

Ales and Sales

SCOTTISH & NEWCASTLE Pub Enterprises, which became part of the Heineken group with the takeover of S&N brewery last year, has put 50 pubs onto the market with agents Fleurets.

They include some very well-known and well-loved pubs in our area, including CAMRA's 2009 Darlington Pub of the Year, the **Quaker House**. The asking price is £225,000 and current lessees Brian Dourish and Garry Hewitt say they hope to stay and have put in a bid.

Within hours of the sale board going up on the famed alehouse mischievous regulars had tweaked the wording: see photo!

South of the Tees, two ancient North Yorkshire village pubs are offered: the **Travellers Rest** at Skeeby for £205,000, and the **Bay Horse** at Great Smeaton for £225,000 (pictured top and bottom in happier times).



Tellingly, their prices have reduced by £20,000 and £25,000 since May.

The Travellers is picked out by Fleurets as a 'star buy' but both have been closed for many months following the departure of their tenants.

One hard-working, enthusiastic landlord said he could not operate under the lease proposed by SNPE when they acquired his pub - and the other two - from Tadcaster Inns in a package of 30 just last year.

Meanwhile, Punch Taverns has the freeholds of the **Slaters Arms** in Bondgate and the **Old Dunn Cow** in Post House Wynd, both in Darlington, up for grabs, at £200,000 and £275,000 respectively.

Punch spent £145,000 on restoring the



18th-century Slaters as recently as 2006. The agents are Colliers CRE.

In a hint of desperation, "final and best offers" for the centrally-located Old Dunn Cow were invited by a June deadline - but the board is still up and particulars still available as we go to press.

THE LORD NELSON at Appleton Wiske was said in DD173 to have no real ale. Well, that was duff information and we're delighted to correct it - the pub serves Thwaites Original - rare for this area - and, landlord Iain Symes tells us, it has for some time.

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The Raby's Return

THE HISTORIC, picture-pretty, Raby Hunt at Summerhouse is set for a fresh chapter in its 153 years, with new owners now in control.

A Mr and Mrs Close of Hamsterley have been granted listed building consent by Darlington council to carry out small scale changes.*

Their application said they had recently purchased the grade II listed pub and were seeking to "upgrade and modernise" it "to serve high quality food whilst retaining the original bar areas".

The couple are also hoping to provide bed and breakfast accommodation on a limited basis.

The Raby closed last August when landlady Pam Askey decided she couldn't continue af-



ter a lengthy bout of poor health. It was placed on the market with an initial guide price of £220,000, later reduced.

Six years earlier the small old inn - originally built to serve the Duke of Cleveland's fox-hunting parties from Raby Castle - had been saved from closure by the protests of villagers and Darlington CAMRA.

A legal agreement between the council and the previous owners, attached to the 2003 planning permission which allowed the latter to develop four new houses on the Raby's previously-spacious plot, prevents the pub's change to any other use.

**For example, alterations to the toilet and kitchen layout and infilling of the rear cellar entrance .*

Shuttle Change

THE SHUTTLE & LOOM at Whinfield is selling real ale following its major refurbishment by Greene King.

That brewery's Morland Old Speckled Hen is now a 'permanent feature', we're told. The works to the suburban local - originally opened by Whitbread in 1980 - have turned it into one of GK's Hungry Horse chain, with a large restaurant and sports bar.



The chain focuses on "value for money, family atmosphere, pub games, big-screen televisions and massive portions of food". Val and Ray Harker are the pub's managers and opening times are weekdays 11-11 (midnight Fri & Sat) and 12-10.30 Sun.



Heighington 01325 316753

Regular Guest Ales

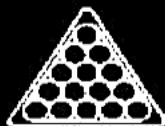
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Quiz & Music Night**

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Darling Hits Again

CHANCELLOR DARLING is at it again - hitting beer drinkers with another punitive tax rise.

From 1st January, Britain's standard rate of VAT is returning to 17.5% after the temporary period at the current lower rate, meant to stimulate the economy, comes to an end.

But Alastair - no darling of drinkers and barred from thousands of pubs after his discriminatory beer price hike of 2008 (right) - says he has no plans to drop back the excise duty on beer, which was increased when VAT was cut to ensure pubs didn't drop the price of beer.

CAMRA's Jonathan Mail predicts the price of a pint could go up by at least 8p. "It really is time the Chancellor gave pubs a break. By not cutting the duty rise he is foisting yet another tax increase on the pub-going public."

A pint of beer sold in a pub typically carries 90p in tax, made up of duty, VAT and employment tax.

Europe to Help?

MEANWHILE, an influential group of MPs is asking the Government to help win a change in European Union tax rules to slow the tide of pub closures.

The Parliamentary Beer Group wants a lower rate of duty for draught beer sold in pubs but the Government is not allowed to make such a differentiation in tax rates under current EU law.

The European Commission has indicated, however, that it is willing to consider a review of the rules and Beer Group chairman John Grogan, Labour MP for Selby, has tabled a parliamentary motion calling on the UK Government to seek such a change.



CAMRA's

Mike Benner said: "A lower rate in pubs would address the disparity between supermarket and pub prices, a problem directly associated with pub closures. It would encourage a shift in consumption back to the regulated environment of well-run pubs and help stem the loss of community pubs."

The Campaign for Real Ale is urging MPs to back the motion. Like the group, it believes reduced duty in pubs would ease the problems that are leading to over six pub closures a day.

Good Beer

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Good Company

Good Weather

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John Smith's Handpulled *Magnet*
Charles Wells *Bombardier*

Food served:

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Hygiene Awards

Foresters Arms Tug of War Championship 29 August

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Quiz every Thursday from 8.45pm

Rock Ale

ROCKLIFFE HALL, the region's newest five star hotel, spa and golf resort, down by the Tees at Hurworth, next to Middlesbrough FC's training ground, is costing £50m to build and open. Its opulent clubhouse - due to open around now - is being provided with everything from a restaurant to a concierge service for golfers.



But players with a taste for cask beer are not being forgotten. Managing director Nick Holmes told the Northern Echo the clubhouse will include a 'spikes bar': "a kind of traditional real ale venue for golfers after they've just come off the green. We really do want Rockcliffe Hall and all of its facilities to appeal to everyone."

Turbinia

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Gig Dates For Your Diary

25th July - Hocus Pocus	22nd August - 101
1st August - Whey AyeC/DC	26th August - Graham Russell
8th August - Skinflint	5th September - This Machine
15th August - Alcatraz House Band	12th September - F.M.

Parsons Centre, Sid Chaplin Drive, Newton Aycliffe

Fest Feast

DARLINGTON'S 'SMALL' annual beer festival, part of the Spring Thing, once again proved very popular, with all cask beers being drunk by 9.45pm on the Saturday.

Mind you, that simply gave cask ale punters the excuse to try to drink dry the event's remaining stock of classic imported bottled beers!

The first draught to sell out was Monty's Sunshine from Powys in Wales, followed by 1488 Tullibardine's Blonde and then Five Town's Lover's Leap. Sunshine was voted beer of the festival by customers.

Runner-up was Swale from Richmond Brewery, based at that town's skilfully-restored former station. The top-voted cider was Double Vision's Impaired Vision from Kent.

Macmillan Cancer Support was the festival's chosen charity and £225 was raised from drinkers who donated their 'spare change' beer cards: thanks one and all.

Plans are now well-advanced for September's 'big' beer festival, **Rhythm 'n' Brews** - see right.

Organised by the Arts Centre, its thriving R'n'B club and, on the brews side, enthusiastic Campaign for Real Ale volunteers it is billed as 'a celebration of live R'n'B music and real ale'.

Over fifty cask ales will be on sale, alongside farmhouse ciders, European bottles that offer very different tastes to British ale, commemorative glasses and that great music.

To offer a choice of ambience, the bands will be performing outside the beer hall - with the exception of Saturday lunchtime drinkers' regular favourite, Copperhead Still, invited back to accompany the ale for the umpteenth time!

Darlington Arts Centre R'n'B Club and
Darlington CAMRA present
The 30th Darlington Beer & Music Festival

Rhythm 'n' Brews 2009

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Friday 18 September

12-4pm (**FREE**) and

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Saturday 19 September

11.30-5pm (**FREE**) and

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Advance booking recommended for eves

R'n'B bands: The Smokin' Spiffires (*Thu 8pm*); Storm Warning (*Fri 8pm*);

Copperhead Still (*Sat 1pm*);

Tommy Allen Band (*Sat 8pm*)

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**Don't miss Rhythm 'n' Blues Sunday, 20th
September. Live and free music in the Market
Place and nearby pubs from 1pm**

Beer in Budapest

WHEN HUNGARY joined the EU in 2005 there was a dramatic rise in the number of 'wedding parties' visiting Budapest for the cheap beer, writes *John Magson*.

Today stag and hen parties have declined but thankfully the range and choice of beers has increased.

Old style bars can be found full of men drinking and smoking but the trend now is



for theme and Irish bars. Many café-bars and restaurants sell good draught and bottled beers and beer is fast overtaking wine as the Hungarian's chosen drink.

The **Dreher** brewery in Budapest, owned by SABMiller, produces many styles of beer, the best-known being Dreher Classic and Arany Azok pilsner style beers but it also brews Kobanyai Vilagos, Dreher lager and Dreher Bak.

The **Borsod** brewery, owned by Inbev, brews Borsodi Vilagos, Barna, Bivaly, Polo and, my favourite, Borostyan - a 5.2% amber ale.

Brau Union Hungaria is a member of the Heineken group and has breweries in Sopron and Martfu. Its brands include Soproni and Gosser.

As for the city, it is full of palaces, historic buildings and churches and is easily accessible by metro, tram or bus.

And if you have reached the age of 65 carry a copy of your passport as all transport is then free. But remember to validate your transport tickets for if you do not, as I found out, you stand the chance of a fine or arrest...

(Ed: anyone know of independent breweries in Hungary? Do let us know.)

Black Sheep Quiz

KEVIN McKENNA of Darlington won the DD173 quiz and an excellent Black Sheep T-shirt.

Kevin's correct answers were: the average price of real ale in Darlington in December was £2.43; Black Sheep's handpumps are made by Angram; Darlington's Winter Pub of the Season was the Blacksmiths Arms, Prestonsle-Skerne. Thanks and commiserations to all of 'ewe' who took part in our series of DD quizzes but failed to win 'black'.



Winter Ales Moving

THE NATIONAL Winter Ales Festival is on the move - but not too far.

The 2010 event is to be held at the Sheridan Suite in Manchester, also known as The Venue.

Although not in the centre of the city, organisers say the Sheridan is within easy reach of Victoria Station and the famed Northern Quarter

- where many of the best free houses are located.

"With a larger capacity, all beers on one level and easier access for the public this promises to be an excellent venue", reckons CAMRA's Graham Donning.

The festival will run from Wednesday 20th to Saturday 23rd January, with the annual Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition being judged and announced on the first day.

The reigning champ is Attila, a 7.5% barley wine from Peterborough's Oakham Brewery. Theakston's Old Peculier from Masham also won a medal in its category last time out.



It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

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Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive three months membership free and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

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I enclose a cheque for

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Applications will be processed within 21 days

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BREWS, NEWS AND VIEWS

THE STRATHMORE ARMS at Holwick welcomed new tenants in June, with Martin and Helen full of enthusiasm for their idyllic spot in upper Teesdale. Two real ales are currently available, Wells Bombardier and Tim Taylor's Landlord, and there is talk of introducing real cider.

THE KIRK INN, overlooking the middle green at Romalldkirk a few miles downstream, is also serving up decent pints of Landlord. It has been taken off the market and gov'nor Paul Jackson has been busy refurbishing the cosy old local.

DARLINGTON SNOOKER CLUB - diagonally opposite the Odeon, ring the bell - is putting on a mini beer festival from Friday 31 July to Sunday 2 August. Eight beers are promised at all times, sourced from, amongst others, the admirable Yorkshire Dales, Captain Cook and Houston micro-breweries.

DIARY DATES - DARLINGTON CAMRA - DIARY DATES

- Tue 4 Aug** - **Darlington Snooker Club**, cnr. Corporation Rd/Northgate (ring bell). Darlington CAMRA branch meeting, 8pm. All welcome.
- Fri 7 Aug** - **Rural coach crawl** to mid-Teesdale area. Dep Feethams (opp. Town Hall) 7pm. Details/bookings: Pete Fenwick (01325) 374817; (07792) 093245.
- Sat 22 Aug** - **Games afternoon** with NW Yorkshire CAMRA branch, Stanwick Inn, Aldbrough St John. Details: Pete as above. (TBC)
- Fri 4 Sep** - **Rural coach crawl** to lower Teesdale. Dep Feethams (opp. Town Hall) 7pm. Details/bookings: Pete as above
- Wed 16 Sep** - **Britannia**, Archer Street. Darlington CAMRA branch meeting, 8pm.
- Thu -Sat, 17-19 Sep** - **Darlington Rhythm 'n' Brews Festival 2009**. 30th annual Darlington beer and music festival, Arts Centre, Vane Terrace. Details on page 5. CAMRA helpers needed, including for set-up/dismantle Mon 14th and Sun 20th: contact Ian on (01325) 243228.

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