

# Donny Drinker

## NEWSLETTER

Edition 1

October 2020

Welcome to the first, of what we hope will be temporary, digital editions of Donny Drinker Newsletter. It's got a slightly different look from the normal printed editions you are used to and will be much shorter. The branch feels that as the Covid-19 situation has gone on for so long, we need to keep regular real ale drinkers and pub-goers aware of the information the local branch is able to get hold of and let you know as much as possible what is happening to pubs in the area. These are worrying times for the pub and brewing industry. Also, many of you will not be aware of the work nationally, that CAMRA is doing to campaign to protect the existence of both pubs and breweries.

We hope you enjoy this edition but also hope that the need for further editions will be short and we can get back to the usual printed format.

*Editor*

## A Message from the Branch Chairman

When I first became chairman of the branch, I knew there would be challenges ahead, but I assumed they would be connected with campaigns to protect real ale and to achieve a better deal for Britain's small brewers. I thought the fight to prevent pub closures would be against the Pubcos. Never in my imagination did it occur to me, that the menace facing our pubs would be much bigger and more ruthless!

This is where we find ourselves however and I've been quite impressed with the way the pubs in the Doncaster and District Branch have picked themselves up and started to fight back.

After weeks of lockdown, the hospitality industry was allowed, in part at least, to try to pick up from where they abruptly left off. Some pubs had already proved they could adapt, particularly the brew pubs, by starting out-sales operations. Most continued with this valuable source of income, whilst others used the downtime to refurbish and modify their premises, ready for when the go-ahead to reopen finally came.

What has comforted me the most, is the responsible attitude I've experienced since the re-opening, from the majority of our licensees and pub managers. By comparing my own observations with the experiences of my fellow CAMRA colleagues, it appears that the majority have shown a refreshing responsibility to obey the rules. I myself have seen a variety of measures implemented, which helped me to relax and enjoy the evening. I'm pleased to say that features such as: partitioned areas, tables and chairs sensibly spaced to enable social distancing, track and trace procedures at the door, one-way walking areas and of course sanitisation points throughout the establishment, have now become commonplace in the battle to stay safe. Even in our smaller venues, efforts like those mentioned above are being made to protect customers, despite spacial difficulties. One town centre outlet even has a temperature gun, and yes, your chairman has been 'shot'!

Behind the scenes, CAMRA, St Albans, have also been playing their part during the crisis. Recent campaigns have seen approaches made to the government in order to get a better deal for managers, tenants and employees in the pub trade. The Campaign has also highlighted the unfair practices of various Pubcos who have expected tenants to pay full rent, even though they couldn't open. Ministers have also been lobbied regarding tax relief for small brewers. More information and news of the outcomes of these efforts, and others like them, can be found on CAMRA's national website: [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)

At branch level, although unable to arrange our usual diary of monthly socials and meetings, we are attempting to keep members informed of news and events affecting the pubs and clubs in our area by using social media and our website. In spite of the difficulties faced by all of us, it is heart-warming to know that there are over a thousand members in the branch and we will do our best to keep you up to date. Thank you for staying with us, your support is more important now than ever, both locally and nationally.

There are more worrying times ahead I'm afraid, but I know the pubs and clubs in the Doncaster and District Branch will do their best to meet the challenges they face.

Stay safe everyone.

*Ian Jones, Branch Chairman*

## History Repeating Itself

If you look back in history, you can often find mistakes repeating themselves and in the brewing and pub trade recent events have a familiar ring.

CAMRA was created to bring back real ale, which was in danger of dying out due to the might of the large brewers who took the easy route with poor quality keg beers. The smaller breweries couldn't compete with the large ones and consequently drinkers found their choice of beers diminishing. The hard work of the many pioneering CAMRA members brought about a revival in not just real ales but in beer generally.

In the last 2 years we have seen two mergers of major brewing companies taking us back decades to a familiar threat of the beer market being monopolised by big corporations. The most recent merger has been between Carlsberg's UK division and Marstons who own a number of



breweries and pubs. In recent weeks the Government has proposed making changes to Small Brewers Relief that will increase the amount of tax they have to pay.

Following the news that the CMA (Competition and Markets Authority) has given the go-ahead to the proposed merger between Marston's and Carlsberg, CAMRA's National Chairman, Nik Antona said, "We are increasingly concerned with the dominance of global brewing brands in the UK beer market and the impact this has on consumer choice. This Joint Venture is the latest in a series of merger and acquisition activity which has seen many styles and brands disappear since the early 2000s.

"While we have seen an increase in the number of small brewers producing some great and varied beers, these brewers account for less than 6% of the total market and are therefore unable to provide effective competition. Many of these smaller brands cannot access the pub market due to the dominance of supply and distribution agreements operated by pub companies and global sellers.

"In addition, two small breweries are now closing every week due to ongoing restrictions on the sector and a lack of a proper support package. On top of this, the Government is planning changes to Small Brewers Relief that will increase the amount of tax some small brewers pay."

The branch is amazed that at a time when we are facing a national emergency, which is wreaking havoc with the economy, the Government can plan tax increases on a part of the economy which is full of entrepreneurs who are protecting and expanding a part of our natural heritage.

## Sign the Petition to reverse the change to small brewers relief

The Treasury has announced changes to Small Brewers Relief (SBR) – the progressive tax system that has revolutionised UK brewing. These changes will reduce the 50% duty threshold from 5,000hl to 2,100hl: small breweries will have to pay more duty, whilst larger breweries could pay the same or less.

Those that will have to pay more do not know by how much as the consultation has been delayed until the Autumn. This is creating grave uncertainty for many small breweries at a time when the industry is trying to survive the Covid-19 crisis.

CAMRA believes the Treasury should not reduce relief for any brewers below 5,000hl and should reverse its decision to reduce the threshold to 2,100hl, and that these changes are threatening closures, innovation, competition, local jobs, investment and consumer choice.

Go to <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/> and put 'Brewers Relief' into the search box.

## Tiers for Beers (No, not a new pop duo!)

It's brave to try and guide someone on any of the Covid-19 rules as they can change by the minute but here is a brief guide on what the 3-tier system means from the point of view of visiting a pub and ordering an alcoholic drink. These rules were relevant on October 28<sup>th</sup> but be aware they could change at any time, including the addition of further tiers. Keep an eye on our Facebook, Twitter and website.

### Tier 1

You can go to the pub for a beer at any pub and sit with people from different households as long as there are not more than 6 of you. There must be a table service so forget about standing at the bar.

You must leave the pub by 10pm.

### Tier 2

You can go to any pub and meet up with up to 6 people from any household provided you drink outside the pub. Many pubs use an ordering app to cater for this situation or you will have to attract the attention of a member of staff to place your order.

If you want to drink inside, then you can only sit with members of your own household or support bubble up to a maximum of 6.

Table service is a requirement in both situations and you must leave the pub by 10pm.

### Tier 3

If you want to drink a beer or any other alcoholic drink, either inside or out, then you must order a substantial meal to go with your drink (If in doubt only the Government knows what they mean by a substantial meal). You can only sit with members of your own household or support bubble. The rule of 6 also applies and again, table service only.

You must leave the pub by 10pm.

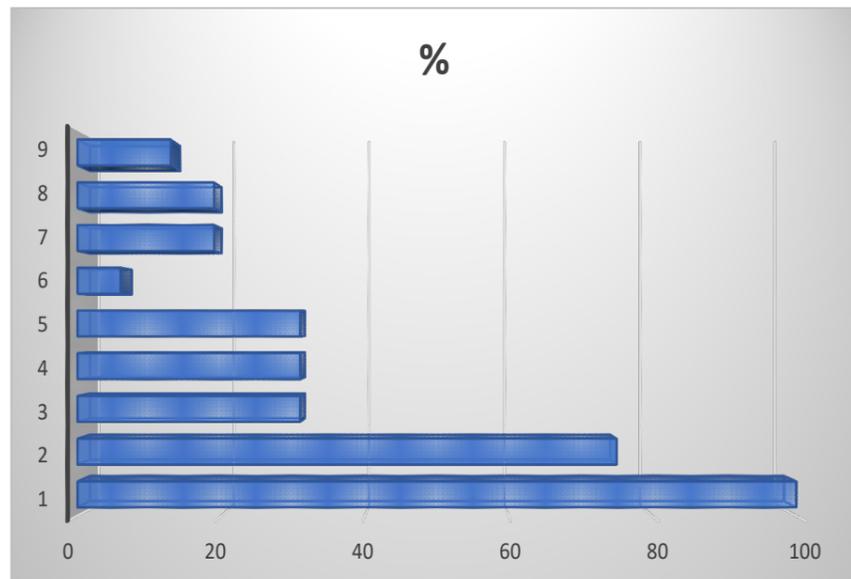
Hopefully that was not too difficult to understand. Remember when all you had to do was just walk through the door, stand or sit where you wanted and order whatever they sold. With a bit of luck when all this is over there will be some breweries and pubs left for us all to enjoy.

## Lockdown Survey

Back in May, at the beginning of the national lockdown, we asked drinkers what they missed the most about not being able to go into a pub environment. The options they were given were:

1. Socialising with family and friends.
2. Drinking alcoholic drinks.
3. Having a pub meal.
4. Listening to entertainers.
5. Pub quizzes.
6. Attending pub social events.
7. Drinking both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks.
8. Drinking non-alcoholic drinks.

The results showing the percentage of respondents who chose each of the options. The numbers correspond to the options above.



There are no real surprises in the results but they emphasise the importance of pubs to social life. When we take into account mindfulness, which is a common topic of conversation in today's stressful world, there is a place for the social role pubs play in reducing stress. They are also somewhere where lonely people have opportunities to make friends with other and share common interests.

For obvious reasons pubs are popular as places to drink alcoholic drinks which, of course, should always be done responsibly.

We hope this survey will prove one of many that we intend to do in the future and we thank everyone who was involved.

## Books for Lockdowns

CAMRA has, for a long time, produced or supported a number of books on beer, brewing and cider. Below are just two of the books that are available from the CAMRA website ([www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)).

### *The Family Brewers of Britain*

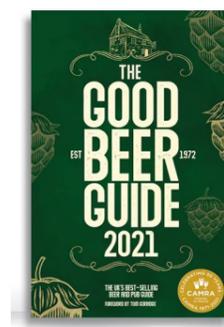


This book by leading beer writer Roger Protz traces the fascinating and sometimes fractious histories of the families still running these breweries.

Many of the breweries remain in buildings of great architectural importance with gleaming coppers and wooden fermenting vessels. Today, our family brewers are not living in the past. They have faced challenges of the modern beer-drinking world and still produce beers that meet the demands of today's consumers.

### *Good Beer Guide 2021*

The Good Beer Guide is the 'definitive' guidebook to help you discover good pubs that serve real ale across the UK.



Since 1974 CAMRA has produced a completely independent regional guide to the best pubs covering the whole of the UK and Northern Ireland with listings based entirely on evaluation by CAMRA volunteers.

With a unique breweries section listing every brewery – micro, regional and national – that produces real ale in the UK The Good Beer Guide is also an invaluable tool for professionals in the drinks and retail industry.

Now in its 48th edition, the beer-lovers' bible is fully revised and updated each year to feature recommended pubs across the United Kingdom that serve the best real ale.

This is the complete book for beer lovers and for anyone wanting to find the UK's finest pubs

## Beer at Home (Deliveries/Collection)

During the various lockdowns, in their many formats, some pubs and breweries have introduced beer delivery and take-away facilities in order to generate some extra income. Many CAMRA members and members of the public have taken advantage of these services

Beers on offer range from a mixture of locally brewed ones and many national ones from around the UK. There is also a choice of containers in which the beer can be delivered from bottles, cans, mini-kegs and 'beer in a box'. Pubs or breweries offering this service include:

Doncaster Brewery & Tap, Hallcross, Draughtsman, Hilltop Brewery, Don Valley Brewery, Imperial Brewery, Yorkshire Ales, Old Mill Brewery, Spotlight Brewery

For further details on placing orders please go to

**[Doncastercamra.org.uk](http://Doncastercamra.org.uk)**

Look for Home deliveries/Collections on the main menu.

## Keeping You Informed

As stated in the article by the branch chairman, the branch is still active in a number of areas. An important mission during the lockdown has been to keep you informed. One of our main sources of information, the Donny Drinker, has not been published because of several months of not having pubs to circulate it in but also for safety reasons, as we did not want to risk the safety of our volunteers and the public.

We still have been able to operate our media platforms on the internet. The website has had a bit of a spring clean and we have enhanced the amount of information in it, including increasing the content on national and campaigning issues.

We have used all the media sites including Twitter and Facebook to pass on information with regards to the local pub and brewing scene. We've done research to pass on which pubs opened after the initial national lockdown, which pubs have operated home delivery and/or take-away services and monitored planning permission requests for pubs, particularly where a change of use is being applied for. We will continue to do this at:

