

Bailey Head is CAMRA's national pub of the year



The Bailey Head, in Oswestry, Shropshire, has been named the Campaign for Real Ale's (CAMRA) national pub of the year for the first time.

The venue had been failing under the ownership of a major pub company and was listed by CAMRA as an Asset of Community Value to protect it from redevelopment.

Nine years ago, it was bought by Duncan Borrowman and Grace Goodlad who poured their knowledge and passion into transforming the pub. Their dedication means that the Bailey Head has won a staggering roster of awards.

Community and inclusion are at the heart of the pub, and it acts as a hub for locals to come together for good causes through events like their charity pub quizzes and live music.

"We have always had a policy of everyone welcome," said Duncan. "Any person should feel happy and comfortable coming in by themselves and enjoying a drink, either on their own or chatting to other customers."

"We thrive on being the heart of the com-

munity and a place where people gather to celebrate or commiserate. While all of the focus tends to be on us as a couple, this win was also down to our incredible team of welcoming and knowledgeable staff, and to our wonderful regulars who have become very much a community in their own right." Aside from providing a welcoming atmosphere, the Bailey Head also boasts an impressive array of cask beer and cider.

Grace said: "We are thrilled. We hope we can live up to the award. In our wildest dreams we never thought we would win CAMRA pub of the year."

"From small beginnings nine years ago, we have taken everything one step at a time, through Covid, slowly improving to the point where we now have 12 handpulls serving six cask beers and six ciders and perries, plus 16 other draught lines."

"When we bought the pub nine years ago it was failing and had been listed as an Asset of Community Value by the local CAMRA branch. That listing made it possible for us to save it from potentially becoming housing and turning it into the pub it is today."

IN BRIEF

- Tiny Rebel is describing its new 4.3% ABV session IPA, Rebel IPA, as a game-changer, designed for "rule-breakers and mischief-makers". It makes it debut this weekend in all Fuller's pubs nationwide, as well as Tiny Rebel's Newport and Cardiff bars, at a time when many people are doing Dry January.
- DEYA and Beak have collaborated on Driving That Train (8% ABV), described as a bright IPA. Hopped with Citra Dynaboot, Centennial, Nelson Sauvin, Citra Hyperboot, Motueka HopKief, and Nelson HopKief, you can expect a medley of tropical fruit, orange, and lime, with a zippy, clean finish.



- Necessary Evil, Thornbridge's 13% ABV single malt English whisky barrel-aged stout, named world's best flavoured beer at the World Beer Awards, is back. This version has been aged in White Peak English whisky barrels for eight months. Initial notes of chocolate, vanilla, and orchard fruit from the barrel are gradually followed by the faintest hint of liquorice and peat on the finish.
- Sales of Murphy's Irish Stout, owned by Heineken, surged by 632% in bars and pubs over Christmas, as rival Guinness struggled with supply issues. However, Murphy's wasn't just for Christmas. The brand saw a significant increase across all of 2024, resulting in a total uplift of 176% in draught sales. "Murphy's is well placed to build on this growth in 2025," said the brewer.
- Neon Raptor has released beers inspired by films of John Carpenter, in association with StudioCanal. They are: They Live (4.8% ABV), a blue bubblegum sour; The Fog (6% ABV), a hazy IPA; and Escape from New York (4% ABV), a session IPA.

New Northern beer tours focus on beautiful national parks

Pioneering beer tourism operator Beer Tours UK is poised to roll out exciting fresh opportunities across Northern England for 2025.

The new tours are being offered for small groups of beer enthusiasts to focus on a trio of dramatically scenic National Parks: the stunning North York Moors, offering the chance to explore the picturesque village featured in the famous TV series Heartbeat; the enchanting Yorkshire Dales, Herriot vet country; and the majestic English Lake District.

For a longer beer adventure, the three area tours can be combined into a spectacular Coast-to-Coast Beer Odyssey. Over four days, this tour will travel from historic Whitby on the rugged North Sea coast across the three beautiful national parks to the sweeping Cumbrian shoreline of the Irish Sea, all along the way exploring independent brewers and characterful pubs.

The tours add to Beer Tours UK's established itineraries in North West England, Shropshire, and North Wales.

WHAT'S ON HIGHLIGHTS

22nd January-2nd February

Beer Festival at JD Wetherspoon London pubs.

23rd January

Norfolk breweries(Grain, Moon Gazer, Tindall) tap takeover at the Shirker's Rest, 9 Lewisham Way, London SE14 6PP.

24th January

Launch of Verdant Putty 2025 at various locations nationwide.

24th and 25th January

Chester Craft Beer Expo at Storyhouse, Hunter Street, Chester CH1 2AR.

Salisbury Winterfest at The Guildhall, Market Square, Salisbury SP1 1JH.

25th and 26th January

Tyneside Lambic Trail at: The Cumberland Arms and Free Trade, Ouseburn; Mean Eyed Cat and Town Mouse, Newcastle; Elder Beer and House Bar, Heaton; and Central Bar and Axis, Gateshead.

PLAN AHEAD ...

30th January-1st February

Pendle Beer Festival at The Muni, Colne BB8 0AE.

31st January and 1st February

Dorchester Beerex at the Corn Exchange, Dorchester DT1 1EZ.

6th-8th February

Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival at the Watson Hall, Tewkesbury GL20 5PX.

12th-15th February

Great British Beer Festival Winter at Magna Science Adventure Centre, Rotham S60 1FD.

There are more — many more — listings, with maps, at beertoday.co.uk/events The biggest beery events guide in the UK? Could be...

Sheffield Beer Week and Indie Beer Feast returning

Sheffield Beer Week is returning, this year shining a light on the 'Outdoor City' it calls home during the Festival of the Outdoors, and beer and food pairing.

Showcasing the city's vibrant culinary scene alongside its thriving craft beer industry, visitors can expect a diverse programme of events between 10th and 16th March. These will include:

Brewery tours and tastings: Go behind the scenes at local breweries, learn about the brewing process, and sample their latest creations. Visit the wealth of pubs, bars, beer shops, and taprooms to enjoy tastings and events.

Beer and food pairings: Indulge in expertly curated local menus, featuring beers paired with delicious dishes.

Pub tours and walking trail events: Discover the gems, explore the city's diverse pub, bar, beer shop, and beer scene with guided tours and self-guided trails.

Community events: Participate in family-friendly events, charity fundraisers, workshops, and book readings that celebrate the spirit of community.

Sheffield Beer Week will also delve into the city's rich brewing heritage, exploring its historical significance.



On the weekend of 7th and 8th March, to start the week, Sheffield's craft beer festival, Indie Beer Feast, is back at Trafalgar Warehouse. It's a celebration of great independent craft beer with brewery bars, street food, low intervention wines and fine cider.

The festival champions and supports the Everyone Welcome Initiative. Award-winning beer writer Adrian Tierney-Jones will be heading up, alongside founder and director of community initiative Women in Beer, Amelie Tassin, to host pop-up tastings.

Hydes brings back Anvil Brand vintage beers



Hydes has launched the first in its bi-monthly range of seasonal ales for 2025, expanding its Vintage range with a collection of historic ales inspired by their original Anvil Brand.

First to appear on the bar is XPA (4% ABV), a blonde ale brewed with flaked rice and extra pale ale malts. It is hopped in generous proportions with US Cascade. The outcome is a refreshing beer with strong citrus fruit characteristics.

In addition to XPA, the range includes a further five new cask ales to be introduced bi-monthly for the remainder of the year. These are Hydes Mild (3.4% ABV), Hydes IPA (4.4% ABV), Hydes Red (4.5% ABV), Hydes Stingo (6.0% ABV), and Hydes Imperial (5.2% ABV).

Hydes has also developed retro-inspired designs featuring their classic Anvil Brewery branding. These vintage-style graphics will be prominently displayed on bar pump-clips, beer and drip mats, and promotional posters.

CAMRA updates web presence

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has launched a new version of its website.

For casual browsers, registering for a free account includes access to an extensive database of pubs, clubs, and pints, the ability to use the 'trip planner' feature and view suggested pub walks up to three times, and the latest CAMRA news and events.

For those wanting to experience these features to their fullest, the option of becoming a subscriber is available at 99p per month. CAMRA members are able to use the website and all its features, as well as provide their own input via beer scoring, improving the ratings and recommendations available to them, as well as which pubs make it into the Good Beer Guide.

Bays supports four good causes

Bays Brewery, in Paignton, have revealed that their 2024 limited-edition charity brews have raised £4,861 for four deserving Devon charities.

Tracker Ale raised money for Dartmoor Search and Rescue, Funky Monkey was a collaboration with Paignton Zoo, Chopper Ale helped to keep Devon Air Ambulance flying, and Christmas brew Jingle Ale supported the Children's Hospice South West.

"With many local charities facing unprecedented demand, alongside inadequate funding, we are pleased to be able to play a small part by helping raise much-needed funds for four incredible worthy causes," said Bays Brewery director Peter Salmon.

More charity beers will be released throughout this year.