



Picture: PETER LUCKHURST

Make mine a pint and a parcel

PICK-ME-UP: Landlord Lee Devilliers holds a parcel for Bronwyn Cooper

IN times gone by, 'taking the dog for a walk' used to be a handy excuse to pop down to the pub for a swift pint or two.

Now, however, you can leave Fido at home and announce instead that you are off to pick up the Christmas shopping. A service allowing people to collect online shopping from their local pub is targeting busy workers who are planning to do their Christmas shopping online.

Use Your Local, founded by former Scottish & Newcastle manager Stuart Mills, 40, is launching its festive campaign tomorrow to get as many pubs as possible to join the scheme.

'It's a great way to get your Christmas presents,' he said. 'There is nothing more annoying than staying at home all day for a delivery that never comes, or queuing at a Post Office to pick up a parcel. And receptionists at work are fed up with deliveries sent to the office.'

'This service puts pubs at the heart of their community and there is nothing more enjoyable than an excuse for a quick pint.'

It costs pubs £50 a year to subscribe to the service. They

then give customers a unique code to enter when they buy items from Amazon, for example. The landlord receives an email saying that a delivery is on its way and hands it to the owners when they drop in.

From tomorrow, the details of every pub in mainland Britain will also be on useyourlocal.com. Customers will be able to rate their local for quality of food and drink, service and whether it has a beer garden or hosts a pub quiz, for instance.

The site is backed by drinks companies Diageo - which owns Guinness, Smirnoff and Gordon's gin - Heineken UK and Coca-Cola, which will receive feedback on drink purchases.

Lee Devilliers, landlord of the Nightingale pub in Balham, south London, which was recently awarded the title of Proudest Pub in Britain, was one of the first to sign up and said his regulars had found it really useful.

'We've got a spare room where we keep all the parcels and it has been a great boost to business,' he said.

SARAH BRIDGE