southpour** has become a branch of the La Casa restaurant chain
- **Under the Stairs** was due to close in early November and was expected to be taken over by **Cocktail Geeks**
- The **Murrayfield Bar and Kitchen** has reopened and is being run by the operators of **Caley Sample Room** and **Greenmantle**. The introduction of real ale has not been ruled out
- The **Prom Bar**, not far from the **Dreadnought**, has reopened after a long closure due to building work on the collapsing tenement above it
- Edinburgh Beer Factory's **Paolozzi** has closed and was set to become an Indian Restaurant
- **Boteco do Brasil** has become the **Gilded Saloon**
- **32 Below** has become **West Nic Records** (still a pub)
- **Shandwick's** long period of closure ended when it was turned into the Edinburgh branch of **Coyote Ugly**, a brash American-style saloon
- The **Tron** closed for a month and reopened as **O'Neill's**, one of an Irish pub chain
- **Hamilton's** in Stockbridge is now the **Captain Darling**
- The **Filmhouse Café Bar** reopened without any sign of the previous real ale, which was disappointing
- **Goose 73** on Broughton St has become the **Nectar Bar**

The Leeds brewer Northern Monk has taken over the **Hanging Bat** on Lothian Road. Real ale is still available, although the number pouring has been rather variable. A major refurbishment will be undertaken at some stage and customer input has been invited. Food has been reintroduced. Just around the corner **Brauhaus** has renamed itself as **Lauri**, still with an excellent range of real ales.

The **Barologist** in Leith closed down but was later reopened as the **Sandport Tavern**. This pub has taken a while to find its feet, but is now looking the part with new signage appearing.

Local keg beer from Campervan has been added to the standard keg offerings.

Work has started on the former **Coopers Rest** on Easter Road. The opening date for this joint venture between Newbarns Brewery and the Palmerston restaurant is not likely to be until Spring 2026, according to reports.

Mackays on the Mile relaunched real ale in the summer with Pilot's Vienna Pale. **Leith Social Club** (a pub) has opened on the site of the former early morning bar **Tam O'Shanter** in Leith. It has been described as a shrine to Britpop and even features a Burberry pool table.

As ever, numerous Beer Festivals have been run by Edinburgh's real ale pubs, including **Steel Coulson (Southside)**, **Bow Bar**, **Guildford Arms**, **Cloisters** and of course the various branches of JD Wetherspoon. Talking of JDW, there's still no name or opening date for their new pub on Chambers St.



Steel Coulson Southside

Finally, the **Kilderkin** has reopened with a new Facebook page, so perhaps with new tenants also there will be a return to real ale. Reports are awaited.

Rose Burn

Please note: our Pub News columns sadly cannot mention every Real Ale pub in the branch area in every issue. If you have some news about your pub you'd like us to share in the next issue, please get in touch (contact details on p2).

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Sir Geoff Palmer

by Timothy Hampson

Tributes have been paid following the death in June of barley pioneer and Scotland's first Black professor Sir Geoff Palmer, at 85.

Sir Geoff, a chancellor and professor emeritus at Heriot-Watt University, moved to the UK from Jamaica as a teenager and became a professor in 1989.

Sir Geoff undertook world-leading research into barley malt.

Principal and vice-chancellor of Heriot-Watt University Professor Richard Williams said: "He was an inspiration not just to me but to colleagues past and present and countless students around the world.

"His infectious enthusiasm and passion for education was impossible to ignore and this university was all the richer for having such a strong association with him over the years.

"He will be dearly missed, and our thoughts are with his loved ones at this difficult time.

"Sir Geoff was a pioneer and an outstanding intellectual. He had a hugely positive impact on Scotland and will be sorely missed."

Born in St Elizabeth, Jamaica on 9 April 1940, he moved to London as a 14-year-old in 1955, where his mother had emigrated some years earlier, as part of the Windrush Generation. A keen cricketer, he earned a place on the London Schools' cricket team and at Highbury Grammar School.

In 1958, upon completion of his schooling, he was employed as a junior lab technician at Queen Elizabeth College while gaining further qualifications studying one day per week at a local polytechnic.

In 1961, Sir Geoff enrolled at the University of Leicester, graduating with a degree in botany.

He then began his long association with Heriot-Watt University when he embarked on a PhD in grain science and technology, which he completed in 1967. This was carried out jointly between Heriot-Watt College, as it was known then, and the University of Edinburgh.

After completing his doctorate in 1967, he began working at the Brewing Research Foundation, where his academic work saw him invent the industrial process of barley abrasion and pioneer the scanning electron microscope to study cereal grains.

Sir Geoff retired in 2005 but was appointed chancellor of Heriot-Watt in 2021.



He was knighted in the 2014 New Year's Honours for services to human rights, science and charity and in July 2024, he was recognised for his contribution to Scotland and installed in the prestigious Order of the Thistle.

Also known as a passionate advocate for the rights of Black communities, Sir Geoff's legacy saw him invited by Edinburgh City Council to chair a review group looking at its colonial heritage.

(This obituary previously appeared in [What's Brewing](#).)

An advertisement for Staggs Bar in Musselburgh. The background is dark green. At the top, "STAGGS BAR" is written in large, gold, serif capital letters, with "MUSSELBURGH" in smaller gold capital letters below it. Underneath, it says "Officially The Volunteer Arms, run by the same family since 1858". In the center, there are three photographs: the top one shows a well-stocked bar with many bottles; the bottom left one shows a man and a woman smiling behind the bar; the bottom right one shows a close-up of beer taps. At the bottom, a gold-bordered box contains the text "CAMRA NATIONAL PUB OF THE YEAR 2025 FINALIST". Below this, the email "bookingstaggs@gmail.com" and the address "81 North High Street Musselburgh EH21 6JE" are listed, along with Facebook and Twitter icons.

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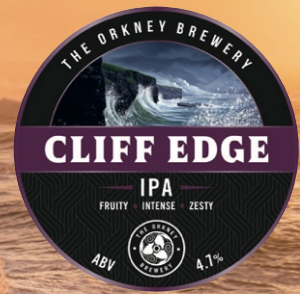


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BEER AND LOTHIAN

Pub News

Some updates to the news items in the last issue of PoV:

- The former **Goth** in Prestonpans is operating as the **Bombay Bar and Grill** – you can go in for a drink (or sit in the beer garden) but there's no real ale
- The **Law** in North Berwick High St duly opened after massive investment by Star Pubs and Bars and the operator (Discovery Group). The regular real ales are Fyne Ales Jarl and Timothy Taylor's Landlord
- The **Grey Horse** in Balerno reopened at the end of August with four real ales and an enthusiastic welcome from the local community
- The **Old Crown** in Penicuik has a rotating Stewart Brewing real ale
- The **Golf Tavern** in Haddington closed and will become a music school as per planning application
- The former **Fisherrow Tap** in Musselburgh is now a convenience store
- **Rocks** in Dunbar closed again after several incidents were brought to the attention of the licensing board

The **Auld Hoose** in North Berwick was due to close at the end of October for a major refurbishment and conversion to a Greene King Nest Franchise pub, reopening in December.



The Grey Horse, Balerno



The Law, North Berwick



Levenhall Arms, Musselburgh

Congratulations to the **Brig and Barrel** in Belhaven for winning 'Best Pub/Inn' in the Scottish Hospitality Awards. Owner James Hughes is, however, taking a step back by advertising a tenancy at the pub.

When in Musselburgh don't forget to go to the other end of the racecourse where the **Levenhall Arms** is a dog-friendly community pub offering two or three real ales from the east of Scotland and Northumberland. There is a pub quiz on the second Sunday of each month, live music once a month and wide TV sports coverage.

After flying the flag for real ale in Whitecraig, the **Mercat** sadly closed due to economic reasons earlier in the year.

In East Linton the **Linton Hotel** has become the **Linton Restaurant with Rooms**.

There are still a couple of real ales on the bar. The nearby **Crown and Kitchen** have added a second handpump to offer two varying Stewart beers.

Hector's in Dunbar (mainly a pizzeria) has been taken over by the team behind **Pilgrim** in Cowgate, Edinburgh. The new owners say that they are going to improve the draft beer offer.

An application has been made to convert the British Legion club in Kirkhill Rd, Penicuik, into a pub. The promoters have quoted the closure of the **Navaar House** and **Mother's** as reasons why the new pub is needed. There is also talk about the **Miners' Club** in Penicuik possibly getting real ale.

The **Waverley Hotel** in Bonnyrigg reopened in September as a sister pub to the **Coach and Horses** in Dalkeith, but unlike the latter it does not have real ale, sadly.

Finally, the **Railway Inn** at Juniper Green is expected to reopen at some stage. Limited planning permission has been given for changes (but not for an extended restaurant).

Wally Ford

INN the BORDERS

Pub News

At the **Templehall Inn**, Morebattle, the smaller downstairs bar opened in June. The inaugural tenants, Sharon and Alan Reid, will be leaving due to health reasons, so new tenants are being sought. Real ale from Born is served in the upper bar.

The unique **Hemelvaart Bier Café** in Ayton will not be reopening in its current form. It's rumoured that another well-known local licensee will be taking it over. Also in Ayton it looks as though there is a members' club with real ale! This is the **Ayton and District Bowling Club**. Investigations are continuing.

Up the road in Eyemouth the **Cutty Sark Inn** closed down, having been given notice by pubco Caledonian Heritable for reasons unknown. The **Ship Inn** is a reliable real ale outlet although the handpump at the **Contented Sole** sees only occasional use. The short-lived **Auld Bank** café-bar has closed down.

The **Besom** in Coldstream, a real ale pub, closed at the end of August when the keys were handed back to Punch Pub Partners, who are now seeking a new tenant. This leaves the lively **Newcastle Arms** as the only real ale pub in town, with no sign of the **Castle** reopening.

The **Waterloo Arms** in Chirnside reopened in June after refurbishment with a new General Manager and Head Chef. The former house beer by Born, Racing Green, seems to be no longer available.

In the far south of the Branch area, the **Liddesdale Hotel** in Newcastleton has occasionally been selling real ale from Three Kings on its three pristine handpumps, but availability has been frustratingly irregular. This very attractive village is further south than Morpeth!

Amongst pubs for sale in the Borders are the **Ancrum Cross Keys**, the **Buccleuch Arms**, St Boswells, and the remote **Tushielaw Inn**. The **Exchange (Dalton's)** in Hawick was put on sale by auction. This is a *Good Beer Guide* regular so hopefully a stable future can be secured.

The **Dryburgh Arms** in Newtown St Boswells came under new ownership in August. Will this see the return of real ale?

In Peebles the **Neidpath Inn** has given up the sale of real ale. Elsewhere in town real ale can still be found at the **Bridge Inn**, **Tontine**, **Crown**, **County** and **Cross Keys**.

The historic **Old Thistle Inn** in Westruther reopened earlier in 2025 and has maintained its former reputation for good food. Tempest beers can be found on keg.

Developments in Galashiels include the opening of **Café Auberge** in October after an impressive restoration of the former **Harrow**, and the planned opening of **Wolfy's Bar and Nightclub**. In the same town, **Quins** closed down following the owners' retirement.

In Kelso the **Black Swan** reopened in July with a new tenant for Caledonian Heritable. Real ale is still unavailable.

In awards news, the **Cross Keys** in Ettrickbridge won Best Pub/Bar in the South of Scotland Thistle awards for the third year in a row! Katrina Reynolds of the **Allanton Inn** won Individual of the Year. Congratulations all round!



Cross Keys, Ettrickbridge

Mel Rose

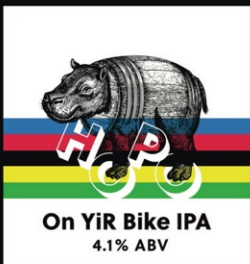
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Heritage Pubs of the Future in Edinburgh Part 5: Standing Order & Caley Picture House

by Mick Slaughter

This is the fifth article in a series which will feature pubs converted from other buildings as well as pub interiors recreated to make them look 'historic'.

JD Wetherspoon is renowned for transforming old and often-derelict buildings into beautiful, vibrant pubs. Among their pubs in Edinburgh are two stunning examples.

Standing Order

Built 1874-78 (Architects David and John Bryce) as the head Edinburgh office of the Glasgow based Union Bank in a neo-classical style and is Grade A listed. The Union Bank merged with the Bank of Scotland in 1995. The



building was sold to JD Wetherspoon who it opened as the Standing Order pub in 1997.

The central entrance leads to the large lobby with a multi-coloured tiled floor. The segmented ceiling has ornate gold detail and there are four polished granite pilasters.

At the front of the three-storey building are separate rooms entered through pedimented doorways and also a number of etched glazed screens. The first room is high-ceilinged with an ornate cornice and two ceiling roses. Two smaller rooms have marble chimneypieces; one contains the original Chubb safe.

At the rear is the enormous Banking Hall entered through four polished Peterhead granite Corinthian columns leading to the top lit telling area. This has an elaborate consoled and coved ceiling.

Standing Order, 62-66 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2LR - open from 8am to 1am every day with food served until 11pm. Real ales on sale are Belhaven 80/-; Greene King Abbot; Sharps Doom Bar

and three to four changing real ales mainly from microbreweries. Alcoholic drinks are served from 9am (11am Sun). 0131 225 4460.



Caley Picture House

Re-opened in December 2016 as a pub after a £2.5 million investment, this is a stunning Wetherspoon renovation of a Grade B listed former cinema. It originally opened on 1 January 1923 (architects Richardson and Mackay) with Game of Life – a silent film. In 1928, the building was enlarged (architect John McKissack) to seat 1,900 for the new 'talkies'. Boasting high ceilings, the venue is split over two levels. It is described by Historic Scotland as an interesting precursor to classical Art Deco architecture.

This played host to many concerts throughout the 1970s and into the 80s. Notable past performers include Pink Floyd, Robin Trower, Wishbone Ash, Uriah Heep, Hawkwind, Rory Gallagher, Queen, Beck, The Smiths, New Order, Bogert & Appice, Gentle Giant and AC/DC. The last picture show at the Caley was in 1984. This landmark cinema became a nightclub named the Caley Palais, later being renamed Century 2000 and Revolution. The building later stood empty for several years, until it was refurbished in 2008 and opened as Edinburgh Picture House. It closed as a live music venue after a farewell party on 31 December 2013.

The original 1920s interior decorative scheme is virtually intact. It includes an oak panelled foyer. The main bar was the auditorium and retains the Art Deco arched proscenium with reeded classical pilasters, with a modern bar added in front.

In the uppermost section of the balcony, aka 'the gods', a modern bar selling three real ales has been created. The pub was Highly Commended in the 2017 CAMRA Pub Design Awards Conversion to Pub Use Category.

Caley Picture House, 31 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH1 2DJ – open from 8am to 1am every day with food served until 11pm. Real ales on sale are Belhaven 80/-; Greene King Abbot; Sharps Doom Bar and four to five changing real ales mainly from microbreweries. Alcoholic drinks are served from 9am (11am Sun). 0131 656 0752.



Photos by courtesy of JD Wetherspoon PLC



NEWS OF THE BREWS

Brewery Update

Barney's Beer

The brewery ran the very successful Gravity Beer Festival at Summerhall in September and plan to run it again next year. Earlier in the summer, *Meadows Pale*, a new sessionable 3.4% ABV (keg) was pouring in **Pear Tree House** and the newly reopened **Filmhouse**. There were also more interesting collaborations. One with Terra Tempo Brewing produced *Return of the Mac* (5.0% ABV) – a blend of 70% Tequila barrel-aged Berliner Weisse and 30% Barneys Pickle Cucumber and Dill Gose. *You Better Run IPA*, a 6.0% ABV rye-based IPA was brewed with Deya Brewing company of Cheltenham. The most recent was with Two by Two Brewery, *Kerouac*, a bright and bold 4.6% ABV beetroot sour that was dry hopped with Mandarina Bavaria hops.

Belhaven Brewery

The latest exciting news is that they have released a new 4.0% ABV golden lager called *Belter*.

Bellfield Brewery

The excellent news, as reported in *City Ale Tales*, is that Bellfield have purchased **Nobles** in Leith which reopened on 15th October. In addition to two of their own real ales, there are 14 draught keg lines featuring guest breweries. Meanwhile, Bellfield continues to gain awards with *Lucky Spence IPA* 3.4% ABV gaining Silver in the Cask Session Pale Ale (up to 4.4%) category at the Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA) Indie Beer Scotland 2025 awards held in Glasgow in September.

Big Light Brewing

A new "small batch nano-brewery based in Edinburgh", though the registered address seems to be Livingston. Several canned beers have been spotted in the **Beerhive**, who also hosted a tasting from the brewery in October.

Born Brewery

With the visitor centre sadly still closed, the brewery continues to trade successfully and, as well as the core range of *Born Blonde* (3.8% ABV), *Amber* (4.0% ABV), and *Best Bitter* (4.5% ABV), various other seasonal specials have been available, including *Session IPA* (3.5% ABV) and *Cask Lager* (3.4% ABV).

Broughton Brewery

More praise for the repeat winner *Old Jock* (6.7% ABV) which received a bronze award in the Cask Imperial and Strong (6.5% and over) category at Indie Beer Scotland. They also took another bronze for *Wee Jock 80/-* (4.4% ABV) in the Cask British Bitter (up to 4.4%) category.

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Campervan Brewery

In another recent competition, the Scottish Beer Awards, Campervan won gold in the Best Lager category for *Brunswick Black* (5.1% ABV) a schwarzbier brewed in collaboration with Laura Braid - Finalist at the Scottish National Homebrew Competition 2024. The brewery also got bronze in Best Session Beer (2.8%-5.4%) for *Leith Juice* (4.7% ABV) session IPA, plus prizes for product development and excellence in branding.

Closet Brewing

Closet Brewing have their first permanent keg line at the **Bowlers Rest** in Leith, a vibrant community pub. They also recently hosted a joint tap takeover with Courier Brewing from Manchester at the **Dreadnought** in Leith.

Cold Town

Cold Town House on the Grassmarket was named Best Beer Destination at the recent Scottish Beer Awards. They were also awarded gold in the Best Pilsner category for *Doddie Beir* (4.3% ABV), and silver in Best Lager for *Crisp Craft Lager* (4.0% ABV). Further prizes came at Indie beer Scotland with silver for *Cold Town Lager* (4.0% ABV) in the Keg Session Lager (up to 4.4%) category, and silver for *Baltic IPA* (5.3% ABV) in the Keg Speciality IPA category.

Cross Borders

A range of regular cask ales continue to be available as well as other seasonal or one-off releases. Recent brews have included *American Red* (5.5% ABV) hoppy red IPA which was spotted in the **Stockbridge Tap** and **Brass Monkey (Grange)** in October.

Durty Brewing

Their beers continue to be available in the taproom in Innerleithen including two on handpulls. Recently cask beers of theirs have been spotted in and around Edinburgh including the **Theatre Royal**, and the **Old Bell**. The latest cask offerings have included *High Definition* (3.2% ABV) session hazy IPA.

Edinburgh Beer Factory

Over the summer their *Paolozzi* lager (5.2% ABV) was briefly featured on cask at selected pubs around Edinburgh including both **Teuchters** and **Teuchters Landing** and the **Canny Man's**.

Jump Ship Brewing

They have recently taken delivery of two new tanks significantly increasing capacity at the brewery. The latest releases include another new IPA in their *Dazzle Ship* range (0.5% ABV), this time using Azacca, and a revamped version of



Paolozzi cask lager at the Blue Blazer

the popular *Flying Colours* (0.5% ABV), now an Amber Ale in 440ml cans and using all British grown hops. Their Hazy pale ale *Steamboat* (0.5% ABV) won gold in the Keg Non-alcoholic & Low ABV category at Indie Beer Scotland (and bronze in the overall keg beer competition).

Kerr's Brewery

A new Kerr's beer, *Lammermuir Hoppy Pale Ale* (5% ABV), was seen in the **Old Clubhouse** in Gullane (very rare to see Kerr's in East Lothian). They recently released a collaboration brew *Ball of Fat* (5.9% ABV), a London double stout, with Cat Asylum from Nottingham and Sunken Knave from Worthing. The brewery also won silver for *Borderer* (3.6% ABV) in the Cask British Bitter (up to 4.4%) category, gold for *Callista* (5.0% ABV) in the Keg Premium Lager (4.5%-6.4%) category,

and gold for *Grains of Paradise* (5.0% ABV) in Keg Speciality & Flavoured Beer at Indie beer Scotland.

Moonwake Beer Co.

Recent cask offerings from the Leith based brewery have included *American Pale* (6.0% ABV). They got a gold at Indie beer Scotland for *Leith Helles* (4.0% ABV) in Keg Session Lager (up to 4.4%).

Newt Brew

The small Musselburgh based brewery is still mostly focussed on producing cask beer which can be found in several local independent pubs, occasionally including a well-known one in the same town. They have now also branched out into canning with *Thirsty Dog* (4.0% ABV) and *Organic Pale Ale* (5.0% ABV) available in 440ml cans from a good beer shop near you.

Orkney Brewery

Arran Sinclair, son of Norman and Christine, the owners of The Orkney Brewery, graduated in May this year with an Honours Degree in Brewing and Distilling from Heriot-Watt University. Post further studies, he will be joining the business full time with the aim of continuing the success of one of the foremost independent Scottish brewers. His brother Alistair has also just

started at Heriot-Watt studying International Finance. So, the family business will be well served in the future. The brewery started on Orkney in 1988 in an old schoolhouse building at Quoyloo. Consistently recognised for the quality of its brewing and range of beer, as demonstrated again by the three Gold Medals and seven awards in total, the brewery received at Indie Beer Scotland in September.

Otherworld Brewing

Whilst the majority of their output remains keg and can, recent cask sightings include *Abys* ▶▶▶



Norman and Arran Sinclair of the Orkney Brewery

NEWS OF THE BREWS

(continued)

porter (4.1% ABV), *Motueka and Lime hazy pale* (4.0% ABV), and *Octavia Mosaic* and *Sabro pale ale* (4.0% ABV). Upcoming releases will be an *80/-* (4.0% ABV), IPA (5.7% ABV) and then probably another porter *Nyx* (5.1% ABV) in cask before Christmas. The latest news is they will soon have a pub, having taken on the **Black Fox** in Leith, as reported in *City Ale Tales*.

Pilot Beer

Their bar, **Vessel**, is apparently doing great and serving cocktails, wines and their range of keg beers. The series of one-off cask beers continues with *Young Leith Steam* (4.4% ABV) and *Easy Paler* (4.3% ABV). The next cask release is a collaboration with friends at Fell Brewery in Cumbria, a proper traditional recipe and a cask only release, no cans or kegs. They are really excited to bring back *Mochaccino Stout* (5.5% ABV) this winter as a rotational beer available in keg, cask and can, a Pilot classic!

Sinnister Brew

The small brewery continues to release mainly strong imperial stouts. Lots of barrel aging, lots of high ABV beer. Recent

canned offerings have included *Jackalope* (10.7% ABV) Sherry and Islay whisky barrel aged imperial stout, and *Obeisance* (11.6% ABV) Maderised imperial stout.

Stenroth Brewing

They have had a busy summer expanding their range of beers, pouring at beer festivals and running tap takeovers at various pubs, the most recent being at the **Jolly Judge** in October featuring 6 beers on keg: *Table Beer* (3.0% ABV), *Pale Ale* (4.5% ABV), *India Pale Ale* (6.6% ABV), *Baltic Porter* (8.1% ABV), and two sour beers *Blueberry Sour* (4.2% ABV) and *Raspberry Sour* (6.0% ABV).

Yikes' first canning of Nice and Sleazy IPA



Stewart Brewing

Another award winning brewery with multiple honours from the Scottish Beer Awards with bronze in the Best British Style Ale category for *Stewart's 80/-* (4.4% ABV), gold in Best IPA (5.5%-7.4%) for *New Relic* (5.6% ABV), gold in Best Porter or Stout for *Mississippi Mud Pie* (5.6% ABV), gold in Best Juicy or Hazy Beer for *Hazy IPA* (5.0% ABV), and gold and bronze respectively in Best Low Alcohol Beer for *Rhuby Rhuby Rhuby* (2.5% ABV) and *Pulp Friction* (2.5% ABV). They also received a gold at Indie Beer Scotland for *Edinburgh Gold* (4.8% ABV) in Keg British ales (up to 6.4%).

Tempest Brewing Co.

Now well established in their new brewery and ever-expanding tap room at Tweedbank, Tempest continue to produce new and different ales in a wide variety of styles and strengths. Although their output is mainly canned, some interesting cask ales have been enjoyed in several pubs to complement the core beers like *Armadillo* (3.8% ABV), *Long White Cloud* (5.2% ABV), and *Hazy Pale*. The popular Tap Room Sessions are held every weekend, and an innovative Borderlands Craft Beer Festival was a great success in September.

Traquair House Brewery

Released a 60th anniversary brown ale (4.2% ABV) seen on draught in Edinburgh at the **Jolly Judge**, **Steel Coulson Southside**, and on handpull at **Durty Brewing** taproom in Innerleithen.

Vault City

Their new brewery at Pentland Science Park (Easter Bush) opened at the end of October. Their heavily fruited sour beers remain widely available in cans and kegs.

Winton Brewery

Received several awards at Indie Beer Scotland including: silver for *Barry Swally* (3.0% ABV) in Keg Session Pale ale (up to 4.4%), silver for *Taps Aff* (4.5% ABV) in Keg Premium Lager (4.5%-6.4%), and silver for *Oh Ya Bassa* (5.0% ABV) in Keg Sour & Wild Ale.

Yikes Brew Co.

We understand their first brew at the South Queensferry premises, shared with Stenroth and Closet, will be *Nice & Sleazy* a New England style IPA (5.0% ABV), which may be available by the time you read this.

M Ashtun



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