

# LocAle®

## Latest news

Since our mini guide to LocAle participants appeared in July 2008 we've signed several more pubs up to the scheme. A further 13 pubs, most of them out in the country, have joined, taking the total to 40.



At the start of September the **Judges Lodgings** on Lendal joined, which may come as a surprise to many people as it hasn't been known for its commitment to cask ale recently. However, that all changed during the summer with the arrival of Andy: those with a long memory might remember him from the heyday of the **Spread Eagle** – his aim here is to create a “Spread Eagle for grown ups”. As he puts it “I'm trying hard to rebuild the faith here regarding beer – an interesting challenge! I've done a lot of work reorganising the cellar and making it work, I've installed a new racking system, four new beer engines, fixed the cellar cooling and had another cooler reconditioned”. Now that's done, he reckons it's clean enough to eat your dinner in, albeit a bit cold. He's a real ambassador for beer, happy to offer smooth drinkers samples of his ales and to give them a refund if they'd rather stick to their poison. Beers from **Daleside** are likely to be among the LocAles on offer, as are those from **Great Heck**. By chance he met up with Jason and Denzil from the brewery and together

they've developed an exclusive beer for the pub, **Final Judgement**, which all concerned hope will be permanent. I spoke to Andy just before this was due to go on for the first time and he was like a kid at Christmas, really excited by the prospect. He also mentioned one of his team, Charlotte Goss: “She's shown so much genuine interest in and enthusiasm for real ale that I've personally taken a lot of time out to try to pass on everything I know. I've approached the whole project with Great Heck as if it were her little baby and she's been a prime part of the process from delivery to dispense”. It's great to see such a turn around at this atmospheric old pub; if you need any more encouragement to visit, the beer prices here have recently been cut!

Also in York the **Old White Swan** on **Goadramgate**, run by the enthusiastic and knowledgeable Andy McCarthy, has joined. The pub is a collection of buildings fitted around a courtyard and has recently been refurbished. According to Andy it has been tidied up without destroying any of the ambience and the overall effect is 'smart, not posh'. The buildings range in age from Tudor times to the 1980s, with some parts unable to be dated. The courtyard, which has been reglazed as part of the refurbishment, is a unique feature and an atmospheric spot for a drink. Inside there are three areas, each with its own character; the Georgian Room is panelled and sedate, ideal for dining; the Tudor Room is spacious with a welcoming open fire; and the Stagecoach Room is more lively and 'pubby'. We were invited to a launch event for the autumn menu and drinks range, which was a tasty romp through some of the highlights of the kitchen and bar. We tried no fewer than nine different varieties of sausage; favourites were the Oxford, subtle and spicy, the Lincolnshire Smokey Poacher, which has smoked cheese as one of the ingredients and Wild Boar and Apple, the seasonal special. We almost failed to last until the pudding tasters, but got a second wind just in time for the delicious chocolate brownies and apple, sultana and cinnamon pie. All were accompanied by complementary drinks, with real ale the apt choice to go with the sausages. The LocAle here is **York Yorkshire Terrier**, while the **Timothy Taylor's Landlord** was some of the best I've had in ages; there are also regular guest beers. Coming soon are Meet the Brewer evenings, with **Everards**, **Batemans** and **Taylor's** already lined up.

A further York pub, the **Punch Bowl** on Stonegate, which has a **Leeds Brewery** beer on

permanently, joined during the LocAle crawl in October. The photo below shows manager Matthew and his assistant, Sandy, with their LocAle poster. One of the oldest pubs in York, it is popular with tourists and locals. Stonegate is full of posh shops, so you can always pop out for a bit of retail therapy between drinks! The drinking areas are served by a central bar; lots of wooden panelling, leaded windows, low beams and an open fire give it an olde worlde feel.



The **Boot & Shoe** at **Ellerton** owned by Kevin and Andrea for the last seven years, is a very appropriate member of the scheme. It has been selling **Old Mill Bitter** for the last 25 years, way before anything like LocAle was ever dreamt of, and was the first free trade outlet for the beer. Also of interest to the beer drinker is the house beer, **Old Boot** from **Dark Horse of Hetton**. A collaboration between pub and brewery, it was launched in July; 150 pints flew out on the first night and sales have been buoyant ever since. The pub dates from the seventeenth century, with low ceilings, an open fire and candles on the tables. There's a cosy bar and intimate separate dining rooms; you won't find a finer example of a country inn anywhere.



Ian (pictured below) and Eunice Walker took over the **Wombwell Arms** at **Wass** in August 2008. This comfortable country inn was built in the eighteenth century using stones from the ruins of nearby Byland Abbey. At the centre there is a characterful cosy area with a huge open fire, which serves as a meeting area for diners and locals. There is a separate Poacher's Bar and high quality meals using local produce are served both in the bars and the two dining rooms. The LocAle is **Theakston's Black Bull** and Ian has plans for a micro-brewery in one of the three outhouses at the back of the pub. Early in his career he worked at Watney's pilot brewery and retains a keen interest in real ale and brewing.



The **Half Moon** at **Newton Derwent** has seen many changes over the past few years. Tenants have come and gone and a lacklustre choice of beers did nothing for advocates of real ale. This changed with the arrival of Steve and Alex in May 2007. They set about the beers with vigour, trying different ones with varying success. The pub is a rare outlet in this area for **Daleside** beers, which feature regularly on the bar. Steve tried them at the Great Yorkshire Show in Harrogate and liked them so thought he'd give them a go – I can't think of a better way to choose your beers! **Blonde, Bitter** and **Old Leg Over** have graced the pumps to mixed reception. Other regulars are **Theakston's Best Bitter** and **John Smith's Cask**, with a cider on hand-pump from time to time. A beer festival, held in August 2008, was a resounding success with eight beers on the bar and a barbecue and bottled beers available in the garden. It raised over £500 towards the Alzheimer's charity and Steve is repeating the event on August 8th 2009. The interior is warm and welcoming, with candles on the tables and a real fire burning in the grate.

The **Oak Tree** in **Helperry** is a very well run, popular village local which sets out to cater

for the needs of the community. The open plan interior has several linked rooms and outside there is a large decked area and plenty of parking space. Lee Dawson and his wife have transformed this pub with hard work and enthusiasm and have grown the real ale trade from one to three handpumps over the past two years. They are very involved in events, such as a recent successful sausage and cider festival, and sponsor the Helperby cricket team. When we visited **Young's Bitter** and **Fuller's London Pride** were on, as well as the **LocAle**, **Black Sheep Best Bitter**.



The **Bay Horse** at **Terrington**, home of **Storyteller Brewery**, qualified easily for **LocAle**, with four beers coming from 25 metres away! Also new are the **Nags Head** at **Heworth**, the **Fleece** at **Bishop Wilton**, the **Boot & Shoe** at **Barkston Ash**, the **Kings Head** at **Barmby on the Marsh** and the **Black Bull** at **South Milford**. We'll try to feature all of these pubs in more detail in a future issue. The full list of all participants in on our website, where you'll also find the first pub profiles.

It's gratifying that some of the bigger pub companies are well-represented on the **LocAle** list, notably **Enterprise** and **Mitchells & Butler**. Not so well represented is **Punch Taverns**; their pubs are hampered by the limited range of beers they can buy as the company steadfastly refuses to move away from the policy of sourcing cask ales centrally. We are trying to set up a meeting with Daniel Haddon who is Purchasing Manager, Beer and Cider, for the company to see if we can change that. He has said he is "more than happy to meet up to discuss the opportunity, and to see how and if we can capi-

talise on it", so watch this space.

All of the smaller breweries that own pubs in York (**Batemans**, **Castle Rock**, **Old Mill** and **York** itself) have joined, with the exception of **Sam Smith's**. None of their pubs has approached us to join; our Secretary wrote to Sam's in July to tell them about the scheme and to ask if they had any objections to us approaching the pubs (you can't be too careful with Sam's!). To date we've not had a reply, which is very disappointing – we'd love to have them on board. Can it really be that Yorkshire's oldest brewery doesn't want to celebrate its heritage and provenance?

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