



First anniversary

We recently marked the first anniversary of **Lo-cAle** in York with a well-attended event at the **York Brewery Club**. As well as celebrating the success of the first year, it also gave us the chance to thank brewers and publicans for their support and to launch a new range of point of sale material.

We invited all 30 brewers who qualify somewhere in our branch area, and they came from far and wide. A representative from **Redscar Brewery** in **Redcar** had the longest journey, while **York's** Andrew Whalley made the shortest trip from his office upstairs. From the East Riding came **Wold Top**, while **Cropton** and **Morrissey Fox**, who are working closely together, formed a sizeable party. **Old Mill**, **Theakston's**, **Great Heck** and **Brown Cow** were also there, while Rob Franklin represented both **Storyteller Brewery** and his pub, the **Bay Horse** at **Terrington**. All have given us great support during the first year, including promoting the scheme unofficially on their rounds and suggesting likely pubs to join.

A large proportion of the 50 accredited pubs and clubs were represented. It was good to see Andy Howdall, from the **Wheatshaf** at **Burn**, who signed up on launch night a year ago, again. At the other end of the spectrum, it was a pleasure to meet John O'Brien for the first time; he came on behalf of **Bishopthorpe Sports & Social Club**, our magical fiftieth outlet. There was a great mix of publicans, many local, but some who had come from the far reaches of our branch area. Doug and Elaine came from the **Kings Head** at **Barmby on the Marsh**, one of our most southerly pubs, while there was a group from the **New Inn** at **Cropton**, one of our northern outposts. It was very enjoyable talking to them all; all are very positive about the scheme and take great pains to follow its simple rules. Some of these pubs are free houses, but there was a good showing from several of the big pub companies too. Mark and Ross came from the **Punch Bowl** on Blossom Street, a **Wetherspoons** outlet which has really improved its commitment to cask ale since their

arrival last year. Andy McCarthy from the **Old White Swan**, a **Nicholson's** branded **Mitchells & Butler** pub, is another licensee who is making a great contribution to the quality and choice of cask ale in his pub. It was good to see Simon from the **Golden Lion**, a **Spirit** pub and Paul and Kerry from the **Swan**, our 2009 Pub of the Year, which is owned by **Punch**.

Following the national roll out by CAMRA last summer, it seemed logical for us to adopt the new look logo and material supplied by HQ once ours ran out: look out for posters, window stickers, pump clip toppers, leaflets for drinkers (our own version) and beer mats – these too are our own design. Our guests formed an effective and free focus group (the sort of thing marketing men charge thousands for!); they were exactly the right people to help us choose the most appealing beer mat design. At the end of the evening we had a clear winner from our shortlist and you can find the finished article in pubs now.

Melissa Reed, our Campaigns Officer looked back on the first year: "While we launched with optimism, we really had no idea how the scheme would go. We've been cheered by the response from brewers, licensees and drinkers and want to thank everyone for their support". Chairman Matt Grant says: "The LocAle scheme is one of our major success stories of 2008. The reception it has received by all just goes to show the marketing effect of being able to offer local products to local people and visitors to our branch area. It makes great business sense, as it is providing exactly what the majority of consumers want! Hopefully, the campaign has helped those pubs that have signed up to the scheme and will do so into 2009/2010. Thank you to all our local breweries, licensees and drinkers who have supported the scheme in these difficult economic times and to our Campaign Team for all their hard work in spreading the word!" Speaking personally, this has been one of the most enjoyable campaigns I've ever been involved in. I've thoroughly enjoyed promoting it (often in pubs I might not otherwise have visited) because it's dead simple to explain, as well as being free to join, and offers licensees a real point of difference for their pub.

All in all it was a satisfying, if hectic, evening. We're well aware that there are problems in the pub and brewing industry in what are difficult times, but there's a great deal of fantastic work going on out there too, which our guests typified. Thanks to everyone who supports and enjoys the scheme, not forgetting you the drinker!