



# Real Ale Experience

*A guide to some of the much loved  
real ale pubs in North Shields and Tynemouth*



North Tyneside Council

# Real Ale Experience

*With traditional pubs offering unrivalled hospitality, each with their own intriguing stories to tell, the Real Ale Experience is a trip for the connoisseur of beers and those who enjoy their inns and taverns with character. The town centre pubs, bustling with charm, have been a focal point of North Shields for centuries, playing a role in the development of the town. Tynemouth has a mix of old and new pubs, providing a fine choice of venues and The Fish Quay, the traditional trading and commercial heart of the town, offers a unique experience where the locals are larger than life and seem more like characters from a seafaring novel. So...prepare to taste the experience for yourself.*

THE MAGNESIA BANK

MAGNESIA  
FINE ALES



GOOD  
FOOD  
Choose from  
over 30  
freshly prepared  
main courses

nce

## *The Magnesia Bank Camden Street, North Shields*

The Magnesia Bank stands high on the bank side overlooking the historic fish quay and it is worth pausing at the railings at the bottom of Howard Street and enjoying the views of the river before imbibing. The building to the right, marked with a blue plaque, is Maritime Chambers, once the home of the Stag Line and, before that, the Tynemouth Literary and Philosophical Society's library.

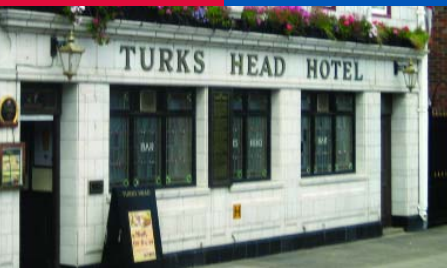
The pub itself, originally a Georgian commercial bank, opened in 1989 and quickly established a reputation as a real ale pub, a reputation certainly justified in the number of awards it has won. The pub has developed a worldwide standing for its real ales and proudly serves cask ales in the best condition, a fact acknowledged by the many awards received from the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). A selection of the guest ales are from micro breweries including the local Mordue Brewery in Wallsend. Ales on offer include Magus, Black Sheep, Workie Ticket and Timothy Taylors Landlord.

Perfectly complementing the ales on offer is the fine range and quality of the cuisine served. The chefs source the very best local ingredients to ensure freshness and flavour and the pub even has its own flock of sheep on a Northumberland farm to supply top quality lamb. From the "chalk board" specials to traditional roast dinners, meals are available in non-smoking areas and in the "Garden Restaurant".

Music and theme nights are part of the pub's fabric and attract people from all over the area. Live music is frequent and varied with some of the best local bands performing music from a multitude of genres including rock and the blues. The pub boasts a real coal fire, no jukebox and no gaming machines. A warm, relaxing and friendly environment awaits as your first visit to the Magnesia Bank firmly establishes it as a regular haunt for your travels.

Fact: ABV stands for alcohol by volume and is a measure of the alcohol in a finished beer. A standard beer has an ABV of about 3.7%; milds are weaker at around 3.4% whilst strong bitters can be up to 4.3%.





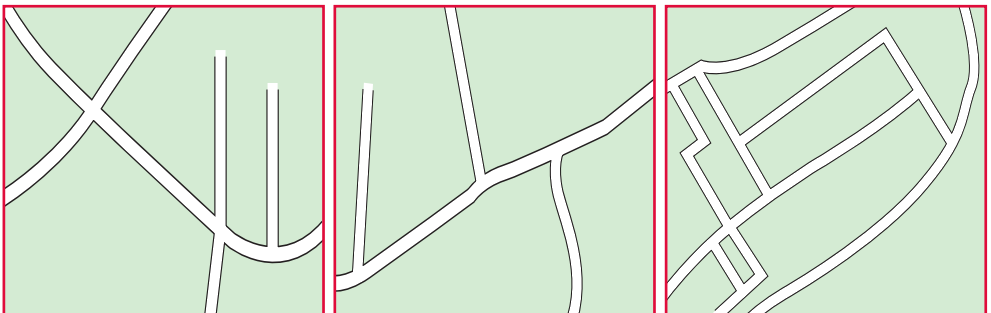
## *Turks Head, Front Street, Tynemouth*

Whichever direction you approach the Turks Head from, it is impossible not to turn your head and be impressed by Tynemouth Priory and Castle. Situated on the headland known as Pen Bal Crag and standing guard over the mouth of the River Tyne, the site is under the stewardship of English Heritage. Inside

the walls of the Castle lie the ruins of the Priory, which dates back to the 7th Century. The site is also the burial place of saints and kings and is marked by a blue plaque. Tynemouth Front Street, complete with magnificent Georgian buildings, perfectly complements the Priory and Castle and provides an idyllic location for the Turks Head.

Built in 1850, the Turks Head, named after a sailors knot, has a white tiled façade and is now listed. The pub consists of one room separated into two distinct lounge and bar areas. The pub is lively and attracts a regular crowd of all ages making the atmosphere relaxed. It is renowned for its real ale, which include McEwans Eighty Shilling, Charles Wells Bombardier, Theakstons Best, and up to four guest ales. The pub also offers good quality, value for money food served daily. The Turks Head has a well-used jukebox and is a popular haunt of football fans on match day cheering their team on watching the big screen. Regulars know the pub as the "Stuffed Dog". In 1873 it is rumoured that a sheepdog named Wandering Willie from the Borders was separated from his owner during a particularly bad thunderstorm. Whilst the Northumbrian Collie successfully rounded up the sheep, his owner had left, perhaps fearing Willie was lost forever. For the next seven years, Willie waited faithfully and patiently at the ferry landing for his owner to return. He never did. On his death, Willie was stuffed and is now on display in a glass case in the Turks Head. Raise a glass to Willie, a faithful dog, man's best friend and picture Tynemouth on a stormy day in Victorian England.

Fact: Zymurgy is the science of brewing. Throw that one into the conversation and people will believe you to be an expert!



The leaflet has been prepared to offer inspiration to real ale drinkers whether seasoned campaigners or those new to the experience. It is recommended that a sensible approach to drinking is adopted.

### *Tynemouth Lodge, Tynemouth Road, Tynemouth*

Trading as a public house since 1799, the Tynemouth Lodge is situated next door to the former Correction House and Justices Room, a prison for minor offenders. The Correction House, although with some modern extensions, is still largely intact and in 1999 was accorded Grade II listed building status. Two blue plaques are located in quick succession here, one marking the lodge itself and the other the Governor's Tree, where important visitors to Tynemouth were met in days gone by.

The current owner bought the Tynemouth Lodge in 1983 from Scottish and Newcastle Breweries at a time when it had fallen into a state of disrepair and had been threatened with demolition. At the time of closure the pub had been a brewery tenancy, selling only brewery-conditioned keg beers and lagers. The new owner, Hugh Price, was a founder member of the Tyneside Branch of CAMRA, and he went about restoring the old building which opened on 22nd December 1983 as a free house, specialising in real ale. He acquired land at the side of the pub for car parking and later bought the old Correction House next door.

The small bar now boasts the highest sales of Draught Bass on Tyneside, alongside traditional ales from Belhaven and Caledonian Breweries, both from north of the border. There has been a long tradition of quality Scottish beers being sold on Tyneside, made with the finest Scottish malted barley and pure water. The real ale policy at the Tynemouth Lodge is to offer a limited range of fast selling house beers, for an altogether fresher pint of beer. Tipples include Bass, Caledonian Deuchars IPA and Belhaven 80 Shilling Ale. Genuinely unspoilt, the pub has no television, jukebox, pool table or hot food. In the last twenty years there have been sightings of a ghost – a woman of about 30, dressed in Georgian period costume. Whether these were witnessed under the influence of drink... we will let you decide on that one!

Fact: CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale is the voice of the real ale drinker and traditional pub lover. The consumer group campaigns to save historic pubs, local breweries and real ales.



### *Wooden Doll, Hudson Street, North Shields*

Standing at the junction of Hudson Street and Tyne Street, outside the Wooden Doll you are greeted with unparalleled views of the River Tyne. Before entering the pub, it is worth strolling down Tyne Street, again with panoramic views of the river. Opposite Dockway Square stands the new High Light Building, traditionally used as a navigational aid for vessels entering the Tyne, the building would be aligned with the Low Light building, thus ensuring a safe passage for travellers. In Dockway Square stands a statue of Stan Laurel. Born Arthur Stanley Jefferson, Stan Laurel lived in Dockway Square between 1897 and 1901. Finally, as you head inside the pub, note the Wooden Doll statue outside, ironically, it is made of plaster!

The pub is part of the Jennings Brewery, based in the Lake District. Established as a family concern in 1828, pure Lakeland water is still used today for brewing and is drawn from the brewery's own well. Added to the finest malt and hops, Jennings Ales are brewed combining traditional methods and years of experience. Jennings Ales include Cocker Hoop, Cumberland Ale, Jennings Bitter and Sneck Lifter. The Wooden Doll features a large lounge, a bar with pool table and a comfortable restaurant. A large beer garden provides a welcoming sanctuary, when the weather allows. The pub is renowned locally for its regular live music which attracts people from all over the area and beyond for a night of blues, jazz and more. The pub car park, overlooking Pow Dene is mentioned in the novel "Falling Into Glory" by local born author Robert Westall. For added intrigue and mystery, the Wooden Doll is reputed to have a secret tunnel to help sailors escape the Press Gang from ships moored in Peggy's Hole, a deep water area where the Pow Burn merges with the Tyne. Have a look round and judge for yourself where the secret tunnel may be... perhaps a secret is waiting to be discovered.

Fact: Original Gravity, often abbreviated to OG is a measure of the strength of a beer. Water has an original gravity of 1000 and beer has a higher original gravity because of the presence of fermentable materials. A standard bitter can be expected to have an OG of about 1035.

### *Tap and Spile, Tynemouth Road, North Shields*

Tap and Spile public houses generally are, of course, well known to the real ale buff and seeing the pub sign is almost like greeting an old friend, even if that particular one is new to you. To the uninitiated the pub name may seem something of a mystery... a mystery about to be revealed. The words tap and spile are part of the real ale drinkers vocabulary, the tap is a simple on/off device used to control the flow of beer from a cask. Traditionally they were made of brass but are now more commonly made from plastic (perhaps you can canvass opinion on your travels as to whether this is to the detriment of the ale). The spile is a small piece of wood or plastic used to seal the shive – a bung used to seal the opening at the top of the cask. Following a quick lesson in real ale terms, you are now ready to try the Tap and Spile's beers.

A popular traditional pub with a separate bar and lounge, the pub prides itself on its selection of real ales. Winner of a prestigious CAMRA award, the ales on offer are well kept and offered at competitive prices. Ales on offer include Theakston Black Bull, Fullers London Pride and Bass. With up to 7 guest ales, there will certainly be something to whet your whistle. Perhaps the best time to try the Tap and Spile is at one of its beer festivals held periodically. Beer festivals are popular with real ale drinkers and are a celebration of traditional beers and provide an opportunity to discover new tipples. One way to enjoy festivals is to sample a half pint of each beer, marking it with a score out of ten, rounding off the evening with a pint of the ale awarded the highest score. Located mid way between North Shields and Tynemouth, the Tap and Spile is a welcome hostelry for those en-route.

Fact: Real ale is beer brewed in the time-honoured manner with hops, water and yeast. It is allowed to ferment in the cask in the pub cellar before being served by hand pump to the discerning drinker.



### *Cumberland Arms, Front Street, Tynemouth*

The Cumberland Arms stands at the western end of Front Street, a magnificent street with many Georgian buildings still intact, notably number 57, now a guest house and formerly the home of Harriet Martineau, a prominent 19th century writer on subjects as diverse as religion, politics and social reform. The Street is a haven for people who are attracted by the pubs, cafes, tea shops and antique shops.

Near to the pub at the end of the street is a statue of Queen Victoria overlooking a small park. Interestingly, the monarch is without her crown.

The Cumberland, as it is known is frequented by many regulars and is popular as a first port of call for many people enjoying a night out in the village. Unusual in shape, the pub is usually bustling with people. The Cumberland provides a welcome haven for real ale fans serving beer from local breweries as well as some from further afield. With a choice of 12 hand pulled beers available, you have the choice of having your beer served the traditional way straight from the cask. The pub also have the Cask Marque – an award reflecting the quality of the beer served. A "mystery drinker" will assess the pub and check the ales for temperature, appearance, aroma and, of course, taste. The Cask Marque plaque on display guarantees a scintillating real ale experience. The range of beers on offer is both impressive and varied and includes Timothy Taylors Best Bitter, Courage Directors and Theakstons Best Bitter. A comprehensive dining menu is offered including bar meals, salads, jacket potatoes and Sunday lunches. The pub is a popular meeting place for those wanting to watch the big match on the large screen in the downstairs bar. One intriguing part of the pub's distinct character is the signage to the gents and ladies or as they are known "gulls and buoys". It certainly causes mild amusement for those in the know when people make a potentially embarrassing mistake!

Fact: Quite often when you ask for a pint, you don't get one! Instead you get beer and lots of froth. A full measure is a full pint of beer excluding the head. Most establishments will normally and gladly top the pint up if asked.