



Festival sponsor



- Have you got what it takes to solve the murder?
- Can you piece together the clues while traveling to real ale venues in Haydock, Earlestown and Newton-le-Willows?
- Complete at your own pace throughout August 2026.
- Start point Haydock Reading Room.

Chance to win two tickets to the Retrospective Festival at Sherdley Park on Friday 11 September

Murder on the High Street

Case File 001 : A murder to debate



Murder on the High Street: Case File 001 - A murder to debate

A body has been found slumped across the snooker table at Haydock Reading & Debating Society. Nigel, the world famous award winning club steward, wants things clearing up as soon as possible. He has called in a favour and asked you and your team from the St Helens & Districts Major Crime Unit (MCU) to help solve the case.

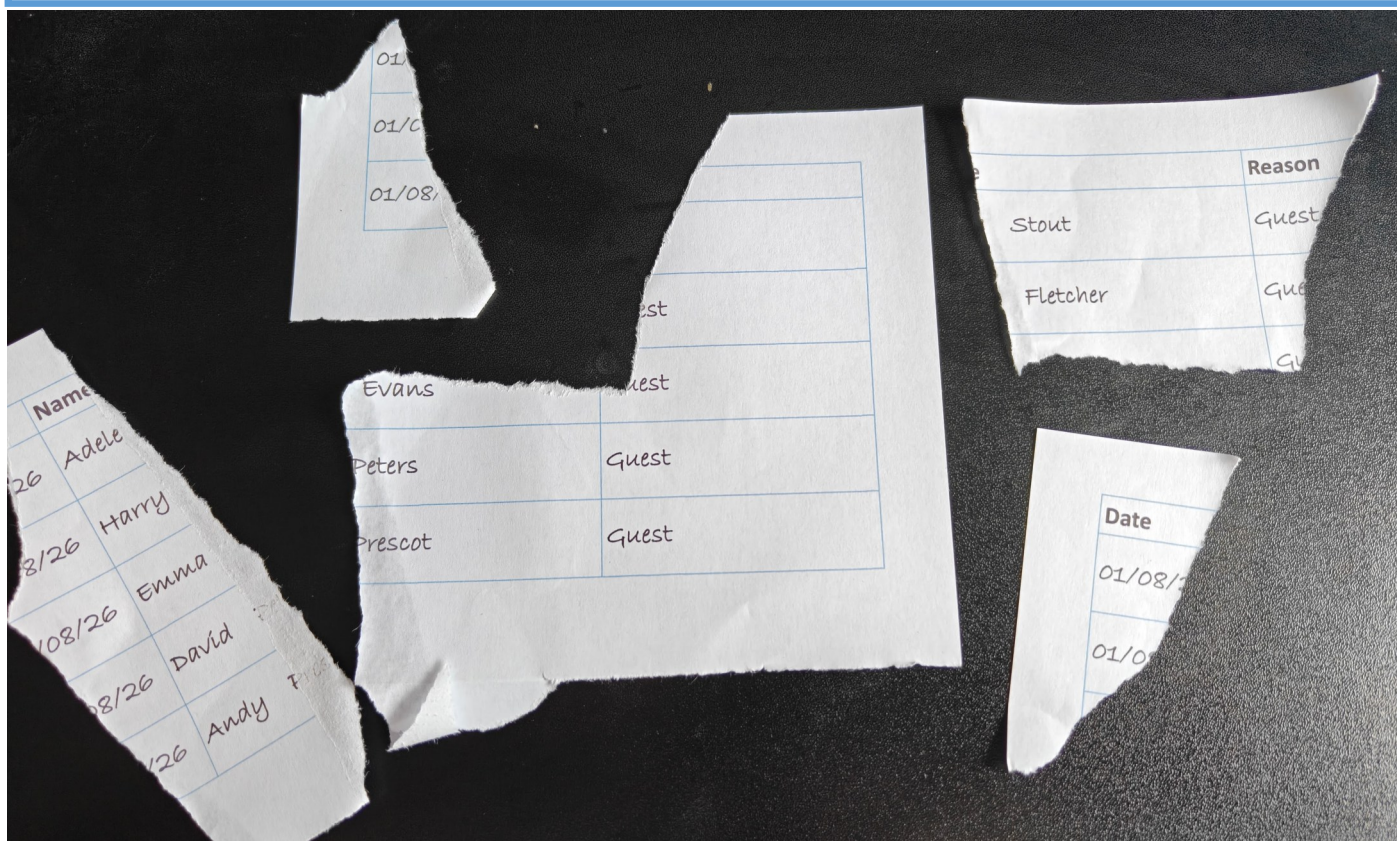
Your first job is to identify who has been murdered and then you can try and find out who it was and their weapon of choice. The clues to help you will need to be collected from several public houses across Haydock, Earlestown and Newton-le-Willows. The Evidence List on the back page will be a big help. Your team has access to the MCU database of pubs and their opening times via www.camra.org.uk/pubs. It will also show where hungry detectives can get a bite to eat as well as enjoy a refreshing drink to power those little grey cells.

Assessing the crime scene

Head as quickly as you can to Haydock Reading Room. When you get there enter via the side door where Nigel or one of his staff will greet you, if you are not a member you'll be asked to sign the crime scene visitors book. Grab one of the excellent quality real ales and settle in to take in the crime scene and gather any clues.

Clue 1: While settling down with your drinks one of your team is chatting to a member whilst also checking on the horse race. He finds out that the victim was here to celebrate the anniversary of their Great Uncle Peter becoming an honorary member of the club for his work in the nuclear industry. They must have signed in to the visitors book and there must be another clue in the club that will help with identification. You get the visitor book but the page has been torn out. Thankfully you don't seem to be dealing with a master criminal as they have just torn it up and put it in the bin. Can you piece it back together and identify who the victim is?

The identified suspects and possible murder weapons are listed on the evidence list (back page).



Clue 2: You discover that an innocent suspect was admiring some 'Yickers' memorabilia which included his first name and a nod to his surname. Have a look around the club and see if you can identify them and cross them off your suspect list.



Interviewing the suspects that remain at the club gives you an important clue.

Clue3: Phil Simms can't remember where he was at the time of the murder. Suspicious in itself. SOCOs trawl through his phone for any useful information and find a collection of photo's taken around the time of the murder, although many of them are blurred and not helpful. If you can identify where they were taken it could prove his innocence if he wasn't in the vicinity of the club at the time. Here is the photo the SOCOs think will be most useful. When you identify the location add it to your evidence list.

Location number 2: Nine Arches

The trail has brought you to the Nine Arches in Earlestown. You've identified the victim and started to eliminate suspects. Grab a refreshment as you now need to consider which suspects still remain and possible murder weapon.

Clue 4: There is a Green Griffin showing you the surname of an innocent person. They were in the Nine Arches sharing a pizza and catching up with another innocent person while enjoying a pint of real ale.

Clue 5: The second person's name can be found in more than one location in the Nine Arches

Clue 6: Can you find where these letters are from. Once you find it you need to use the 4 numbers that are associated with it. Multiply the first 2 numbers to give you an answer A and then multiply the second 2 numbers to give you an answer B. Take answer A away from Answer B and that number now gives you the ID number of a weapon that wasn't used.



The trail continues and the scent carries you towards Newton-le-Willows where the Pied Bull awaits.

Location 3: The Pied Bull

If the weather is nice you can go over the evidence inside and out but you'll need to check both to gather all the clues.

Clue 7: In this dog friendly establishment there seems to be a gambling element. Maybe the answer lies in smoky rooms and gambling dens. It seems you are barking up the wrong tree though. The number of players in the game eliminates another murder weapon.

Clue 8: This person's St Helens namesake traces its history back to 1762 and is commemorated here for all to see. SOCOs have analysed a beer and gravy stain on their clothing that proves their innocence.

Location 4: Stocks Tavern

This pub hasn't always been the Stocks Tavern in the murky past it was known as the Blue Bell. Maybe other things have changed and are not all they seem.

Clue 9: You and your team enter into a room that feels like the lounge side of the pub. All is not as clear as it seems though. Find out what this space was and you have an anagram of an innocent suspect or do you? Best to enjoy a drink while you ponder this one as you don't want to eliminate the wrong character.

Clue 10: Another suspect insists they were enjoying a pint of real ale for £3. A likely story! If you can find evidence it may be true, the name will also eliminate one of the murder weapons.

Location 6: Kirkfield

The trail heads across the road the Kirkfield Hotel. Maybe the murderer hid out here for the night and then escaped on a train. As your team head in to the bar they settle down with a drink and start looking at the menu, maybe they could get something from the interesting bar snacks to keep them energised. Out of the corner of your eye you spot one of the suspects sat reading in the next room. Wandering over you decide it is time to quiz them.

Clue 11: They share that they often enjoy a quiet pint here reading one of the books on offer. They say they are happy to lend a hand in anyway they can with the case and explain they were in the Kirkfield reading at the time of the murder. Andrew, the friendly owner confirms their alibi. You weren't destined to identify the killer here but with a bit of luck you can find the name of another innocent person.

Clue 12: Your phone pings to let you know an email has just arrived. The preliminary autopsy report is back which should help narrow down the murder weapon. On opening the report the section identifying the murder weapon has become corrupted meaning only part of it is visible. It's also partly scrambled up. The full report will have to wait until you return to the station but you should be able to eliminate one more weapon. You get the relevant page of the report printed but misplace it somewhere in the Kirkfield. The reports date is clearly Friday May 26 and an 'extra special 8 round' test was conducted to identify the weapon. You discover it hidden within the letters of this pie-eater's first name. Identify the 3 letters and rearrange them to eliminate that weapon.

Clue 13: One last clue at the Kirkfield sees you eliminate another murder weapon. The report states this weapon has never left the Kirkfield, but Pumba and a local icon have been keeping it company. Cross it off your evidence list once you've identified it.

Location 7: Drinkworthy

The trail takes you to a new haunt for people looking for a real live beer. Not fitting the stereotype (maybe like the pattern to this case) Drinkworthy offers a selection of the extraordinary as well as the familiar in both cans and bottles. Look for the evidence to prove its real though if that's what you desire.

The list of suspects is beginning to narrow down so it can't belong before you solve the case. The clues here should help you eliminate 2 more suspects.

Clue 14: One of the suspects actually works as a professional butler and on checking with his employer he has a solid alibi. At the time in question he was serving Sauvignon Blanc to a group of guests at an exclusive wine tasting event. Have a look around, he may be a little mixed up but I'm sure you'll spot him doing what he does best and be able to eliminate him.

Clue 15: This suspect thinks its looking like a bit of a stitch-up. With the number of suspects getting ever smaller the chance of them being accused seem to be getting quite high. Whilst sipping an easy, light and delicious French wine that glides down the throat they offer an alibi that translates into their innocence. Can you identify and eliminate them.

Location 8: Firkin

You're now incredibly close to solving this case. Just one last set-of clues and you should have it. Entering the Firkin you see the real ales—both cask, keg and cans, as well as a real cider offering. This looks a good place to grab a drink and solve this case.

Clue 16: Chatting to Luke at the bar you find out that one of the suspects was on the front of the 562 on their way to the club when the murder was committed. This means they couldn't have done it. Have a look around and see if you can find the evidence to eliminate them.

Clue 17: While chilling looking at the beer selection you find the final vital clue to the murder weapon. Here it was all along in black and white (well maybe a shade of yellow). It's obvious now and the weather is looking great for a pint of cask, what weather isn't? Can you identify the murder weapon and mark it on the evidence list.

With just one suspect remaining they are arrested and when presented with the facts of the case confess to the murder. The weapon you identified is found with them which is the final clue that proves their guilt.

Well done to you and your team. Now time to celebrate.

Once you have all the answers (Victim, photo location, weapon and murderer) email them to pubfest@sthelens.camra.org.uk with your full name and telephone number. All correct entries received by 31 August 2026 will go into a draw for 2 Retrospective Festival. No cash alternative.

Please email us and let us know what you thought of this first murder mystery.

St Helens & Districts CAMRA
Covering St Helens & surrounding districts including Billinge, Earlestown, Garswood, Haydock, Knowsley, Newton-le-Willows, Prescot, Rainford, Rainhill & Whiston
Campaigning for Pubs, Pints and People

Events throughout August
Big Bang Bank Holiday
26 - 31 August
www.sthelens.camra.org.uk/pubfest

Logos: CAMRA St Helens & Districts, Willowbrook Hospice (Every Contact Counts), Festival sponsor SSO Logistics Ltd, and Festival of Pubs.

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CONFIDENTIAL - EVIDENCE LIST

Victim name:

Phil Simms photo location:

Weapon:



1) Wooden Yo-Yo



2) Knife



3) Gun



4) Scarf



5) Golf Club



6) Trophy



7) Rhino horn

Suspects:

Rose Mook



Eric Ram



Peter Mild



John Flemish



William Manus



Phil Simms



Geraldine Whitley



Levi Creek



Cole Parkside



Mike Gouleyant



Notes