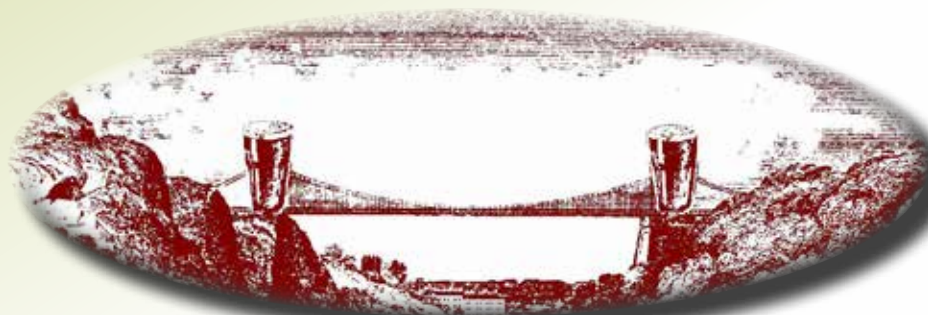


Free
No. 125
Spring
2020



Campaign
for
Real Ale



PINTS WEST

Multi-award-winning magazine of the Bristol & District
and Bath & Borders branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale



The pub that time forgot

PINTS WEST

The multi-award-winning magazine of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, plus the Bath & Borders branch

Brought to you entirely by unpaid volunteers

Ten thousand copies of Pints West are distributed free to hundreds of pubs in and around the cities of Bristol and Bath ... and beyond

Also available on-line at www.camrabristol.org.uk

Published by the Bristol & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, February 2020 ©

Editor: Steve Plumridge (steve.plumridge.pintswest@gmail.com)

Design & Layout by: Steve Plumridge

Next edition: end of May 2020 (probably)

Printed by: JamPrint

Subscriptions: to be put on a mailing list to receive Pints Wests (for UK addresses) send **ten standard (not large) 1st class stamps** to the editor

CAMRA Good Beer Guide: suggestions for future entries, and

comments on existing ones, can be made to our GBG coordinator,

Martin Gray: marting1@sky.com

If you have any pub updates: please enter them via whatpub.com or email details to whatpub@camrabristol.org.uk

For further information on all aspects of CAMRA contact the Bristol & District branch secretary, Michael Bertagne: m.bertagne@camrabristol.org.uk

Trading Standards: for problems such as consistent short measures, no price lists, call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline – they will assess your problem and pass it to Trading Standards if considered appropriate: 03454 040506 (Mon-Fri 9-5). See www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards

LETTERS: please email correspondence to the editor at

steve.plumridge.pintswest@gmail.com

or post it to Pints West Editor, Steve Plumridge,

Garden Flat, 6 Royal York Villas, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR

ADVERTISE: to find out about advertising in Pints West, please email steve.plumridge.pintswest@gmail.com

CONTACTS: for further contact details and diaries see inside back page

Views expressed in Pints West are those of the individual authors and not necessarily supported by CAMRA

Inclusion of an advertisement does not imply endorsement by CAMRA

Thanks to this issue's contributors:

Andy Coston
Anisha Chandar
Bianca Ambrose
Dave Graham
Dave Thomas
Dave Weir
Duncan Shine
Eddie Taberner
Henry Davies
Ian Beckey
Laura Coombs
Laurie Gibney
Mal Fuller

Mark Munday
Martin Ansell
Martin Campling
Martin Gray
Marty Cummins
Michael Bertagne
Paul Gregory
Pete Bridle
Pete Dommett
Pete Taberner
Phil Cummings
Richard Aldridge
Richard Brooks

Robin E Wild
Roy Sanders
Stephen Edmonds
Steve Hunt
Steve Plumridge
Tim Nickolls
Tim Webb
Trevor Cromie
Vince Murray

Contents

Page 23	BAD Ladies
Page 32	BADRAG (rare ales group)
Page 18	Bath & Borders pub news
Page 22	Bath Winter Ales Festival
Page 7	Bristol Beer Festival
Page 28	Bristol Pubs Group
Page 43	CAMRA diaries & contacts
Page 12	Champion Beer of Britain South West results
Page 8	Cider
Page 22	Cryptic crossword
Page 41	Going for a beer ... in Wrocław
Page 39	Good Beer Guide and beer scoring
Page 17	Luppitt Inn – the pub that time forgot (cover picture)
Page 20	Midsomer Norton pubs
Page 34	National Pubs of the Year
Page 14	Shine on Thornbury
Page 24	Weston-super-Mare news

Brewery news:

Page 36	Arbor Ales	Page 16	Left Handed Giant
Page 5	Bath Ales	Page 38	Little Giant
Page 21	Bath Brew House	Page 31	Moor Beer
Page 3	Basement (new)	Page 10	New Bristol
Page 13	Bristol Beer Factory	Page 19	Plain Ales
Page 19	Brotherhood	Page 19	Twisted
Page 3	Cheddar Ales	Page 9	Twisted Oak
Page 10	Croft Ales	Page 37	Wiper & True
Page 26	Epic Beers	Page 10	Zerodegrees
Page 31	Good Chemistry		
Page 27	Incredible		

and so much more...



10 great reasons to join CAMRA

1 CAMPAIGN for great beer, cider and perry	2 Become a BEER EXPERT
3 Enjoy CAMRA BEER FESTIVALS in front of or behind the bar	4 GET INVOLVED and make new friends
5 Save YOUR LOCAL	6 Find the BEST PUBS IN BRITAIN
7 Get great VALUE FOR MONEY	8 DISCOVER pub heritage and the great outdoors
9 Enjoy great HEALTH BENEFITS (really!)	10 HAVE YOUR SAY

What's yours?

Discover your reason and join the campaign today:

www.camra.org.uk/10reasons



Campaign for Real Ale

Introducing Basement Brewery

Bristol's brewing industry continues to flourish!

Our city's ever expanding roster of breweries continues to grow with the addition of Basement Brewery. Founded by Ben, the popular landlord of the Robin Hood pub on St Michael's Hill, Kingsdown, Basement Brewery is a new venture stemming from home-brew beginnings in Ben's basement (hence the name!). The new brewing equipment moved into St Phillips in October 2019, and Ben (pictured) - aims to have the brewery commercially producing beer at full capacity by the middle of this year.

Ben began home-brewing a number of years ago and wanted to progress, and take the opportunity to go commercial. As a landlord he's spent many days with some of the fantastic brewers who supply the Robin Hood and it became his ambition to be able to have his own beer on the bar, across Bristol and beyond.

In February the brewery was about to start packaging a hazy pale ale for distribution, a crowd-pleaser of a fruit-driven hop-flavourful cask ale that will be very popular once available. In addition, the brewery is producing a core range of cask beers that will include a session IPA, a couple of darks (Ben's preferred style of beer) and a "beefy IPA". The brewery's headliner ale, *Oblique Strategy* is a hop-dominant 4.1% session IPA named after Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt's card-based method for promoting creativity. Ben said he felt the Eno approach at challenging constraint fitted Basement Brewery's ethos for creative and unrestricted brewing techniques.

In addition to their core range of cask beers, the brewery will also produce seasonal specials and some interesting brews. Due to the scale of Basement Brewery, Ben is able to be innovative and take more risks with brewing. Ben's currently using his old home-brew kit as a test kit creating small batch brews that are more experimental by nature. In February he was testing pale ale recipes for a loose-leaf



tea pale ale with tropical, fruit-based tea leaves, and an alternative ale using smokier and sweet bonfire toffee tea.

Ben will be expanding distribution throughout pubs in the city but *Oblique Strategy* has recently been on tap at the Good Measure on Chandos Road in Redland, and of course can be found at the Robin Hood on St Michael's Hill where beer enthusiasts can get lucky and discover some of the smaller batch experimental brews Ben has been producing.

The brewery will be supplying beer for the CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival in March and other events including personalised brews for weddings, and group events throughout 2020.

To get in touch, contact Ben at Basement Brewery on 07702430808.

Laura Coombs

New tap room for Cheddar Ales

Major news from Cheddar Ales is the opening of their new tap room at the brewery just outside Cheddar. The tap room is set within the brewery itself with beers running straight from the cold store and will serve their six permanent beers plus seasonal brews and guest beers (all cask, although two keg lines are also available). A variety of events are being planned to take place here in the future, with music and food provided.

First of all though will be the 'Grand Opening', which is from 5pm on 4th April, when there will be 11 cask beers available alongside one keg beer and a couple of local ciders. There will be a range of gins from local company Gin Jar, plus wine and soft drinks and food options, as well as live music from local covers band *One for the Road*. Tickets for this special event will be available on the door at £5, to include a branded glass, your first pint, and entry into a 'beery' prize draw (10% discount for CAMRA members).

For those unfamiliar with the location, it has on-site parking, camping less than five minutes' stagger away (www.petruthpaddocks.co.uk) and the 126 Wells to Weston-super-Mare bus passes regularly.

As for Cheddar Ales' beers, following on from their South West region Champion Beer of Britain award for *Totty Pot*, the next seasonal beers will be *Bedstraw* (a 4.4% Kolsch) and *Seismic Shift* (a 4.2% New Zealand pale ale), joined by a new brew, *Piney Sleight* (a 4% session IPA).

Dave Thomas



Perfection

is a rich aroma of hops and malt.
Taste for yourself to see why it's called Gem



THE TASTE IS
IN THE NAME



News from Bath Ales' Hare Brewery

Beers

Popping out of the rabbit hole (see the previous issue of our multi-award-winning magazine) and bounding along in time for spring is *March Hare*. This 3.9% pale ale, using Nelson Sauvin and Motueka hops from New Zealand, will be found on the LocAle bar at this year's Bristol Beer Festival, as well as the usual outlets. *March Hare* follows on from *White Rabbit*, a 3.6% session IPA brewed with Cascade and Amarillo hops, which turned out to be an extremely popular ale, selling out at both brewery and outlets very quickly.

Harefest

If you are a fan of *Rare Hare* remember to add Saturday 6th June to your diary, as this iconic but elusive beer will be making a welcome return, not only in cask but also in bottle, at the festival to be held at Hare Brewery in Warmley. Although only the second Harefest to be held, this one will be rather special as it will be celebrating 25 years of Bath Ales.

This and That

The two brewing apprentices taken on late last year (introduced in the last issue) have been spending time in the labs, understanding and learning how to implement the strict quality processes that are now mandatory in the brewing industry. They have already completed their first study sessions at Nottingham University, and are well on the way to getting an overall picture of the whole brewing process.

By the time you read this, the new kegging line, also mentioned in the last issue, will be in the process of being commissioned, and is due to be operational at the end of March.

A brewing collaboration between Bath Ales and Blackpit Brewery is planned as part of the Brewgooder Global Gathering campaign. The idea of the campaign is for brewers, representing their cities and neighbourhoods, to work together over the World Water Day weekend of 20-22 March 2020. They will brew a unique beer, and launch it all together on 20th March, raising £500 or more each. The money will go to the Brewgooder Foundation towards rehabilitation and construction projects, which they hope will empower the lives of 100,000 people in 2020/21. More details will follow in the next edition of our unmissable publication.

Roy Sanders

Good Hare days!

The Hare on the Hill on Thomas Street North in Kingsdown is situated a short but steep climb up from Stokes Croft, which really is not far from Broadmead shopping centre.

Ed Johnson and Liz Chambers took over running the pub in February 2019 on a short-term basis, but have recently signed a five-year lease for the pub. Both have a background in real ale pubs, with Ed managing the award-winning free house the Duke of Wellington in West Sussex (owned by Dark Star brewery founder Rob Jones), and Liz working for many years in Dark Star flagship pub the Evening Star in Brighton. In Bristol, Ed worked at Small Bar and the Bag of Nails, and Liz at the Moor Beer Taproom.

The Hare on the Hill (formerly the Mason's Arms), was taken over by Bath Ales in the late 1990s, and subsequently became independent in 2015 when Bath Ales was taken over by St Austell. Despite still being owned by the founders of Bath Ales, it is now a free house.

For both Ed and Liz, starting their own business has been a dream since they met in 2012, and the Hare on the Hill is the perfect pub for them in terms of size and scope. Their ethos is to provide a welcoming place for people of all ages and backgrounds to come and spend an evening, with the focus being on great beer and a welcoming environment. The pub has recently reopened after a refurbishment in early January, with the decor returning to a warm and traditional look. They were very lucky to have been able to draw on the expert advice of the same local pub designer who fitted out the pub in the late 90s. They've also decorated the Hare in an unusual quirky style with lots of pictures and antiques around the pub and real hops hanging in the window.

In addition to the cosy interior, the pub also boasts an impressive and attractive partially green-tiled exterior and is situated in a conservation area.

The pub now hosts an array of events including a weekly pub quiz, live music, low-key DJs on Saturday nights, and they have recently acquired a gorgeous piano and hold jazz piano evenings twice a month on a Wednesday. The pub's Chilean chef serves Latin-American food



with a modern twist – think tacos, deep-filled sandwiches and global tapas – serving from 6pm to 9pm Thursday and Friday, and 4pm to 9pm Saturday, and they are starting a Sunday roast service imminently from 1pm to 5pm, which will be followed by laid-back live jazz or folk music every Sunday at 6pm.

The Hare currently has four real ale lines and one real cider line, although Ed and Liz plan to increase this as trade continues to grow. The focus is on local breweries, as Bristol has so much great beer to offer, and regulars include Moor, Arbor, Bristol Beer Factory, Croft and New Bristol, but the pub also draws on breweries from further afield such as Tapstone, Siren, Burning Sky, Buxton and Marble.

It gets better as there are plans to host more beer-related events in the coming year such as beer launches, tap takeovers and meet the brewer events. And the Hare offers a 10% discount to card-carrying CAMRA members. For details of opening times, etc, check their entry on WhatPub (though note it's currently closed Mondays).

Pete Bridle

Anytime of the year...



Campaign
for
Real Ale



Gift Membership to CAMRA makes an ideal gift for friends or family who love beer and pubs.

A full year's CAMRA membership includes:

- A welcome pack to help members make the most of CAMRA membership
- Award-winning *BEER* magazine and *What's Brewing* news
- Free or reduced entry to over 180 beer festivals
- £30 worth of CAMRA real ale* vouchers
- Discounts on CAMRA books including our best-selling *Good Beer Guide*
- Discounts on pints at participating *Real Ale Discount Scheme* pubs
- Social activities in the member's local area and exclusive member discounts online
- Learning resources to help members discover more about beer and brewing
- Opportunity to campaign to save pubs under threat from closure

Give the gift of CAMRA Membership today
www.camra.org.uk/gift-membership

*real ale, cider and perry, subject to terms and conditions.



Bristol Beer Festival



Tickets have sold out quickly for the Friday lunchtime, Friday evening and Saturday lunchtime sessions of the 2020 CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival, which runs from 19th to 21st March at Brunel's Old Station, Temple Meads, Bristol. The good news for anyone else hoping to try some of the great range of beer, cider and perry is that there are – at least at the time of writing – still some tickets available for the Thursday evening and Saturday evening sessions.

If you want to come along and join in the fun at the biggest real ale-dedicated event in our area, tickets can be purchased online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/camrabbf. You can scan the QR code here to go straight to the ticket sales website.

If you do not want to buy tickets over the internet you can purchase them by calling 0333 666 3366. This is a telephone box office service for which there is an additional charge to print and post the tickets, so it is more expensive than buying online.

Please keep an eye on www.camrabristol.org.uk/festival.html for updates about the Bristol Beer Festival including the beer and cider lists.

Richard Brooks

Avon Valley Railway Beer Festival



The Avon Valley Railway is holding its 18th annual beer festival on Friday 5 and Saturday 6 June. The heritage railway in Bitton (half way between Bristol and Bath) has been running the event since 2003 and now welcomes up to 750 people over the two days. The team at the railway have worked in partnership with a variety of local breweries over the years and in 2019 started working with Gary Burchill at Great Western Brewing (GWB). They provided an excellent selection of 30 ales and half a dozen ciders, sourced from around the country, and they'll be working together again this year.

Mark Simmons, the railway's commercial and business manager, said: "Our beer festival is always one of our busiest weekends. It's always great to see the station buzzing with noise and people enjoying themselves. The team at GWB were really helpful in making last year's event such a success and we look forward to even better things this year!"

See advert for details. Tickets do sell out (especially the Saturday evening) so make sure you've got yours in advance.

BITTON'S 18TH ANNUAL BEER FESTIVAL

Friday 5 & Saturday 6 June 2020
Friday 6-10.30pm • Saturday 12-5pm & 6-10.30pm
2 DAYS • 5 CIDERS • 30 REAL ALES
ENTRY BY WRISTBAND FOR JUST £3.50
NOW ON SALE FROM BITTON STATION
0117 932 5538 www.avonvalleyrailway.org

In association with
GWB
GREAT WESTERN BREWING

Find us off the A431 between Bristol and Bath, BS30 6HD

Taking a look at the local
cider-making scene

Pulpt Cider

The cider market has changed somewhat over the previous decade or two and is finding its way into newer areas such as quality-driven pubs, bars and restaurants, and also into many countries not normally associated with cider. This modern market requires a consistent high-quality product in order to appeal to discerning drinkers and a relatively new company named Pulpt, based near Hewish in North Somerset, has set its sight on this market. Run by Al Collar and Jim Wakefield (pictured), they have leapt from almost nothing in 2017 to making around 50,000 litres in 2019.

Both Al and Jim come from senior levels in corporate backgrounds. They have taken a very scientific approach to cider-making; there is no “let it go and see what happens” here. Carefully selected cider apples are delivered to their site and, after milling and pressing on modern equipment, the juice goes into a number of stainless-steel tanks (four 10,000 litres and five 3,400 litres). The main apple varieties are fermented separately using cultured yeasts, the latter chosen to enhance the estery aromas and flavours of the apples. Sulphite is added judiciously and levels of sulphur measured on site, as is the acidity. The objective is to give each cider a clean, crisp taste. As some readers may know, naturally fermented West Country ciders can have a fairly heavy feel in the mouth owing to high tannin levels or to microbial action such as malolactic fermentation.

The varieties of apples used include Yarlington Mill, Harry Masters Jersey, Tremlett’s Bitter, Chisel Jersey, Dabinett and Kingston Black. Not all varieties go into all ciders. An unusual variety also used is Gilly, which has a pronounced pineapple aroma and flavour and is used to make an interesting single-variety cider.



Jim busy milling and pressing

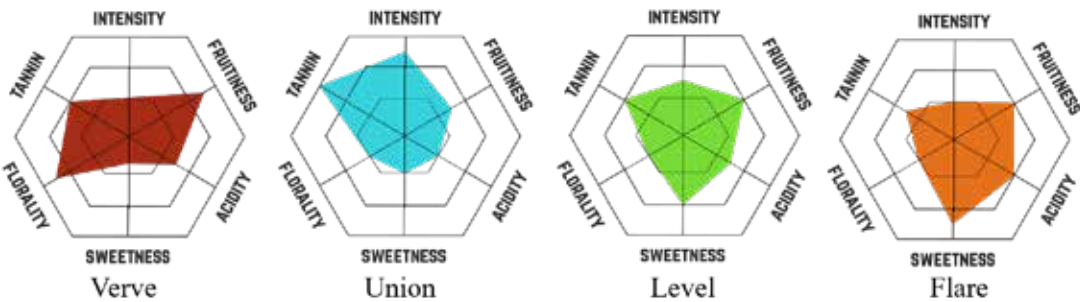


The bulk of the product is sold in keg around the country, but is also available in 330ml bottles, with still versions available as bag-in-box in a number of pubs (including the author’s favourite cider pub, the Orchard in Bristol). There is a refreshing honesty about the labelling on the bottles. For cider the listing of ingredients and additives on labels follows the same rules as the wine industry in the European Union – that is, there aren’t many rules and a whole raft of additives are allowed without any requirement to state them on labels. On bottles of Pulpt cider, everything is listed, but it’s a very short list and has nothing added that doesn’t need to be! The inclusion of a flavour-wheel gives the consumer a much better idea of what they are purchasing than just “dry”, “medium-dry” or “traditional”.

Currently there are four main ciders in production: *Union* (6.4%), *Verve* (5.8%), *Level* (5.4%) and *Flare* (4.9%). *Gilly* (5.7%) is produced in small batches and so is not always available. In 2019 *Union* won the gold prize in the Tannic Class at the International Brewing and Cider Awards. So, success has come their way already but development continues and experiments are currently under way using oak barrels from a distillery.

More information, including outlets (stockists include a fair few pubs in the Bristol and Bath areas), can be found on their web site www.pulpt.co.uk. They also have a Facebook page www.facebook.com/pulptcider and are on Instagram [@pulptcider](https://www.instagram.com/pulptcider).

Martin Campling



New brews from Twisted Oak

Wrington-based brewery, Twisted Oak, has recently crafted a brace of new beers. *Ghost Town* is a classic, but complex, milk stout, made with no less than nine different malts, hopped with Fuggles, and infused with real Madagascan vanilla pods.

“It’s a deliciously smooth and sweet stout,” said head brewer, Keith Hayles. “At 5.7%ABV, it’s strong, but deceptively easy to drink.” Look out for *Ghost Town* at the CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival.

The North Somerset brewery has also teamed up with Clevedon’s community cinema, the Curzon, to produce a new bottled beer. Proceeds from sales of *Leaky Roof* – a 4% ABV modern English pale ale, brewed with Jester hops – contribute to the cinema’s ongoing fund-raising campaign to repair its ailing roof.

Olly Treasure-Smith from the Curzon said: “*Leaky Roof* has quickly become the top selling beer in our bar. It goes down very well with our audiences, alongside the other bottled beers from Twisted Oak that we sell, and customers like the fact that it’s doing a bit of good.”

Leaky Roof is also available to buy from Bugler’s off-licence in Wrington, Budgens in Langford, Cork & Fork in Yatton, Brockley Stores near Cleve, and direct from the brewery.

Ukuleles at the Tree!

The Fallen Tree micropub in Clevedon, owned and operated by Twisted Oak, has launched a fortnightly ukulele club. The Monday night sessions, run by Steve Pearson of the Ukulele Funhouse Orchestra, are free to attend and aimed at both beginners and the musically challenged.

“The idea of the club was just to give people an excuse to go to the pub,” explained the Fallen Tree’s manager, Pete Dommett. “But it’s really taking off! A pint and a strum on your uke – what’s not to like?” To find out more, contact Pete on 07493 924386 or pop into the pub.



Dawkins Bristol Beers

Dawkins Brewery Tap

AWARD-WINNING BREWERS

Dawkins Pubs

The Miner’s Arms, Mina Road, St Werburghs, BS2 9YQ

The Hillgrove Porter Stores, Hillgrove St North, Kingsdown, BS2 8LT

The Victoria Ale House, Southleigh Road, Clifton, BS8 2BH

The Portcullis, Wellington Terrace, Clifton Village, BS8 4LE

The Green Man, Alfred Place, Kingsdown, BS2 8HD

The Brewery Tap, Lawnwood Rd, Easton, BS5 0EF (Fri 4-8 & Sat 4-8)

Our sister company Steel Coulson in Scotland

Steel Coulson Tap Leith, Henderson St, Edinburgh EH6 6BS

BREWERY TOURS first Saturday of the month

Book online or buy a voucher at the Brewery Tap or Dawkins pub - ask the Landlord

TAKE HOME BEERS

from the Brewery Tap, independent shops and many Co-operative Food stores

Local deliveries online via [fresh-range.com](https://www.fresh-range.com)

beers@dawkinsales.com [dawkinsales.com](https://www.dawkinsales.com)

The BRIDGE INN BRISTOL

OPENING TIMES: MON-SAT FROM 12PM. SUN FROM 1:30PM.
PASSAGE STREET, BRISTOL BS2 0JF

Bristol & District branch zero in on Zerodegrees

On 30th January, the one and only master brewer at Zerodegrees Bristol, Simon Gueneau, welcomed a select party from Bristol and District CAMRA to a brewery tour. For those of you who haven't dared venture into this well-established but modern brewpub, it isn't just about the method of dispense (air pressure) or computer-controlled kit (aren't they all these days?), there are some jolly interesting quality beers to be had.

Simon showed us around the compact brewery arranged on two floors. We didn't have to walk very much but looked on as he explained the step process used, including starting in the mash tun then to the lauter, back to the mash tun, back again to the lauter, then to the fermenting vessels and finally to the maturing/serve tanks. From there the beer is delivered to the bar taps downstairs by gravity, via chilled lines. Brewing takes place two or three times a week, production volume typically being 12 hectolitres (7.33 barrels, 2,111 pints).

There are five core beers, including the infamous Our Mango as well as the award-winning Cloud Waltz Vienna-style lager, a pale, a wheat beer



Brewer Simon demonstrates to Bristol and District CAMRA members the wonders of his compact brewery

and a black lager. As ever, Simon had brewed some seasonal specials and two new beers were provided to taste: Timewarp, a 4.3% session IPA, and Holzfäller, a 5.3% Dunkelweizen (a cross between a German-style dunkel and a hefeweizen), as well as snifters of the previous specials still available such as the delicious Christmas Spundapparat. To sustain us in this arduous task copious amounts of tasty pizza were served from the wood-fired oven.

An interesting and informative time was enjoyed by all, and thanks are due to Simon for forfeiting his time to give us what turned out to be a fun evening. This being the quiet season, beers are not being exchanged between Zerodegrees brewpubs, but considering Simon's prodigious and interesting output, who cares?

Roy Sanders

More winners for New Bristol Brewery

New Bristol Brewery is no stranger to awards but they seem to keep coming! The latest two are for their *Wonderland* as the 2019 Champion Beer at the Finstock Village autumn beer festival (in Oxfordshire), and for *Super Deluxe Stout* as the Gold winner in the Specialty Beers category of CAMRA's own Champion Beer of Britain South West regional heat, meaning it goes on to compete in the national championships.

Husband and wife team Noel and Maria's latest research trip took them to New York on the east coast of the USA. Breweries visited included Grimm Artisanal Ales, Evil Twin Brewing and Brooklyn Brewery. The results are now "bearing fruit" with the first inspired brew already out in the form of *Mello Yello IPA* (5.2% ABV). A new craft lager, *Bristol Lager* (4.8%), is also out and a further three brews in the series will follow over the coming weeks. All this new beer has required extra capacity so a new 4,000-litre tank has been added in the premises.

The Christmas party at the brewery tap was very well attended and the next major events there will be centred around the Six Nations Rugby when the tap will be open for the England games.

There are a few tap takeovers in the works (recent ones were at the Eternal Optimist in Swindon at the end of February and at 1 Town Hall Square in Cowbridge, South Wales in early March). Other local tap takeovers do take place but usually with not enough advance notice to go into *Pints West*, so for these keep an eye on the New Bristol Brewery Facebook page.

Michael Bertagne

Dark times at Croft

Things were doubly dark for Croft Ales over the winter period as brewer Emanuel launched *Dark Matter*, a 5.2% ale that proved an excellent complement to popular Irish-style stout *Black Book* (also 5.2%). *Dark Matter*'s tart hedgerow flavours combine subtly with restrained Belgian candy sugar sweetness and an undertow of fruity hops to create a beer to savour – available in cask, keg and expensively hand-bottled versions. It was gratifying to see a cask of it being heartily appreciated by drinkers at the Tewkesbury Winter Ales Festival, where Bristol brewers had a substantial presence, with New Bristol Brewery, Fierce & Noble, Moor, Bristol Beer Factory and Incredible taking their place on the stillage alongside the two dark Croft offerings (*Black Book* also made the journey north). Still on the festival trail but closer to home, cask Croft is also making an appearance at local beer festivals large (Bristol) and small (Wrington).

But if you miss out on those, the roster of fine drinking establishments also now regularly taking Croft ales includes the Gallimaufry on Gloucester Road, and the White Rabbit just behind the Students' Union in Clifton. Sales of the core beer range comprising *BS2* (4%), *Beast* (4.2%) and *Westide* (4.5%) continue steadily, and they are particularly pleased with the latest batch of moreish American style *Deep Red* (5.5%), which their tap room front man Jack pronounced "the best ever".

So what of the future? By their own admission, long-term planning has never really been Croft's forte but Emanuel has been mulling over the prospect of brewing his first lager – hopefully in cask as well as keg – in response to many visitors' requests. You can see whether he's taken the plunge or not by popping into the tap room (Upper York Street, Bristol), whose current opening hours are 3pm till 10pm on Friday and Saturday.

Marty Cummins

Beaufort's 25 years in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide

Last December Mark and Fiona Steeds of the Beaufort Arms, Hawkesbury Upton, received the huge honour of a plaque and certificate to mark the pub's 25 consecutive years in CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide*.

Mark says that, although no longer in the Bristol & District branch area (following boundary changes twenty-odd years ago), the Beaufort owes its inclusion in the *Good Beer Guide* in particular to former Bristol branch members Mark and Sara Dyer, who originally (along with the rest of the branch) gave them a chance in those early hard days of being in the pub.

The presentation was made by Dursley & District CAMRA branch chairman Peter Corfield, who was joined by about a dozen fellow branch members plus around 30 members of Fishponds-based special needs charity PROPS ('Providing Opportunities and Support' – www.propsbristol.org) who were up at the pub for their annual Christmas dinner.



Mark says: "Pete did a lovely speech – amusingly surpassed by Samantha from PROPS – which you can view on the Beaufort website.

"Many, many thanks to everybody who has supported us over the years, from staff to customers, from CAMRA members to our numerous suppliers of such fine ales (in the most part from the West).



Left to right, Samantha from PROPS, Mark Steeds, and Pete Corfield

"PROPS have a special place in our hearts and working with them is especially pleasing. They look after the pub grounds and have a market garden in the pub providing us with fresh seasonal produce for the kitchen – plus every week they make us smile."

Here's to the next 25 years then?

The aforementioned video can be found at www.beaufortarms.com/25_YearsGBG_and_PROPS.php (or from the home page www.beaufortarms.com scroll down and click on a link beneath the picture of the plaque). Pictures by Dave Hedges.



LOOK OUT FOR THESE SPECIALS DURING THIS ISSUE

CONSTANTLY CREATING INNOVATIVE FRESH CONSISTENTLY AWESOME BEERS

DRINK WITH PALS AND REPEAT...

A TASTE OF INDEPENDENCE

BRISTOLBEERFACTORY.CO.UK

Celebrating 25 consecutive years in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide

We would also like to take this opportunity to introduce our new bar manager, Elliott Paterson, who will continue to provide quality ales in a similar manner.

01454 238217
www.beaufortarms.com

Champion Beer of Britain

South West regional results announced

Local breweries well represented

The South West regional round of heats for the Champion Beer of Britain competition were completed in January and the results announced. No less than eight breweries in the Bristol & District CAMRA branch area were declared award winners, some of them picking up multiple awards. Arbor Ales, Bath Ales, Bristol Beer Factory, Dartmoor for their Legend).

Bitters category

Gold: **Driftwood Spars** - Bawden Rocks
Silver: **Great Western Brewing (GWB)** - HPA
Bronze: **Bristol Beer Factory** - Nova

Best bitters category

Gold: **Arbor Ales** - Shangri La
Silver: **Bath Ales** - Gem
Bronze: **Dartmoor** - Legend

Strong bitters category

Gold: **Arbor Ales** - Yakima Valley American IPA
Silver: **Moor Beer** - Hoppiness
Bronze: **Tintagel** - Merlin's Muddle

Speciality beers category

Gold: **New Bristol Brewery** - Super DeLuxe Stout
Silver: **Cornish Crown** - Red IPA
Bronze: **Hanlons** - Port Stout

Porters category

Gold: **Driftwood Spars** - Bolster's Blood
Silver: **Pitchfork Ales** - Old Slug Porter
Bronze: **Cheddar Ales** - Totty Pot

Stouts category

Gold: **Plain Ales** - Innecognito
Silver: **Bristol Beer Factory** - Milk Stout
Bronze: **Exeter** - Darkness

Cheddar Ales, Great Western Brewing (GWB), Moor Beer, New Bristol Brewery and Pitchfork Ales (part of Epic Beers) all gained awards in one or more categories. And in the Bath & Borders CAMRA branch area there was an award for Plain Ales. Our congratulations go to them, and of course to the other winners too (not least regular advertisers Dartmoor for their Legend).

Milds category

Gold: **Driftwood** - Blackheads Mild
Silver: **Branscombe Vale** - Mild
Bronze: **Holworthy Ales** - Mine's a Mild

Golden ales category

Gold: **Moor Beer** - Nor'Hop
Silver: **Skinner's** - Porthleven
Bronze: **St Austell** - Proper Job

Old ales and strong milds category

Gold: **Tintagel** - Excalibur
Silver: **Tintagel** - Poldark Ale
Bronze: **Teignworthy** - Martha's Mild

Barley wines and strong old ales category

Gold: **Exmoor** - Beast
Silver: **Driftwood** - Alfie's Revenge
Bronze: **Moor Beer** - Old Freddy Walker

Real ale in bottle category

Joint Gold: **Bristol Beer Factory** - Independence
Joint Gold: **St Austell** - Proper Job
Bronze: **St Austell** - Big Job

Bristol Beer Factory brews news

The news this edition is all about the beer! The Bristol Beer Factory (BBF) continues to produce new beers, themed series and occasional reoccurring specials at an impressive rate. You will be able to try some Bristol Beer Factory beer at the CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival from 19th to 21st March.

There is also an eight cask and five keg tap takeover and meet the brewer event at the Butcher's Hook in Thornbury on Friday 13th March, with rumours that landlord Pete Tiley will furnish every table with an Alan Partridge-inspired game and the Bristol Beer Factory will provide prizes.

Some of the beers to look out for during this spring edition of *Pints West* include:

Returning specials

Russian Hill (5.0%) is a pale ale (not as heavily hopped as an IPA) with a blend of Lemondrop, Summit and Eureka hops. The first brings a lemon-citrus character with subtle herbaceous notes; Summit gives it another citrus boost of tangerine, grapefruit and orange with a strong alpha content adding bitterness; and finally rounding off with Eureka, tropical and dark fruits. Maris Otter and Caragold malts give body to this fine bitter-sweet American hopped pale.

Fascination (4.2%) session IPA is a lactose, citrus pale using four hops, Mosaic, Simcoe, Citra and Ekuanot. The hop combination should give it tropical notes, bubblegum and lemon, and the lactose should add a smooth, creamy sweetness.

Low Rider (3.9%) is an extra pale ale at session strength, dry-hopped with two classic American hops (Citra and Amarillo) intended to deliver an easy-drinking pale ale with character. The citrus hop notes are balanced by a simple and clean malt bill of 90% Maris Otter and small quantities of Cara malt and wheat.

Gambler (4.2%) is a golden beer made with Amarillo hops and is a "beloved and significant special" as it was the first recipe designed by head brewer Tristan Hembrow for the BBF back in 2017. Tristan has gone on to design over 80 new beers including five so far in 2020, including the following:



Sales operations manager Tom Clermont enjoying one of Bristol Beer Factory's new creations

New beers

These are their third, fourth and fifth new beers of the year. And they say they won't stop brewing new beers as they love trying new things, and these new ones cover cryo hops, single hops and blended hops.

Infinity (3.5%) uses Galaxy (a big hop for a small beer) to give some Aussie flavours of citrus, peach and passion fruit.

Raiders (5%) is a keg beer, made with Falconer's Flight, which is a blend of hops (claimed to be seven hops in one) and a favourite for the BBF after cask IPA **Fly Casual** made them fall in love with it.

Arctic Gates (5.2%) is a keg beer made using cryo Ekuanot and Azacca hops. This powdered form of hop is relatively new to the market and this is only the second time they have used it.

Richard Brooks

OVER 30 DIFFERENT
CASK ALES
EVERY WEEK

SEVEN
STARS

OPEN ALL DAY
EVERY DAY

WWW.7STARS.CO.UK
THOMAS LANE REDCLIFFE
BRISTOL BS1 6JG

DARTMOOR'S FINEST

The UK's highest brewery at 1,465ft above sea level, Dartmoor Brewery creates handcrafted cask conditioned real ales with authentic Dartmoor character from its heartland in Princetown.

Dartmoor Brewery Ltd, Station Road, Princetown, Devon PL20 6QX
Telephone: 01822 890789
Fax: 01822 890798
www.dartmoorbrewery.co.uk

8TH GLOUCESTER CAMRA BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

FRIDAY 15TH MAY – SATURDAY 16TH MAY 2020
11.30AM – 11PM
AT THE HISTORIC BLACKFRIARS PRIORY,
LADYBELL GATE STREET
OFF SOUTH GATE ST – CENTRAL GLOUCESTER

**AROUND 90 LOVELY BEERS
AND MORE THAN 30 CIDERS & PERRIES!!**

ONCE AGAIN WE PRESENT THE WONDERFUL
GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHEESES!

FOOD, WINE & SOFT DRINKS AVAILABLE

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

ADMISSION £6
INCLUDES FESTIVAL GLASS & PROGRAMME

**FREE PINT FOR CAMRA MEMBERS
ON PRODUCTION OF A VALID CAMRA CARD.**
BEER, CIDER & CHEESE ARE SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

www.facebook.com/
GloucesterCamraSpringBeerCiderFestival
www.gloucesterbeerfestival.org.uk

Chippenham Beer, Cider & Perry Festival

24th and 25th April 2020
Olympiad Sports Hall, Chippenham, SN15 3PA

Tickets include free commemorative glass and £3 of drinks vouchers
CAMRA members get extra £2 worth of beer vouchers

Fri 24th April	5:30pm - 11pm	£10
Sat 25th April	11am - 4pm	£10
Sat 25th April	7pm - 11pm	£8

Tickets available from
www.nwwiltscamra.org.uk
Prince of Wales Micropub, Chippenham
The Three Crowns, Chippenham

Venue is five minutes on foot from the town centre and a two-minute walk from the railway station. A pay-and-display car park is available with provision for disabled badge holders.

Cash or card payments can be taken at the festival.

Shine on Thornbury

At the northern end of the area covered by the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA lies the market town of Thornbury. Situated just off the A38 from Bristol to Gloucester, the town boasts a 16th century castle, the even older church of St Mary's, and a healthy selection of pubs and bars. Seven of those pubs sit in a long, rectangular circuit created by the High Street to the west, and a vague line encompassing St Mary Street and Quaker Lane to the east. A complete lap of this circuit is only around 600 yards, so it's possible to start the lap at any of the pubs, go clockwise or anti-clockwise and end up back where you started.

Let's start at:

The Malthouse – 59 High Street



For a while this was the Knot of Rope, and before that the Exchange. It opened in 1892 as the Royal Exchange but there are records of inns in one of the three original buildings that form part of the current property as far back as the early 1700s. These days the Malthouse is a Marston's pub, refurbished in 2016 in the same style as other Marston's properties, with shiny brass-look pumps, stone floors and a variety of seating. Sports TV is very much a feature, with Sky and BT both available, and the beers are from Marston's broad stable of resident ales. Just Pedigree on when I visited, but you might see one or two more, plus a real cider is usually available. There is also an outdoor seating area to the rear, and a full food menu is offered.

Next down the High Street, on the left is:

The White Lion – 10 High Street



With its imposing Lion stood atop the porch entrance, the White Lion has long been a highly visible landmark in the High Street, and both the pub and the lion (or one very like it) have been welcoming and/or intimidating visitors since the early 19th century. The pub spent a while closed before reopening late in 2018, but now seems to be doing well. With its L-shaped bar, this is very much a place where locals gather and chat. There is a pool table on the left, and through to the rear is a lovely secret garden, which is perfect for alfresco drinking when the weather permits. Thatcher's Stan's Cider is on offer, as well as well-kept pints of Bombardier and Pedigree.

Across the road, gazing at the Lion from its own lofty position above the entrance to the pub, is the large white bird welcoming you to:

The Swan – 17 High Street



This was a coaching inn on the original route from Bristol to Gloucester as far back as the time of Charles I. It's a listed building protected by English Heritage, with many original and early features surviving towards the rear of the building. In the winter, the large real fire provides warmth, and there is a great deal of olde-worlde charm to the whole place. There is a large function room, and three B&B rooms. The garden to the rear also provides an entrance from Quaker Lane if you're approaching from that direction. Food is available throughout the day, and the pub is very welcoming of your canine companion. As for the beer, there was Butcombe Original on offer, as well as a guest which, when I popped in, was Holy Grail from Llangollen.

Careful as you cross the High Street again back to:

The Butcher's Hook – 8 High Street



Also a listed building. Built in the 1600s, it spent much of its time as a butcher's, with the animals kept in the fields behind and slaughtered on the site! In the 20th century, once the butchery had stopped, there was an antique shop on the site, and subsequently an Indian restaurant. Today the Butcher's Hook is a pub owned by Peter Tiley, and offering beers from Tiley's Brewery in nearby Ham, as well as a wide selection of other real ales – up to eight at a time. When I visited there were three Tiley's beers (including a lovely pale ale) as well as Moor Stout, and Electric Bear's American pale ale Werrrd! The pub, which doesn't open till 4pm, is made up of three rooms, with low ceilings and some lovely nooks and crannies, and an original fireplace. Oh, and they had an amazing cheeseboard too!

At the bottom of the High Street it veers right past:

The Royal George – 7 The Plain

Originally the Boar's Head, this has been a pub since Queen Victoria's time, and is the third on our circuit to have an elaborate columned porch at the front, though there is no animal sitting on top of it. Its current name may well refer to one of many warships that were



called the Royal George in the 19th century, with the current pub sign featuring a stencil-style drawing of a warship. It was part of the 'Mezze' chain for a while, but has now reverted to being a simple one-bar pub, with a few tables outside at the front, and a larger rear garden. Food is available all day, and there is a function room available for hire. Six Nations rugby is shown too. Thatcher's Stan's Traditional Cider is available, along with three real ales. When I visited there was Doom Bar and Atlantic IPA from Sharp's as well as a guest, which was Ghost Ship from Adnams.

Come out of the front of the Royal George into Quaker Lane and straight ahead (past the rear entrance to the Swan) onto the pedestrian precinct where, after 100 yards or so, you will find:

Hawkes House – St Mary Street



Although part of the pedestrian precinct, this building also goes back to the 19th century, and was an alehouse and part of the estate of Arnold Perrett & Co Brewers of Wickwar. For a long while it was the Barrel, but has recently reinvented itself as Hawkes House. Hard to know how to define this place these days. It's a pub and a neighbourhood café and a bar and a bistro all rolled into one. There are lovely cakes and sweet treats to tempt you as you enter from St Mary Street, exposed brickwork on the floors and several distinct drinking and dining areas, including a snug type room to the left, a corralled mezzanine on the right and a little cubby hole room at the back. There's also outdoor seating at the rear. There's an extensive food menu, and a varied selection of coffees and soft beverages. They also offer three changing local beers – a 'lightguest', an 'amberguest' and a 'darkguest' on handpump. When I visited these were Wickwar Falling Star, Coachman from Clavell & Hind in Birdlip, and GWB's Black Flower Vanilla Stout.

Finally for this circuit, carry on up St Mary Street until you see:

The Wheatsheaf – Chapel Street

Another Victorian pub, this is a real old-fashioned two-bar boozier, complete with Victorian screen between the saloon to the right and the lounge to the left. There is a skittle alley, pool room and a large rear



garden including floodlit boules/pétanque piste. Two large TV screens have football, cricket and rugby a-plenty for you to watch, and home-cooked food is also available. Three resident ales here are Doom Bar, St Austell Tribute and Fuller's London Pride, as well as one traditional cider and a guest ale from a brewery such as Exmoor.

Two other pubs in Thornbury but not on this circuit are worth a mention.

The Anchor – Gloucester Road



A very popular two-bar pub with a great reputation for food and beer. Six changing real ales on offer such as Greene King Low & Behold, Purity Mad Goose, Wells Late Hop Pale Ale, GWB Maiden Voyage, Butcombe Gold and Otter Bitter.

The Black Horse – Grovesend Road



A brick-built estate pub on the outskirts of Thornbury, with a thriving community feel. Butcombe Original and Fuller's London Pride plus one guest ale.

Duncan Shine

Cask collaboration at the Left Handed Giant brewpub

Following the report in the last edition of *Pints West* on the launch of cask beer at their brewpub in the city centre last November, Left Handed Giant (LHG) have continued their collaborations with other like-minded brewers.

Back in December they hosted Verdant from Falmouth for a brew-day, with a ticketed guided tasting/meet-the-brewer event in the evening at Finzels Reach and a full tap takeover at Small Bar on King Street. The cask beer they brewed, **Wide Awake** (5%), a fruity pale ale, was released at the beginning of January.

At the end of January they hosted Cloudwater from Manchester for a similar event. On this occasion the ticketed tasting event at the brewpub featured beer and cheese pairing, with the delicious cheese provided by Rosie Morgan from the Bristol Cheesemonger at Cargo 2 in Wapping Wharf. The tap takeover at Small Bar featured both cask and keg beers from Cloudwater, which demonstrates the resurgence of cask in the craft beer sector. At the time of writing this article (mid-February), the cask beer they brewed with Cloudwater, an amber ale, is yet to be released. The next event in the series of cask collaborations will be with Het Uiltje from Haarlem in the Netherlands.



LHG and Verdant collaboration



LHG and Cloudwater collaboration

Other news from LHG is that the top floor of the brewpub has been reimagined as a gaming lounge, featuring pool tables and dart boards. It is open Monday to Friday 5 till 12, and weekends 12 till 12.

Brewery tours continue to be available on Saturday afternoon which, in addition to seeing lots of shiny stainless steel in the brewhouse, feature tasters of beer fresh from the tank and a guided tasting of a flight of beers.

Finally, LHG are looking forward to participating in the next East Bristol Brewery Trail (Friday 8th and Saturday 9th May), when they will be rolling up the shutters of the Tap Room at their St Philips site on Wadehurst Industrial Park.

Dave Graham



Make friends with an Otter



OTTER BREWERY

01404 891 285 otterbrewery.com



The Luppitt Inn

The pub that time forgot



Sixty-two miles south of Bristol lies a place like no other. The Luppitt Inn near Honiton in Devon has been a firm favourite in Blackdown Hills for over 100 years. Owned by 98-year-old landlady Mary Wright (pictured), this ten-seater pub (15 at a push) is in the front room of her traditional farmhouse. Mary now enjoys quiet evenings watching Dad's Army, while her granddaughter Caroline serves only one type of beer – Otter Bitter.

A brass bell marked my arrival on a cold February evening, as I pushed through the stable door. According to CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors (in which this pub is listed), this type of farmhouse pub "would have been very common a couple of generations ago but is now virtually extinct."

Locals greeted me with smiling faces and curiosity, while Caroline handed me a pint. "Last week we had a guy in here from Finland. He was on a mission to visit every pub and Premier League pitch in England. He came in, had his pint, then headed to Gatwick. His flight back was in the morning."

Sipping a pint of Otter, I look around this time capsule. Thick stone walls, clad in salmon pink paint, are adorned with family pictures, odes to the community – and a signed headshot of Tina Turner. Ask why and the locals will have a field day. Although you're not guaranteed a straight answer, you're guaranteed good chat.



"The floor came from WW2 American paratroopers. They were actually part of the famous Easy Company of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, stationed just around the corner in Upottery!", one local recalls. The Band of Brothers brought the lino with them for their base, and in the spirit of war the people of Luppitt put the leftovers to good use.

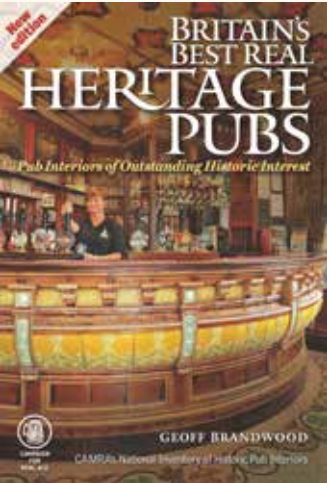
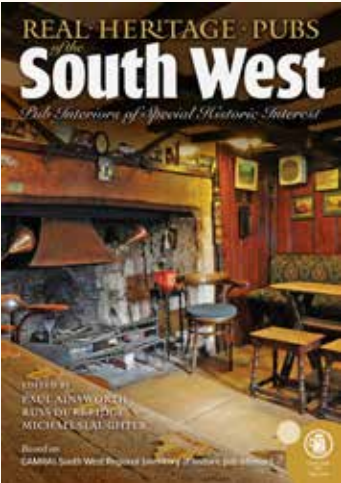
Caroline pours me another pint straight from the cask. Otter Brewery is just the other side of the valley and has been delivering beer to the pub for 30 years. "The Luppitt Inn is at the centre of all our hearts at Otter as it's the first pub we ever supplied back in 1990. Mary is very special to us. She doesn't have a set delivery day, she just gives us a call and we drop anything," said Patrick McCaig, managing director of Otter Brewery. It's clear the beer goes down well with the locals as by the time the evening is done, we've almost finished the cask.

At the time of writing, the Luppitt Inn is open from 7:30pm Thursdays and Saturdays (cash only). Before you leave, be sure to say good night to Mary, who oversees pub proceedings from her armchair.

Anisha Chandar



The Luppitt Inn features in *Real Heritage Pubs of the South West* and *Britain's Best Real Heritage Pubs*. Both guides to this and other very special pubs are available online from the CAMRA shop at shop1.camra.org.uk (type in "heritage pubs" and press Search) at just £5.99 and £9.99 respectively.



Pub news from Bath & Borders

Bath pub scene

The **Boathouse** at Newbridge should be reopening in March following an extensive refurbishment. This large modern Hall & Woodhouse pub is on the very western edge of Bath on the banks of river Avon.

The **Royal Oak** on Pulteney Road in the Widcombe area of Bath closed again in January. All the pub's doors have been boarded up by a security firm. The owners El Group have been advertising for a new landlord on its *Run a Pub* site for some time. The pub had been recently refurbished and boasts a wide range of features including a separate large skittle alley that can be used for private functions and an outstanding south-facing beer garden and patio area. The Royal Oak is close to the Bath rugby ground.

In the same area of the city the **Ram** on Widcombe Parade reopened at the end of January. During a recent visit by one of our branch members there were found to be six real ales on. Bath Ales Gem and Sharp's Doom Bar will be regulars whilst the rest are drawn from the El Group list. The Ram is now a managed house under the Bermondsey Pub Company banner. (El say: "Bermondsey Pub Company is our business unit for operating our fully managed pubs.")



The Ram, Widcombe

A planning application made last year to convert the **Victoria Hotel** on Millmead Road in the Oldfield Park area of the city has been withdrawn. The future of the pub is uncertain.

At the **Fairfield Arms** in north-eastern Bath the new landlords have settled in well and the pub seems to be well used. A full calendar of events has been established featuring quizzes, live music and special events such as Burn's Night and Pancake Day. Live sports, such as the Six Nations, are shown. The range consists of beers from St Austell whilst there are plans to recommission the kitchen for relatively straightforward fare. There is still a planning application for the complete demolition of the building hanging over the pub (reported in the last *Pints West*) with a decision expected shortly (at the time of writing). The application has received almost 200 objections.

Stones Cross Hotel, Midsomer Norton

We've recently become aware of a planning application, submitted in October but only recently validated, to build six private dwellings on what used to be the car park of the Stones Cross Hotel on North Road. The imposing stone-built Midsomer Norton pub has been closed for almost six years following a major police drugs bust, and the building has since fallen into disrepair. The car park, which is behind the pub, is partially enclosed by a high wall. The new application proposes that the height of this be reduced to ease access to the new accommodation and make the new homes seem less gloomy. Strangely the new planning application does not seem to involve any development of the pub building itself. A decision on the application looks likely to be made in April, but we understand a similar application made in 2018 was rejected by Bath & North East Somerset Council.

Prestleigh Inn reopens

This pub, which lies right to south of the Bath & Borders branch area, has recently reopened. We have limited information at the moment, but new landlady Debbie confirmed in early February that this handsome stone-built pub is back open for business. At the time of writing opening hours are limited and Butcombe Original is the only real ale available. By March, however, Debbie hopes to have extended the opening hours and the beer range. The village of Prestleigh is around a mile south of Shepton Mallet, on the A371 between Cannard's Grave and Evercreech. It's not far from the site of the Glastonbury Music Festival.

Cross Guns mystery

In January we learned that the Cross Guns at Avoncliff had closed (and was still closed mid-February when it was last visited by a branch member). This has come as something of a shock. This ancient pub, which backs on to the Kennet & Avon canal and, with its picturesque descending terraces out front, overlooks the river Avon, is as famous in the local area as it is well used, so hopefully this will be a temporary closure.

Eagle at Coleford conversion?

A planning application has been submitted to convert this village-centre pub into six flats. The application was registered on 18 December and the deadline for objections will have passed on 28 January with a decision expected to be made in early or mid-February. Coleford is roughly mid-way between Mells and Radstock and has two pubs, the Eagle, which is on the main street running through the village, and the King's Head which is on the edge of the village, some way from the centre, and down a long, steep hill. The Eagle has been the home of Coleford Athletic Football Club for over 100 years, hosts a bridge club and, until recently pool and skittles teams.

Coleford is in what used to be a predominantly coal-mining area. The village once supported many pubs and had its own off licence. The last three or four decades have seen the closure of the **Greyhound**, which was demolished to make way for a private house, along with the **Miners**, the **Anchor** and the **Rose & Crown** (also known locally as the **Lyon**), which were all converted into private dwellings. **Len Button's** off licence closed around 40 years ago. It had a bar and resembled a pub. The closure of the Eagle would leave Coleford with just two drinking establishments, the **King's Head** and the **Royal British Legion** club. The nearest pubs beyond the village are the **Duke of Cumberland** and **Holcombe Inn** in one direction, and the food-oriented **Vobster Inn** in the other.

Somerset Arms, Maiden Bradley, refurbishment

This attractive and popular village local pub closed for refurbishment on Saturday 5 October. The Somerset Arms has been successfully managed by landlords Andy and Lyn Hobbs since Wadworth gave up its lease on January 2018. Planning permission has been granted for the number of letting bedrooms to be increased to 17 and for an updated kitchen, a new skittle alley, and improvements to the beer garden and car parking. The existing skittle alley is to be reroofed and will be used to house the new bedrooms.

Maiden Bradley is a highly active and well-organised community and, over the course of the pub's closure, locals are running pop-up pub events every few weeks in the village hall. Christened *The Interim Measure* the first one of these, held on Saturday 7 December, was a resounding success with over 50 villagers attending.



Royal Oak in Frome goes from strength to strength

This edge-of-town locals' pub (pictured above and right), which very nearly closed for good last year until it was bought and effectively rescued by local landlord and pub owner Chris Pitcher, is picking up and now busy. The pub still does not do food, nor has any plans to do so, but it has started opening in the afternoon (from 2pm Monday to Friday and from midday at weekends). The range includes regular beers Abbot Ale and Tribute alongside an occasional guest, all at £3 per pint. During the pub's extended "happy hour" (which is between 2pm and 4pm), all beers and ciders are just £2.50 per pint.

News from Bradford-on-Avon and Trowbridge

It looks like a change of management is in hand at the **Bear** on Silver Street in Bradford-on-Avon. A chalkboard spotted outside the pub in early February said: "Closed. Will reopen soon under new owners." Two of the windows had been boarded up. In Trowbridge a planning application has been submitted to convert the roof top of the **Albany Palace**, a Wetherspoon pub located between the town centre and the park, into a roof terrace with plant area and to create a new access through to the roof. This is actually a resubmission of a similar planning application originally made in October 2018.

News of the RAT

Visitors to the 'Real Ale Train' (RAT) at Midsomer Norton will have a much warmer welcome this year since steam heating has been fitted to the locomotive and carriages. The cold train rides are now a thing of the past as visitors can travel in nostalgic comfort on a steam train through the surrounding countryside. The first RAT of 2020 will be on Saturday 9th May and will feature award-winning beers from Plain Ales of Sutton Veny plus another brewery yet to be confirmed. There will be two sessions starting at 12:00 and 18:00. Tickets (online from www.sdj.co.uk or from the railway station) cost £12 and include the first pint of beer, a souvenir "glass", train travel and tasting notes.



Twisted Brewing update

The Westbury-based brewer has been celebrating the Six Nations with its annual special *Fly Half* (4.6%). It's made with five malts and five hops and, according to the brewery, this premium ruby ale goes down well with hearty food, such as a Sunday lunch.

The latest from Brotherhood

Also based in Westbury one of our newest breweries is planning to introduce three new beers: *Nevermore*, a porter at 4.7%, *Outsider Nordic IPA* at 4.6%, and a hoppy 4.2% IPA to be called *Voices*.

Plain Ales scoop national award

Congratulations to James Timoney and his team at Plain Ales. The west Wiltshire-based brewery has won a bronze medal in the stouts category of CAMRA's national Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition for its *Inncognito*. The full-bodied 4.8% stout – which was a gold medal winner in its category in the South West regional heats of the Champion Beer of Britain competition prior to this more recent award – is made with port, which imparts a rich, velvety flavour. The beer featured, and was very much liked, at the recent Bath Winter Ales Festival. This is a well deserved national award for a splendid beer.

Steve Hunt

Photos by Hugh Steele (Ram) and John Macarthur (Royal Oak)

Advertise in Pints West

10,000 copies printed quarterly and distributed to hundreds of pubs throughout the region

Also available on-line at www.camrabristol.org.uk

Contact: steve.plumridge.pintswest@gmail.com



A meander down Midsomer Norton High Street

The name Midsomer Norton summons up images of green pastures and sunny, summer days but, although close to attractive countryside, the town has long been a centre for industry. The closure of the last coal mine at Norton Hill in 1966 coincided with the closure of Midsomer Norton's two railway stations on the Bristol and North Somerset line (Welton) and the Somerset and Dorset Joint Railway (Midsomer Norton). The latter station is now owned by the Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust. The packaging industry, once a mainstay of employment in the area has also suffered a serious decline but thriving business parks have sprung up to replace traditional industries. On the beer front, the town possessed several breweries, but all are now closed. Midsomer Norton is located at the far west of Bath and Borders CAMRA territory and there are five pubs on the High Street at the town centre which are the subject of this article.



Stones Cross

Starting at the east end of the one-way High Street opposite the derelict **Stones Cross** pub, a range of shops, takeaways and cafes are passed on the left-hand side with branches of Lidl, Argos and Sainsbury's set back on the right. The first pub trading, located about half-way down the street on the right, is **Mallards**, which is set back



Mallards

from the street with seating outside. The pub was previously the Jack o' Lent (straw effigy burnt on Palm Sunday!) and before that the Commercial Hotel. The inside of the pub has been opened up to create one large room and the only beer available on my visit, amongst a sea of cider and lager, was very cold Theakston's Best Bitter in keg form at 3.8% ABV.

Crossing the road an exposed stretch of the River Somer appears which follows the High Street in a channel a few feet below road level. Wetherspoon's **Palladium Electric** is soon reached, set back



Palladium Electric

slightly on the left. The building was previously the Empire theatre and cinema which had been converted from the Welton Old Brewery vat house. Following 20 years of closure Wetherspoon sympathetically refurbished the premises and opened the pub in 2018. On a Saturday lunchtime the pub was packed with diners and drinkers. As well as the usual Doom Bar, Hobgoblin, Ruddles, Greene King IPA and Abbot draught ales, Harviestoun Haggis Hunter (4.3%), Ringwood Fortyniner (4.9%) and Marton's Old Empire IPA (5.7%) were also available. The pub walls are adorned with many historic photographs charting the history of Midsomer Norton and there is a large, paved and astrotrurfed area outside with extensive seating.



Riverside

The **Riverside** is located a few doors further up the street but, alas, no real ales were to be found here.



Greyhound

The High Street takes a right turn at the Town Hall and the **Greyhound** café bar is reached in part of an attractive Italianate-style brick building. The bar is essentially three open spaces with many keg cider and lager offerings but Bason Bridge Brewing's Hardings Somerset Best Bitter (4%) could be found on draught amongst the keg taps.

Although not strictly on the High Street, the **White Hart** is located on the Island very near the town hall bus stops. In Victorian times the premises belonged to the Anglo Brewing Company, suppliers of gold medal ales and stouts. It is a friendly, traditional establishment



White Hart

with public and lounge bars, a third room, a small terrace by the River Somer and a skittle alley. Draught Bass and Doom Bar are regular beers and a third cask ale (St Austell Tribute on my visit) is rotated on stillage. The White Hart is a CAMRA heritage pub, with an interior of regional importance.

The real ale drinker will find much of historical interest in Midsomer Norton which has a fascinating industrial past, expertly recreated at Radstock Museum, and there are some good facilities for drinking and shopping in a traditional setting.

Martin Ansell

Bath Brew House

The Bath Brew House (BBH) is once again celebrating International Women's Day by producing a beer dedicated to the occasion. For the last two years Max Cadman (pictured), head brewer at the BBH, has brewed a pale ale called *Suffrajitsu* which has sold well. This year, International Women's Day falls on 8 March, and the BBH has produced a different beer called *Boudicca*. However, this year Max took a back seat, and this has become an all-female production. The beer has been brewed by the ladies on the staff of the brewery and they have also taken responsibility for the design and artwork on the pump. The only involvement of men (along with women) in this venture will be in the drinking! (*Boudicca, or Boadicea as older readers were probably taught at school, is a British folk hero and was the warrior Queen of the Iceni tribe in the first century AD. She led an uprising against the occupying Roman forces, which was initially successful, but ultimately ended in her forces being overpowered.*) The choice of the Boudicca name continues the links with the Brewery's Roman-themed beers – regular and newer – see below.

Collaborations and themed beers will feature strongly in 2020. A two-way collaboration with the award-winning artisan Thoughtful Bakery in Bath will see the bakery's bread being used in the mash for a new beer, and then the bakery will make bread from the resulting wort. This collaboration follows on from the honey beer brewed in conjunction with the Mayor of Bath and the *Route 4* APA (American pale ale) brewed to support the Sustrans Bristol to Bath cycle path last year.

Future plans for themes include brewing a beer for Euro 2020, the European football championship being contested across Europe from 12 June. This will be followed a month or so later by a keg Japanese rice lager being brewed to celebrate the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

In keeping with the theme of innovation, Max is producing four new beers, three of which will be entered into the SIBA (the Society of Independent Brewers) competition. SIBA acts as the voice of British independent brewing and represents around 800 British independent craft brewers across the UK. Of Max's four new beers – *Spartacus* (New England IPA), *Hercules* (stout), *Commodus* (session IPA) and *Barbarossa* (amber ale) – the last three will join three of the new beers from the BBH's sister pub in Bristol (the King Street Brew House) as entries in the various beer categories in SIBA's country-wide competition. The SIBA Independent Beer Awards are run across SIBA's eight geographical regions, with the champions from each region moving forward to the national competition.

Max has also been experimenting with fruit sours, and 2019 saw the appearance of lemon, cherry and raspberry sours. However, his biggest



current experiment is a 6.2% salted caramel stout (this will be *Carpe Noctem* v9) which he has brewed and split. Half has already gone on tap, with the other half currently being barrel-aged in a bourbon whiskey barrel, obtained from the Heaven Hills Distillery in Kentucky. This aging process started in December and will run for eight months, meaning that the barrel-aged brew will be available for sale in the summer (check social media for precise dates).

Of the regulars, *Gladiator* (biscuity and fruity best bitter), and *Emperor* (hoppy pale ale) are generally available, with *Lupulus* (shape-shifting IPA) now on to version 16, and *Carpe Noctem* (the salted caramel stout mentioned above) to its ninth incarnation. Max aims to produce one new beer every month, so that, with his regulars, there is always a wide choice of both cask and keg beers.

Of course, whilst variety is good, it can only work if he can source ingredients that match his high standards. For most of his beers, Max uses malts from Warminster Maltings (WM). Not only is he supporting a local business, but a company that has been in existence for over 160 years, supplying brewers across the country, and which can claim to be the supplier of malts to the 2019 Supreme Champion Beer of Britain. Max sources his base, speciality, crystal and roasted malts, including an abundant supply of organic malts, from WM to brew his varied range of beers.

Visit the BBH and, although not all of the above ales will always be available, you should be able to find something just a bit different which will appeal (remember to bring your card to get your CAMRA discount on the in-house brewed beers). Social media is kept updated with the beers on offer at any one time. And if you're there in normal office hours, Max will be pleased to talk to you about his brewing and receive any comments you may have.

Paul Gregory

Bath Winter Ales Festival

Bath and Borders CAMRA held their fourth Winter Ales Festival over the weekend of 7th and 8th February, once again in the Widcombe Social Club just a few minutes from Bath Spa station. This was actually Bath and Borders' 41st beer festival and visitors were presented with 29 beers in a range of styles from 25 breweries, kept in great condition by bar managers Graham Church and Dave Holland.

As has become tradition about half of the beers came from breweries in the Bath and Borders region with the balance from more distant English, Scottish and Welsh breweries (sadly plans for the full house, including Farmageddon from Northern Ireland, fell through).

This year's event started a little earlier than normal at 5pm on the Friday (going through to 11pm) though this earlier start didn't catch out our customers and we had a healthy but manageable queue at about 4.50pm. The all-day session on Saturday (from 11am to 7pm) attracted the largest crowd since we moved to this venue in 2016 (maybe influenced by the prospect of two Six Nations games on TV in the club room downstairs, which was accessible for festival attendees) and included a number of the Bristol CAMRA BAD Ladies on one of their socials.

At the end of the event we still had 28 beers on, with Mad Dog Marmalade IPA (4.5%) being the only one to sell out, though Wessex Russian Stoa (9.5%), Fyne Jarl (3.8%) and Wylam Cascade (4.1%) were hard on its heels. Speaking of the legendary Russian Stoa, we wish its brewer, Chaz Hobden, a speedy recovery from his recent illness.

The Widcombe Social Club hosts a wide range of exciting events throughout the year and we are very grateful to Jake and his team for supporting the festival and providing delicious pies, and to our main sponsor Electric Bear, who sponsored the festival glasses. Ralph's Ruin sponsored the programmes, Kettlesmith the tokens, and Abbey Ales the banner on the social club wall. Andy Murray, owner of Twisted Brewery, once again kindly provided crucial logistical support and

Steve (multi-award-winning) Plumridge did the clever stuff with the graphic design of the programme. On their way out customers made generous donations for the Dorothy House Hospice who will receive a cheque for £300. We hope to do it all again on the same weekend next year (5th and 6th February). Cheers.

Trevor Cromie



BAD Ladies

bimble about Bristol centre and Bath Winter Ales Festival

BAD Ladies are the CAMRA Bristol and District branch ladies who love beer. We meet every couple of months to share adventures in beer and brewing. Winter is a great time for sitting indoors and sampling beer, and the BAD Ladies made the most of this cold wet season, exploring historic city-centre pubs in November, the best that Stokes Croft had to offer for 'Tryanuary', and the CAMRA Bath Winter Ales Festival in February.

Bristol is blessed with some very interesting historic pubs, many of which represent important parts of the city's heritage. Around fifteen of us started our exploration at the **Christmas Steps**, which was established in the 17th century and occupies a site that used to be one of Bristol's many or so sugar refineries, and important part of the 'triangular trade' where slaves from West Africa were exchanged for sugar and rum imported back to the city. The pub was previously known as the Three Sugar Loaves. When we visited there were three cask and three keg beers on offer. We particularly enjoyed Panama Beach (5%), from Bristol Beer Factory, which we described as "crisp clean, fruity and eminently quaffable", and Crack Gold (4%) from Twisted Oak, which one BAD Lady, Shirley, thought was "a lovely golden beer, not too hoppy, which works for me."

We moved on to visit the **Bridge Inn**, which took its name from St Philip's Bridge across the Floating Harbour. Originally a ferry operated at this spot but in 1838, after the passing of an Act of Parliament, a temporary bridge was built. Our favourite beer in this cosy pub was Swallow Tail (4.6 %) from Animal Brewing, which we described as "very nice, unexpectedly hoppy, which is not what you'd expect from an amber."

We ended our afternoon at the **Seven Stars**. There is a record of "The Starrs" alehouse in this building since the 1660's, but latterly the pub has become well known for its association with the abolitionist movement. It was used as a base by Thomas Clarkson as in 1787 he investigated and prepared a report to Parliament about the slave trade in the city. At the Stars we tried, but were unsure about, Elf Sufficient (4.1 %) from Ramsbury Brewery, which was "very malty rather than wintry", and enjoyed Fortitude by Bristol Beer Factory which Deming thought "was very smooth without much aroma which is perfect for some of us."

In January more than 20 of us turned up for a not so dry adventure, a Tryanuary quest for new beers and places. It was a surprise that many of the pubs and bars in Stokes Croft don't necessarily open Saturday afternoons. We began at the Canteen, where we enjoyed Cinder Toffee Stout (4%) from New Bristol Brewery: "Rather like a Crunchie bar in a glass," said Kate, and Butcombe's Winter Wonder (4.1%) which pleased a number of us: "I don't normally do dark ales but I do like this one," said Lou.

On to the **Hillgrove Porter Stores** in Kingsdown, which is always a very reliable stop, and it didn't disappoint. It has a very large beer menu, with a well curated mix of styles. Our favourites here were Broken Dream, the award-winning 6.5% stout from Siren, Old Freddie Walker strong ale (7.4%) from Moor, the 4.2% pale ale Weerrd! from Electric Bear, and Dark Matter (4.4%) from VOG brewery: "Starts sweet, ends rich and full-bodied fruit cake," we thought.

We then walked down to **Croft Ales** where the highlight of the evening was probably **Dusk till Dawn** (7%), a very full and rich flavoured hazy American IPA that a number of us got very excited about. A final stop at **Crofters Rights** enabled us to purchase pizza which helped us to end our bimble.

In February nine of us BAD Ladies visited the **Bath Winter Ales Festival**, which was the first time for most of us visiting this small and friendly festival run by the Bath and Borders branch of CAMRA. It was held at Widcombe Social Club, which was a very short five-minute



BAD Ladies at the Christmas Steps

walk from the railway station, exiting using the rear entrance. There were around 30 beers on offer, some from local breweries and some from further afield. We had a number of dark beer fans amongst us, so we were immediately tempted by some of the stouts and porters on offer. First tried was Morello Bordello stout (5.2%) from Frome brewery, which we thought was "light and fruity, but certainly didn't have enough cherry flavour." The Russian Stoa (9%) from Wylam went down a treat: "It's warming in the tummy, raisony, not too thick, with a long vinous finish," but the Wylam Macchiato porter (6.5%) split our opinions. However, we all agreed the Dark Star Revelation strong bitter (5.7%) was very nice. We discussed the rising popularity of "brown ales" (American brown ales, bitters, milds), and the new trend for adding flavours into pale ales, but what's with the mango with everything we wondered? The biggest surprise amongst the ales on offer was probably the Sour Raspberry Wheat beer (7.5%) from Ralph's Ruin, which might be considered a summer more than a winter ale by some but was really rather nice.



BAD Ladies at the Bath Winter Ales Festival

The BAD Ladies programme of events for 2020 is listed below. For more information please check the branch website www.camrabristol.org.uk/ladies.html.

March. Please check website for details of any **International Women's Brewday** events on or around 8th March.

Sat 18 April: Rail Ale Trail, Weston-super-Mare. Meet at Bristol Temple Meads for the 13:27 service to Weston-super-Mare, where we'll visit a selection of micropubs and others.

20 Sat June: Bristol Harbour West. Meet 14:00 at the Bag of Nails (141 St. Georges Road, BS1 5UW). We'll then take the Bristol Ferry from Brunel Quay down to pubs at the western end of the harbour.

Sat 5 Sept: Beer tasting. Details to be confirmed. This session will provide you with a chance to understand your palate, identify the taste profiles of particular beer styles, and compare cask, keg and low/non-alcoholic versions of particular beers and beer styles.

Sat 28 Nov: Christmas warm-up, up Blackboy Hill. Meet 14:00 Beaufort Arms (23 High Street, BS8 2YF).

Bianca Ambrose

Cryptic Crossword

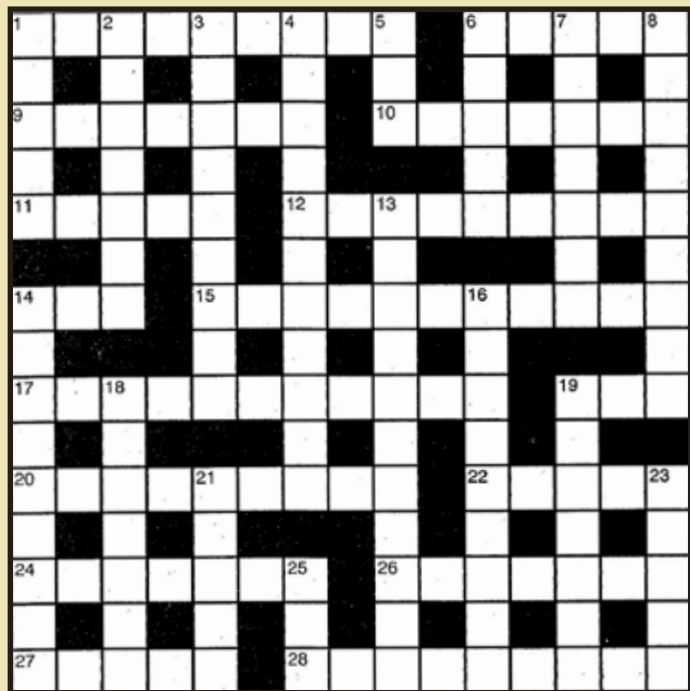
Compiled by Pete and Eddie Taberner
(Solution on page 43)

ACROSS:

- Spooner's flagon dry, makes for a fabulous flyer (9)
- Drank heavily back at the warehouse (5)
- Marketing department award for the "famous" volunteer (7)
- Beer's an awful option in ancient Indian city (7)
- Don't start to dawdle for Devon beers (5)
- The ale wort he fermented is very welcome in the desert (9)
- Anaemic penny-off beer (3)
- Seek a phrase that's different for a Bristol tavern (11)
- King Richard III has allegedly mislaid nephews (4, 7)
- Dawkins' resolution served short in house (3)
- Ban the unattached from pub's corner nook (3, 6)
- Handheld erection restrained old codger at the tree (5)
- Pub chums found behind bars? (7)
- Stokes Croft pub is illuminated when full (7)
- Sounds like a small measure of beer from the Cumbrian brewery (5)
- Endlessly sniff steam brew in order to appear (9)

DOWN:

- Drunken Sid needs op. for the craver of alcohol (5)
- St Peter's bitter about daily delivery (7)
- Brewed pear is off, you should try it (5, 1, 3)
- Giving up, a possible reason to get barred from pub? (11)
- Boy turns into a loutish customer (3)
- One who provides a kebab by the sound of it (5)
- Clumsily grope AI under this in the beer garden (7)
- Tests ales, very weak, just like water (9)
- A very hearty eater could be a digger (11)



- Best bitter & Aldi gin served up without preparation (2-7)
- I'm angry! Priests' mead regularly discarded. It's not on (6, 3)
- Secret agent swallows cold odd rough cider (7)
- Heads right up to Dirty Duck, likes easy-sipping Greene King (7)
- Some begin telling of electronic beer app (5)
- Stare strangely at the bane of landlords (5)
- Little boy or little girl could be Smith's! (3)

'Watering Holes in the Desert'

Welcome to Watering Holes ... the Weston-super-Mare bit of *Pints West*

We have been enjoying some very good social events in recent weeks. 18 people braved foul weather on a Wednesday night in January to enjoy a 'Beer and Curry Night' at the **Regency**. The quality of the food was very good and the price of £7.95 including a pint of any of their five ales made it even better! We enjoyed it so much we will be doing it again on 11th March, going on afterwards to the nearby **Black Cat** (see diary section on the inside for details). We also recently had an excellent day out visiting some lovely village pubs on the 126 bus route – see associated article.

18 local members attended a sub-branch meeting at the **Cat and Badger** on 5th February. The evening also marked the C&B's opening night for 2020 and we enjoyed three superb beers – Milton Neptune, Quantock Red Dawn and 3D Sheridan's Irish Coffee Milk Stout.

I am pleased to report that the town centre has recently seen a long-standing pub reopen after a lengthy closure. The **Old Stable** on

Wadham Street, close to the Blakehay Theatre, used to be owned by Banks's and had been closed for over two years. The freehold has now been purchased by Pete Tilley who has successfully rejuvenated the Bristol House on Milton Road. Although the pub sells a real ale, Butcombe Original, the main focus will be on food, with the venue offering a seven-days-a-week carvery, including a vegan option. They also do hot drinks, with some nice looking muffins on the bar. We wish the team there well.

The start of spring always signifies the start of beer festival season and we have the Bristol Beer Festival in March, followed by May's annual Brit Bar and Weston-super-Mare Cricket Club festivals to look forward to. Dates in diary section.

We love to see new faces at our events (as well as most of the old ones!) so please do come along if you haven't done so before.

Tim Nickolls

Taking the 126 to the pub

The last Saturday in January saw a group of us from Weston head out for a bus trip along the southern edge of the Mendips. There were several reasons for doing this outing, including the reasonably close proximity to Weston of several attractive villages with fine pubs – including four in the 2020 *Good Beer Guide* (GBG) on our route – and convenient public transport. We used the 126 bus route which runs on an hourly basis from Weston to Wells. A one-day bus pass costs £7, with up to five people able to travel for £14 on a group ticket.

Our group of eight, plus occasional *Pints West* contributor Poppy the dog, left Weston at midday, picking up a couple of other CAMRA members in Locking. We alighted at Draycott. This was the furthest point that we travelled to, so the longest journey of the day, lasting

THE CAT AND BADGER ALE HOUSE

Sunday Lunch Quiz
Every week 12 - 4pm
£1 entry to charity
Win Cask Ale / Cider

3 BOULEVARD
WESTON-S-MARE
BS23 1NN



OPENING HOURS

THURSDAY 12- UNTIL LATE
FRIDAY 12- UNTIL LATE
SATURDAY 12- UNTIL LATE
SUNDAY 12-4PM
MON, TUE & WED CLOSED



CATANDBADGERWESTON@GMAIL.COM

FOLLOW US ON GOOGLE AND GOOGLE MAPS
FOR INFORMATION ON OUR LATEST BEERS!



The Cider Barn

exactly an hour. If you are doing this journey you need to get off the bus at the stop after the **Cider Barn** and it is around four minutes' walk back to the pub. This was my first visit and it is the kind of pub that the word 'quirky' was invented for. As the name suggests it puts a very big focus on cider. It also features in the *Good Beer Guide*, although the only real ale available was Crown and Glory from the local Cheddar brewery. There are a range of 'Barn Bowls' available for £8, including curry and chilli (with vegetarian and vegan options) and I enjoyed a very nice beef & beer casserole, accompanied by a couple of rounds of bread so thick they practically comprised half a loaf! The nice food and drink in front of a real fire was definitely just the job to start off a cold day out. We peered through the mist at the pub garden and view across the Somerset Levels and considered what a great spot this would be for a drink on a fine summer's day. I would certainly encourage people to visit the Cider Barn if they are in the area.

The hourly bus service meant the length of time that we stayed in each pub/village was dictated by the bus timetable and we were only able to spend about 40 minutes at the Old Barn. Right turn out of the pub to the bus stop for the ten-minute journey to Cheddar, where we had a leisurely two-hour stay. We got off at the Market Cross, which is about a minute's walk from the large, imposing **Bath Arms**. The large 'Village Bar' was very busy, with many people enjoying meals, and we struggled to get seats. Although there is clearly a strong focus on food, it happily still feels very much like a pub and we enjoyed good quality Cheddar Potholer and Bath Ales Gem.

Coming out of the Bath Arms, turn left, then left again into Union Street, then after about 100 metres bear left up Cliff Street. After about 300 metres you arrive at the **Riverside Inn**. This is a very large



Inside the Bath Arms

pub with a lounge bar, public bar and restaurant. There is also a large beer garden that borders the River Yeo. All three rooms were nice and busy. The public bar had five TV screens showing rugby and cricket. It also had people playing darts (sadly a rare sight these days).

On the beer front, the pub has Butcombe Original, Sharp's Doom Bar and Cheddar Potholer as permanents, plus a guest. On this occasion it was Exile (a sub-brand of Exmoor brewery) Wicked Wolf. The barman seemed concerned about the clarity of the Wicked Wolf that had just gone on, but it seemed absolutely fine to us, as did the other beers tried. They also do a real cider. A few of our party dined here and were very happy with the food quality. Aside from the normal menu there was also a very tempting display of cakes on the bar. This was the second time that I had visited the Riverside and have been impressed both times.

A few of us headed off to the nearby GBG-listed **White Hart**, passing the Black Dog (no real ale) and the Galleries (closed with a 'freehold for sale' sign outside). This is a lovely old pub with plenty of character. It is very food-focussed with lots of mouth-watering items on the menu. Some of the more 'traditional' aspects of the pub seem to have had to make way for the different needs of our times. For example, although there is a dart board in both rooms, anyone contemplating a game of darts would have found it impossible, with families sitting eating at tables directly in front of the boards. My friends enjoyed their Cheddar Potholer, but my St Austell Tribute was perhaps a bit below par. Butcombe Original was also available. A poster caught my eye advertising an upcoming event called 'Pub crawl with games', involving participants visiting the White Hart, Black Dog and Riverside. It is good to see, in these difficult times for pubs, that venues can work together to organise joint events that encourage people to visit other pubs as well as their own.

It is less than five minutes' walk back to the 126 bus stop, which is opposite the Riverside Inn. Another ten-minute journey and we were in the village square in Axbridge. The centre of Axbridge has three drinking options, all in very close proximity. Some of our party headed up St Mary's Street to the **Crown Inn**, where they all enjoyed Bath Ales' January special, White Rabbit, reported as being very tasty for only 3.6% ABV. The Crown also offers Tribute. The rest of us went more with hope than expectation to the **Oak House Hotel**. I have had several pleasant summer visits here, sipping beer outside on the square, but thought they may not do real ales in the quieter winter period. A very nice surprise though. They had two ales from Twisted Oak brewery, Spun Gold and Solstice, the latter being a nice new dark bitter from the brewery at 4.7% ABV. The hotel's display of old pumpclips were mainly from Twisted Oak, another one of our fine local breweries. Both the beers were in good condition and we made a big dent in a display of delicious-looking cakes on the bar.

A short walk across the square to the GBG-listed **Lamb** – a wonderful old multi-roomed coaching house owned by Butcombe brewery. Plenty of beams and nooks and crannies. Butcombe's very nice Rare Breed was on offer which was in good condition, as was the only genuine dark beer that we encountered all day – Black Flower Vanilla Stout from Great Western Brewery.



Mike and Gina at the White Hart, Cross

Back on the bus for the short journey to Cross. After shooting over the busy A38, we headed up to the **White Hart** where the rest of our team were already in situ, having walked down from Axbridge.

Another lovely old pub (this one 17th century) that has suffered some gloomy times in recent years, including periods of closure. Current incumbents Mike and Gina took over in April 2019 when the pub was, in their words, in a dilapidated state. We had received good reports on the pub from various sources and it is now looking fresh and vibrant and was very busy. I got talking to some people who regularly travel out from Banwell to drink there because they like the pub so much. The Hart does lunches but doesn't bother competing with the nearby New Inn for evening dining. On the beer front Mike told me that they started with just two beers, St Austell Trelawny and Bath Ales Gem. Happily demand meant that St Austell's Tribute and Proper Job have been added to the roster. Online reviews are very enthusiastic and we very much enjoyed our visit. Hopefully the White Hart will continue to flourish.



The Lamb, Axbridge

The final stop of the day, a couple of minutes' walk back along the Old Coach Road in the direction of the A38, was the GBG-listed **New Inn**. Yet another very busy pub (so heartening to see this throughout our day). Very foodie, with a good reputation for this, but they don't seem to ever forget the importance of their ales. Permanent beers are Otter Ale and Bitter, plus two guests. One of these was a beer from Timothy Taylor that I had never heard of before called Knowle Spring. The other started as Long Man Bitter but this went off, being quickly replaced with Cheddar Gorge Best.

A final dart between the traffic across the A38 to the bus stop and the last 126 of the day duly appeared on time and we were back in Weston at 6.50.

This was an excellent day out, visiting some great, friendly and very busy pubs. This would probably be a very different kind of day out in the middle of the summer, when some of the lovely outside drinking areas could be enjoyed. In fact, we will do it! Look out for details in the next edition of *Pints West*.

Tim Nickolls
(photos by Liz Brady)

Epic Beers (3D Beer and Pitchfork Ales)

Brews, Blues and Barbecues, Epic Beers' annual beer and music festival, is confirmed this year as Saturday 11th July. This family-friendly event will have live acts performing throughout the day, and should be bigger and better than ever. Additionally, there's going to be an official after-party at Epic's taproom, the **Fork 'n' Ale** in the centre of Weston, which will see a live blues jam session during the evening. They are also investigating organising minibus transport from Weston to assist with getting people up to the brewery (in West Hewish). Ticket prices are being held at £10 for entry on the day (£9 in advance, with a CAMRA discount making them just £8 per person – kids free) and will include a pint too.

Epic have confirmed their beers for Bristol Beer Festival. Under their **3D Beer** brand there's a new American pale ale called *Blame it on the Boogie!* As this was a Jackson Five hit, they've used five varieties of American hops for this fruity and citrusy 3.8% ABV session beer. Under the **Pitchfork Ales** brand, there is something rather special. For the past few months they've been barrel-aging some *Santa Fé* in a bourbon oak cask (see picture). There will only be three firkins available and one of them is making it to Bristol Beer Festival (at the same time



a cask will be on at the **Fork 'n' Ale**). Epic are also going to produce 100 330ml bottles as a special limited edition. It'll be delicious but will undoubtedly be strong – expect north of 8% ABV!

Vince Murray

A Round with Robin

Singing is thirsty work (and so is bell ringing for that matter). The back row of most church choirs that I've known of have need of a pint or two after singing daily service. I have been singing with the parish church choir at St John the Baptist in Weston-super-Mare since 1977 and over the years with many other basses (and occasionally an alto or a tenor) have frequented local pubs. When I joined the choir the only pub in Weston to serve real ale local to the church was the **Britannia**, a Courage pub with a good cellar. Later the Top Hat became the Silver Jubilee and had a Wadworth beer in, but after a few years this became the **Regency** and when David and Cynthia took it over it started to have four real ales. A fellow bass, formerly of choirs at Sutton Coldfield and Longwell Green, named Viv, aptly was a Bass drinker, though I was, over the years, able to steer him away to Bombardier and even Tribute. He had a wonderful quote that a visit to the pub was "a thirst after righteousness".

It is fairly well known that the back row of Bristol Cathedral Choir favour the nearby **Three Tuns** so it was with a murmur of some relief when it reopened after Christmas in time for the Epiphany Services. I also offer you a quote from a report on the Exeter Cathedral Choir (in Friends' News December 2019) written by their Director of Music Timothy Noon: "The choir was fortunate enough to make a short visit to Slovenia and Austria we stayed in a lovely hotel, but one that was not entirely used to English cathedral church choirs, judging by the fact that the adults drank the bar dry on not one, but two occasions."

As a follow-up to the last 'A Round with Robin' two issues ago, where I mentioned the **Golden Ark** in Selsdon, the following story has much to say in favour of **Pints West**. Returning from a visit to Sussex for bonfire celebrations at Newick in November last year, I detoured to the Golden Ark to give the micropub copies of **Pints West** and the landlady was very pleased to see the mention they had in our "wonderful magazine". Following on from that visit (where I noticed over 300 different beers had been served at the pub in the first ten months of opening), the Croydon and Sutton Branch of CAMRA had a social at the Golden Ark two days later, and noticed **Pints West** there. I heard from a Somerset CAMRA member in touch with them that 'A Round with Robin' was now circulating throughout that branch and also Bromley branch which adjoins Croydon and is close to Selsdon.

The CAMRA **Exeter Winter Ales Festival** is one that I have been to fairly regularly over the years and this last January three members of the Weston sub-branch attended on the Saturday; I normally prefer the

Friday as beers are all on, whereas on the Saturday some beers had sold out by noon. However, I tried some 14 ales in thirds and halves. At the time of writing I am also looking forward to helping serve beer and cider at the forthcoming CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival and trying a few beers at the next **Gryphon** beer festival which runs from 5th to 8th March (the one after that being 3rd to 6th September).

January 2020 was marked by two very auspicious beers which were very different from each other: the **Battledown Black** (7.4%) drunk in the **Seven Stars** for £4.20 (with CAMRA discount) is well worth a try for those who like a dark strong mild; but an even stronger ale was to be found at the **Royal Oak** in Twerton. In December I made a visit there to try to get *La Ralph* 2019 version, but it wasn't ready. However, on 4th January I revisited the pub and Chris the brewer told me all but one barrel had been sold, but that he had tapped the last barrel which was ready to go on but no handpumps were available. He then went to the cellar and poured me a pint, directly from the barrel, of *La Ralph version Z*, which he brewed with Belgian yeast. He had been hoping it would come in at 10% but was only 9.5% and cost me £3.90 (after CAMRA discount).

Finally, a lovely quote by Tony Hedger from the *London Drinker* magazine (vol.41, no.5): "An important role for the traditional pub has always been to provide a meeting place for local groups and societies. I was however surprised to hear that the Brighton branch of the Flat Earth Society meet in a pub called the Globe."

Robin E Wild

Advertise in Pints West

10,000 copies printed quarterly and distributed to hundreds of pubs throughout the region

Also available on-line at

www.camrabristol.org.uk

Contact: steve.plumridge.pintswest@gmail.com

Some Incredible changes

Change is in the air at Incredible Brewing, with the next few months likely to see a number of developments that will be welcomed by Incredible fans.

The most fundamental change planned, although the one that will perhaps take the most time to bring to fruition, is the hoped moved to different premises, which will allow the business to expand and a tap room to be open more regularly.

One change that will happen sooner, with *Pints West* readers likely to see the impact in March, is a rebranding, with colours of the bottle labels changing, and some beers being given names other than the current, matter of fact, style name. However, Incredible beers will still be easily-identifiable on the shelves of bottle shops, so fans should not be worried about this evolution of Incredible Brewing.

As well as the changes to bottles, some of the more popular bottle-only beers, such as *Coriander and Lime*, and the hop-forward pale ales, will soon be available in keg in local bars and pubs, which will be part of the drive of Stephen "Mr Incredible" Hall to increase his direct distribution to the on-trade. As well as these two dispense methods, look out for nine-pint mini-kegs on sale at the brewery in Brislington and on the soon-to-be-launched online sales portal on the Incredible Brewing website.

For any *Pints West* readers who haven't had the chance to enjoy any Incredible beers, the CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival will again be showcasing an offering; this year will see the popular 4% nettle pale.

Here's to an Incredible 2020 full of change and growth.

Stephen Edmonds



Stephen "Mr Incredible" Hall checking his new labelling machine

Mumbles Brewery

Supplier of award-winning ales to Bristol Free Houses – also available through our online shop

01792 792612

www.mumblesbrewery.co.uk



Chums Micro Pub

FREE HOUSE Est. 2016
22 Chandos Road, Redland
Bristol BS6 6PF

T. 0117 973 1498

www.chumsmicropub.co.uk
email: chumsbristol@gmail.com



Winner
Bristol & District
Pub of the Year
2018



The Bar Code
by Eddie Taberner



Bristol Pubs Group

The Bristol & District CAMRA Pubs Campaigning Group (Bristol Pubs Group for short) was formed in response to the growing number of pubs in the Bristol area closing or being drastically altered. The Group was launched in 2008 with the support of local councillors, members of the trade and the media.

Web: www.camrabristol.org.uk/pubsgroup Email: bristolpubsgroup@yahoo.co.uk

Our aims are simple. Bristol Pubs Group will:
Promote the use of community pubs.
Campaign against closure of pubs that could be viable.
Campaign against insensitive alterations.



Can Bill & Ben and former Flowerpot men save the Old Flowerpot Inn?

The Old Flowerpot Inn on Kingswood High Street, Bristol, on the A420 main road to Marshfield and Chippenham, was a popular local pub for many years with a loyal customer base. However, in early 2019 the pub closed without warning with rumours circulating that the landlord had left at short notice. Since then the pub has remained closed and plated up with no sign of any activity apart from the building starting to take on a somewhat rundown appearance.

This loss is yet another blow for local pub users following the closure of the Highwayman, Tennis Court Inn, Anchor Made For Ever and the Shant, and reduces the choice for those customers wanting to visit traditional style pubs.

The pub was built in 1890 using local stone in a rustic farmhouse vernacular style with twin gables topped by finials, a central entrance doorway, a side entrance, four-pane upstairs and downstairs mullioned windows complete with stress-relieving arches above each one, and an attractive chimney stack at one end of the building. A highly ornate stone frieze with words 'THE OLD FLOWER:POT INN 1890' in an unusual serif font in relief above the central entrance doorway is of some interest. The frieze also has an inter-twinning leaf pattern above the words and a two-handled vase between the words 'INN' and '1890'.

Until fairly recently the pub (popular with local Bristol Rovers football supporters), was run by the ex-Bristol Rovers defender Graham Day who was part of the well known 1970's team which included Stuart

Taylor, Frankie Prince and the legendary 'Smash & Grab' strike partnership of Bruce Bannister and Alan Warboys.

With this sort of pedigree you would have expected the pub to put in a solid performance every week and thrive as part of the local community, but evidently the business plan could not make it profitable enough at the time of closure. So in order to see the Old Flowerpot return to winning ways, Bristol Pubs Group would encourage former pub regulars and other interested parties to contact them by e-mail: bristolpubsgroup@yahoo.co.uk. Then, hopefully, a match-winning team of twenty-one South Gloucestershire council tax payers can be put on the pitch to nominate the pub as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) to save it from any potential threat of permanent closure.



Ian Beckey

Is it the final swansong for the Swan?

The Swan public house on Morley Street in Barton Hill, Bristol, located at its junction with Morton Street, is a two-storey Victorian corner pub which appears on the first edition 1883 Ordnance Survey map. It is close to Lawrence Hill railway station and the A420 main road from Old Market to Redfield and St George, being a popular pub with its regular customers living around the Barton Hill/Lawrence Hill area. It is a rare survivor from the wholesale demolitions which took place in the area during the 1960's to make way for new blocks of corporation flats.

Until recently, the Swan did not appear to be under any particular threat from developers and always seemed to be busy with its regular customers both during the day and evening throughout the week. However, when making a recent delivery of *Pints West* magazine I was informed by a member of bar staff that there was no point in bringing any further copies in future because the pub was going to close after being sold to the Barton Hill Settlement community organisation. She explained that Pru the landlady, who was planning to retire, had tried to sell the Swan as a going concern but due to a lack of interest about taking it on as a pub there was no one else in the market. A recent planning application (reference 19/00644/F) for the installation of shipping containers to house community/work space and 'transitional' residential accommodation seems to confirm this, as an artist's impression of the plans shows the pub to be a vacant building without any pub signage on it.

Local residents and perhaps some of the pub regulars may not be aware of this change of ownership and it does not appear to be mentioned in the local *Up Your Street* community magazine either. The potential loss of this pub is certain to cause inconvenience to local pub customers as there have been significant closures already including

the Kings Arms and Earl Russell (both Lawrence Hill) together with the Lord Nelson, Royal Fort, Forgemans Arms and Russell Arms (all in Barton Hill) leaving just the Packhorse and Rhubarb Tavern as the sole survivors.

Needless to say, Bristol Pubs Group are extremely concerned about the potential loss of the Swan as a pub and would like to think that an organisation like the Barton Hill Settlement will keep this valuable local facility at the heart of the community in the future and not let it go down the 'Swannie'.

Recently, discussions have taken place between Bristol Pubs Group and the management of the Barton Hill Settlement with a view to finding an acceptable way forward and consequently representatives from the organisation have been invited to come to the next Bristol Pubs Group meeting in March. Currently, no decisions have been made on the Swan's future so hopefully the pub can be saved.

Ian Beckey



Pub news

In this column in the last issue of *Pints West* we reported the **White Lion** in Nailsea as closed ("...the White Lion has closed, hopefully temporarily so it could be open by the time you read this."). This was not the case – it is in fact open and trading under the stewardship of John Lindsay as it has been for the past seven years. We apologise to readers for this misinformation, and we have apologised to John for the error regarding his pub.

There are a lot of closed pubs about the city of Bristol. The historic tourist attraction in King Street, the **Llandoger Trow**, the high-Victorian classic in Old Market, the **Palace Hotel**, and the well positioned **Scotchman & His Pack** on St Michael's Hill are but three, but after years closed the **Old Castle Green** on Gloucester Lane in Old Market was due to reopen as a pub in February. The **Palace Hotel** has been closed for two years but this flagship pub is too good to be idle and really should be enjoyed by all pub-goers, so if there's anyone out there looking at taking on a characterful and very smart landmark city pub then please consider this one. We are hopeful of a long-awaited refurbishment and opening of the **Printer's Devil** in Broad Plain. This pub closed over ten years ago and has remained dormant amongst the regenerative redevelopment that has happened around it.



Llandoger Trow

It has been said to us, unsurprisingly, that English Heritage may be interested in what might happen at the **Llandoger Trow**. We know that Whitbread has offered the lease on this spectacular building which closed last April. The **Bank Tavern** on John Street, right in the centre of Bristol, was the recipient of the Observer food monthly Sunday roast award. If you want to try one you'd better be patient – the waiting list for a Sunday lunch table is said to be rather long!

Great news at the **Hare On The Hill** in Kingsdown. It is now off the market with a new five-year lease agreed with Ed Johnson and Liz Chambers who have been running it for the past year. They have given it a refurbishment which includes the eccentric and quirky. There are two lines for ales from Lost & Grounded, while other Bristol breweries and those from further afield will also feature.

Jenna Graves left the **Three Tuns** in St George's Road, West End on 23 December to start off the brand new Cloak and Dagger, a five-room events space with two bars on Cheltenham Road. However, the **Three Tuns** reopened early January under the same management as the **Golden Guinea** in Redcliffe, **Steam Crane** in Southville and **Rising Sun** in Bedminster. Spot on.

A refusal for change of use to residential has been made on the **Adam and Eve** in Hotwells. Its owner wanted conversion into flats but will need to think again. Christie & Co are advertising a free-of-tie lease on the **Lansdown** on Clifton Road, right in the heart of all things happening. This pub is a *Good Beer Guide* regular and its entry says "Traditional pub with a strong real ale offering, mainly from South West breweries. Beers from local independent breweries among the five or six on offer, which change every few months, and there is often a good mix of styles. An upstairs lounge/dining room is available for functions. Good food is available weekend lunchtimes and every evening. The courtyard garden is heated and covered in winter, shows rugby on a big screen, and is the venue of occasional Lansdown 30 beer festivals where all the beers are sourced from within 30 miles of the pub." We're very much hoping a new lease-holder can continue these popular offerings.

In Stapleton, regarding the **Merchants Arms**, we are told the Local Government Ombudsman has appointed an inspector to investigate



Three Tuns (photographed early morning before opening time)

the local community association complaint alleging ineffective enforcement action since the pub closed nearly three years ago. Furthermore, we're told the owners have now engaged a new set of consultants and are working up new development proposals prior to submitting a pre-application. We await developments.

We are told there is an interested party considering the purchase of the **Blackbirds** on Stapleton Road in Easton. A free-of-tie lease has featured in the *Morning Advertiser* on the **George and Dragon** at Redfield, advertised at £85k. Towards the city from here, the **Redfield** has yet to gain a suitor. This pub was recreated as part of an expansion of the building to increase living space a couple of years ago. The new pub space makes an ideal location at the city end of Church Road's leisure scene.

Switching across from East Bristol to Redcliffe's Commercial Road, the former **Velindra** has had a major conversion into **Cock & Tail** cocktail bar. The emphasis is, of course, on cocktails but ales from St. Austell and Bath Ales are available on cask. Following a public meeting in early December regarding saving the **Windmill** on Windmill Hill, an application has been made for: "First-floor extension and change of use of The Windmill Public House from Use Class A4 and conversion into five flats (Use Class C3). Reinstatement of the basement beneath 3 Eldon Terrace to residential use. Proposed external alterations and sub-division of the rear garden area." The planning application is 19/06116/F. A group of committed individuals have formed *Save the Windmill Campaign*, a working group focusing on raising money from the sale of community shares or donations, applying for help from charitable trusts and public funding bodies, and organising loans from CICs (community interest companies) and charities. Get in touch with them if you want to help this popular pub.

Bristol Pubs Group has objected to an application on the **Black Boy Inn** on Whiteladies Road that wishes to change use from A4 drinking establishment with associated residential to flexible ground floor uses of A1, A2, A3 or D1 and a sui generis house in multiple occupation. A company called Planning Developments Limited have submitted an application for the "proposed demolition of the former **Giant Gorum** public house and the development of seven dwellings with associated private amenity space and parking." There is an air of arrogance when a developer calls a pub that they have just closed a *former* public house. But this is typical of the respect afforded to, and the subsequent pressures on, the existence of community pubs. Bristol Pubs Group has been talking with the local community and have strongly objected to the plans for the loss of Lawrence Weston's last community pub. A more friendly application has been granted for the **Lamplighters** in Shirehampton to have six timber customer hospitality shelters in the beer garden. This was a pub that was declared at the end of its life ten years ago but is now a thriving destination and community pub since intense local pressures forced its reopening, demonstrating that the right business model and trading conditions bring success.

Work has started on conversion of the former **Crown Inn** at Hambrook into two dwellings. Expect to see a new Travelodge hotel with a **Chef & Brewer** pub within to appear any time soon on the green field remnant

(Continued on next page)



Live And Let Live

(Pub News – continued from previous page)

of Wick Wick Farm opposite the Willy Wicket pub at Downend. A free-of-tie lease is advertised by Fleurets on the closed **Live and Let Live** in Frampton Cotterell. The pub is owned by Wellington Pub Company and could be, as it has been before, a very attractive community local.

In Staple Hill the **Portcullis** has had a freshen up with a brightly illuminated interior, but no real ale is offered. The **Old Flowerpot Inn** on Kingswood's High Street remains closed but the **Shant** on Crown Road has now been demolished to make way for housing. Where the **Carpenter's Arms** stands at Wick the owner wants to create a smaller pub under the micropub moniker. The planning application declares an intent to create a small pub on the same site alongside a new housing development. This application is fuelling a feeling that the small pub may not prove viable leaving no option for change by expansion or improved space utilisation.

We have been contacted from a local of the **Tern Inn** at Chipping Sodbury who says "The update at the moment is that there is no news. The owner of the pub has removed it from the market, and isn't showing any signs of either remarketing for sale or reopening." Down on the bank of the River Severn we've been told by an Aust villager and CAMRA member that following changes in ownership of the lease the **Boar's Head** is now to let. Locals are very keen to see their community pub continue as the hub of their village.

Star Pubs and Bars are commendably investing in another pub. This time around £585k in the **Charlton** at Keynsham; good news indeed for this popular estate pub, and by the time you read this it should be open following a three-month refurbishment. Also enjoying an extensive refurbishment is the **Brassmill** at the confluence of the Rivers Avon

and Chew. Diners are well catered for and drinkers are welcomed with a selection of ale from four handpumps. Opposite Keynsham Rugby Club the **Crown Inn** rightly gained good press for offering meals to children of struggling families, and free homemade soup and showers to homeless people over the Christmas period. The **George & Dragon** at Pensford closed in 2019 but we are told it will reopen early 2020 as a free house.

The **Warwick Arms** at Clutton closed and is for sale, and a proposal has come to light for demolition of the **Bungalow Inn** at Redhill. The latest at the **Lord Nelson** at Cleeve is that an appeal against North Somerset Council's decision to refuse planning permission has been lodged by the developer. However, the *Friends Nelson* group are strongly opposed to Tout Ltd's intent to convert the **Lord Nelson** into a multi-use site which would see the demolition of this local landmark that, since 1935, has retained its entire frontage unaltered along with the original skittle alley and function room. Local campaigners claim the pub is a well-built, distinctive entity in Cleeve and is ripe for sympathetic conversion to include a village pub business and other community interests such as a shop. The Bristol Pubs Group are fully supportive of that view.

A planning application has been submitted to Sedgemoor District Council on the **Crown Inn** at Axbridge which proposes alterations, including a single-storey extension, to facilitate a change of use into a dwelling. The skittle alley would be demolished to increase the size of the rear garden. The New Market in Weston-super-Mare has changed to **Queso Wine Bar**.

Don't forget to check WhatPub (web address whatpub.com) before you travel. You can also send in updates on WhatPub which is an enormous help, particularly if you are the licensee or a regular user with first-hand information. And remember to use your pub through the spring months so that it's there for you to enjoy year-round.

If you want to join Bristol Pubs Group, or come along to one of its meetings to see what it's all about, then check the branch diary at the back of this issue. Contact us first if you have an item you want to bring to our attention so that it can be considered for the agenda.

Oh, and a closing message from Bristol Pubs Group – do you feel your local pub may come under threat? (All readers of this column should consider the possibility.) Bristol will be having full local elections in May. Candidates for these will want to satisfy you. Consider asking if they are prepared to support you and your friends if you campaign to save your local. Listen out for that knock on the door and have your questions at hand, or email or write to them in advance before they decide what they will commit to.

Mike Jackson, for Bristol Pubs Group

The revitalised Greyhound

The Greyhound public house on Lodge Causeway in Fishponds is located just off of the A432 Fishponds Road near an area of industrial premises and suburban housing close to the Bristol-Bath railway path. The pub was featured in the summer 2014 issue (no. 102) of *Pints West*. It had reopened after a limited refurbishment in February that year following a period of closure and has continued trading since then (now under the management of tenants Darren and Sarah) on a free-of-tie self-maintenance lease from the Wellington Pub Company (Criterion Assets).

Since taking the pub over three years ago, Darren and Sarah have invested in a major refurbishment of the property which has now been redecorated throughout, with new bar fittings including pumps, new seating, a covered outside stage area, together with displays of Whitehall Rugby Club memorabilia and greyhound-themed paintings. There are also plans to reopen the skittle alley and to make the upstairs function room available to community groups.

Currently, the pub is not serving real ales, with the predominately local clientele tending to prefer cider, but real ale could be provided if the demand is there. (*Start demanding it folks – maybe some award-winning cask Bath Ales Gem as advertised on the banners in the garden for starters?*) The extensive pub facilities include two Freeview televisions (a Sky TV package would apparently cost £8,000 and is far too expensive to make it cost effective), a dartboard, sweet machines, a rear back garden with seating, an upstairs pool table, cribbage boards, and bar snacks. The pub also has no less than nine darts teams

(men, ladies and mixed), live music on Saturday nights, and early Sunday evening discos. A Saturday National Lottery £1-per-ticket bonus ball draw is popular with pub regulars. A charity campaign which the pub was involved with helped to raise £3,800 for Macmillan Cancer Care, which goes to show how important pubs are as community hubs. This is something that is often overlooked by planning officers when making delegated planning application decisions to allow pubs to be converted to non-pub uses.

At present, the pub hours are 4pm to 11pm Monday to Thursday, with longer Friday and weekend opening hours. With the current management team in charge offering a variety of pub events to bring in regular local customers, Bristol Pubs Group are most optimistic that the pub can stay the course for a secure long-term future. We would like to encourage people to support the pub whenever they have the opportunity to visit the Fishponds area.

Ian Beckey



Part of the revitalised outside area

More awards for Moor beers

Every time I catch up with Moor proprietor Justin Hawke I seem to be handing over more CAMRA award certificates, and this time was no exception! On this occasion *Hoppiness* was recognised, being awarded silver in the Strong Bitter category at the South West regional Champion Beer of Britain competition. Also winning recently was the mighty old ale, *Old Freddy Walker*, winner of beer of the festival at Kidderminster beer festival. This was *Freddy's* 32nd award!

As always the brewery was a veritable hive of activity when I visited, and the new beers just keep on coming! I was delighted to try a pint (or two) of *Winter Warmer*, a classic English strong bitter weighing in at 5%, with a beautiful balance between fruit, malt and hops, and only available in cask. It will feature at the forthcoming CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival.

On the way soon is a new core beer to add to the Moor range. *Distortion* will be a 4.7% pale hop-forward ale, filling a gap at that ABV level. It will be available in cask, can and keg.

Meanwhile, *ElMoor* will be a special limited brew to celebrate the birthday of the ever popular Elmer, the local DJ and proprietor of the rather splendid Elmer's Arms in Old Market. *ElMoor* will be a pale ale brewed with Moor's strain of Belgian yeast, and will be exclusive to the Moor Tap and Elmer's Arms.

March will see several exciting new releases. These include *White Pony*, a white IPA, and an as yet unnamed beer brewed in collaboration with Bristol Beer Factory at the request of Mitchells & Butlers for their chains of pubs – these include Ember Inns, Nicholson's, Vintage Inns and Sizzling Pubs. There is also another collaboration with Fuller's, available in cask only – look out for it in Fuller's pubs, including the Old Fish Market and Cambridge Arms in Bristol.



At the Tap Room in Days Road, St Phillips, you can often find exclusive and interesting brews, usually pale and hoppy, produced on Moor's pilot kit which has a minimum brew length of only 60 litres!

Moor's current branding is now ten years old, so look out for a refresh from April. As always, evolution not revolution will be the way forward, with the branding still recognisable but subtly enhanced. And to aid with combating the vagaries of the British weather there is now a covered area outside of the Tap Room (pictured).

As always, Moor will be participating in the first East Bristol Brewery Trail of the year. Look out for further information on this and other Moor news at the Moor social media feeds.

Phil Cummings

Busy times at Good Chemistry

The biggest news coming out of GCHQ (Good Chemistry's headquarters) in the last few months is that their longest-serving employee, Sam (sales manager), is leaving the company at the end of March. Although everyone who's met Sam will agree that he's inimitable and irreplaceable, look out for the introduction of his replacement in the next issue of *Pints West*. With his typical sense of occasion, Sam's timed his departure to tie in with the Timothy Taylor tap takeover at Good Chemistry's pub, The Good Measure in Redland, on Thursday 26th March.

The first two months of 2020 have been as busy as ever for Good Chemistry, with plenty of planning and then brewing of the spring and summer range of beers. Alongside the change from GMT to BST, one good indicator of the movement from winter to spring and summer was the mid-February Kokomo Crawl, which saw over 30 venues in Bristol and further afield pouring both *Kokomo Weekday* and *Kokomo Weekend* – this year the rarer cask form of *Kokomo Weekday* could be found at the Drapers Arms, the Hillgrove Porter Stores and the Swan With Two Necks. Outside of Bristol, Good Chemistry fans were well-served with *Kokomo* at the Three Crowns in Chippenham, Chapter One in Bath, and in cans at 'Good Food on the Edge' in Wotton-Under-Edge, the town in which Good Chemistry founders Bob and Kelly grew up.

At the end of February, Good Chemistry had a very productive visit to London for BrewLDN, a big beer festival and trade show in East London, which allowed them to spread the word of just how good Good Chemistry beers are to trade attendees from across the UK.

Early March sees Kelly again hosting a celebration of 'Women In Beer' at The Good Measure for International Women's Day on 8th March. Any women who work in the beer industry and who enjoy drinking beer, and anyone who would like to try beers brewed by women and from breweries owned and run by women, are very welcome to attend, and should look out for more details on Good Chemistry's website and social media feeds.



Left to right: Sam, Kelly and Bob (at the Great British Beer Festival)

Having won the runners-up award for LocAle Beer of the Festival for Extra Special at last year's CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival, Good Chemistry are aiming to go one better this March with their 4.3% brown ale Storms Pass and their 6% Baltic porter, Becoming North.

April will see the reopening of the brewery tap after its annual hibernation, and we'll know summer has well and truly arrived when the East Bristol Brewery Trail (EBBT) returns on the May Day bank holiday weekend. However, as there isn't technically a May Day bank holiday weekend in 2020, due to the bank holiday being moved to Friday 8th May to coincide with the VE Day 75th anniversary celebrations, EBBT will this year take place on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th May. For the first time in 2020, there'll also be a mini, mid-season EBBT on Saturday 4th July, as well as the usual August bank holiday weekend. Here's to a great spring and summer with Good Chemistry beers.

Stephen Edmonds

BADRAG

Bristol And District Rare Ales Group

BADRAG 'Mild Time' launch

The CAMRA national 'Mild Month' is May each year and, while we encourage the trade locally to provide mild ales during May, we understand from them that as soon as the sun comes out many in the trade find it difficult to sell dark beers. And so, as promoted in the last few of issues of *Pints West*, we in BADRAG decided to launch our own local 'Mild Time' campaign in November 2019.

Mild is a rare style of ale once very common in the UK including the South West. It is low in bitterness, often malty, nutty and very easy drinking. There is a myth that it always has a low ABV (alcohol by volume), but low ABVs were introduced in the Victorian era to avoid factory workers returning from lunch a bit tipsy. Stronger mild ales, such as Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby at 6% ABV, sell very well and often the word 'Mild' is omitted from the name on the pump clip, so ask the bar staff which is the mild ale if it is not obvious to you, or look out for the CAMRA mild pump crowner.

Many breweries and pubs in our branch area came on board for Mild Time. And just as the last issue of *Pints West* was about to go to press a number of Mild Time events were getting underway. Below are reports of what took place, but first some of the reaction that Mild Time generated.

"Well done Laurie Gibney [BADRAG founder], a lot of hard work for you. I've enjoyed several days sampling the delights of the milds." – *Richard Aldridge on 'CAMRA Bristol Chat' Facebook group.*

"Thank you to the Mild Time organisers. I popped into my closest venue, Nailsea MicroPub, yesterday to enjoy two very different mild beers: King Street Brew House's Mild Mild West and Nottingham Foundry Mild. I'd like to see more milds throughout the year." – *Patrick Townsend.*

"Mild Time is definitely here with Sarah Hughes at the Drapers Arms." – *Chris Griffiths, whose business Stroudprint kindly printed the Mild Time Posters.*

"Hands up who loves a mild out there? It was our Tom's personal mission to brew a mild at Bristol Beer Factory because he ruddy loves them. He got his wish and oh boy are we pleased he managed to twist our arms. A true homage to cask ale, it's rich in flavour, low in ABV and super sessionable ... and just admire that creme on top. It should be and is 'Future Proof'." – *Bristol Beer Factory.*

"Do you know how nice it is to be able to go into your local (Drapers Arms) two nights in a row and order a decent ordinary dark mild?..." – *Boak & Bailey – see the full blog "The BADRAG effect – a choice of milds" at boakandbailey.com/2019/11/badrag-milds.*

Mild Time events

On Thursday 21 November Laurie Gibney was at a Mild Time 'meet and greet' at the **Old Bank** in Keynsham to enjoy Bristol Beer Factory's Future Proof 3.3% mild ale. Also the same evening in Portishead there was a Mild Time 'meet and greet' at **Sirens Calling** with Neil Ravenscroft. And the Weston-super-Mare sub-branch ran a 'Mild Evening', led by Tim Nickolls, calling at the **Duke of Oxford, Fork 'n' Ale, Cat & Badger** and **Black Cat**.

On Friday 22nd November Laurie Gibney led a BADRAG Mild Time visit to Backwell via some Nailsea pubs. Our first stop was at **Siren's Calling**, and we were joined here by a couple (Chris and Heather) who

BADRAG, the Bristol & District Rare Ales Group, is an award-winning campaigning group within the local branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.

Its aim is to promote the rarer *styles* of real ale, in particular **dark beers** such as **milds, stouts** and **porters**, plus the even rarer old ales and barley wines.

See www.camrabristol.org.uk/badrag/RareAlePubs.html for over a hundred pubs that support BADRAG.

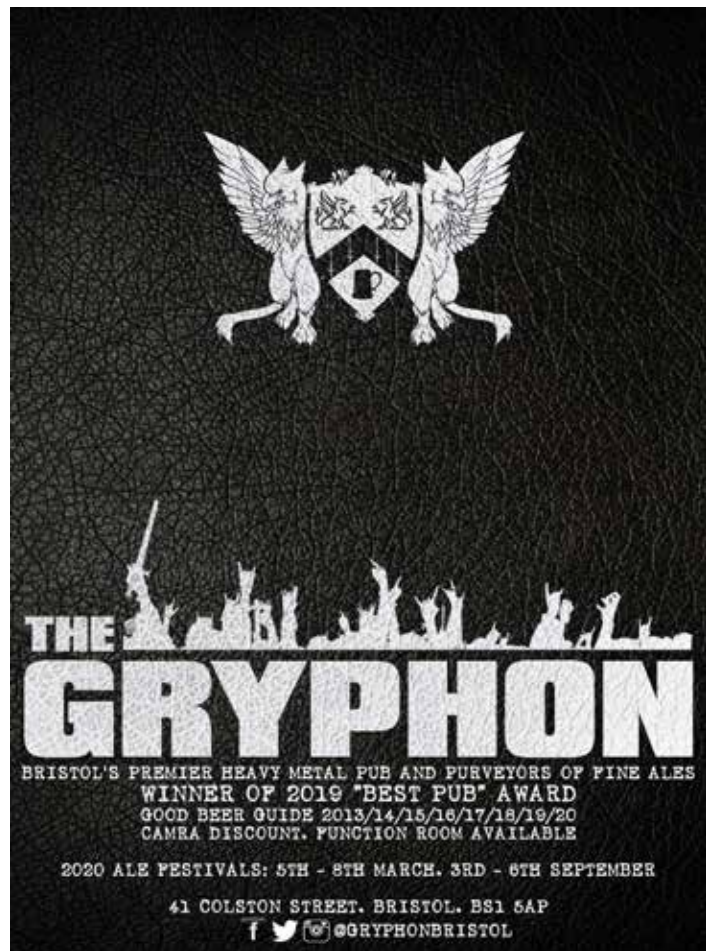
BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk

had come all the way from Basingstoke (staying in a hotel in Bristol) especially for the Mild Time Weekend, and tell us they would do it again. Siren's Calling spoiled us with Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild (6%) and Mighty Oak Oscar Wylde Mild (3.7%). **Nailsea Coates House** had King Street Brew House Mild Mild West (3.6%), as did **Nailsea MicroPub**, which also had Nottingham Foundry Mild (4.7%), and at the beer festival at **Backwell Village Club** we enjoyed Bristol Beer Factory Future Proof (3.3%), amongst other ales.

No. 17 bus Mild Time trail

On Saturday 23rd November Mal Fuller led the number 17 bus mild trail from the Lyons Den to the Drapers Arms, which was a great success and well attended (including a chap called John Lamb who came over from Cardiff to take part). Mal recalls:

The buses were on time, the beer was great, the conversation flowed as did the beer, and I think all thoroughly enjoyed themselves; I know I did. The beer festival at the Drapers at the end of the trail was the cherry on the cake. The only snag was Snuffy Jack's opened at 4pm instead of 3 due to a barrel mishap involving spillage which had to be cleaned up, but no real problem as we adjourned to the Spoons a few doors down



and had something to eat whilst we waited for the mops and buckets to do their job. And it was worth hanging around for; the place was full and lively and a good time was had.

As for the pubs and ales served, Mike at the **Kings Arms** in Kingswood, our first pub, went all the way to Nuneaton to fetch Church End Gravedigger (3.8%) for us, a very good mild with a malt that bloomed in the aftertaste. Having had our fill here, we left for the Lyons Den over the road.

The **Lyons Den** greeted us with Ratliffe's Celebrated Stout from the Phipps brewery in Northampton, which despite being called a stout I would describe as a spiced strong mild due to its lightness of hop. It reminded me very much of the old RCH Firebox with its Christmas pudding flavours of cloves and mixed spice. They also put on Bristol Beer Factory Future Proof mild.

The **Wooden Walls** put on Nethergate Melford Mild (3.7%) and **Snuffy Jack's** went for Bank Top Dark Mild (4%) from Bolton. Both were served in excellent condition and quite impressive with their interesting layers of malt flavours.

But the mild of the day for me was had at the **Drapers Arms**, namely Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild, an old friend. What a great beer festival the Drapers put on; the place was buzzing. Now looking forward to their next Easter beer festival (see advert).

City centre Mild Time trail

Also on the same Saturday (23rd), BADRAG ran a mild trail in central Bristol, led by Laurie Gibney and Mark Munday. On that day, a CAMRA South West regional meeting was being held at the **Famous Royal Navy Volunteer** in King Street, and the start of the trail was timed to coincide with the conclusion of that meeting, meaning many of the attendees, who had come from all parts of the South West, were able to join in.

Having sampled some of the fine ales at the **Famous Royal Navy Volunteer**, around 40 or so trailers set off in search of mild or other dark ales in a tour of some of the other fine hostelries in the city centre. The next stop was further down the same street at the **King Street Brew House**, where people sampled the brewpub's own Mild Mild West (3.8%), Moor Confidence (4.6%) and Bristol Beer Factory's award-winning Milk Stout (4.8%). Next up was the **Shakespeare Tavern** in Prince Street where there was Bristol Beer Factory's Future Proof and also Goff's Black Knight, a 5.3% porter. Then, deftly escaping a hen party on a quest, the tour moved on to the **Gryphon**, just up from the Colston Hall, where there was once again Bristol Beer Factory's Future Proof, plus West Berkshire Brewery's, Maggs' Mild (3.3%). The tour concluded at the **White Lion** where there was Wickwar Mild Paw at 4.3%.

Mild Time at Chums and Good Measure

On Sunday 24th November, Dave Weir and Roy Sanders conducted a Mild Time social meet & greet at Chums and the Good Measure in Chandos Road, Redland. Dave recalls:

For the occasion, the Good Measure had two milds on handpump. Firstly there was Bristol Beer Factory Future Proof at 3.3%. This was a dark ruby mild that was served with a good tight head. The taste was fresh, light and toasty with little evidence of any hops. The finish was dry, fruity and vinous. The other mild was Timothy Taylor Golden Best at 3.5% which was a dark gold/amber light mild. The taste was biscuity and dry. Of the two, the Bristol Beer Factory was my favourite. The Good Measure also had some very interesting dark beers on keg, including Good Chemistry Shadow Future at 4.2%, which was a dry rye stout, and Good Chemistry Dark Energy at 7%, which was a black IPA.

The best of the lot for me was 1832 XXXX Mild at 8.1%, brewed to 'an original recipe' by Sheffield-based Saint Mars of the Desert. I had a third of a pint of this and it tasted to me more like a Belgian Triple than a mild. The aroma was astounding – sweet and honey like. The beer was well balanced, sweet and butterscotchy, with a very satisfying burning finish reminiscent of a whisky! It was delicious.

Chums was selling two dark beers. Clearwater Proper Ansome at 4.2% was a smooth dark and malty amber mild. There was a pleasant sour

vinous quality to this drink. The second was Severn Vale Ruby Porter at 4.8%. It was a rich, fruity, ruby-coloured ale and was a great beer to finish on.

Roy added: I agree with the descriptions above of the Good Chemistry dark beers. My favourite was also the 1832 XXXX Mild from Saint Mars of the Desert. However my favourite at Chums was the Severn Vale Special Bitter which was malt driven, barely a taste of hops, and to my (admittedly jaded) palate, a bit on the mild side.

Other BADRAG news

Siren's Calling in Portishead (who were at the time hosting their winter beer festival) was the venue for this year's BADRAG Christmas social, where a number of 'Badraggers' met up for a very enjoyable evening, with sixteen festive ales to choose from. Notable amongst these were Moor Old Freddy Walker (7.3%), New Bristol Crème Brûlée stout (7%) and Weird Beard Black Perle (3.8%).

Nailsea MicroPub has become a welcome addition to the BADRAG scene. In its first three months, of the fifty-one beers on offer, fourteen (or 28%) were of a style appreciated by BADRAG. In fact they usually try and keep a BADRAG style real ale available whenever possible.

Future BADRAG events

Here are some events at which you may enjoy some BADRAG style ales (see www.camrabristol.org.uk/diary.html for more details and late changes). *Note that on the organised trails, if a pub happens to have no cask dark or rare style of beer on, the plan is to move straight on to the next one that does, so as to give extra support to those that support us.*

- Sat 7 Mar, 12 noon – BADRAG Gloucester Road Trail.
- Sat 25 Apr, 10am – BADRAG social by train to Chippenham Beer Festival.
- Sat 2 May, 9am – BADRAG visit to Exeter Mild Ale Trail.
- Thu 18 June, 6pm – BADRAG Kingsdown & Cotham Trail.

Laurie Gibney, Rich Aldridge, Mal Fuller, Mark Munday, Dave Weir, Roy Sanders



National Pubs of the Year

A tour of (almost) all of them! (part two)

As per the last edition of *Pints West* (issue no. 124), I have now completed my grand tour of all pubs that have ever won the prestigious CAMRA National Pub of the Year title, and are still trading and selling real ale. One has closed and another stopped selling real ale many years ago. In part one I detailed my trips to 11 of the 26 that needed to be visited. I can now detail the remaining 15.

It is necessary to clarify that the opinions expressed are purely my own and not intended to represent those of CAMRA. In many cases I have only paid a single brief visit, so can only offer a snapshot of my impressions. The intention is to offer my impressions of why it won the award, what it is like now, and how highly I would recommend it now. In some cases the ownership or management of a pub may have changed at least once since it won the award. I will take the remaining pubs in the order that they won.

1989: Cap and Feathers, Tillingham, Essex



The Cap and Feathers

In part one I had yet to visit this one but I managed to get there at the end of November 2019. Quite a journey and almost as far east that it is possible to go in England. This is a pleasant weather-boarded pub in a small village near Southminster. It has not featured in the *Good Beer Guide* for a few years but still dispenses three real ales. On my visit these were two from the local Mighty Oak brewery and the dreaded Doom Bar, all dispensed in good order. The pub is basically furnished, with stone floors and a warm real fire. We enjoyed a warm welcome and a pleasant lunch at reasonable prices. The pub has only been under its current management for six years so the connection to the award is lost. I'm prepared to wager that the prominent pool table and Sky Sports TVs were not present back in 1989 but became necessary to maintain trade levels. A decent pub but maybe not what it was way back?

1994: Beamish Mary Inn, No Place, Stanley, Co Durham



Beamish Mary Inn

The other from part one that I was yet to get to. Got here night before my 60th birthday. It's an excellent traditional inn with three separate

areas that I imagine is virtually unchanged from when it won. A warm welcome in the lounge with its real fire. There was a choice of six real ales which included several local beers, plus superb food with large portions and low prices and pleasant B&B rooms. Still a great pub.

2002: Swan, Little Totham, Essex

First of two wins for this pub. My visit was around 2010 on the way to a flight from Stansted. This is a Grade II-listed building described back then as "the archetypal village pub" open to all: "dogs, families and walkers with muddy boots." It had a big range of beers back then and seemingly still does although it does not appear in the 2020 *Good Beer Guide* I notice. A big walled beer garden is a feature. Back then there is no mention of the separate restaurant that now features. Our otherwise pleasant visit was spoilt somewhat by the condition of the beer that we were served. Maybe just unlucky.

2003: Crown & Thistle, Gravesend, Kent

Run at the time of winning by Phil and Jacki, now long-time proprietors of the Cornubia in Bristol, sadly this is the pub that has been closed since 2015 and seems unlikely to reopen.

2004: Fat Cat, Norwich – second win, see part one.

2005: Swan, Little Totham, Essex – second win, see above.

2006: Tom Copley Tavern, Spreyton, Devon

The award came west for the second time to this splendid pub in a small village near Crediton. No less than 14 real ales and 18 ciders can be available at one time, mostly from local brewers and many straight from the cask. Add in great food, a warm welcome, frequent events and quality inexpensive accommodation and you have a very good pub indeed. I've visited four or five times and can recommend that you do too.

2007: Old Spot Inn, Dursley, Gloucestershire



The Old Spot

The award stayed in the West Country and deservedly went to this cracking pub only a short drive from Bristol, and which I've visited a dozen or so times. This pub was offering a large range of independent beers long before it became popular to do so. A big supporter of Uley brewery, the house beer 'Old Ric' was brewed for the long-standing landlord, now sadly deceased. Although good lunchtime food is served, it's all about the beer here with seven changing guest beers, and frequent events.

2008 and 2009: Kelham Island Tavern, Sheffield

Still the only pub to win in consecutive years. This excellent free house, which I've visited multiple times, was rescued from dereliction in 2002. It is tucked away in a historic industrial area of Sheffield that features a number of other excellent free houses nearby. Always busy, with conversation as king, it offers a constantly changing range of 12 real ales always featuring a good mix of styles, quality lunchtime meals and

an award-winning beer garden. Sheffield is one of the best cities for beer so it does well to win the local pub of the year these days!

2010: Harp, Charing Cross, London

The only time to date that the award has come to the capital. This tremendous small pub, visited many times by me, has somehow stayed as a real ale mecca whilst all around has changed. Always bustling and often crowded, there is a lesser-known cosy upstairs room that can be a refuge. Owned and run for many years by the legendary Binnie Walsh (now deceased sadly) it was sold to Fuller's in 2014 and they have kept their promise to change almost nothing. Four regular and five guest beers plus real ciders. An absolute gem worth seeking out.

2011: Bridge End Inn, Ruabon, Wrexham

The only win for Wales so far. My only visit here came in 2017. Conveniently located almost next to Ruabon station, this is an excellent family-run free house focussed very much on the beer offering. At the time of winning it offered five changing beers. That is now up to eight and often includes some brewed by the in-house McGivern brewery. There is always a good mix of styles, as witnessed on my visit when the beers were well chosen, but sadly no house brews that day. A worthy winner that may be even better nine years on from winning.

2012: Baum, Rochdale, Greater Manchester



The Baum

After a not very enjoyable visit to the 2013 winner (see below) we made an impromptu visit to this wonderful pub, around 40 miles away, in 2018. In a most unlikely location, to the side of a very busy road in urban Rochdale, sits this warm, friendly gem. Owned by the council and adjacent to a museum, it operates as a free house with eight changing real ales, ciders, keg and bottled beers. We had a very enjoyable meal at a low price too. Best of all was the warm welcome that we received as total strangers. We stayed for around four hours, totally unplanned. Recommended highly.

2013: Swan With Two Necks, Pendleton, Lancashire

Oh dear. In 2018 not exactly the best experience of the whole quest. As always, I had checked whether dogs are welcome. If the relevant symbol is not showing in the *Good Beer Guide* or on *WhatPub* then I ring the pub. In this case the 'dogs welcome' symbol was present which should mean that they are welcome in at least one part of the *inside* of the pub. We suffered a difficult journey driving from Southport and arrived later than planned at 2.40pm – still 20 minutes before closing time. We walked in with me carrying our tiny dog, Sonic, only to be gruffly told, "No dogs inside" by a lady who I took to be in charge. I pointed out that the *Guide* said otherwise, to be told, "Only in the garden." I said, "It's raining and my wife is on crutches – I'll carry the dog," but still she refused. Only one other customer and they were closing soon but no discretion was shown. To avoid the need to return I ordered a swift half from the choice of four beers, necked it in the doorway, then left. I am surprised to see that it is currently in the final four for the 2019 title – I myself will not be returning. Determined to have a better experience, I drove straight to the Baum (above).

Great decision. [No restriction on dogs is mentioned in the *Good Beer Guide*, but *WhatPub* does say "Dog friendly, Beer garden only", though apparently did not back in 2018. Ed.]

2014: Salutation Inn, Ham, Gloucestershire



The Salutation Inn

This is the closest that the award has ever come to Bristol; Ham is a small village on the outskirts of Berkeley, not far from the A38. Visited four or five times by us over the last 10 years, this three-roomed pub had not yet sprouted the successful and highly regarded Tiley's brewery (nor its sister pub the Butcher's Hook in Thornbury). It was offering around five or six local real ales plus local ciders back in 2013/14 – that figure has risen by a few now. Food is served lunchtimes only, and a skittle alley/function room is available. I will admit to some surprise when it won the national award at that time, but it is a great pub.

2015: Sandford Park Alehouse, Cheltenham, Glos

The third different (and second consecutive) Gloucestershire pub to win the award – making it the most successful county to date. This one is quite a contrast to the other two; it only opened in 2013 with an airier more modern feel in the centre of Cheltenham. I had visited for the first time just a few months before it won. We enjoyed a great night there sampling from around nine real ales and a dozen keg too. Have returned once since. The one grumble has been that on both visits there were a few too many pale/golden beers and not enough of other styles. I was concerned to hear that it changed hands in late 2019, but reports suggest that little has changed to date. Recommended.

2016: George & Dragon, Hudswell, North Yorkshire



The George & Dragon

We had to show some dedication to visit this one in 2018. Driving from York we got stuck in a two-hour traffic snare up on the motorway causing us to miss the 3pm lunchtime closure. A detour to Ripon for a few hours and we there for evening opening time. This lovely pub, the only one in the village, was rescued from closure in 2010 by members of the local community. It now includes a shop and library as well as offering four changing real ales from local brewers (always including a dark beer) and two real ciders. Whilst enjoying a chat with the locals, several of whom were stakeholders, we had a cracking evening meal at a fair price. The pub has a beer terrace with great views and its own allotments. Walkable from Richmond. Currently in the final four again for the 2019 award and recommended to you.

(Continued on next page)

2017: Cricketers Arms, St Helens, Merseyside

I got to this pub in 2018 whilst it was reigning champion and was wowed by the amazing array of drinks on offer. No less than 13 changing real ales are sold, including occasional beers from the in-house Howzat brewery, ten real ciders and a massive selection of spirits. The latter include over 100 gins! The pub has two beer gardens and hosts darts and pool teams as well as regular beer festivals, quizzes and other events. The place was buzzing at 4pm on a Friday and is everything you'd want in an urban pub. No food here – it's all about the beer. (Just a mention too for the quite close by Turks Head pub which was also excellent.) Highly recommended.

2018: Wonston Arms, Wonston, Hampshire



The Wonston Arms

Visited in 2019 whilst reigning champion. This is tucked away in a small village, but not far from Sutton Scotney on the A34. We visited on a Saturday lunchtime and the pub was positively vibrant, despite not offering meal service beyond the pork pie and scotch egg type menu. Noticeably popular with families and dog owners, and spilling out into the pleasant garden, there are always four changing real ales on, mainly from local brewers. The pub hosts many events, some live music, pop-up cafes and quizzes. We got chatting to the licensee, who said he was truly amazed to have won the award only around 18 months after taking over and revitalising the pub, which had been allowed to run down by one of the big pub chains. We loved this place and recommend it highly.

2019: Bell, Aldworth, Berkshire

When the four finalists were announced late in 2019, three of them were previous winners – this one included. It last won in 1990, and I covered it in part one in the last issue of *Pints West*. A very worthy winner this time, and one I highly recommend.

Of those other finalists, the two that were previous winners were the Swan With Two Necks, Pendleton, Lancashire (2013) and the George & Dragon, Hudswell, North Yorkshire (2016).

The fourth finalist deserves a mention, I believe – the **Red Lion at Preston in Hertfordshire**. On our way to Tillingham to visit the Cap and Feathers (1989 winner) we realised that we would be driving within 20 miles of this pub. Well – it had to be done! We stopped off for lunch



The Red Lion

at this classy old pub on the village green. The food was very good as was the selection of five ales on sale. Apparently this was the first ever community-owned pub – once again showing how inept the big pub chains can be and what can be done in the right hands.

Big thanks to my wife Marilyn, who did a lot of post-pub driving, and to my dog Sonic for tagging along to a lot of them. I really enjoyed this quest and hope you enjoyed reading about it.

Vince Murray



Wiper & True's exploration of natural fermentation and the influence of terroir

Wiper & True (W&T) have always been known for being alchemists and inquisitors, exploring ideas for new and exciting brews each and every day. However, their latest experiment, which has taken several years to come to fruition, is their biggest and boldest yet; and it provides a foretaste of exciting times ahead.

Having first dabbled in the art of fermentation with cider-making, Michael Wiper planted an orchard eight years ago. Soon afterwards he realised that making beer was much quicker and so the seed of W&T was also sown. As the orchard and brewery grew, Michael decided to bring the two together by blending apple pressings and a traditional ale wort to create a spontaneously fermented Orchard Ale. Part of the fun was that they had no idea what flavours would be produced as they were relying on the yeast naturally occurring in the orchard to be able to ferment malted barley and wheat, hoping that would create good flavours. The 2017 vintage of **Old Twelfth Night** (6%), their barrel-aged Orchard Ale, was released back in January on keg and in 750ml bottles. The name is linked to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of wassailing on the twelfth night after Christmas Day, the ancient ritual of awakening apples trees from their winter rest and ridding them of bad spirits to encourage a bountiful harvest.

Terroir has long been held in high regard for its influence on the character of its produce. The aspect, soil, climate, flora and fauna, all combine to create something unique, with a sense of place at the core. This is carried through every apple from the 2017 harvest pressed and added to the blend. The countryside surrounding W&T's home in Bristol provides the perfect assortment of these contributory factors for orchards to flourish and is steeped in a rich history of cider production. Together with the naturally occurring yeasts and bacteria found in an orchard, they have drawn from this history to create a beer that has the area's spirit at its heart.

They turned to Jonny Mills of Mills Brewing for guidance and assistance with this project, who is highly regarded in the craft beer industry for his expertise in the art of fermenting and ageing beers in the Lambic tradition. Will Davies (pictured), head of their barrel-ageing programme, was in charge for W&T. They added aged Wai-iti hops to the boiling wort to impart a subtle bitterness without creating an antimicrobial environment that is created with fresh hops. The temperature of the wort was then brought down to around 80°C and steeped in Simcoe, their stand-out hop of the 2017 harvest, allowing for the infusion of aroma and flavour. Fermentation of the turbid wort and cider pressings, followed by ageing of the beer, took place in French oak barrels.

So, what of the final beer itself? Well, it retains a malty beer-iness, complex aged hop notes, a wild fermentation character and a tart apple finish that embodies everything about the journey they have been on. It has been a slow beer maturing since the autumn of 2017, the first product of an orchard planted 10 years ago. The project is one that they are excited to continue for many years to come, with each vintage drawing on the influence of the year.

Other news from W&T is that their latest cask release is **Milkshake** (4.5%), their milk stout featuring copious chocolate malts laced with vanilla and cacao to create a luscious milkshake-rich dark beer; it is full of chocolatey goodness and sweet marshmallow flavours, rich and velvety with a gentle roasted finish. The tap room is open each weekend on Friday (5-10), Saturday (1-10) and Sunday (1-6) for all things beery: a range of their finest draft beers, including brewery-exclusive tank beer, take-out cans and merchandise. Brewery tours are available each Saturday afternoon. Finally, they have just taken possession of an additional unit in St Werburghs, close to the brewery, that will be dedicated to barrel-ageing and mixed fermentation. Their aim is to produce accessible, balanced yet innovative and experimental beers, with releases throughout the year.

Dave Graham



News from Arbor Ales

This bulletin reflects a somewhat quiet time at the Arbor Ales brewery as far as news is concerned. The two 40-barrel tanks, delivered at the end of last year, have been installed thus bringing the fermenting capacity to one million litres per annum. A makeover for their brewery tap is on the cards and a collaboration with Yakima Chief Hops is imminent.

Staff news now: head brewer Daniel Bell has "emigrated" to the European Union and Elliot Murphy, late of Bath Ales/St Austell has joined the team. Robbie Sattin has decided to pack in the day job to concentrate on music. I wish him well – I have never regretted my similar decision fifty-odd years ago. Robbie's replacement is Dan Handley previously of Great Western Brewery.

In spite of Brexit Arbor continues to export a large proportion of its output to Italy and, to a lesser extent, Belgium, Spain and France. Furthermore, it has been decided to join other breweries in producing cans in the popular 440ml size. The first essay is still in the design stage; suffice to say that it will contain a new beer for nationwide distribution in large retail outlets! Fans of the pint cans have nothing to fear though, as the majority of Arbor's beers will continue to be packaged in that format.

Henry Davies



A beer tour of Leek and Buxton

With many a chance to sample Bristol beers

A period spent up in Cheshire over Christmas offered an opportunity to visit Leek and Buxton, which are just across the border in Staffordshire and Derbyshire respectively.

Arriving in Leek at lunchtime, the tour did not get off to the best start. We entered the **Old Mill Smokehouse** only to find the landlord cleaning up after a small fire from the previous night and telling us that the bar was closed until the evening. He must have seen the



The Old Mill Smokehouse, Leek

disappointment on our faces as he insisted on giving us some free tasters from his three cask and nine keg beers. Perhaps best of the bunch was *Amundson Triple Scoop Bourbon*. It was also good to try *Arbor Zero Zero* which, like us, had made its way up from Bristol. The pub opened late in 2018 and is a converted textile mill furnished in an 'industrial style'. One very pleasing feature of our crawl in Leek was that every other pub we visited also sold a beer from a Bristol brewery! Another was

that every pub was packed out with friendly and thirsty customers from all demographics. We popped across the road (pubs in Leek are very close to each other) to the Titanic Brewery-owned **Roebuck**. This pub is a beautiful half-timbered building with a very traditional interior which was fitting for a pub built in 1626. The stand-out beer for me was *Titanic Cherry Dark* which was a beautiful hoppy red beer with just a hint of cherries. *Bristol Beer Factory White Milk Stout* was also on sale amongst the nine cask and six keg beers.



The Roebuck, Leek

Just 100 metres away was **Den Engel**. This was a cafe-style bar selling one real ale together with a wide range of Belgian draught and bottled beers. We shared a bottle of *Hanssens Lambic Experimental Raspberry*, which is very rare in the UK. This beautiful beer was very tart with a good balance of sour fruit. The pub also sold *Wild Beer Bibble* on keg which, for the purposes of this article, I regarded as a Bristol beer (well, the brewery's not that far away). We then made the brief walk to **(Brew)ce's Craft Ale Shop and Sipping Room** which is a micropub conversion from a shop. There were no cask ales on sale here but the selection of ten keg beers was superb. They also had a wide variety of bottled and canned beers for on or off sale. The pick of the bunch was *Verdant Export Stout* while the beer from Bristol was *Arbor Mosaic*. The

final pub visited in Leek was the multi-award-winning **Earl Grey Inn**. This is a traditional street-corner boozer which sold five cask ales and several keg beers. One of the beers on offer was a very tasty *Whim Ales Black Xmas*. This jet-black beer is a cross between a stout and a porter and was perfect for a cold winter afternoon. The Bristol beer was *Arbor Breakfast Stout*.

Over in Buxton we set out for the **Red Willow** pub which was opened by the Red Willow brewery (from nearby Macclesfield) in late 2017. This pub is located in a recently converted bank and had five handpumps and ten keg beers. The *Red Willow Headless* went down well. From here it was just a short walk to the contemporary-styled **Buxton Brewery Tap** with two cask ales and 14 keg ales on, amongst these a very tasty *Buxton Gatekeeper Porter*. It's then a longish walk up the hill to the Titanic-owned **Cheshire Cheese**. This pub reminded me of the Roebuck in Leek due to its half-timbered construction and traditional interior. Here it was possible to sample the rare and superb *Titanic Plum Porter Grand Reserve*. This 6.5% beer is a more complex version of the 'regular' Plum Porter (4.9%) and greatly benefits from the warmth on the palate given by its higher alcohol content. I was so impressed with the *Grand Reserve* that I put it straight into my mental list of '30 Top 10 Beers' – the price of £3.90 a pint only added to the pleasure.

The next pub was the idiosyncratic **Ale Stop** with an eclectic mix of clientele and a huge collection of LPs. Customers would wander behind the bar to play their favourite tune on vinyl and respond (or not) to shouted suggestions from others for the next track to be played. The three handpumps dispensed unusual beers for the area and three real ciders were also available on draught. The last pub of our tour was **53 Degrees North**. This pub is furnished in a contemporary cafe/bar style and sells four ales on handpump; the cask *Thornbridge Jaipur IPA* was a good one to end on.

I can certainly recommend a visit to Buxton and Leek to those beer tourists amongst you who are looking for a great variety of high-quality beer in very different and interesting pubs. My favourite town of the two was Leek as all the pubs we visited were surprisingly busy, very close to each other, with a very friendly clientele, and sold their beer at very reasonable prices. We only visited a small proportion of the pubs in Leek but if the others are half as good as those we visited then you will not be disappointed. Also, the availability of Bristol beers will stop you getting too homesick! Leek can usually be reached within one hour by bus from Stoke-on-Trent railway station.

Dave Weir

Latest from Little Giant

Little Giant continues to spread its wings, with the Oxford in Totterdown and Three Tuns in St Georges Road joining the ever-increasing list of Bristol hostleries regularly stocking their ales. Meanwhile, back at the brewery in Fishponds, brewer Simon Pickstock is currently working on a new pale ale to join and complement the established range. This yet to be named new beer will pack plenty of flavour for its modest 3.8% ABV, and should be available around the time this issue of *Pints West* hits the streets.

The LocAle bar at the Bristol Beer Festival will feature one of Little Giants beers, so for anyone attending that has not yet had the opportunity to sample their wares, this is the chance you have been waiting for.

Little Giant will be supplying their beers to an exciting new venture in Patchway during the spring. An existing Indian restaurant is diversifying into the real ale scene by adding the Beer Patch, a micropub-style bar area to its premises. More details on this will be included in the next issue, by which time all being well it should be up and running.

Also looking to the future, Little Giant is in advanced discussions regarding supplying one of their microbreweries to a venue in Bristol. Once contracts are signed and the plant installed more details will be revealed.

Andy Coston

Beer scoring and the Good Beer Guide

I hope that many readers of *Pints West* will by now have purchased the 2020 *Good Beer Guide* (GBG) either as a traditional book or as an app for smartphones. The GBG contains details of some of the best pubs in the country for beer quality as assessed by CAMRA members on visits over a year and is an essential resource for people to find a pub to drink in, particularly if they are on unfamiliar territory. The assessment process varies from branch to branch but all CAMRA branches are encouraged to use beer scores submitted in the National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) by members in the selection process.

The initial phase of the selection process for the 2021 GBG has already commenced and CAMRA branches across the country have (or soon will have) submitted their recommendations for pubs to be included in the 2021 GBG. The selection process doesn't stop there though and beer quality is being constantly monitored in pubs across the country, by CAMRA members visiting pubs and scoring the quality of the beer in these pubs.

I'd like to thank all CAMRA members who have recorded beer scores on WhatPub or the GBG app over the last year, and to ask you to continue to record scores – be they good, bad or average – whenever you can. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have contributed to the selection process for pubs included in the GBG, whether it be

for the 2020 edition, the 2021 one or for a future edition. There are many pubs across our branch area (and elsewhere in the country) that receive very few or even no beer scores on NBSS due to their remote location or lack of visits by CAMRA members. So I encourage all members to try to visit a few different pubs, maybe outside your normal drinking area, over the next year. By doing so you may come across a pub that serves consistently good quality beer that may warrant inclusion in a future issue of the GBG. If we receive several good scores for a pub we can try to include it on a survey visit by more members.

CAMRA members can score beers on NBSS either via WhatPub (website whatpub.com) or via the GBG app available for the smartphone. Visit gbgapp.camra.org.uk for more information about the app and to download yours for free.

As a reminder the scores are you can give are:

- o. No cask ale available.
- 1. **Poor.** Beer is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable reluctance. You may have been unlucky and were served the last pint in the barrel. If the beer is exchanged without a problem and taken off sale you may use your discretion and not score the beer at all.
- 2. **Average.** Competently kept, but the beer doesn't inspire in any way. It is drinkable, but you may decide to try a different beer in the pub or move on to another pub. Below what is expected for the GBG.
- 3. **Good.** Good beer in good form. A GBG user would not be disappointed with it. You may decide to seek out the beer again in the same session and visit this pub again.
- 4. **Very Good.** Excellent beer in excellent condition. Exceeds expectations.
- 5. **Perfect.** Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

You also have the option to use half points if your opinion of the beer falls between two categories, and remember that you should base your score on the **quality** of the beer, not whether it is a particular beer or beer style which you prefer. Don't give a pint a score of 4 or 5 just because it's (say) Doom Bar and you happen to like Doom Bar. Think: in your experience is this beer in front of you a really good example of a Doom Bar, or a pretty poor one? And don't give a pint a score of 1 because it's a stout and you happen to dislike stouts. If in doubt, don't score, or maybe ask a friend what they think. Most people can tell the difference between a beer that just happens to have a flavour that "isn't for them" and a beer with actual defects.

So please carry on scoring your beers whether it is in your local, when drinking with friends or family in their local, or anywhere else you may happen to visit. Your scores do matter and continue to help in the selection process for the GBG.

Martin Gray

BEER SCORING

THE BEER SCORING FUNCTION IS FREE AND EXCLUSIVE FOR CAMRA MEMBERS



As a CAMRA member, we want you to tell us about the quality of beer in the pubs you visit.

The National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) is a 0-5 point scale for judging beer quality in pubs. It is an easy to use system which has been designed as one way to assist CAMRA Branches in selecting pubs for the Good Beer Guide and also monitor beer quality.

You can now submit your scores via GBG App and What Pub.

DOWNLOAD THE GOOD BEER GUIDE APP FOR FREE

These scores will sync with WhatPub .



WHAT?PUB

Unlock all functions of the App for a subscription of 99p p/month or £4.99/ 12 months.

Visit gbgapp.camra.org.uk for more info.



Campaign for Real Ale

Looking for good beer?

buy CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide 2020*

Published continuously since 1974* the *Good Beer Guide* is the independent guide created by members of the Campaign for Real Ale.

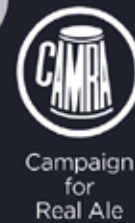
- 4,500 pubs across the UK
- Unique breweries section
- Informative features

Buy your copy today in the
CAMRA shop
shop.camra.org.uk

ONLY
£13
for CAMRA
members!
(RRP: £15.99)



*First published in 1972



From pint to print the Good Beer Guide journey

The Brief

To visit and report on beer quality and pubs across the UK to record the best of the best for entry into the **Good Beer Guide**

STEP
01



STEP
02

The Survey

Members of CAMRA visit pubs across the UK to drink and score their beer. These scores are logged on the **Good Beer Guide App** and **Whatpub?**

The results

Branches submit their final results and select pubs for entry into the guide. These are checked and submitted by CAMRA Regional Directors

STEP
03



The Production

The submissions are edited by a small team of editors and proof readers and formatted for the final guide along with a few articles by some notable contributors

STEP
04



The Delivery

The **Good Beer Guide** is produced in time for a September release and all pubs are told the happy news before publication. Many CAMRA members celebrate by having a pint of quality beer in their local **Good Beer Guide** pub!

STEP
05



Going for a beer ... in Wrocław

Say "Vrats-waff" in a cod Russian accent and you should get as close as any Brit to pronouncing the name of this city of 640,000 people in southwest Poland that was formerly German-speaking Breslau, the largest town in Lower Silesia. It did not have an easy time from either side in the Second World War, following which the German-speaking population were "repatriated" to a place they did not know and its Polish identity established.

Today's successful, modern city retains enough of its old centre to impress, and has an impressively eclectic beer culture helped by hosting the Wrocław Good Beer Festival in June each year, regarded as the best as well as being the biggest in Poland.

Historically the Polish beer scene encompassed a range of mostly stronger porters and stouts from its Baltic north, the blond and dark lager traditions of its central European south and a wide variety of local wheat beer styles. The Poles' fondness for smoked foods extended to malted grains used in brewing too.

Poles drink a lot of beer, averaging just under 100 litres a head per year – 50% more than the Brits and up there with their neighbours in Germany and the Czech Republic. Much of this is made up of undemanding blond lagers, marginally better than UK brands but not as good as Czech *světly*, Bavarian *Helles* or German Pils, and mostly drunk at home.

The wave of new craft beers is more often found in bottles or 30 cl draught measures, the most memorable of which are variants on porter and stout, some of which, through ageing in spirits barrels can reach prodigious strengths – routinely 8% and up to 16.5% ABV, though some newer brewers are increasingly adept at making ones of 4.5-6.5% ABV, sometimes served uncarbonated by hand pull.

Both smoke and wheat feature in *grodzińskie* (sometimes *grodziśz* or *Grätzer*), a light beer from smoked wheat, originating in the town of Grodzisk Wielkopolski (formerly Grätz), 150 km to the north. This light, dry beer gained such renown that it was widely exported, its provenance at one point as tightly controlled as Cologne's Kölsch beers are today. While it enjoys a renaissance abroad, it remains rare locally, though not as rare as *Schoeps*, a strong beer brewed from 80% malted wheat that manages a barley character.

Need to know

The Poles have yet to join the Euro and retain the pleasingly named Złoty, of which a pound will buy five. Despite it rising against the Euro, prices remain significantly lower than in the UK, beer coming in at a third to a half its UK cost.

In a city that has a lot of good bars, the one I like most is **Szynkarnia** (15 *Świętego Antoniego* – daily 10.00-22.00), on the western side of the island that makes up the old centre. With the look and air of a large Welsh tea room, the vibe of an up-market Cornish surfer's shack, some scene-setting variants on pork and cheese, and a great section of Polish and imported beers, it epitomises the best of cool Poland.

A couple of blocks south of the impressive main square, at one end of a long street, you will find **Kontynuacja** (17 *Ofiar Oświęcimskich* – Mo-Th 16.00-01.00; Fr 16.00-02.00; Sa 14.00-02.00; Su 14.00-24.00), a long bar with more space to the rear and a separate restaurant business next door. Twenty taps including two hand pulls serve mostly Polish beers with some collaborations brews and tap takeovers. Expect whacky fruit-laced stuff as well as classic porters and pale ales.

At the other end, some way away is **4 Hops** (46 *Ofiar Oświęcimskich* – Su-Th 15.00-24.00; Fr-Sa 15.00-01.00), a more obviously craft beer bar that attracts all ages. Its cycling theme includes displaying some serious machines in the walls. Good service, light snacks and the sort of music that makes some of us feel young again until we realise just how long ago it came out.

Underneath the arches that support the tracks that run through the city's Główny station are two bars, side by side, called **Lamus** and **Beer & Bear**, each mildly chaotic in a foreign-stranger-friendly way.



Tim Webb is the author of *The World Atlas of Beer* and *Pocket Beer Book* (with Stephen Beaumont); *Good Beer Guide Belgium* (CAMRA Books: 8th edition, with Joe Stange); and *Bristol Craft Beer Map* (www.booksaboutbeer.com). He lives in Clifton and relies increasingly on Bristol airport as his gateway to the world's evolving beer cultures. (Photo of Tim Webb by Andres Teiss.)

An even better pair of neighbours is on the opposite side of the southern inner ring road. The larger one is **Graciania** (39 *Kazimierza Wielkiego* – Fr-Sa 12.00-02.00; Su-Mo 12.00-23.00; others 12.00-24.00), an easy-to-spot beer bar that verges on elegance and carries a sound range of 50 or so beers and does a nice line in pizzas. So close that technically it shares the same address, **Maryanka** (Fr-Sa 16.00-02.00; Su 16.00-23.00; others 16.00-24.00) is a differently accented, stone-floored, randomly furnished, craft beer bar with an even better range of beers, a much-vaulted brick ceiling and a pizza oven hidden in an alcove in the back room. Named for the best known Polish hop, its key talent is to appear invisible, though if you try the doors at the back of the apartment block lobby, you emerge into its tiny courtyard.

Travel tips

Flights: Ryanair flies Bristol-Wrocław twice a week. Bus 106 from the airport into the city costs about £1 each way (pay the driver).

Trains: Wrocław Główny station has direct trains to Berlin, Warsaw and Krakow plus a remarkably indirect one to Prague.

Hotels: Seasons vary but inexpensive is the rule. A double room somewhere efficient will cost around £40 a night, comfortable from £60, and splurge no more than £100.

Getting around: 24-, 48- and 72-hour travelcards are available from the airport and main station for 50, 60 and 70 Złoty respectively. However, the extensive tram and bus network is aimed solidly at commuters and locals and the bars of interest are mostly in the centre of the city, which is better to walk. Both Bolt and Uber are established here and there are enough annoying electric scooters to mean that speedy urban travel is just a click away.

Food: If it's edible someone will do a smoked version of it. Start with the hams, move to the cheeses and then just go wild.

Knowledge: Tipping in restaurants at 10% is fine but do not say *dziękuję*, meaning 'thank you', as they will assume you want them to keep the change. Instead say *proszę* (pro-sheh), which means 'please'.

Tim Webb

Your shout

Send your letters to
steve.plumridge.pintswest@gmail.com

Steve Plumridge,
Garden Flat, 6 Royal York Villas,
Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR

Rail pub crawl between Stapleton Road and Parson Street

I'm writing to tell you that in the new winter rail timetable there are now hourly trains that run directly between Parson Street and Stapleton Road in Bristol, sufficient to make a five-stop pub crawl with stops at Parson Street (Miners Arms), Bedminster (Windmill), Bristol Temple Meads (Barley Mow, Knights Templar, Bonapartes), Lawrence Hill (Old Stillage) and Stapleton Road (Sugar Loaf, Greenbank).

I live in Madrid at the moment, so I couldn't lead it myself. But I think it would make good copy for *Pints West*.

Best regards,
Eric Wildman,
Madrid, Spain.

WhatPub updates: an appeal to all readers

whatpub.com
Featuring over 35,000 real ale pubs

Thousands of pubs
at your fingertips!

Over 96% of Britain's real ale pubs featured

Information updated by thousands of CAMRA volunteers

Created by CAMRA who produce the UK's best beer & pub guide

Many readers will find WhatPub to be an invaluable tool for locating a convenient real ale pub to drink and/or eat in when out and about. Created by CAMRA, and accessible to everybody, members or not, it contains details of almost all the pubs in the land, with all information entered by volunteers.

However, the information contained on WhatPub can only be kept up to date by volunteers who provide feedback on pubs they visit. You don't even need to be a CAMRA member. So this is an appeal to everyone reading this magazine: next time you are in a pub (maybe your local or even your own pub), check if any thing has changed – maybe there are new opening times, or the regular cask ales are different from that shown, or maybe the pub has now started (or stopped) serving a guest ale, real cider or food.

It's easy to do. Simply find the pub, click on 'Submit Updates', enter the information, and send it off. Thank you.

CAMRA pub discounts

- Air Balloon, Gloucester Rd North, Filton, Bristol
- Albion, Boyces Avenue, Clifton Village, Bristol
- Albion, Bristol Rd, Portishead
- Anchor, Gloucester Rd, Bishopston, Bristol
- Anchor Inn, Gloucester Rd, Lower Morton, Thornbury
- Annexe Inn, Seymour Rd, Bishopston, Bristol
- Bank Tavern, John St, Bristol
- Bay Horse, Lewins Mead, Broadmead, Bristol
- Bath Brew House, James St West, Bath
- Bear Inn, Walliscote Rd, Weston-super-Mare
- Beaufort Arms, North Rd, Stoke Gifford
- Beehive, Wellington Hill West, Henleaze, Bristol
- Beer Emporium, King St, Bristol
- Bell, Badminton Rd, Old Sodbury
- Bishops Tavern, Cheltenham Rd, Cotham, Bristol
- Black Castle, St Philips Causeway, Brislington, Bristol
- Black Cat, High St, Weston-super-Mare
- Boardroom, St Nicholas St, Old City, Bristol
- Borough Arms, Locking Rd, Worle, Weston-super-Mare
- Brassmill, Avon Mill Lane, Keynsham
- Brewhouse & Kitchen, Cotham Hill, Bristol
- Brit Bar, High St, Weston-super-Mare
- Red Admiral, Alexandra Parade, Weston-super-Mare
- Cat and Badger, Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare
- Channings, Pembroke Rd, Clifton, Bristol
- Cider Press, Gloucester Rd, Bristol
- Christmas Steps, bottom of Christmas Steps, Bristol (city centre)
- Chums, Chandos Rd, Redland, Bristol
- Cornubia, Temple St, Bristol
- Cotham Porter Stores, Cotham Rd South, Kingsdown, Bristol
- Crofters Rights, Stokes Croft, Bristol
- Cross Hands, Bridgwater Road, Bedminster Down, Bristol
- Cross Hands, Staple Hill Rd, Fishponds, Bristol
- Cross Hands Hotel, Tetbury Rd, Old Sodbury
- Dawkins Brewery Tap, Lawnwood Rd, Easton, Bristol
- Drapers Arms, Gloucester Rd, Horfield, Bristol

We do not expect or ask any pub to do so, but a number of pubs have volunteered to offer discounts on the price of real ale or traditional cider (or occasionally other things) to card-carrying members. These include:

- Drawbridge, St Augustines Parade, Bristol (next to Hippodrome)
- Duke of Oxford, Oxford St, Weston-super-Mare
- Eastfield Inn, Henleaze Rd, Henleaze, Bristol
- Fallen Tree, Hill Rd, Clevedon
- Famous Royal Navy Volunteer, King St, Bristol
- Fork 'n' Ale, Walliscote Rd, Weston-super-Mare
- George, Mill Lane, Bathampton, Bath
- George Hotel, Broad St, Chipping Sodbury
- Glede Brewery Tap Bar, Tweed Rd Industrial Estate, Clevedon
- Globe Inn, Church Rd, Frampton Cotterell
- Gloucester Old Spot, Kellaway Avenue, Horfield, Bristol
- Golden Guinea, Guinea St, Redcliffe, Bristol
- Griffin, London Rd, Bridgegate, Bristol
- Griffin, Milk St, Frome
- Gryphon, Colston St, Bristol (up from Colston Hall)
- Hare on the Hill, Thomas St North, Kingsdown, Bristol
- Hawkes House, St Mary Street, Thornbury
- Horseshoe, Downend Rd, Downend, Bristol
- Horseshoe, High St, Chipping Sodbury
- Inn on the Green, Filton Rd, Horfield, Bristol
- Just Ales, Market St, Wells
- Just Ales, Stony St, Frome
- King Street Brew House, King St, Bristol
- Lamplighters, Station Rd, Shirehampton
- Lime Kiln, St George's Rd, Bristol (behind City Hall)
- Lodekka, Tramway Rd, Brislington, Bristol
- Lyons Den, Regent St, Kingswood, Bristol
- Mill House, Emerson Way, Emersons Green, Bristol
- Nailsea MicroPub, Ivy Court, High St, Nailsea
- Nettle & Rye, Kings Rd, Clifton Village, Bristol
- New Inn, Badminton Rd, Mayhill
- Old Globe, East St, Bedminster, Bristol
- Old Post Office, Fishponds Rd, Fishponds, Bristol
- Old Stillage, Church Rd, Redfield, Bristol
- Orchard Inn, Hanover Place, Bristol
- Organ Inn, High St, Warminster
- Penny, Whiteladies Rd, Bristol (opposite Clifton Down shopping centre)
- Phoenix, Champion Square, Bristol (opposite Cabot Circus)

- Prince of Wales, Gloucester Rd, Bristol
- Red Admiral, Alexandra Parade, Weston-super-Mare
- Robin Hood, St Michael's Hill, Kingsdown, Bristol
- Rising Sun, Alfred Rd, Windmill Hill, Bristol
- Rose & Crown, Stallard St, Trowbridge
- Rose & Crown, High St, Wick
- Royal Oak, High St, Nailsea
- Royal Oak, Lower Bristol Rd, Twerton, Bath
- Sandringham, Quaker's Rd, Bromley Heath
- Saracens Head, Broad St, Bath
- Seven Stars, Thomas Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol
- Shakespeare Tavern, Prince St, Bristol
- Ship Inn, Lower Park Row, Bristol
- Ship Inn, Thornbury Rd, Alveston
- Smoke and Mirrors, Denmark St, Bristol (near Hippodrome)
- Snuffy Jack's, Fishponds Rod, Fishponds, Bristol
- Star, Bristol Rd, Congresbury
- Steam, Whiteladies Gate, Bristol (by Clifton Down railway station)
- Steam Crane, North St, Bedminster, Bristol
- Swan With Two Necks, Little Anne St, St Judes, Bristol
- Three Brooks, Bradley Stoke District Centre, Bradley Stoke
- Three Tuns, St George's Rd, Bristol
- Victoria, Southleigh Rd, Clifton, Bristol
- Volunteer Tavern, New St, St Judes, Bristol (near Cabot Circus)
- Wheatsheaf, Chapel St, Thornbury
- White Lion, Quay Head, Colston Avenue, Bristol (city centre)
- White Hart, High St, Iron Acton
- White Lion, Passage Rd, Westbury-on-Trym
- White Lion, Frenchay Common, Frenchay
- Wooden Walls, Broad St, Staple Hill, Bristol

The details of the discounts vary from pub to pub and possibly from time to time. The discount is at the discretion of the pub and can be as little or as large as the pub feels suits their business, or may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Please let us know of any additions or deletions via whatpub.com

Diaries and Contacts

Bristol & District branch

- Sat 7 Mar: BADRAG Gloucester Road Trail. Start 12:00 at Good Measure, Chandos Road. Trail leader Mal Fuller 07580 840685.
- Sun 8 Mar: BAD Ladies event – check website for events for International Women's Day.
- Wed 11 Mar: Committee meeting, Gryphon, 8pm.
- Wed 25 Mar: Branch meeting, Boardroom, St Nicholas Street, central Bristol, 8pm.
- Wed 8 Apr: Committee Meeting, Gryphon, 8pm.
- Sat 11 Apr: Old Market area pub walk. Start 12.30pm at the Phoenix near Cabot Circus. Then the Volunteer Tavern, Old Castle Green (should be open by then), Swan With Two Necks, Old Market Tavern, Punch Bowl and Stag& Hounds. Contact on day Norman Spalding 07790 237562.
- Sat 18 Apr: BAD Ladies Weston-super-Mare rail ale trail. Meet Temple Meads for the 13:27 service to WsM to visit a selection of micropubs and others.
- Wed 22 Apr: Branch meeting, Pied Horse, Summerhill Road, St George, Bristol (close to bus routes 37, 44, 45), 8pm.
- Sat 25 Apr: BADRAG social to Chippenham Beer Festival. Meet Temple Meads for the 09:57 service. Contact Dave Kibble for more information on 07976 732934.
- Sat 2 May: BADRAG visit to Exeter Mild Ale Trail. Contact Rich Aldridge on 07771 342845 for more information.
- Wed 13 May: Committee meeting, Gryphon, 8pm.
- Sat 16 May: South Gloucestershire Ale Trail. Depart Cornubia 11.30am.
- Wed 27 May: Branch meeting, Cat & Badger, 3 Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare. Depart Cornubia 6.45pm.
- Sat 30 May: Cider saunter around the Harbourside area. Details tbc. Contact cidercamrabristol@gmail.com.

Please check our website (www.camrabristol.org.uk) or sign up to our yahoo group for the latest information and more details on any of the above events, as sometimes events can change after press date – or email Andy Gray at camrasocials@btinternet.com for the latest information. Please note that any coach and brewery trips must be booked in advance, either by email, or in person at a branch meeting.

If you would like to receive no-obligation details of forthcoming Bristol & District branch events, simply go to the branch website (www.camrabristol.org.uk) then click on 'Contact Us'. This takes you to the branch contacts page, then just click where it says 'Click here to join our email news list'. It's as easy as that.

Andy Gray (Social Secretary)

Solution to the crossword on page 22

Across: 1 Dragonfly, 6 Depot, 9 Proffer, 10 Benares, 11 Otter, 12 Waterhole, 14 Ale, 15 Shakespeare, 17 Lost prince, 19 Res, 20 Bar single, 22 Elder, 24 Immates, 26 Moonlit, 27 Gilly, 28 Manifest. Down: 1 Dipso, 2 Apostle, 3 Offer a sip, 4 Forswearing, 5 Yob, 6 Donor, 7 Pergola, 8 Tasteless, 13 Trencherman, 14 Ad-libbed, 16 Pissed off, 18 Scrumpy, 19 Ruddles, 21 Intel, 23 Rates, 25 Sam.

Wear Pints West

YOU can now wear Pints West! T-shirts, polo shirts, sweat shirts and fleeces are now available to order with an embroidered Pints West logo on the left breast. All are available in navy, black, bottle green, grey, red, dark royal, purple and burgundy, and in sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL. All except the fleeces are also available in jade, sky blue, gold and white. Make cheques payable to "Bristol & District CAMRA", and post your order to 19 Willada Close, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 5NG. Email enquiries to clothes@camrabristol.org.uk. Please allow up to 4 weeks for delivery.



Pints West Clothing Order Form

	Price each	Quantity	Size	Colour
T-SHIRT	£16.00	.....	.....	.....
POLO SHIRT	£19.50	.....	.....	.....
SWEAT SHIRT	£21.50	.....	.....	.....
FLEECE	£25.50	.....	.....	.....

Prices include postage & packing. If your order is for a selection of items more complex than this form can accommodate, please print your exact requirements on a separate sheet of paper.

NAME

ADDRESS

..... POSTCODE

EMAIL ADDRESS (in case of queries)

Bristol & District CAMRA

Web: www.camrabristol.org.uk
Twitter: @CAMRABristol
Facebook: [CAMRA-Bristol-District](https://www.facebook.com/CAMRA-Bristol-District)
Facebook group: [CAMRA Bristol Chat](https://www.facebook.com/CAMRA-Bristol-Chat)
Got some news?
Email it to news@camrabristol.org.uk

Bath & Borders CAMRA

Web: www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk
Twitter: @BathCAMRA
Facebook: [Bath-Borders-CAMRA](https://www.facebook.com/Bath-Borders-CAMRA)

Weston sub-branch

Weston CAMRA is a sub-branch of the Bristol & District branch covering Weston-super-Mare and some of the surrounding areas.

- Wed 25 Mar: Two-pub town-centre social. The Regency 7.45 (with optional curry £7.95 including a pint), then Black Cat micropub 9.15.
- Fri 10 Apr: Good Friday Worle crawl commencing at the Parish Pump at 2.00. Subsequent route to be decided on the day but likely to include Nut Tree, Old Kings Head, Lamb and Golden Lion.
- Thu 23 Apr: Three-pub St George's Day crawl – Dragon Inn 8.00, Fork 'n' Ale 9.00, Duke of Oxford 10.00.
- Fri 8 May: Visit to Brit Bar Beer Festival, 8.00 onwards.
- Sat 23 - Sun 24 May: Visit(s) to Weston-super-Mare Cricket Club Beer Festival.

All events should be on the Bristol CAMRA diary www.camrabristol.org.uk/diary.html. Please check it for updates, as well as the contact details below.

For possible other activities please see our Facebook page or use the contact details below ... or weston_camra@googlegroups.com if you are in this Google group.

Contact: Tim Nickolls – tim.nickolls@outlook.com
Facebook: [Campaign for Real Ale Weston-Super-Mare](https://www.facebook.com/Campaign-for-Real-Ale-Weston-Super-Mare)

Bath & Borders branch

- Thu 5 Mar: A Bath mini-crawl starting at the Rising Sun in Grove Street, 8pm, and then on to Boater on Argyle Street.
- Tue 10 Mar: An evening in Midsomer Norton, starting at the Palladium Electric from 7pm and then on to skittles at the White Hart at 8pm.
- Thu 19 Mar: A social at the Bell and Crown, Warminster, 8pm.
- Tue 24 Mar: A social at the Packhorse, South Stoke, near Bath, 8pm.

See www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk/events for further dates.

Branch socials contact: Denis Rahilly on 01225 791399 or 07486 8887825, or email denis.rahilly@talktalk.net or socials@bathandborderscamra.org.uk.

Contact for all non-social matters: James Honey on 01373 822744



Campaign
for
Real Ale

Join up, join in, join the campaign



Campaign
for
Real Ale

From
as little as
£26.50*
a year. That's less
than a pint a
month!

Includes
£30
Real Ale
Cider & Perry
Vouchers

Protect the traditions of great British pubs and everything that goes with them by joining today at www.camra.org.uk/joinup

Or enter your details and complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive 15 months membership for the price of 12 and save £2 on your membership subscription

Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinup, or call **01727 798440**. * All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road St. Albans, Herts AL1 4LW.

Your details:

Title Surname
Forename(s)
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)
Address
.....
..... Postcode
Email address
Daytime Tel

Single Membership (UK)

Under 26 Membership

Joint Membership (At the same address)

Joint Under 26 Membership

Direct Debit

£26.50

£18

£31.50

£23

Non DD

£28.50

£20

£33.50

£25

Please indicate whether you wish to receive *What's Brewing* and *BEER* by email OR post:

What's Brewing
By Email ☐ By Post ☐

BEER
By Email ☐ By Post ☐

Concessionary rates are available only for Under 26 Memberships.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association which can be found on our website.

Signed

Date

Applications will be processed within 21 days.

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname
Forename(s)
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit		DIRECT Debit	
Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to: Campaign for Real Ale Ltd. 230 Hatfield Road St. Albans, Herts AL1 4LW			
Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society	Service User Number		
To the Manager	Bank or Building Society	9 2 6 1 2 9	
Address			
Postcode			
Name(s) of Account Holder			
Bank or Building Society Account Number			
Branch Sort Code			
Reference			
FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY			
This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society			
Membership Number			
Name			
Postcode			
Instructions to your Bank or Building Society			
Please pay Campaign For Real Ale Limited Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Campaign For Real Ale Limited and, if so, will be passed electronically to my Bank/ Building Society.			
Signature(s)			
Date			

This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debits
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society
- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign Real Ale Ltd asks you to
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.