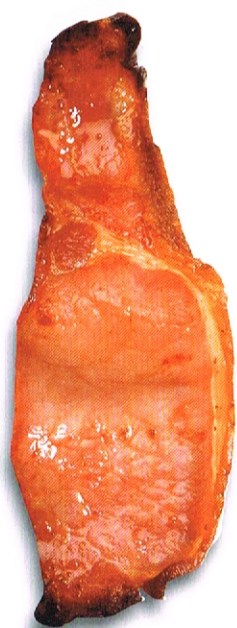


# The early birds

**MORE AND MORE PUBS ARE BREAKING INTO THE LUCRATIVE BREAKFAST MARKET**



It's the most important meal of the day, and customers are increasingly getting their gastronomic start on the go.

Horizons estimates that the out-of-home breakfast market was worth £3.2bn last year, up 13 per cent on 2013 and accounting for nine per cent of the total foodservice market.

For many pubs though, the start of the day remains uncharted waters, with the extra trade generated by a breakfast menu needing to be balanced against the additional staffing costs.

Among the pioneers of the pub breakfast are operators in tourist sites, including Friels Bar in Swatragh, Derry, in Northern Ireland.

As one of the pub category winners in the Best Breakfast Awards, announced during Farmhouse Breakfast Week at the start of the year, the pub was singled out



*Dualit toasters on the table at The Greenhouse*

for "Friels Fry", which is chef Anne McCann's own take on the Ulster Fry, the province's answer to the full English.

For £5.95, the bar's breakfast includes soda bread, potato bread, sausages, bacon, eggs, tomato, mushrooms and sautéed potatoes. "It's very good value, and that's very important," says Anne. "We have regulars from the local community who come in for the breakfast, which we serve all day, and we also get plenty of passing trade from visitors heading for the north coast."

Anne points out that the breakfast offer at Friels also includes healthier options, "although since winning the award we've seen even more interest in the Fry. Customers say they've heard it's a prize-winning breakfast."

When offering accommodation, "the quality of the breakfast is crucial" says Alex Clarke, owner of The Red Lion in Hinxton, Cambridge. "In the same way that you want customers to go away with a smile on their face at the end of an evening meal, the breakfast is the last thing they'll remember about their stay with you."

The pub has a busy B&B trade, with the breakfast spearheaded by a full English



*Friels Bar's Finola Macgill, Anne McCann and Dermot Friel with the prize-winning Friels Fry*

## Managed morning offers

### JD Wetherspoon

Served until noon, Wetherspoons' breakfast menu has recently added healthier options, including a bagel with cream cheese, and tropical fruit and Greek-style yoghurt with honey. Breakfast rolls and wraps are also featured.

### Greene King

Hungry Horse offers the Big Breakfast Burrito, a 12-inch tortilla filled with baked beans, ketchup, grilled tomato, a flat mushroom, scrambled egg, cheese, two rashers of bacon, a pork sausage and hash brown bites.

butter milk pancakes served with a choice of fruit or bacon, and dirty beans on toast, made with pulled pork, bacon, cannellini, butter and baked beans in hickory smoked BBQ sauce, and topped with a fried egg.

### Mitchells & Butlers

Harvester offers a weekend breakfast menu from 9am to 12 noon, with the Harvey's Breakfast as its take on the full English. Also available is the Breakfast Sundae, made with natural yogurt, apple & blackcurrant compote and granola. At M&B's Premium Country Dining pubs, the breakfast menu includes smoked salmon and scrambled eggs, a bacon & avocado sandwich and vegetarian eggs benedict, served with poached egg and mushrooms.

### Whitbread

The Brewers Fayre brand, co-located with Premier Inns, offers a "kids eat free" breakfast which allows two under-10s to eat free when one adult buys a breakfast from the English and continental buffet selection.

### Loungers

The expanding café bar chain has a breakfast/brunch menu which includes triple-stacked,



which includes free-range eggs either fried, poached or scrambled, along with bacon, sausage, plum tomato, mushroom and black pudding. Among the other options is eggs benedict made with Suffolk ham and poached egg.

"Including local produce is just as important at breakfast as it is on other parts of the menu," believes Alex. "It's something customers expect to see."

The pub has an AA Rosette and features in guidebooks including Sawdays, which

"makes a difference when people are looking for pubs offering B&B. They know there's a proper kitchen serving a good quality breakfast."

While the Red Lion's accommodation is the biggest driver of its breakfast trade, it has also captured the business breakfast meetings market.

Located in a busy town centre site, The Greenhouse in Bristol uses checked tablecloths to create a traditional café vibe at breakfast time, whisking them

away to transform the business back into a pub by lunchtime. This retro feel is enhanced by chunky Dualit toasters on each table, allowing customers to make their own toast. General manager Neil Shorter says: "Piping hot toast is an important part of breakfast, but it's where a lot of pubs and restaurants let you down. Allowing our customers to make their toast when they're ready has proved very popular." ■

## Celebrate the sausage

British Sausage Week 2014 runs from November 3-9. BPEX has designed promotional kits including posters, balloons, stickers and a dedicated booklet full of tips, interviews and recipe ideas. The kits are available on request by emailing [info@bpexfoodservice.co.uk](mailto:info@bpexfoodservice.co.uk)

