



CORFLU CRAIC

Corflu Craic (Corflu 40)

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Progress Report 4 – Feb 2023

The Malone Hotel, 60 Eglantine Avenue

Belfast, BT9 6DY, UK.

31st March—2nd April, 2023

“I could murder a pint...”



So coffee, tea and indeed food are all very important but every so often – as Ian Rankin has said – I could murder a pint. (You may want to watch this advert – which is great – but for a terrible beer: <https://youtu.be/pRAbCF9OGhw>)

So where can you go that is not the hotel (though the bar is great there) to see a bit of local colour and get a decent pint? Two local bars that I and the committee can recommend:

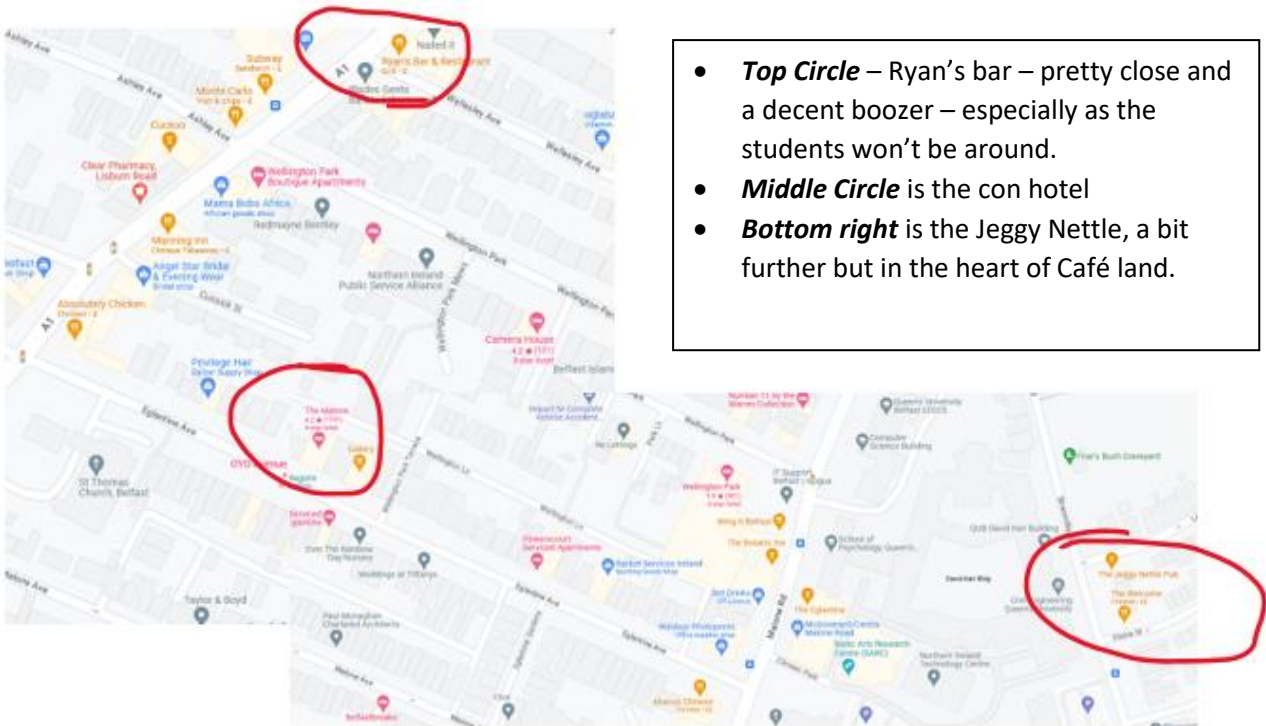
Jeggy Nettle

This pub used to be called House and is a narrow Victorian house converted into a pub. It's really cosy inside and if you want to skip the TVs and music head straight through the bar, and upstairs to the lounge area. If it's lunchtime you may have to eat, else it's a lovely snug to sit and have a natter.

It will get busy in the evenings and during 'sportsing' events at the weekends – and there is usually a quiz or live music or other entertainment on as well.

Not had the food – but it looks tempting to be fair.

Pubs near the hotel



Ryan’s bar

If I think about all the Corflus I’ve been to, there has always been one bar fairly close to the hotel which it is good to escape to every so often – or just a convenient place to meet up.

For Corflu Craic I think Ryan’s may be that bar. It is close enough to dander too (even Nic Farey could make it, I reckon...), serves a decent pint of Guinness and has some local craft beers in bottle and at least one on tap.

The food is reasonable as well – there is a good range of pub classics around £10 - £12 and I’m really glad to see they have Boxyty on the menu. Check out this link for more details -

<https://www.tastingtable.com/1021225/boxty-the-irish-potato-pancakes-that-go-with-everything/> Depending on the time of day you should be able to get a seat and relax in the warm surroundings, and the staff are young but engaging.

These two are the best pubs within staggering distance of the Hotel – which I count to be about 500 metres – and should balance out the Greyhound bar in the hotel. If you’re willing to step out a bit further, or even into town – then Belfast is littered with great places to drink (I’ll let you find restaurants further afield for yourself) Here are my favs.



For more details contact: belfast@corflu.org

Lavery's – down the road from the hotel



God, I love Lavery's. When I came to Belfast in the mid-80s (1980s for those sniggering at the back...) this was the pub that I eventually called my spiritual home. It was a punk pub (and much smaller than this iteration) and home of the alternative scene. Students – reader, I was one – were frowned upon as middle-class snobs with no business in a proper drinkers' pub.

The juke box is legendary. I took friends from Richmond, VA in here for a quick pint and we stayed hours flicking through the song options and drinking Guinness. I always felt this was a better record collection than even the coolest of my cool mates had...

When I left to go to Canada the Belfast fandom mob gave me my send off here, and now we've reconstituted into the Friday Curry club we've started ending up here again after a Nepalese curry in Botanic Avenue, the street behind this. Whilst the staff are younger, they are still trained properly and there is still that edgy vibe in there – although a lot of 'young wans' these days have no idea. It is 0.8 miles from the hotel – a straight line from the end of the street on the way into town.

White's Tavern- in town centre

This is where James White used to come after he taught creative writing classes in the local technical college and it eventually took over from the existing fan meet ups in Belfast. This is also where I first met local Belfast fandom – Paul Campbell (Publisher of Extro), Joe Nolan, Frank McKeever, Graham Andrews, Prof Jim Mallory, and Brian Clarke in later years. There were some other fly-by-nights – including Caroline Mullan – before my time but these were the central characters.

The Craic was also mighty – topics flying left and centre but always featuring old SciFi movies and B&W classics, writers' pseudonyms (Frank had an encyclopaedic knowledge), and what nonsense was happening in each other's lives. I was 18 or 19 at the time and in awe of these grown-ups – one an actual professor at the University I was attending. It set the benchmark for pub groups ever since.

When they started playing jazz music on Thursday nights, we moved across the yard to the Monico – another equally glorious bar – snugs where we could all fit in, Joe the barman who let us eat our own bizarre snacks, and where the locals were consigned to the back room to drink themselves into a stupor and sing the night away. Sadly, it's all been modified now into what looks like a decent bar – but they removed all the memories and the bullet hole in the window which gave it such character.



The Kitchen Bar & Bittles Bar – in Town

A great spot to watch the locals in action, and also to take the weight off your feet after shopping in Victoria Square – just to the left in this picture. An old skool Belfast pub that is great for food, will have a range of seats, and the staff know how to pour a pint of Guinness.

Used to be the place for Real Ale in town – but there are more and better options available. Still, I drop in for a pint every so often when I'm in town and having lunch.



John Bittles used to be the head barman at The Morning Star pub – a bit further down the street when I was going there in the md 90s – but was always going to open his own place.

It's small as you can see – but has a fantastic art gallery refreshed after a recent fire. This is a drinkers' pub and all the better for it. John recently got into a spot of bother due to this sign:



“While John confirmed to Belfast Live that the sign is "a bit of craic", but there are too many [tourists] looking for half-pints. We can't afford to have people sitting at the bar only drinking a half-pint of Guinness and you just don't get the same effect drinking a half-pint as you would from a pint.”

I mean – what's not to like? John tells it as it is and the time, effort and care he puts into pulling a pint of the Black Stuff shows. And when I say he – it is almost a one-man show – so if you do take the trip into town, you're almost certainly going to be served by him – and there's always a bit of craic about him.

Best of the rest – in Town



Muriel's

Just to prove it is not all about the beer and pints of Guinness we have this Gin den of iniquity – which in fact is a shabby chic boudoir devoted to all things Gin.

It gets really busy of an evening – especially the weekends – but is deffo worth a visit – if only to try the NI gin served with a piece of honeycomb; believe me it is worth it for that alone.



Kelly's Cellars

In the heart of Belfast and unchanged in the almost 40 years I've been in Belfast. Low exposed wood beamed ceilings, equally waist height bar, and granite flagstones for the floor. It's all locals here – who know a decent bar when they see it.

Seafood – if you love it – next door is the [Mourne Seafood Bar](#) – book early because everyone in Belfast knows how good it is!



Honourable mentions

In the Cathedral Quarter of Town is [The Duke of York](#) and the [John Hewitt](#) (now run by Boundary Brewing, but previously a workers' co-operative) – neither of which have TVs, but do have great drinks selections and atmosphere.

Craft Beer – [Northern Lights](#) is on the Ormeau Road – opposite the Errigle Inn where we are meeting on Thursday night – all craft beer – though it also has wine, cider and a great whiskey selections. Attached to Lavery's (mentioned above) is the [Woodworkers](#) – which specialises in craft beer as well- though a smaller selection.

Botanic Avenue has [The Empire](#) – an old Music Hall whose cellars are now an atmospheric pub, with live music upstairs – and I still have a soft spot for [Katy Dalys](#) on Ormeau Avenue. Might even tell you why some time!

For more details contact: belfast@corflu.org

It's award season – Deadline is 2 weeks away!

The Incomplete Register 2022 (<https://efanzines.com/TIR/index.htm>), contains the voters' guide and pro forma ballot for the 2023 FAAn awards, fanzine fandom's only dedicated honours, and voting is now open.

The voting deadline is midnight (Pacific time) Friday March 10 2023, and ballots must be received by then (please note this if you're sending by snail mail). Your own name and contact details should also be clearly supplied.

The awards will be announced at Corflu Craic in Belfast, Northern Ireland on April 2 2023. Voting is open to anyone with an interest in fanzines, no memberships of anything are required.

Publicity is welcomed. Feel free to share and distribute this as far and wide as you like.

Nic Farey (Current FAAn Awards administrator)

THE INCOMPLETE REGISTER 2022



A FAAn awards listzine published
by Nic Farey
2657 Rungsted Street
Las Vegas NV 89142
fareynic@gmail.com

The man who admitted he voted in the Neffys instead

For more details contact: belfast@corflu.org

Membership List (as at 21st February 2023)

Drop me a line if I've missed you off this, or you know someone who should be on it, but isn't.

Corflu Members				Corflu Members			
1	Ted	White	S	38	Bill	Burns	A
2	Tommy	Ferguson	A	39	Mary	Burns	A
3	Robert	Lichtman	S	40	Sandra	Bond	A
4	Rich	Coad	A	41	Ian	Sorensen	A
5	Stacy	Scott	A	42	Yvonne	Rowse	A
6	David	Hodson	A	43	Mike	Meara	A
7	Spike		A	44	Pat	Meara	A
8	Tom	Becker	A	45	Roy	Kettle	A
9	Pat	Virzi	A	46	Kathleen	Mitchell	A
10	Dennis	Virzi	A	47	Hazel	Ashworth West	A
11	Geri	Sullivan	A	48	Tony	Berry	A
12	Nigel	Rowe	A	49	Sue	Mason	A
13	Rob	Jackson	A	50	Alison	Scott	A
14	Martin	Tudor	A	51	Steven	Cain	A
15	Heloise	Tudor	A	52	Pascal	Thomas	A
16	Christina	Lake	A	53	John	Berry	A
17	Doug	Bell	A	54	Heath	Row	S
18	Mark	McCann	A	55	Perry	Middlemiss	S
19	Gary	Mattingly	A	56	Murray	Moore	A
20	Malcolm	Hutchinson	A	57	Mary Ellen	Moore	A
21	Marcin	Klak	A	58	John	Nielsen Hall	A
22	Lucy	Huntzinger	A	59	Joe	Siclari	A
23	Jerry	Kaufman	A	60	Edie	Stern	A
24	Peter	Sullivan	S	61	Cat	Coast	A
25	Suzanne	Tompkins	A	62	Dave	Hicks	A
26	Nic	Farey	S	63	Rich	McAllister	A
27	Jen	Farey	S	64	Lin	McAllister	A
28	Keith	Freeman	A	65	John	Hertz	S
29	Claire	Brialey	A	66	Dave	Langford	A
30	Mark	Plummer	A	67	Joseph	Nicholas	A
31	Eugene	Doherty	A	68	Steve	Jeffery	A
32	Harry	Bell	A	69	Vikki Lee	France	A
33	Pat	Bell	A	70	Linda	Krawecke	A
34	Ron	Gemmell	A	71	Ian	McDonald	A
35	Alan	Rosenthal	A	72	Vincent	Docherty	A
36	Jeanne	Bowman	A	73	James	Bacon	A
37	Moshe	Feder	A				

“Any craic, lads?”

Craic is the Irish word that most confuses outsiders, yet it is a relatively simple concept. It is the atmosphere, fun, and carry-on surrounding a particular night out.

“How was the craic?” is the first question uppermost in most young (and old) Irish minds after a weekend. Here’s the encyclopedia definition:

"Craic" (/kræk/ KRACK), or "crack" is a term for news, gossip, fun, entertainment, and enjoyable conversation, particularly prominent in Ireland. It is often used with the definite article – the craic.

So now that you have a grasp on what craic is, here's all the different kinds of craic (as if you weren't confused enough!):

- **Good craic:** A fairly ok night out, fun but nothing too amazing.
- **Mighty craic:** Better than good craic, not quite at the highest level, someone did some crazy stuff maybe.
- **Savage craic:** Almost there, great night all together, everyone on top form, Guinness flowing, great jokes.
- **Deadly craic:** A step above savage craic but not quite the Everest moment.
- **Wile Craic:** Next level stuff – Derry Craic (Derry Girls anyone?) - It represents a pronunciation of wild!
- **The craic was ninety:** The nirvana of craic, everything was amazing, incredible, everyone hooked up, the pints were great. No one quite sure how the word ninety came into it--a famous Christy Moore song “The craic was ninety in the Isle of Man” maybe...