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2022

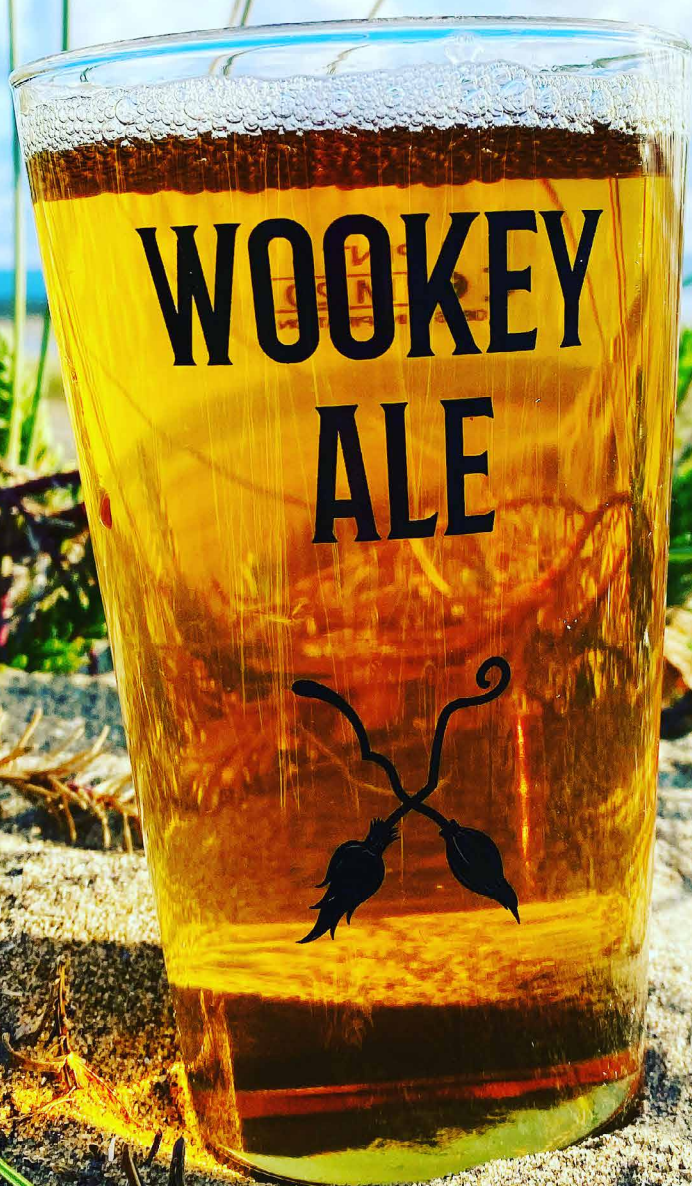


Campaign
for
Real Ale



PINTS WEST

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



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

Up to 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

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

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www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards

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Bristol & District CAMRA

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Weston-super-Mare

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

Facebook: [Campaign for Real Ale Weston-Super-Mare](https://www.facebook.com/Campaign-for-Real-Ale-Weston-Super-Mare)

Bath & Borders CAMRA

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Diary

Things are still not quite back to normal and we are unable to provide a diary of future activities beyond a handful of events just ahead of the time of *Pints West* going to press, so please keep an eye on social media and the diary sections of the web sites for anything happening:



camrabristol.org.uk/diary.html



bathandborders.camra.org.uk/events

Welcome to Pints West issue 130

The *Pints West* team was very pleased at the welcome given to our last edition – the first in print for nearly two years. Feedback from customers, publicans and CAMRA volunteers has been very positive. Many thanks to the latter in particular for ensuring thousands of copies were distributed to pubs and other outlets across the Bristol and Bath branch areas (and to the pubs that displayed them).

We are delighted that so many advertisers continue to support the magazine, and that we have had approaches from several new ones for this issue. We cannot print *Pints West* without their income – if you would like to advertise, we'd love to hear from you too.

The Bristol & District branch of CAMRA has cautiously restarted some face-to-face activity, with some social gatherings and formal meetings recently taking place, and members beginning to enjoy exploring pubs through one or two small-scale organised walking or bus trips. We have

also gathered votes online for our local Pub of the Year (to be reported more fully in the next issue) and will start to consider nominations for the next *Good Beer Guide* soon. Even so, it is still difficult for many of us to reach some pubs, so please do help by submitting updates to WhatPub (see page 4).

Despite pub closures continuing, this spring edition of *Pints West* features some new pub and brewery openings and reopenings, and reports of further growth and innovation in the local beer scene. We hope that by our next issue (summer 2022), we will be able to publish a fuller branch diary of activity and celebrate further positive developments amongst local pubs and breweries.

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy reading this issue and welcome its continuation in print as much as we do.

Steve Plumridge (Editor)

Lesly Plumridge (Advertising)

Branch Pub of the Year 2022

Hot off the press is news that the Bristol & District branch Pub of the Year 2022 is the [Shakespeare Tavern](#) (Prince Street, Bristol) and the runner-up is the [Cornubia](#) (Temple Street, Bristol). Very well done to both pubs!

Presentation of their official CAMRA certificates is planned for the evening of Wednesday 20th April, meeting at the Cornubia around 7pm and then moving on to the Shakespeare Tavern for 8:30pm, and people are encouraged to attend and join us in congratulating both pubs.

More coverage and pictures to come in the next edition of *Pints West*.

Richard Brooks



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



How are you reading Pints West?

Printed copy or online?

If you are reading a printed copy of *Pints West* and happen to have a smart phone (or tablet) with you, then whenever you see a QR code like the ones here, if you scan it with the phone's camera it should take you directly to the relevant website.



For instance, scanning this one should take you straight to the national CAMRA website (www.camra.org.uk).



And this one should take you straight to an online copy of *Pints West* (www.camrabristol.org.uk/pintswest.pdf).

If you are reading *Pints West* online, then whenever you see a web address or an email address, clicking on it should take you straight to the website or initiate an email. Furthermore, wherever you see a pub name in blue in an article – or in some cases the picture of a pub – clicking on that should take you straight to the WhatPub entry for that pub.



For instance, clicking on this pub name – [Cornubia](#) – or on the photo should take you straight to its entry in WhatPub.

Good Beer Guide selection and beer scoring

An appeal to CAMRA members

The way in which pubs are selected for the *Good Beer Guide* (GBG) involves, as a first stage, the analysis of beer scores recorded by CAMRA members on CAMRA's national database. A 'long list' is then prepared which includes pubs in the branch area which have met the criteria for inclusion in the GBG, i.e. they serve beer to a consistently good standard throughout the year, as rated by CAMRA members visiting these pubs and scoring the beers.

An annual selection meeting then takes place to agree on the top 63 pubs in the Bristol & District branch area (including the Weston-super-Mare sub-branch area) to be included in the GBG.

A similar process happens in the Bath & Borders branch.

Understandably perhaps, fewer beer scores have been recorded in the last year than in the years before the pandemic, particularly in pubs outside of the city centre area. In order to ensure that the selection process for the GBG includes the whole of the branch area on a fair basis we need more beer scores for more pubs in suburban and rural areas. So please try to score your beers whenever you can.

This can be done via WhatPub on a smartphone or computer (web address whatpub.com) or the GBG app if you've downloaded it.

Martin Gray



Updating WhatPub

An appeal to all readers

Many pubs across the country have had to change opening times, beer ranges and facilities compared to how they traded before the pandemic. CAMRA branches across the country rely on local members and non-members submitting updates of any significant changes to details shown for a pub on WhatPub.

So if you are drinking in your local or another pub somewhere in the branch area – or indeed anywhere in the country – take a look at the pub's entry on WhatPub and if you notice that the details shown for the pub are incorrect, please submit an update to get the entry changed – just click on 'Submit Updates' and tell us what's changed.

Martin Gray

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whatpub.com
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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

Bristol's lost breweries

and some volunteering opportunities

We currently have around thirty breweries in and around Bristol and are fortunate to have seen some new openings, but what about closures? Unfortunately, we have lost a few over the years and not just due to the more recent pandemic. Going back a way we lost **Chew Valley**, **Crane**, **Cosmic** and **Croft**. More recently we heard that **Little Giant** have ceased brewing but that they will still be around focussing on selling their brewing equipment. **Fishponds** brewery had reportedly moved their equipment out of the brewery and into the garden of the Star pub. And **Masquerade** who had been brewing at Fierce & Noble's premises and are no longer there, and other than a Brewdog collaboration have not been seen since. If you have any information to the contrary on any of these breweries, please let me, as Bristol & District branch secretary, know – contact details below.

This raises the question, how do we keep in touch with our breweries? If you look at the back of the *Good Beer Guide* you will see that there are almost 1,900 breweries. The answer is that CAMRA has a network of members who regularly make contact with the breweries, have a chat with them and pass on their news. The members who do this are known as brewery liaison officers, or BLOs. We aim to have a BLO appointed to every brewery no matter how big or small, so that includes microbreweries and brewpubs. We are always on the lookout for members to be BLOs; If you would like to join the team in Bristol please let me know. Details about the role can be found in the [Volunteers' Area](#) of the CAMRA national website, or email me for details.

Michael Bertagne

m.bertagne@camrabristol.org.uk

New brewing company Wookey Ale

New local beer brand Wookey Ale has burst onto the Wells scene with the launch of its signature debut beer, *Witch Way Home*, named after the infamous Witch of Wookey Hole.

Wookey Ale is the brainchild of Sam Mills. The beer lover lives in Wookey Hole and dreamed of having a local beer available in local pubs. He decided that he couldn't do this alone, so asked a fellow ale connoisseur, Simon, to join him in making the dream come true. Samuel and Simon wanted a session ale, which is easy on the palate and without a lingering after-taste. That's when they came up with *Witch Way Home*; it is a pale ale, full of flavour, but at 4% ABV is, in their opinion, the perfect session ale.

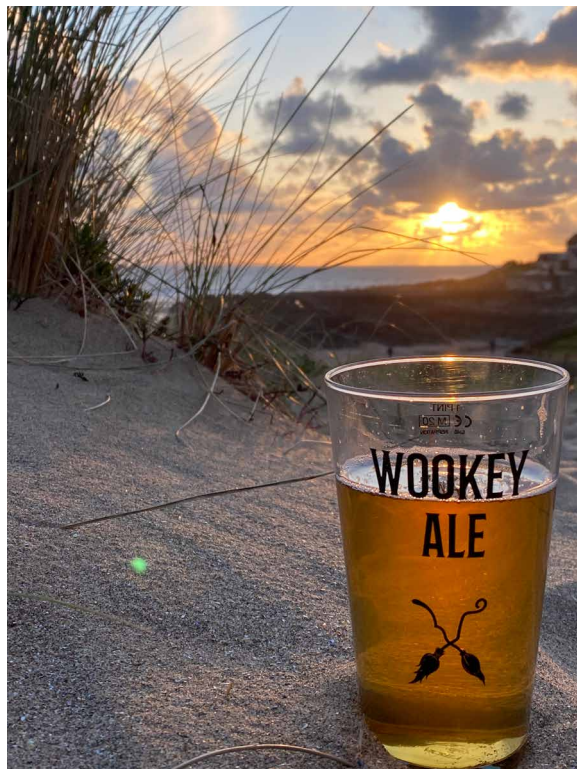
Witch Way Home, together with two other beers, *Autumn Gail* (4.2%) and *Arthur's Point* (4.0%) are available in cask to local public houses, bars/restaurants and hotels within and around Somerset. The beers are currently brewed under contract, but the owners are actively seeking suitable local premises to establish their own brewery and are hopeful this will be achieved by the summer.

Sam Mills said, "Our ethos is to always provide value to our customers with the highest quality ale, with premium ingredients that will make people keep on coming back. We believe that session ales and craft beers are the future for pubs, hotels, restaurants, delis and cafes."

Witch Way Home has also been released in cans, and has generated impressive interest around the Wells, Cheddar, Glastonbury and Street areas.

English pale *Halloween Rift* (4.0%) will be part of their core collection, and should be available in cask and can from the end of April. *Witch Way Home* is available for nationwide delivery, as will be *Halloween Rift* when it's released.

Coming soon are monthly beer subscription boxes, each to include a selection of six of their craft beers and three different gourmet snacks, handpicked from local



luxury brands such as Wookey Hole Cave Aged Cheddar, Mr Filbert's and Billies & Tong. Details of all products available to the general public and the trade, and current stockists, can be found on their website at www.wookeyle.co.uk.

Richard Aldridge

A promotional image for Wookey Ale. It features two beer cans and two beer mats. The left can is 'Halloween Rift' (Citrus Ale, 4.0% ABV) with a label showing a stylized mountain and forest. The right can is 'Witch Way Home' (Pale Ale, 4.1% ALC, 330ML) with a label showing a witch's hat and broom. The beer mats also feature the brand name and logos. In the top right corner, there are social media icons for Instagram and Facebook, and a logo for 'THE SUPPORT & TRAINING OF CAMPS'. At the bottom, a black banner contains the text: 'Premium craft beer, made with Somerset water. Locally brewed beer delivered straight to your door.'

BAD Ladies visit the St Phillips 'newbies'

Bristol and District CAMRA Ladies Who Love Beer, aka BAD Ladies, are a group of CAMRA women who meet up once every couple of months to socialise, share a beer or cider, and learn more about brewing and the brewing community.

Getting back into the habit of meeting since the easing of many COVID restrictions in 2021, this was the BAD Ladies' third meeting and the first of 2022. A number of new breweries and businesses opened just before the pandemic or during it, so this was our trip out to visit some of them.

A total of 17 BAD Ladies turned up at our starting point at [Little Martha Brewing](#). Their tap room opened in December 2021 and is located in converted arches on Oxford Street (BS2 0QT), around the back of Temple Meads. The tap room offers Little Martha's own beers as well as other guest brews, although there were no cask beers. Many of us tried Little Martha's *Stout* (5%) which we found dry and smokey, and easy drinking. The other two popular choices were: *I Knew We'd Get Here* by Duration Brewing in collaboration with Newbarns Brewery, a German Alt Bier at 4.8% which had a rich caramel toffeeiness and crisp malt finish; and Gypsy Hill Brewing's pale ale *Bandit* (3.8%) which BAD Lady Lauren described as: "Very refreshing and quite citrusy, good for a spring day."

We went on to visit [Newtown Park Brewery Taproom](#). The brewery opened their taproom in May 2021, after taking on the premises on the Wadehurst Industrial Park (BS2 0JE) previously occupied by Left Handed Giant. Again the beers on offer didn't include cask. However, Virginia, one of the Newtown Park brewers, said they have plans to provide cask in the near future. We tried the good value flight of three different American style beers, and were struck by the American brown ale *Leading Lines* (6%), a collaboration with North Brewing Company. The flavour was full and rich caramel base notes, with some pine/citrus highs to finish.

Our final stop was for the cider lovers amongst us. The [Cider Box](#) opened in March 2020 as the first cider tap room in Bristol, under a Victorian railway arch on Silverthorne Lane (BS2 0QD), not far from the famous [Rhubarb Tavern](#). The selection of real ciders on offer was impressive, including clear and hazy, sweet and dry, flat and sparkling. There are many different cider styles, so this was a learning experience for most of us. The very knowledgeable barman helped us navigate the cider choices. A number of us chose to try *Murmuration* (5%) by



BAD Ladies at Little Martha

Pilton, which was medium sweet, with a lot of fully rounded deep apple flavours.

The full information about the BAD Ladies programme of events for the rest of the year can be found on the branch website at www.camrabristol.org.uk/ladies.html. Follow us on Twitter @CAMRA_BADLadies or call me, Bianca, on 07723020223 for more information. The dates of our next meetings are:

- April 30th: visit to Chippenham Beer, Cider and Perry Festival.
- May 2nd: save the date for East Bristol Brewery Trail.
- June 11th: Southville hop.
- August 13th: village pub(s) explorer.
- October 8th: Gloucester Road gadabout.
- December 3rd: enjoying pub firesides in Bath.

Bianca Ambrose

Little Martha The first three months

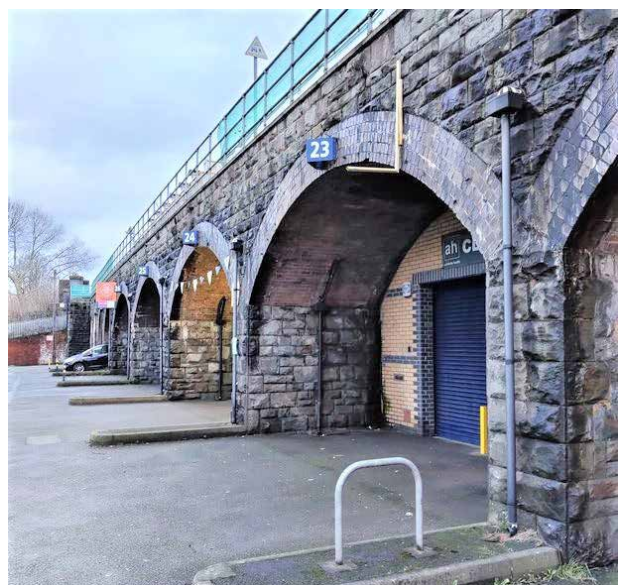
Bristol's newest micro brewpub opened a week before Christmas in a railway arch in Oxford Street, St Philips, serving a range of tank-fresh and keg beers brewed on the premises, alongside a selection of guest beers from British craft breweries. During their first three months of trading they have been pleasantly surprised to see so many eager faces at the bar looking forward to trying one of their own Little Martha beers, or something from the ever-changing range of guest beers on offer. George Mann, one of the team of three behind the venture who is often to be found behind the bar, commented, "We've been received locally with a warm welcome, and are glad to be settling into the neighbourhood. Our first few months have been a roaring success!"

They recently held their first evening offering food, pairing up with Future Doughnuts (from an adjacent railway arch) who served up a menu of hotdogs to enjoy with a beer. Despite the stormy weather it was great to see so many people out enjoying themselves, and they are keen to repeat this type of event, teaming up with other local vendors to offer all sorts of food.

Another member of the Little Martha team, Pelin Morgan, recently joined women from other local breweries for a huge collaboration brew for International Women's Day. Expect to see this on draught and in can soon.

Finally, brewer Ed Morgan is exploring the potential of brewing and packaging their popular *Stout* in cask, so it can be "served as it was meant to be enjoyed." Keep your eyes peeled for that!

Andy Coston



She Drinks Beer

As mentioned briefly in the last edition of *Pints West*, the female beer drinkers of Bristol are now regularly invited to gather once a month at Good Chemistry's Redland pub, [The Good Measure](#). Opened in December 2018, the pub quickly established itself as a lively local, with a popular quiz night, and was runner-up for Bristol's CAMRA Pub of the Year in 2020/21.

The brainchild of Good Chemistry's co-founder Kelly Sidgwick, She Drinks Beer is described as "a regular night at the pub for women who enjoy beer", both for groups of friends and for those who are happy to turn up on their own and meet new people, or just enjoy the beer. It tends to be well-attended by women from Bristol's beer and brewing industries, as well as other beer fans.

As well as providing a social event, She Drinks Beer showcases women in brewing, with all the guest draught beers either brewed by women or from breweries owned by women. The March evening was held on International Women's Day, with representatives from three guest breweries – Arbor, Newtown Park and St Austell – who took round samples of their beers and chatted with those present.

Kelly's keen to stress that She Drinks Beer isn't an organisation: there's no political agenda and no one's asking anyone to join up. The gatherings aren't exclusively women-only: there's no attempt to boot men out of the pub once the event begins. I've been to a couple of these evenings now, along with others from the branch's 'BAD Ladies' group, and have enjoyed the friendly, relaxed atmosphere, as well as the excellent beer. I'm sure I'm not the only *Pints West* reader with plenty of experience of being the only woman in a pub. It's nice now and again to redress the balance.

She Drinks Beer takes place on the first or occasionally second Tuesday of the month, from 6pm. Forthcoming dates are April 5th, May 10th, June 7th and July 5th: dates are published on the event's Facebook page. There's a link to that page from the Good Chemistry website's blog post about the event, and also the opportunity to sign up to She Drinks Beer's mailing list.

Bridget Andrews



Our Beer Festival returns after a two year absence!

Friday 10 – Sunday 12 June 2022

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There are four sessions, lasting 4 hours, over the weekend;

Friday 10 June: 6 – 10pm • **Saturday 11 June:** 12 – 4pm and 6 – 10pm • **Sunday 12 June:** 12 – 4pm

Entry costs just **£3.50**, or **£9.00** to include a ride on one of our heritage diesel trains.

For tickets and more details please visit:
www.avonvalleyrailway.org

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

Pub openings in Clifton

Bucking the nationwide trend for pub closures, Clifton Village has seen two pubs reopen under new management.

The Royal Oak on the Mall used to be a traditional pub, but was completely gutted to become St Vincent's restaurant in 2014. It did not take off, and the property had been empty for several years before reopening as the Royal Oak in February 2022 under the Wickwar Wessex Pub Company. The pub has undergone another major refurbishment to offer split-level drinking areas and bar from the entrance, with two upper floors providing further drinking areas which can also be hired for private functions or meetings.

On the bar are three Wickwar branded beers on hand pump including, on our last visit, Bob, Try Me (for the Six Nations) and Falling Star. Butcombe Gold was also available. Keg taps include Camden Town Helles. The décor is smart and modern, but with a cosy feel and nod to the traditional, with dark painted walls, lots of pictures on the walls and a range of seating including high stools and tables, high-backed padded benches and other wooden furniture. The old Royal Oak was a popular venue for sports fans and the new incarnation is clearly aiming for a similar following, with large-screen TVs always on in every part of the pub (although generally the sound is off), showing a range of different sports at any one time. Young families and dogs appear to be welcome. The kitchen was not yet fully operational at opening, although a range of snacks and small plates were on offer. It is hoped that a full menu will be available soon.

The Lansdown, at 8 Clifton Road, was for many years a real ale hub under the stewardship of Charles and Amanda Yaxley. It was sold in 2021 and was closed for several months before reopening towards the end of January this year with Dan and Lara at the helm. The pub, originally part of a Georgian coaching inn, had undergone a sympathetic interior refurbishment during the last lockdown. The new owners have added their own touches, and the pub is a mix of stylish dark walls with gold highlights, wooden floors and furnishings, and a welcoming fire. The large, heated marquee in the garden continues as a venue for showing major sporting events, hosting live music, and student groups. On the bar are five changing real ales, largely sourced from local breweries. At least one real cider, and food, are also available.

Both reopenings are welcome additions to Clifton's pub scene and we wish them well.

Lesly Plumridge



Ashton Beerfest

A school may not be the first place you'd think to go for a beer festival. Enterprising parents at Ashton Park School would have you think otherwise by creating the first Ashton Beerfest. Billed as 'the best time you'll ever have at school' it promises to showcase beers from Bristol's vibrant independent brewing scene as well as real cider and a selection for the non-beer drinker too.

A 'family friendly' afternoon session will provide distraction for the kids while parents enjoy a pint in the sunshine; the evening has a 'grown-ups only' session with music from local bands to keep the party hopping (pun intended).

Initially planned for 2020, the inevitable delay has only sharpened the thirst to make the event a corker. The school lies on the edge of Ashton Court providing a verdant setting for the whole event.

If you needed any greater incentive, all proceeds are going to help buy a new minibus for the school – so you'll get a warm fuzzy feeling from more than just the beer.

The event takes place on Saturday 9 July at Ashton Park School. For more info and tickets visit ashtonbeerfest.org.

Beer – Music – Food

**Saturday 9 July
2022**

Tickets and info at

ashtonbeerfest.org



**11am-4pm Family-friendly session
6pm-11pm Just for the grown-ups
Venue: Ashton Park School, BS3 2JL**



CAMRA relaunches its 'Real Ale in a Bottle' accreditation scheme, with a new name and a bold new look



'**One to Try**' will help consumers discover the very best beers available in bottles and cans, an invaluable tool in the fast-growing bottle and canned beer market, which has been fuelled in part by brewer's need to adapt during the pandemic.

The 'One to Try' accreditation will take a fresh approach to supporting and promoting brewers and their products, while helping consumers explore everything that 'live' beer has to offer with confidence. 'Live' beer is any beer that adheres to the principle of continuing to condition in a final container to improve the flavour and character of the beer.

CAMRA will work directly with brewers to accredit their beers through a self-certification process, with no costs involved. Any brewer of live beer is invited to sign up to the 'One to Try' scheme, from innovative start-ups to familiar favourites.

A range of exciting new resources to help consumers learn more about live beers will also be made available, including a directory of accredited beers, and videos and articles to dive deeper into beer styles, brewing processes, bottles and canning.

Commenting on the launch, Gillian Hough, CAMRA's Real Ale, Cider and Perry Campaigns Director, said: "Live beer in all its formats is a varied and delightful product. 'One to Try' aims to make exploring live beer styles in bottles or cans easier for everyone.

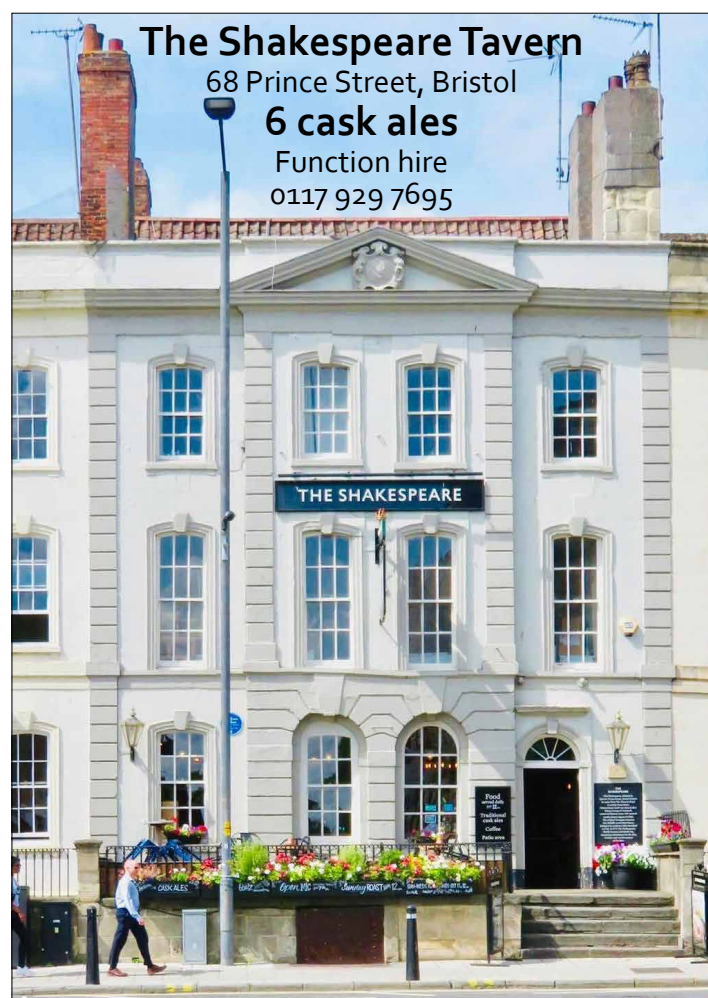
"When CAMRA was founded, there were only five real ales available in so-called 'small pack', but bottle- and can-conditioned beers have come a long way since then. Today, there are hundreds of bottled and canned live beers for consumers to enjoy and we want to support and celebrate the brewers who make them.

"Look out for the 'One to Try' logo, enjoy these fresh, living products, and find some new favourites while supporting UK breweries!"

Moor Beer, the first brewery to have a can-conditioned beer accredited under the 'Real Ale in a Bottle' scheme, is just one of the many breweries who have already moved their accreditation to 'One to Try' ahead of its public launch.

Justin Hawke, owner and head brewer at Moor Beer, said: "I've been a CAMRA member and volunteer for 25 years and moved to Britain for my love of real ale and pubs. Everything we brew is 100% naturally conditioned, and it is still one of my personal and professional life achievements to have been the first to be accredited for brewing real ale in a can. It's a real point of difference achieved through an incredible amount of extra cost and work, but we firmly believe that you taste the difference with our Live Beer."

More information, including details of how brewers can join the scheme, can be found at: camra.org.uk/ott



The Cornubia

142 Temple Street, Bristol BS1 6EN



**In the CAMRA Good Beer Guide
for 11 years running**

We are so proud of our team

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*Keeping the flag flying high in Bristol
And will continue to do so*

Thank you for all the continued support
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THE TASTE IS
IN THE NAME



Bath Ales: Return of the seasonals and the coming of cans

The seasonal ales theme based on Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, planned for 2020 but stymied by the plague, has been resurrected for 2022, and *Queen of Hearts*, a 4.3% fruit beer, has already appeared in venues. This month sees *March Hare*, a 3.8% New Zealand pale ale, bounding out, followed in May by *Cheshire Cat*, the 4.0% pale ale previously brewed in collaboration with Charles Wells. In July the 3.9% *Mad Hatter* golden ale makes his appearance, with *White Rabbit*, a 3.6% white IPA, hopping into September. *King of Hearts*, a 5.0% special bitter rules November with *Festivity* hopefully jingling back for the Christmas season.

The components for the new canning line, mentioned in the previous edition of our multi-award-winning publication, have been assembled, and commissioning is well under way. A number of different brews

have been trialled, using different sized cans, to decide on optimum packaging. As we know from just about every brewery that has introduced a canning line lately, these are temperamental beasts to fine tune, and need a lot of TLC to get optimum performance. However, the final product should be with us soon.

The two apprentices, also mentioned in the last edition of *Pints West*, are well into exposure to the different brewing processes, including working in all areas of the brewery. At present they are developing their skills at the Small Batch Brewery at St Austell.

Bath Ales/St Austell have sold on the [Graze Bristol](#) gastropub. This is a one-off disposal and not part of a pub reduction policy.

Roy Sanders

Ashley Down back in production

It's just over four and a half years (September 2017) since a fire devastated Ashley Down Brewery, located in the double garage of owner and brewer, Vince Crocker. Initially Vince did some cuckoo brewing at Twisted Oak in Wrington and put more time into the partnership he had with Garvan Hickey running Bristol's first micropub, the [Drapers Arms](#). This partnership came to an amicable end in the middle of COVID, at the end of November 2020, and since then Vince has been slowly working towards bring the brewery back into production.

Most of the brewery vessels survived the fire but needed deep cleaning and the copper needed recladding. Vince had to put on a new roof, build a new cold room, replace all of the flexible piping and the electrics, which were the cause of the fire.

Further COVID-19 related setbacks ensued but at the beginning of this year Vince did a test brew using his smallest 3.5-barrel fermenting Vessel. After a significant break from brewing Vince felt almost like he had to relearn how to brew. Vince says he tried to utilise some old hops that had survived the fire in a fridge but the resulting beer lacked a crisp, moreish bitter finish, so it was discarded. However his second brew, using new Bramling Cross and Goldings hops and named *December*, a 4.6% ruby-coloured, vegan-friendly, malty premium bitter, hit the mark, if not the time of year.

The first casks went to the Drapers Arms at the end of February and it went down very well. The remainder sold out on the 1st of March, to pubs that regularly took Vince's beers, plus a few new ones.

At the time of writing Vince has *Red Stroat* (5.2%), a beautiful smooth, dark red beer with loads of oats, sitting in the cold room for



The copper, seat of the fire in 2017

secondary fermentation. This should be ready for distribution around the beginning of April (as this edition of *Pints West* comes out). After that he plans to get his 5.5-barrel fermenting vessel refurbished and brew *Ashley Down Pale Ale*, an easy-drinking 4.3% pale bitter.

Vince's old recipe book didn't go up in the fire and so he intends to work his way through some of his favourites, over the summer.

Tony Durbin

What's new at New Bristol Brewery?

Quite a lot. First of all, a new head brewer has been appointed. Albert Holmes, formerly of Sharps, is back in Bristol having previously studied at UWE. He will continue to "explore the progression of traditional styles to create increasingly forward thinking, great tasting beers" as envisioned by the brewery's owners and operators, Noel and Maria.

There is a new 'Micro Can' canning line in place which is now up and running. But it is not just about cans since there is a strong demand for cask with the popular ones being *Joy Of Sesh* (4.2% ABV) and *Cinder Toffee Stout* (4.0%).

The latest brewing collaboration is with Adidas, which as you probably know is not a brewery but a sports brand. The new beer will be called

Isambard and will mark the relaunch of the Adidas's 1980s Bristol trainer.

With all this beer to sell there is a new sales and export manager. Thomas Rooke has been busy getting the beer out of the door to local pubs and distributors as well as to new customers in Switzerland and Denmark.

Three new stainless-steel fermenters are on order and will soon take their place on the brewery floor but don't worry about being squeezed out of the tap room; the team are planning ahead and are working on opening a new brewery tap nearby soon!

Michael Bertagne

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@camrabristol.org.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.

Pub News

Out in Henbury, the **Blaise Inn** has been taken over by a team including Louise McCrimmon (latterly executive chef at Harvey Nichols). The pub has had a refurb, with one side given over exclusively to diners. The other side is still very much a traditional pub, however. Food is served Wednesday to Sunday, with the pub open just for drinks on Monday and Tuesdays, offering three real ales.

Red Oak Taverns have acquired eight free-of-tie pubs from Euphorium, including (we think) the **Star** at Pill, the **Victoria** at St Werburghs, the **Gryphon** on Colston Street in central Bristol and the **Coach & Horses** behind Old Market. No news yet of changes affecting customers of these pubs.

The new **Little Martha** brewpub in the railway arches on Oxford Street, St Phillips is currently offering three or four tank and keg beers brewed on site, as well as one guest.

The former **Colston Arms** on St Michael's Hill in Kingsdown, Bristol has been given a new identity, and is now the **Open Arms**, still offering sport on TV, Sunday roasts and three or more real ales.

Word reached us just before Christmas that the **Cowshed** on Whiteladies Road, Clifton (previously the Dog & Duck) is to be converted to provide an additional screen for the cinema next door.

The former **Grave** reopened in January as the **Cow & Sow** in Queen Square, an all-day contemporary chophouse.

The former **Bristol Ram** (in Park Street), which was **Le Château** for many years before that, has now reopened as **Four Quarters**, the latest in a chain that combines a bar with arcade games and retro consoles. Beer collaborations with Lost & Grounded and the Bristol Beer Factory are promised.

Brewdog have been granted planning permission to open a large new bar in Millennium Promenade, in the site previously occupied by Costa Coffee.

The **Bull Inn** on Crews Hole, St George, has had its licence restored by Bristol City Council after it had been revoked last year after neighbours' complaints. Given its troubled history in recent years, we hope that it can again be a welcome part of the community.

Changes at the **Swan** in Winterbourne, where real ale has been returned to the bar in the guise of Sharp's Doom Bar, while the restaurant has been scaled back to a couple of carveries a week, and a new pool table has been installed.

Meanwhile, more good news reaches us from Somerset. The **Plough Inn** in Wrington has also reopened, offering an attractive breadth of choice for drinkers and diners alike. Likely to be two or three real ales on offer, such as Butcombe Original and Timothy Taylor Landlord. Regular quiz nights are also proving very popular.

A potential set-back in the same county though. Last edition we were able to confirm that the **Star** at Tickenham was still open, but we have since learned that a planning application has been submitted to demolish the pub to make way for more housing. An application to demolish had previously been rejected on appeal, but this is a new attempt to get approval.

In Fishponds, the former **New Moon** pub was expected to open towards the end of March as the second Crafty Egg in the city (the other is in Stokes Croft), a licensed café offering food and drink throughout the day.

Opposite the 'fairest and goodliest church in all England' the **Portwall Tavern** in Redcliffe was announced in February as up for grabs. Long-term landlord Andy Shaw has decided to move on, so Fleurets are offering assignment of the free-of-tie lease on the pub which has a seven-day licence until midnight.

In St Jude's, the **Swan With Two Necks** has been taken over by the proprietor of the nearby **Elmers Arms**. Three or four cask ales are offered at any one time, usually from local breweries and often featuring a dark beer. There's also a traditional cider as well as numerous keg fonts.

Some good news to cheer up Bristol City fans bemoaning their team conceding the latest inevitable injury-time goal. The **Rising Sun** in Ashton has reopened for the first time since the COVID pandemic. Under completely new management, it has reverted to its original name after a period as **Bar BS3**. As you'd expect given its location, there is an emphasis on live sport on the TVs.

In Dundry, we hear the **Winford Arms** is now operating as **La Campagna at the Winford Arms**, with a strong emphasis on Italian food. However, drinkers remain welcome and the garden is as lovely as ever.

A planning application has been submitted to turn the former Wetherspoon pub **St George's Hall** in Redfield into a series of flats spread across four storeys. There are strenuous local objections to the potential destruction of this former cinema.

The **Inn at Yanleigh** may not sound familiar to readers, but that is the new identity of what those of a certain age will remember as the **Town's Talk** by Barrow Common on the road out from Bristol to the airport. Real ale dispensed by gravity is available (a couple from Butcombe when our intrepid researcher visited).

*Duncan Shine
for Bristol Pubs Group*



Can the Fishponds Road Revival community campaign help forge a new future for the Farriers Arms?

The **Farriers Arms** at 690 Fishponds Road, Fishponds, Bristol has now been closed for nearly twelve years after being purchased by Morrisons in 2010 and has been featured in *Pints West* (autumn 2016 and previous editions). In 2011 Morrisons submitted plans to demolish the pub and replace it with a store extension but after a limited stakeholder consultation involving the Frome Vale Neighbourhood Partnership, Bristol Pubs Group and Living Easton Heritage & Environmental Group, among others, it became evident that there was considerable opposition to the scheme and it was subsequently withdrawn. Since then the property, a two-storey Georgian building converted into a pub in the 1860s (which used to have a smithy next door) has been boarded up and left in a poor external condition with graffiti on the walls, broken roof tiles, buddleia growth, missing lead flashings, damaged guttering and internal fire damage/vandalism. To add to this tale of woe, the pub endured several months of squatter occupation which did not help matters.



Following concerns raised by the local community and CAMRA's Bristol Pubs Group over the pub's continuing deterioration, Morrisons gave assurances that they would maintain the pub and market it within the pub trade using their own estate agents (Rapleys). However, Morrisons have still not reopened the pub and in 2020 they submitted new plans to demolish it and replace it with a landscaped community area (planning application ref: 20/04156/F) but due to local community opposition the planning application was turned down by the City Council's Development Management planners.

At one time Bristol Pubs Group discussed the possibility of nominating the Farriers Arms as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) to register it as a community facility, where if the owner wanted to sell the pub freehold or lease it for 25 years or more, the ACV nominating group would have to be told and given an opportunity to buy it. A successful



ACV registration would also be a material consideration in any planning application for a potential change of use. However, as the pub has been closed for more than 10 years now it is probable that an ACV application from a community organisation would fail and currently the pub is not locally listed with Bristol City Council.

The pub has often been discussed at Bristol Pubs Group meetings but due to the current difficult trading conditions that many UK publicans are facing, it was thought that the Farriers Arms might struggle to find someone to take it on. Then in 2021 Bristol Pubs Group became aware of the 'Fishponds Road Revival – Free the Farriers' local community campaign in Fishponds being organised by Kathe Jacob. On the Fishponds Road Revival Facebook page Kathe commented: "The group aims to improve the sense of place and community ownership of the Fishponds Road, the local high street and for it to be a place to linger not just pass through."

The Facebook page also mentions five key themes for the group, which are: increasing greenery, biodiversity and tree planting, especially pocket parks; valuing and restoring heritage sites, and increasing awareness of our local history; improving provision for walking and cycling and reducing the effects of heavy traffic and poor air quality; creating opportunities for independent trading, community markets and locally owned shops; and introducing art and colour to add colour and revive our retail environment.

Currently, there is a Fishponds Road Revival on-line petition to save the Farriers Arms, titled 'Morrisons: Please Give Us Our Historic Pub Back!', which readers are encouraged to support, at:

www.change.org/p/morrisons-plc-morrisons-please-give-us-our-historic-pub-back

Bristol Pubs Group would certainly be able to support this vision and when we found out that they were campaigning to save the Farriers Arms as some sort of community facility and were in active negotiations with Morrisons to take over the premises for community use, it was decided that we should make contact with them. With that in mind we invited Kathe to attend a Bristol Pubs Group branch meeting in February. At the meeting she gave us an outline of the Fishponds Road Revival plans for the Farriers Arms and we then provided guidance on how Bristol Pubs Group could support the pub/community hub reopening campaign which she found most useful, resulting in her being able to take some positives away from the evening. Kathe has now been invited to future meetings to provide us with any updates and for us to help with support for her next provisional campaign event outside the Farriers Arms in April.

With this encouraging news it will be interesting to see if the Fishponds Road Revival community campaign working with Bristol Pubs Group can help forge a new future for the Farriers Arms.

Ian Beckey

Redcliffe Renaissance in Ruins

Not that long ago, Mayor George Ferguson was seeking to incorporate Redcliffe Way into the new Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone. Bristol Pubs Group wondered if this initiative could save the much abused Bell in Prewett Street, the George & Railway at Temple Gate and the Cattle Market Tavern just beyond Temple Meads Station.

The scene now though (March 2022) is distressing; looking down Prewett Street towards Temple Meads, there are still three centuries' worth of architecture but only just. In the distance at Temple Gate is the 19th-century George & Railway Hotel complete with massive 'advertising wrap' on its all encompassing scaffolding. The roofless, windowless 18th-century Bell is in the middle distance; adjacent to one of Bristol's last remaining Art Deco buildings the former 1930s Palais de Danse is all tinned up. The Cattle Market Tavern has been flattened.

The graffiti-strewn Bell in Prewett Street now looks forlorn but still defiantly shows its venerable past. At one time called the Blue Bell, it had its own brewery dating back to the early 1700s, when many of the area's old industries, including a bell foundry, once thrived amongst the populace. You can still glimpse the ornate and unique two bow windows on the ground floor that once earned the pub listed building status, but they were altered without permission, and planning then lost interest in saving the pub.

The 'capital' skittle alley is still extent and was once the longest and oldest in Bristol, despite alterations undertaken during WWII by the Luftwaffe, who shortened it without planning permission. It's left plenty of scope for children of the can to practice their art, but what



The Bell



The George & Railway wrapped up

they've done is nothing compared to the vandalism perpetrated by the developers. By hook or by crook they let the elements ruin the pub by letting the roof, first floor and windows all cave in. Classic common practice from cynical people who have patently never cared about Bristol's past or its communities, the pub is now just waiting for its last rites.

Next on our itinerary is the George & Railway Hotel. Still splendid on its island site just outside of Temple Meads Station, it used to reside alongside the viaduct for the Docks Railway, now demolished and replaced by a pathway currently named 'Brunel mile'. This listed pub's future, along with its statuary and finials, seems secure as it has been protected by scaffolding for nearly two decades. Originally built in Georgian times, the Victorians maximised the potential of its location by turning it into a hotel and adding the railway sobriquet to its title.

On a hoarding that surrounds the site, Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone has taken the opportunity to re-assure Bristolians about the fate of the area; they say: "Thank you for your patience while we improve our city." Unfortunately this improvement doesn't include preserving the Bell, and couldn't save the 1915 Arts & Crafts style Cattle Market Tavern around the back of Temple Meads, formerly on Cattle Market Road. With a strong suspicion of political spite, the demolition crews were called in early doors to prevent the pub from being a touchstone for sensitive development in the heart of the enterprise zone.

Could a rearguard action be fought to save more of Bristol's heritage like the Bell? Or does everything have to be swept away for yet more anonymous and unsympathetic high rises?

Mark Steeds

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Exciting Times at Wiper & True



These are very exciting times at Wiper & True (W&T) as cask beer has just been relaunched after a hiatus of two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and they work towards the summer opening of their new brewery and taproom at a site in Old Market which has historic roots.

During the pandemic, W&T had to initially focus their output on canned beer sold either directly to the public via their can kiosk and webstore or through bottle shops and off-licences. Subsequently, as the restrictions eased and the on-trade market returned, keg beer was re-introduced due to its broad appeal across a range of outlets and its long shelf-life. Now that we are coming to terms with the 'new normal' and cask beer has become viable once again for W&T, they released their flagship pale ale *Kaleidoscope* (4.2%) in cask at the beginning of March. Brewed with an ever-changing trio of hops, this version features Citra, Mosaic and Simcoe hops. According to their marketing manager, Alice Howells, "It's tasting beautiful and is available at a variety of pubs across Bristol." Expect a smooth serve with gentle carbonation and elegant, refined flavours. More cask is on the way with *Amber Ale* (4.8%), already racked into casks and conditioning at the brewery before being released into the wild, coming next.

W&T are aiming to have their new, sustainable brewery in Old Market up and running, and the associated taproom open to the public, by

the summer. Located in a 28,000-square-foot industrial unit on City Business Park, it will provide them with over five times as much space as their site in St Werburghs, allowing them to double their current brewing capacity with installation of a custom-made, state-of-the-art, 4,000-litre brewhit built to their exact specification by German experts Bier-Know How. It will also provide space for a new top-of-the-range Leibinger canning line able to fill 5,000 cans an hour, a cold store, a sizable warehouse, and a purpose-built taproom. The site is located adjacent to the legendary Trinity Centre and a five-minute walk from Left Handed Giant and Newtown Park in St Philips. After signing for the unit, they discovered that it is just across the road from the site of the award-winning 19th-century Garton brewery led by Charles Garton.

Keep an eye on the W&T website and their social media channels for the latest news as their ambitious plans come to fruition in Old Market (note that they have dedicated Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts for the new taproom, so you can follow the developments as they happen). Despite the much larger capacity the new site will provide for indoor and outside seating, there are exciting plans for development of the current York Street site in St Werburghs which will be retained to provide additional brewing capacity and an alternative space to enjoy W&T beers.

Dave Graham

The new On Point Brew Company

First introduced in the last edition of *Pints West* as "coming soon", brewing has now kicked off at the new On Point brewery in Bedminster.

The first brew by the On Point team of Ollie and Ale (Alessandra) is *Sunup*, a 4.2% hazy session IPA which will be hitting venues around Bristol in keg and cask as you read this. Also on its way is a 4% East Kent Goldings golden ale destined for cask only.

The team hope to be bottling and canning within the coming weeks, the results of which will be available from the brewery and in bottle shops around Bristol.



Cask is back at Basement

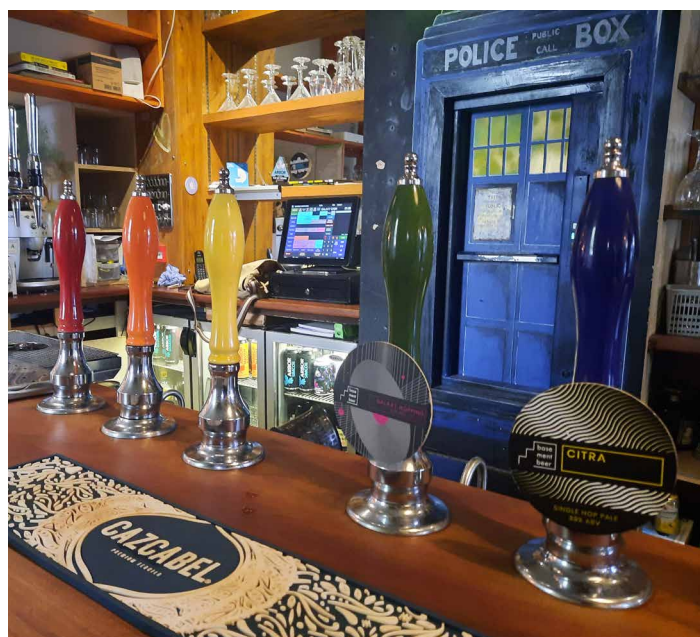
It's been a busy few months down in Stokes Croft in Bristol as Ben Evans of Basement Beer has been fully occupied refitting the brewery, sprucing up the taproom and devising ever more interesting recipes to brew – from tea infused pales to heftily alcoholic mango sours.

But the predominant news, for *Pints West* readers at least, is the return of cask beer to the Basement portfolio. The pandemic brought uncertain trading conditions to pubs and breweries alike, and for Ben (and his customers) cask brewing became unviable due to potentially high amounts of wastage. However, now that the handpumps are beginning to proliferate once more – in our city pubs at least – Ben has committed batches of *Citra* pale ale (3.9%) and *Galaxy Hopping* (6.2%) to cask.

A recent tap takeover at the [Robin Hood](#) on St Michael's Hill, Kingsdown, proved the ideal occasion to sample these. *Citra* is a refreshing light golden ale, while *Galaxy Hopping* is a classic of the New England IPA genre, hazy and fruit-driven with big up-front tropical flavours of pineapple and grapefruit leading to a long, dry grassy finish. The remaining fonts at the tap takeover showcased a full range of highly individual Basement beers: *Cabana Cooler* fruit tea pale (3.6%); *Strawberry Lemonade* fruity sour (3.9); American pale *Oblique Strategy* (4.1%); *Lost Horizon* coffee stout (5.9%); and newcomer *Charlie Loves Mangos*, a mango sour that clocks in at an arresting 7.1%.

Basement beers are ever-present at the Robin Hood – fittingly, as the pub hosted the original eponymous basement where brewing began – and of course at their [Basement Beer Taproom](#) in Upper York Street, Stokes Croft. There are plans to extend its days of operation, but for the time being opening hours are 5 to 10.30 on Fridays and 3 to 10.30 on Saturdays. Should you be unable to fit this in to your hectic schedule, Basement's online shop at www.basementbeer.co.uk will deliver free locally to your door.

Marty Cummins



Cask Basement Beers at the Robin Hood

Never short of ideas at the Bristol Beer Factory

The Bristol Beer Factory (BBF) report that although to them it's always cask season, this winter has been especially full throttle within the Factory walls. They have taken the single-hop brew model and spiced it up using both CRYO and T90 pellets of the same hop, from Talus in *Deception Peak* to Ekuanot in *Mission Ridge*. This is all part of what they see as their focus on progressive cask brewing, utilising the new-wave and hop innovations into the classic styles of cask beer.

The BBF also have plans for a new exploration into the origins of hops and how they have been developed and 'evolved' around the world, under the headline of 'Evolution Brews'. The first dive into this series, *Flashback*, is pouring now around the South West, taking the German crisp Hallertau Mittlefruh brewed alongside the Evolved version of this hop: Kohatu from New Zealand. You can hunt down Evolution Brews all year round in your favourite independent venue as they are apparently only available in the pub.

BBF's signature lager *Infinity* is back, considered by the brewery to be Bristol's go-to session draught lager at independent venues across the city. For some time this pale-golden Helles was sold out and unattainable in cans, but it has now gone into permanent production in 440ml cans to be sold far and wide.

The BBF are never short of ideas for new beers and coming in June 2022 is a brand-new range across all formats from cask to can. Look out for the Roam series which is intended to take you on a journey around Europe taking in the best styles, yeast and hops on offer.

Richard Brooks

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News from Butcombe

It has been a while since *Pints West* heard from Butcombe Brewery; reporting back in the Winter 2020 issue, they were looking forward to a year which, as for everyone else, turned out to be quite different than expected! Butcombe is fondly remembered as one of the first of the West Country's small independent brewers, which has now been brewing for a total of 42 years. They were able to continue brewing during the pandemic, offering sales online and through the brewery shop when pubs were closed.

Butcombe pub news

The **Bowl Inn** at Almondsbury reopened recently following a five-week investment project, and is looking good with fully refurbished interiors, 12 revamped bedrooms, shiny new exterior paintwork and signage. Ideal for a day-trip or mini-breaks exploring Bristol and South Gloucestershire, it has new menus and, of course, a range of Butcombe beers.

Last year, in case you missed it, the **Whitmore Tap** opened (in premises previously known as the Penny Farthing and then just the Penny), named in honour of Butcombe founder Simon Whitmore. It functions as Butcombe Brewing Company's Bristol taproom, offering the full range of Butcombe cask, keg and bottled beer and cider, with food. It is located on Whiteladies Road opposite the Clifton Down shopping centre, with a small, sunny (potentially) outdoor area.

Butcombe have also expanded the range of pubs you can stay in, with over 20 locations across the West Country and beyond, stretching from West Lulworth in Dorset in the south, to Worcester in the north. Find out more in the 'pubs and rooms' section of their website.

Butcombe brewing news

While Butcombe continue to brew their core range of *Original*, *Gold* and *Rare Breed*, on 1st February, they launched their 2022 'Small Batch Brew' programme. As the name suggests, these are small batches with a limited run. The first two were the New England IPA, *Nubble*

Light, and *Bungee IPA* (the latter named in honour of the first bungee jump that took place from the Clifton Suspension Bridge in 1979).

The Small Batch Brews are intended to promote how Butcombe are being innovative as a brewery and to show the skill of the brewery team. A new beer will be launched every month, available not only in their own managed/tied pubs, but also across the free trade.

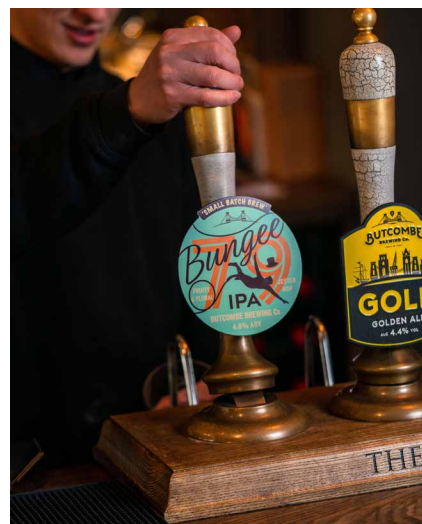
Each beer will also be available in mini-kegs from the online shop. It has given the team a chance to play around with beers that are more experimental than the core range, inspired by brews worldwide, from the West Coast of the US, to the shores of the Pacific.

The Small Batch Brews are stated to be hand-crafted using only the very finest of ingredients, using a combination of tried and tested techniques and some of the latest innovations in the brewing industry.

The start of 2022 was also particularly busy with greater demand for low or zero alcohol products. *Goram IPA Zero* launched in 2021, and was found to be really popular in January, not only within Butcombe pubs, but also across the free trade. It had great write ups by Fiona Beckett in the *Guardian* and Elly Curshen, Waitrose columnist and author, on Instagram. Although only available in bottles or keg, *Goram IPA Zero* is now one of the best-selling Butcombe products in the online store.

As usual the brewery shop is open in Wrington on Wednesday to Friday or click & collect Tuesday to Friday with a free local delivery option to anyone with a BS or TA6-9 postcode who spends £40+.

Nigel Morris



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News of Dawkins Ales and Taverns

Glen Dawkins reports that trade is gradually getting back to normal across the pubs, exclaiming: "Crossed fingers, crossed everything, of course, after the last two years! Landlords and teams have done a tremendous job throughout the pandemic – adapting to circumstances with home deliveries, take-outs and refurbishments big and small. It is immensely gratifying that customers, old and new are returning to their locals. Some things haven't changed though; a warm atmosphere and good beer!"

Glen continues: "The **Miner's Arms** has resumed its place as a real centre of the St Werburghs community; the **Portcullis** has had a thorough spruce up of its listed facade in Clifton Village; the **Green Man** in Kingsdown is back with a bang with regular live music; the **Victoria Ale House**, a gem in Clifton, is once more hosting its eclectic weekly quiz; and there is big news at the **Hillgrove Porter Stores** – not only will drinkers see new signage (and much behind the scenes refurbishments), there will be new (well, not really!) faces in charge. After a dozen years at the helm of this real ale and craft beer mecca in Kingsdown, landlord Jamie is off to pastures new – in New Zealand! He will be sorely missed but his big shoes are being ably filled by his deputies Dom and Dan. The pub is in safe hands."

A little out of the branch area, the sister Steel Coulson business in Edinburgh is also recovering, and soon to grow to a third site with 'Vaudeville' mooted to be a 'theatre of beer' as described by Glen, and featuring a street food kitchen with rotating local pop-up chefs from late spring.

At the brewery, volumes are increasing as publicans get more confident in rebuilding their beer ranges. Naturally cautious in the

early stages of emerging from the pandemic, Dawkins found that many pubs had much reduced stocks which particularly affected cask, given its short shelf life versus kegs. The brewery is proud of both its cask and keg beers (the latter being 'live', not pasteurized or filtered) but it is satisfying to see that 'Cask is Back', to coin a phrase!

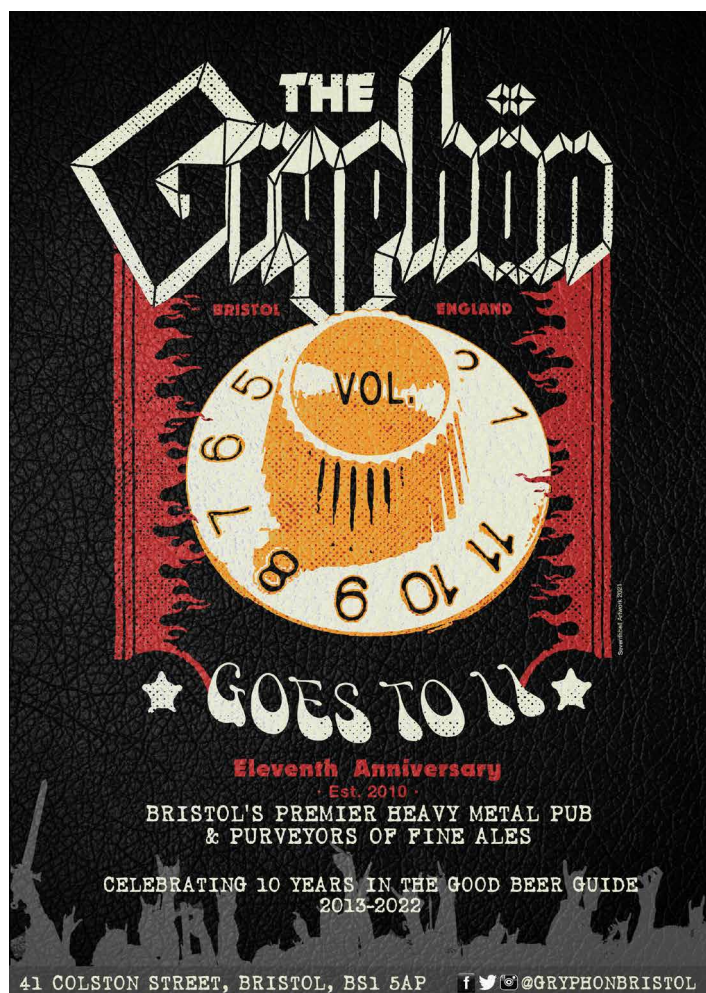
During lockdown, most brews were diverted to bottling and that has remained strong with availability across the area in independent off-licences as well as the **Dawkins Brewery Tap**. Free local deliveries continue as do national sales via the webshop. All bottling is done by hand at the Easton brewery and all beers are bottle-conditioned for quality.

Canning will be the next exciting step with trials underway. First release should hit the shelves in the summer.

Head brewer Paul is busy conjuring up innovative new brews as monthly specials. The latest being *We Three Bears* oatmeal stout and by contrast the pale gold, Ekuanot-hopped *Mount Whitney*.

All Dawkins beers are now vegetarian-friendly and with a few exceptions (like old favourite smoked oat milk stout *Foresters Black* which contains lactose) are vegan too.

Dawkins is really looking forward to taking part in the **East Bristol Brewery Trail** once more. Five independent breweries come together to roll up their shutters to the public over Easter and summer bank holiday weekends (Saturdays & Sundays 30th April/1st May and 27th/28th August). They promise to be fantastic events with beers, music and food for all.



DAWKINS Bristol Beers

EAST BRISTOL BREWERY TRAIL RETURNS FOR 2022!
Sat 30th Apr - Sun 1st May
Sat 27th Aug - Sun 28th Aug
details to come - check social media!

Our Pubs

The Miner's Arms, St Werburghs BS2 9YQ
The Hillgrove Porter Stores, Kingsdown BS2 8LT
The Victoria Ale House, Southleigh Rd, Clifton BS8 2BH
The Portcullis, Wellington Terrace, Clifton Village BS8 4LE
The Green Man, Alfred Place, Kingsdown BS4 8HD

Steel Coulson Shore, Bernard St, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6PR
Steel Coulson Southside, Causewayside, Edinburgh EH6 4PU
Coming soon...
Vaudeville, Henderson St, Leith, Edinburgh EH6 6DE

Dawkins at Home - order online

Brewery-fresh draught cask & keg beers in free 2 pint & 4 pint growlers, 5 litre Minikegs, Bag-in-Box and bottle-conditioned bottles

Collect from us
Pre-order online and contactless collection from the Brewery Tap - see web for details & book your slot today

Free Local Delivery
Often as fast as next day - see web for details & book online

Flat Rate National Shipping
Just £6 for two or more cases of bottles - see web

dawkinsales.com

An Incredible brewing philosophy

"It's going to be an exciting year for the Incredible Brewing Company. Projects and developments that have been on the back burner for a few years are finally coming to fruition."

So says owner and brewer, Stephen "Mr Incredible" Hall, who goes on to explain: "As well as installing two new uni-tank fermentation vessels the brewery has added a canning line. This is a welcome addition as it allows us to preserve the freshness and flavour of our hoppy beers. The beer will be can-conditioned, which is in line with the brewery's more ethical principles and 'real beer' philosophy. No CO₂ will be added to the beer."

"The main reason for this addition to the range is the lighter weight of the product, which has environmental benefits during transportation, and the recyclability of the aluminium. As well as this, biodegradable paper labels used up until now on the bottles will be replaced with corn starch which is more fridge friendly. There is also a beautiful and eye-catching, new label design by Emily Mackwell to introduce the cans. It easily recognisable as the Incredible Brewing Company's unique crafted style, says Emily, and it aims to bring a more sophisticated image to a complex and sometimes misunderstood product."

Most of the brewery's spring and summer range will be canned, including speciality best sellers like the *Coriander & Lime* and *Nettle* beers. It is also increasing its range of popular pale ales and IPAs, so keep a look out for new releases over the coming months.

The brewery is not turning its back on the bottle format however. Stephen believes that certain beer styles are more attributable to certain formats so his range of darker beers such as the popular *Mild* and the porters and stouts will continue to be produced in 500ml bottles as usual. It gives the consumer a great choice at any time of the year.



All that said, the brewery is aiming to broaden its reach and will be putting more dedicated batches of beer into casks and kegs, the first in quite a while. This is great news for any real ale pub or bar in the area. The brewery has maintained its business philosophy by selling much of the beer directly at food festivals and events over the years but in the coming months, as the volume of beer produced grows, it will be more readily available in all formats in the city of Bristol and the surrounds.

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



United Kingdom of Beer shines a spotlight on the best beer available in bottle and can in the British Isles

- The only book on the market to focus on British and Northern Irish beers available in bottle and can
- Featuring a carefully curated selection of 250 of the best UK beers available
- Compiled and written by one of the UK's foremost beer writers, Adrian Tierney-Jones

A new book from renowned beer writer Adrian Tierney-Jones (pictured below) will take readers on a fascinating journey across the British Isles, exploring 250 of the finest beers available in bottles and cans.

Focusing entirely on the domestic market, the *United Kingdom of Beer* offers a comprehensive overview of the numerous types and styles of beer available in modern Britain, complete with tasting notes and fascinating background stories about each beer as well as an insightful look into how to pair the beers with food, mood and occasion.

With a wide selection covering nine different beer styles ranging from muscular best bitter to midnight-black imperial stout, it is the perfect guide to find a beer to cater for all occasions and moods, from an evening spent in front of the fire to a barbecue with friends.

Written and researched by Beer Writer of the Year 2017 and author of several books including *The Seven Moods of Craft Beer*, this new volume builds on Tierney-Jones' expertise and passion for excellent beer.

Speaking about the book, Tierney-Jones said: "Whether on a day out or meeting up with friends, extraordinary beer helps to make great days even better. Coming out of the pandemic, 2022 is a fantastic year to

The book cover for 'United Kingdom of Beer' by Adrian Tierney-Jones. It features a grid of various beer bottles and cans. The title 'UNITED KINGDOM OF BEER' is prominently displayed in the center, with the subtitle '250 TOP BEERS IN BOTTLE AND CAN' below it. The author's name 'ADRIAN TIERNEY-JONES' is at the bottom. The cover is colorful and detailed.

Get United

If you want more froth and less fluff - buy Adrian Tierney-Jones' brilliant new book matching great brews to your moods.

Shop1.camra.org.uk

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Campaign for Real Ale
CAMRA 1971-2021

enjoy the many delights that the exceptional breweries across the UK have to offer. I am thrilled and delighted to use my expertise to select and share the best beers from around the UK with readers who are as passionate about beer as I am."

The book is priced at £17.99 and available for purchase online from www.camra.org.uk/camrabooks (CAMRA member discount available when logged in) or by contacting books@camra.org.uk, and will also be available in all good bookshops.



Scan here with your phone's camera to order yours

News from Good Chemistry Brewing (GCB)

It won't be long until Easter is upon us, and, along with chocolate eggs and hot cross buns, the weekend of April 16th and 17th will see Good Chemistry Brewing's taproom (GCHQ) in St Philips roll away the stone and open its door for the first time in 2022, with weekend opening continuing throughout the spring and summer months. Opening weekend will see food on offer from Basement Tacos, with other vendors appearing as announced on social media nearer the time. Equally excitingly, **East Bristol Brewery Trail** returns in 2022 after a two-year hiatus, with the May Day Bank Holiday weekend (April 30th and May 1st) seeing a number of breweries in St Philips and beyond joining forces again to make the bank holiday weekend special for beer lovers.

At the time of writing, GCHQ was due to host a visit from Brighton brewery, Unbarred, with a collaboration brew taking place alongside a tap takeover and meet the brewer event at GCB's pub, **The Good Measure**, on Chandos Road in Redland. The resulting beer is due for launch towards the end of April. Also at the end of April a similar event at the pub, which will see Cheltenham's Deya appear on the 28th. This marks the start of regular such evenings there, the first since before the pandemic.

Each of Good Chemistry's brewers, Dan and Oli (pictured), has produced a one-off, limited-edition lager recently, with Dan opting for *Spring Break*, a Mexican lager, and Oli producing *Cool Story*, a 4.9% Helles. Following the success of these, a third lager is being brewed that will be more widely available.

GCB beers are now more widely available outside of Bristol, with regular delivery runs to Swindon, Chippenham and Weston-super-Mare, and Good Chemistry would love to hear from people in these areas who'd like their local pubs, bars and bottle shops to stock a GCB beer or two. Whether you're in Bristol or elsewhere, you might currently be able to see the following cask ales available on the handpumps: *Time Lapse*, a 3.8% English bitter; *High Plains*, a 4.6%

pale ale; *Extra Special*, the award-winning 5.6% strong, malty bitter; *Storms Pass*, a 4.3% brown ale based on historic recipes; and *Full Circle*, a 4.1% hazy hoppy pale ale.

Bob, Kelly and the Good Chemistry team look forward to seeing you drinking GCB beers in the coming months, whether at the taproom, The Good Measure or another of the many places now stocking Good Chemistry. Cheers!

Stephen Edmonds



World Beer Guide by Roger Protz

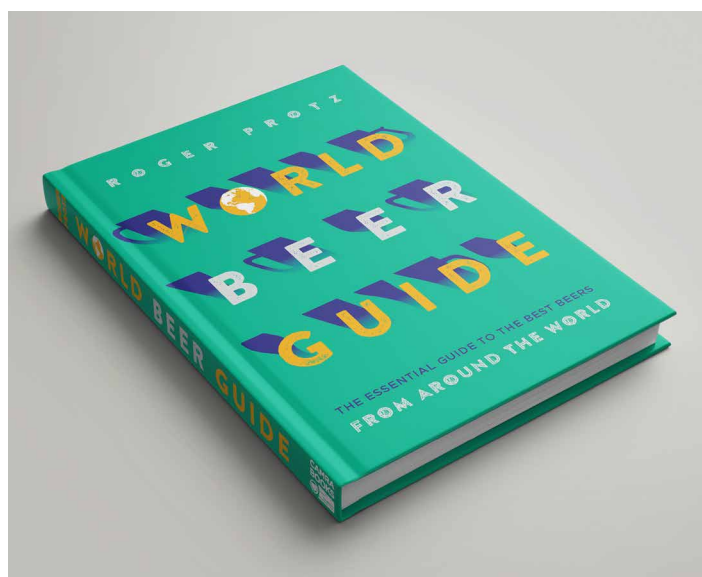
The ultimate guide to beer around the world

World Beer Guide is a large hardback book about beer – produced in every country on earth and enjoyed by millions of people. It's written for those who enjoy beer and want to know more

Beer is the world's favourite alcohol and it has changed out of all recognition in the 21st century. The country-by-country sections will give more detail of the changes but the introduction will lead readers into the world beer revolution by describing the enormous power and stretch of global brewers – with AB InBev accounting for one third of all beer made and consumed – with the counter culture of the world-wide craft movement. From the US to Australasia, charting the beer scene in every country, the key players and the styles available.



Scan here with your phone's camera to order yours



The *World Beer Guide* incorporates decades of Roger's beer experience alongside new trends and modern processes. Each region across the globe is given detailed analysis and information. The book also explores how the smaller breweries are still competing with the large corporations.

Available from the CAMRA shop at:

shop1.camra.org.uk/product/the-world-beer-guide-by-roger-protz

Ideas for beery days out from Bristol

Frome and Chippenham

For many years I have regarded most of the towns within easy reach of Bristol (Weston, Bath and Cardiff excepted) as not worth travelling to for pub visits – but things are changing for the better. Together with two friends (Phil and Yug) I have been exploring the new beer scenes available. Today I will focus on Frome and Chippenham, with Gloucester, Cheltenham and Worcester to follow.

Chippenham is extremely well served by train and is only £10.10 day return currently. A rail card or group save ticket (three or more people) brings this down to around £7. All the pubs featured are easily walkable for anyone who is moderately fit. Frome takes a little more planning as it lies on the Weymouth line from Bristol and trains only run once every two hours. The station is also a 20-minute walk from the centre so a bus or taxi may help. Current day return price is £13.30 reducing to around £9 with group save or a rail card. For those with time and capacity to spare breaking your journey is allowed with options including Bath, Bradford-on-Avon and Trowbridge. Bath is also possible on the way home from Chippenham.

In our view Chippenham now has four pubs to attract those with an interest in quality and varied beer. We started at the [Old Road Tavern](#) very close to the station. This is a proper old-fashioned wet-led pub offering five or six cask ales mostly from a relatively 'safe' range of better known brands. We all opted for Stonehenge Danish Dynamite on our visit which was very good. Open all day with bar food Thursday to Saturday lunchtimes. A good vibe we thought.

We then made the 10-minute walk to the pub furthest from the station, the [Three Crowns](#) at 18 The Causeway, passing the remaining two on the way (saving the need for tipsy navigation later!) This is another traditional pub dating from the 1700s, just the other side of the town centre. This has the widest and most diverse range of cask ales in Chippenham. The seven hand pulls dispense an ever-changing range of beers in all styles from all over, including plenty of darker beers. We tried a couple of different beers each and enjoyed them all. Open from 4.30 Monday to Thursday and all day from 12 Friday to Sunday. Food is limited to filled rolls and pork pies at weekends only.

Doubling back towards the station we came next to the [Flying Monk](#) pub in the Market Place. Open all day every day (closes at 8pm Sunday) this pub no longer has any connection to the brewery of the same name. Three hand pulls dispense one beer from North Cotswolds brewery plus two guests. There is also a good range of bottled Belgian beers. On our visit all three beers were of the brown maltier type (the only style that none of us like much) so it was a swift half and move on. Probably just unlucky.

Finally it was a short walk to Chippenham's only micropub, the [Prince Of Wales](#) in Station Hill. Closed on Mondays, open from 4pm Tuesday to Friday, 12 noon Saturday and 2pm on Sunday, and closes at 10pm. Originally opened in 2018, it changed hands in 2021. We found a friendly welcome and a great range of beers on both cask and keg dispense. We stayed here for a couple then stumbled back to the nearby station then on to Bath for more punishment!

Our next trip took us to Frome, a town that I'd never got around to visiting before. Originally we'd hoped to find a way to combine it with a trip to the famous Tucker's Grave pub at Faulkland but had to abandon that idea as no sensible public transport options exist (my lovely wife Marilyn drove us to Faulkland a week later so all was not lost – see Phil Cummings's separate article).

We found a pleasant riverside route for the 20-minute walk into town and once there the four chosen pubs were all pretty close together. A word of warning to those who are not willing to drink any form of keg



Brewed Boy, Frome

beer: two of the pubs do not serve any cask ale so may not suit you. We are quite happy to try keg beer so not a problem for us. Another warning is that most of the weekday opening hours are quite limited so the trip is best made at the weekend.

The centre of Frome was a pleasant surprise with loads of independent small shops in its narrow, often hilly streets. First stop was [Brewed Boy](#) at 4 Cork Street. Please ignore the farcical opening times on their Facebook page. It is closed Monday and Tuesday and opens 2pm to 9pm Wednesday to Friday, 12 noon to 9pm Saturday and 12 noon to 5pm Sunday. All eight taps serve key-keg beers (technically real ale but cooler than cask) from ever-changing brewers and in all styles. A big range of cans from all over to take out too. We really enjoyed our visit. Brewed Boy now have outlets in Bath, Dartmouth and Sherborne too.



The Griffin, Frome

We then made the five-to-six-minute walk (after a shocking piece of sober navigation that cost us 10 minutes) downhill to the [Griffin](#) in Milk Street. It opens from 5pm Monday to Friday and 12 noon at weekends. This was formerly the home of Milk Street Brewery – which has now moved to the outskirts of the town and been renamed Frome Brewery – and the Frome beers here were in superb condition. Three were on offer including their Zig Zag stout, plus a good selection of unusual keg beers from all over. We ate here as it was the only pub on our itinerary offering full meals. The food was good but we concurred that it seemed unduly expensive for what it was.

Back up the hill to the last two pubs back in the centre and next up was [Just Ales](#) at 10 Stony Street, sister micropub of the one of the same name in Wells. Three cask beers here in a simple pub where quiet conversation rules. I was delighted to try the Epic Beers Matchmakers Mint Stout that I had missed at Christmas. Pork pies available and open 2-9 Monday and Tuesday, 12-11 Wednesday to Saturday and 12-8.30 Sunday.

Our final port of call was [Palmer Street Bottle](#), an excellent off license and taproom that also has a sister pub in Kingsmead Street, Bath. With a Tardis-like interior that is much larger than it looks from outside, again all beers are served via key-keg from its four taps and change constantly. There is an extensive range of cans and bottles plus unusual cheeses, available to eat and drink in or to take away. The cheeseboard that I had was very good. Closed Monday, then open 2-10 Tuesday, 2-11 Wednesday and Thursday, 12-11 Friday and Saturday, and 12-8 Sunday.

We had thoroughly enjoyed our trip to Frome but had to get to the station for the two-hourly train. We got off in Bradford-on-Avon which has a much more frequent service, to visit a couple more pubs.

When you fancy a day out with good beer both towns are worth considering

Vince Murray
Photos by Phil Cummings



Palmer Street Bottle, Frome

Draught Bass – an endangered species

Look at any photographs of urban pubs in the Victorian and Edwardian era and the chances are they will be bedecked with prominent advertisements for Bass. As recently as 1996, when the unlamented county of Avon was abolished, the local branch of CAMRA published a final guide to the county's pubs. Of the 900 or so pubs listed over 300 sold Draught Bass. Today just a few outlets for this classic brew remain. What has happened?

Tastes change. Over the past decade there has been a proliferation of very pale hop heavy beers. Bass is now seen as an old blokes' drink. Over the same period many traditional pubs have closed and been replaced by bars and micropubs. Few, if any, of these new establishments sell Bass.

This trend is reflected in the *Good Beer Guide*. An entry in the Guide today seems to require a range of constantly changing beers. This is not the same thing as serving good beer. A lot of these beers come from microbreweries, some of which are very good, and some of which are not (pint of hop-flavoured sludge anyone?). *[Remember, opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the editor or CAMRA – Ed.]* This trend has pushed Bass, and other traditional beers, off the bar. I weary of pubs where the choice is limited to one of several American style IPAs. There seems to be no place any more for the traditional boozier selling a couple of well-kept and well-balanced beers.

There has also been a shameful lack of interest in the beer by Coors, who own the Bass brewery, and InBev, who own the Draught Bass brand, so much so that it is now brewed under contract by Marston's (and a fine job they make of it). There is almost no promotion or advertising for draught Bass.

National Bass Day

All is not lost. Bass enthusiasts, alarmed by this decline, are fighting back. A group in the Bass heartland of Staffordshire and Derbyshire established a national Bass day to commemorate the purchase by

William Bass of his brewery in 1777. This will take place this year on Easter Saturday, 16th April. The aim is to encourage beer drinkers to have a pint or two and to persuade more pubs to stock this iconic beverage. More information about Bass and a national list of Draught Bass stockists can be found at: thewickingman.wordpress.com/2019/10/05/labouring-with-love-through-the-bass-mirror.

Bristol Flat Bass

Bass has a great history in Bristol and the West. 'Flat Bass' is a Bristol speciality, and electric pumps which serve it through wonderful mirror boxes can still be found in the [Avon Packet](#), the [Sandringham](#) in Brislington and the [Horse and Jockey](#) in Nag's Head Hill.

Where else can we find Bass today? In central Bristol only the [White Lion](#) has it. Just outside the centre the [Myrtle Tree](#) still serves it straight from the barrel and the [Crown Tavern](#) in Lawfords Gate has it on electric pump.

Bedminster is a stronghold, with the [White Hart](#), [Black Cat](#), and [Tap & Barrel](#), as well as the [Avon Packet](#), still faithful. The [Post Office Tavern](#) in Westbury-on-Trym serves a wonderful pint straight from the cask and, perhaps surprisingly, the [Three Brooks](#) in Bradley Stoke sells fine hand-pumped Bass. The [King William IV](#) in Staple Hill still proclaims Bass from a lantern over the door and continues to serve a fine flat pint.

In Bath the [Star Inn](#) sells wonderful Bass to match the wonderful surroundings. The [Bladud's Head](#) rewards the walk out to Larkhall with a fine pint, and the extraordinary [Livingstone](#) in Oldfield Park on the other side of the city provides a rare outlet.

Outside of the cities the [Ship](#) in Portishead and the [Anchor](#) in Thornbury remain stalwart purveyors of the brew.

So all you mature beer drinkers, why not take a step back in time and celebrate Easter and National Bass day with a pint or two. And all you younger drinkers, why not try a pint? You might be pleasantly surprised!

John Clark

BADRAG

Bristol And District Rare Ales Group

BADRAG annual review gathering

We don't have formal 'meetings' as such, but once a year we gather to talk about when BADRAG activities took place the previous year and are planned for the coming year.

For the occasion, John Ashby kindly opened the [Gryphon](#) on Saturday 15th January two hours early, and so the fifteen of us 'gathered' in the bar enjoying Bristol Beer Factory After Hours, a 5.5% stout, and Donkeystone Ginger Bread Stout, a 5% vanilla / milk stout.

There wasn't much to review about last year due to the pandemic, as a result of which BADRAG decided not to put pressure on licensees to provide dark etc ales until their trade had settled down.

For 2022 the socials below were planned; a BADRAG Gloucester Road central trail was also discussed and subsequently took place on Saturday 19th March, visiting the [Inn on the Green](#), [Wellington](#), [Annexe](#), [Lazy Dog](#) and [Drapers Arms](#), led by Mal Fuller.

- We shall be visiting CAMRA's Chippenham Beer Festival on Saturday 30th April at lunchtime
- We are planning, in support of CAMRA's national 'Summer of Pub' campaign, a pub trail centred in Kingsdown on Saturday 18th June from noon. However we need a **volunteer** to assist Pete Bridle with this, as Pete has a lot on his plate now, what with being both a branch officer and a regional director.

For more details of these and other events later in the year keep an eye on the branch diary at www.camrabristol.org.uk/diary.html.

BADRAG volunteers are needed

In addition to the above volunteer, it was suggested at the annual review gathering that BADRAG should make more use of podcasts and social media, so if you are into these please volunteer.

Also, we have compiled a list of bars that support BADRAG style ales which needs review. The pandemic could well have changed the classification in the first column or some of the pubs/clubs may have decided they cannot sell BADRAG style ales for the foreseeable future. See the list at: www.camrabristol.org.uk/badrag/RareAlePubs.html.

If you would like to help with visiting these and verifying these facts or volunteer in any other way please email badrag@camrabristol.org.uk or speak to a branch officer.

BADRAG social at the Old Bank Winter Ales Festival

A dozen or so Badraggers enjoyed the Winter Ales Festival at the [Old Bank](#) in Keynsham during the afternoon of Saturday 19th February, the day after Storm Eunice when 100 mph winds ravaged the South West and other parts of the country. On the day, trains didn't start until 10am and roads in the centre of Bristol were closed due to buildings and trees being storm damaged, causing bus diversions!

Those that bravely made it to Keynsham enjoyed the four winter ales provided by Old Bank landlord Simon Sherwell, including Exmoor Beast (6.6%) on handpull in the bar, and three casks that had to be warmed up to the correct temperature in a very cold pub garden! Those three were: Stonehenge Old Smokey, a 5% porter; Palmers Tally Ho, a 5.6% old ale; and Holderness Dark, a 4.3% mild ale from Kingston upon Hull.

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

Later in the day, your scribe enjoyed cans of New Bristol Brewery Ferrero Roche Stout (7%) and Wilde Child Brownie Hunter chocolate fudge brownie stout (4.9%) at the [Nailsea MicroPub](#).

BADRAG social at the Gryphon's MetAle Fest

John Ashby provided six interesting dark ales for the twenty or so Badraggers who started in the downstairs bar and later moved to the upstairs room, there being three dark ales in each. Our number included two who had made their way from Basingstoke and two from Exeter!

The dark ales were: Shimmy (4.0%), a dark mild by Howling Hops in London; Nepenthe (4.0%), a porter by Siren in Wokingham; Painted Lady (4.4%), a marshmallow porter by Great Newsome in Hull; Black Ink (4.5%), an extra dark stout by One Mile End in London; Voodoo People (4.8%), a double oat stout by Tiny Rebel in Newport, South Wales; and Winterlust (4.9%), a dark ale by Little Ox in Witney. Your scribe's favourites were Black Ink and Shimmy.

Laurie Gibney



Chippenham Beer, Cider & Perry Festival

29th and 30th April 2022

Olympiad Sports Hall, Chippenham, SN15 3PA

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

Fri 29th April	5:30pm – 11pm	£10
Sat 30th April	11am – 4pm	£10
Sat 30th April	7pm – 11pm	£8

Tickets available from:

www.nwwiltscamra.org.uk or
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.



A visit to Tuckers Grave Inn

There are some pubs that due to their venerable history have achieved legendary status. One of these is located at Faulkland, midway between Bath, Frome and Radstock, namely [Tuckers Grave Inn](#).

The only difficulty with visiting Tuckers Grave is the lack of transport options; located at a crossroads on the A366 road, there is no regular public transport passing nearby. I was lucky enough to make my second visit in February, with special thanks due to Marilyn Murray for driving Vince Murray, me and our friend Yug there.

A pub for over 200 years, Tuckers Grave features in CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide* and *Real Heritage Pubs of the South West* (see below), and is Grade-II listed by English Heritage. Its remarkable features include having no bar counter, one of only a handful of pubs of this kind left in the UK. Drinks are served from a stillage in the bay window. The lettering on the door to the Georgian tap room is thought to be perhaps the oldest pub lettering in the country.

Cider is king here, with ten draught still ciders available on our visit, and the real ale offering was Butcombe Original, dispensed directly from the cask. It was as good as Butcombe is ever likely to be. We enjoyed the cider offering too.

My previous visit was over a decade ago, and I was delighted to see that whilst the historic core of the inn is cherished, steps have been taken to bring the pub forward and ensure its viability for future generations to enjoy. The derelict milking parlour has been replaced by a smart cafe, which lies adjacent to the extensive camping grounds which adjoin the pub beer garden. Efforts are being made to improve provision for campers too.

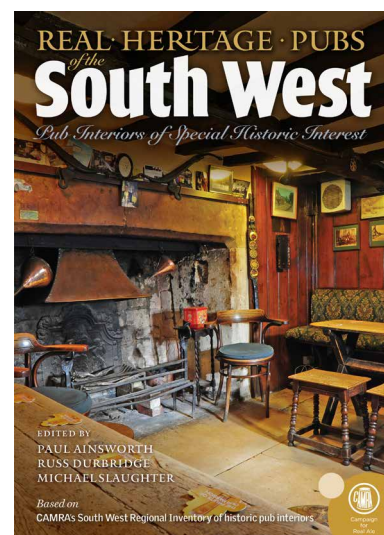
So, if you fancy a trip to somewhere special, make a visit to Tuckers Grave – it should be on the bucket-list of all lovers of great and historic pubs.



Please check out the pub's social media or their website at www.tuckersgraveinn.co.uk for further information.

CAMRA's *Real Heritage Pubs of the South West* is available to purchase in the pub heritage section of CAMRA's online shop at shop1.camra.org.uk (search for "heritage"). Or scan the QR code below with your phone's camera to go there directly.

Phil Cummings



'Watering Holes in the Desert'

Reflecting on two turbulent years for the Weston-super-Mare pub scene

What a terrible couple of years we have had. Covid has wreaked havoc in all aspects of society and the pub world has been hard hit. As we currently appear (everything crossed) to be pulling out of the worst, Covid-wise, with the view that in future we will just have to manage any new outbreaks without large-scale lockdowns, I have been reflecting on how the local pub scene has changed over the past two years. Not all of the adverse changes have been due to Covid, with a variety of factors causing pub closures.

In May 2020 we were very saddened to hear of the death of Colin Hicks. Colin was the licensee of [Off the Rails](#) on Weston railway station for many years and was always a great champion of real ale. Turning the clock back 20 years or so, the Rails was one of very few pubs in Weston where you could find some interesting real ales from small breweries rarely seen in our area. The pub was, for many years, a *Good Beer Guide* (GBG) regular with Colin receiving an award from CAMRA for getting in the *Guide* for 10 consecutive years. Lots of warm tributes to Colin were made on social media on the news of his death. He was a great character and is sorely missed by many. Sadly, lockdown prevented us from holding a proper tribute to Colin at the time. The premises have remained closed – stripped-out and looking very forlorn.

Another permanent closure has been the [Dragon Inn](#) at the bottom of Meadow Street. For a long time, this Wetherspoon's pub was highly-valued by local real ale fans. Indeed when I moved to Weston in 1998 this was the town's sole GBG entry, being described as "a welcome haven in a renowned beer desert." However, its popularity with local ale fans waned in recent years – largely due to the growing number of pubs in and around the town centre "upping their game" on the beer front. Wetherspoon's opening of the much larger [Cabot Court Hotel](#) on the seafront was no doubt a major factor for the company in deciding not to renew their lease last year.

The [Claremont Vaults](#) on Birnbeck Road had been up for sale for several years, with a "sale at auction" sign appearing on the roof back in 2019. It was therefore not a great surprise when this pub did not re-open after the initial Covid lockdown. I've always thought that this pub in a great seafront location with views across the bay could/should be a strong business proposition but the current feeling is that it is unlikely to re-open as a pub.

Many local ale lovers were bitterly disappointed that the [Cat and Badger Ale House](#) on the Boulevard closed its doors on 31st October 2020 – Covid being one of the factors blamed. This micropub was only open for 18 months, but quickly became a much-loved addition to the town's pub estate, offering something rather unique in terms of ambience, as well as a well-chosen range of beer styles and strengths, always served in excellent condition. We wish Chris and Andrew well and hope they might have a future venture into the pub trade.

In addition to the above, the [Bristol Hotel](#) has been closed for many months. The [Royal Hotel](#) has given up trying to keep a real ale going and the handpumps have been removed.

The [Woodspring](#) on Worle High Street has been closed for around two years. In recent years there have been several temporary closures and plans have now been submitted to turn it into housing. The pub has had a long and interesting history – built in 1815, an ex-coaching inn, and used as a base for air-raid wardens during the war. The planning application claimed that it would not be missed because there are three other pubs in close proximity ([Old Kings Head](#), [Lamb](#) and [Golden Lion](#)), but it is still sad when a community loses a pub that has been at its heart for over 200 years.

But it's not all bad news...

I was not alone in fearing that with lockdowns running into months of closure at a time, along with the Government's Covid messaging filling many people with terror about going out and mixing with people and

the new discovery for some people that you could have great beer in the comfort of your own home for half the price of drinking in a pub, all this would result in many people never returning and many of our favourite pubs having to close. Also, of course, there was the issue over whether the operators' financial circumstances would enable them to re-open. Happily, these fears have largely been proved wrong. Many of the town's best pubs appear to have bounced back from all the difficulties and, in some cases, are close to pre-Covid business levels.

As with many businesses confronted with the horrendous challenges presented by the post-lockdown restrictions and regulations, the [Regency](#) had to consider how best to respond with a new way of working that met safety requirements and was financially viable. In the immediate aftermath of the lockdowns, when table service was compulsory, the pub cleared the front driveway to provide an expanded patio area with more tables and this, coupled with the main bar, back garden and more tables in the games room, enabled lots of people to still enjoy the pub in comfort. Landlord Mark Short reports that as restrictions eased, all of their skittles, pool and cribbage teams returned along with the vast majority of their regular customers. There are a few people who are still a bit anxious about being in busy places and tend to pop in during quieter periods. However, it is now pretty much "business as usual" – five real ales available at all times and live music most Sunday afternoons.

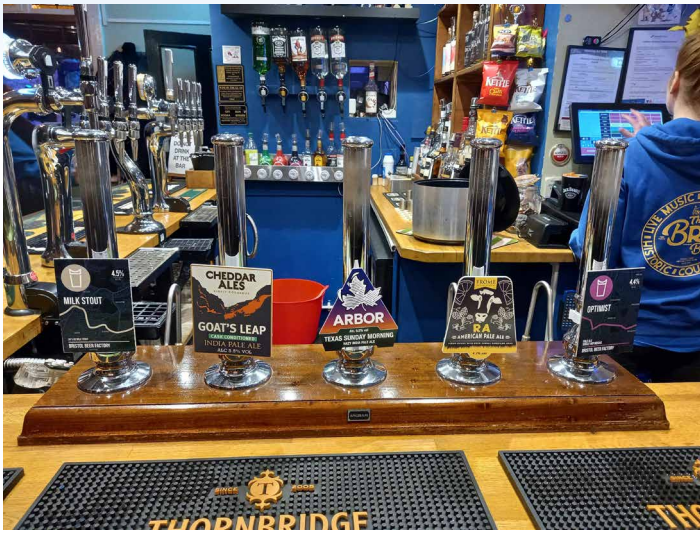
Like the Regency, the [Criterion](#) is another pub that has always relied heavily on its role as a community pub and the vast majority of its regulars have returned. Still a great place to watch rugby, sit by the fire on a cold day or just have a drink or two amongst friendly clientele. They also had a nice boost in January when Cask Marque carried out an unannounced inspection and gave them a glowing report and accreditation for the quality of their real ales. The number of ales has been reduced from five to three since the first lockdown. This is a sensible move as five was hard to sustain for much of the year. The regular beers are St Austell Tribute and Courage Directors, along with a guest, usually from St Austell/Bath Ales. They are also back in the *Good Beer Guide* for 2022!

The [Walnut Tree](#) on Winterstoke Road has seen major investment, with a £190k new conservatory and refurbishment of some other areas. The Mayor opened the new conservatory on February 12th. Unlike many eating establishments who seem to have responded to the spectre of reduced customer numbers post-Covid by making huge increases in their prices, the Walnut Tree provides a very good value menu, including daily specials such as a pie meal and pint for £8 on Tuesdays and any two fish meals for £10 on Fridays. On the all-important beer front there is the excellent Proper Job from St Austell, along with Tribute.

Speaking of bargains, anyone who is starting to despair over the shrinking amount of change you can get out of a fiver for a pint nowadays might like to visit the [Bristol House](#) on Milton Road, close to Ashcombe Park, where you can get a good pint of Butcombe Original for a mere £2.50. There is an occasional guest beer, although these are a whopping £2.80! The pub has Sky and BT Sport. Like the above pubs, this is a focal part of its local community and these are the kinds of pubs that seem to have recovered best – other good local examples of this are the [White Hart](#) and [Captain's Cabin](#).

In the town centre, the [Brit Bar](#) took the opportunity during lockdowns to get some maintenance jobs done and, on re-opening, was able to go straight back to offering five ever-changing real ales in great condition, covering a wide range of styles and strengths. It is like having our own permanent beer festival in the centre of town. A full programme of live music has been re-instated.

The nearby [Black Cat](#) micropub used lockdown for a revamp of the premises. The bar has been relocated from along the back of the premises to a side position, which has helped facilitate new cooling equipment for the real ales, ensuring consistent year-round



At the Brit Bar
"Meet the new normal, same as the old normal"

temperature. There has been a slight change in the beer focus, with the number of cask ales being reduced to two or three, whilst increasing the number of craft kegs to between four and six. To my knowledge the Black Cat now offers the largest choice of craft keg beers in the area and there are always some flavours to challenge the taste buds, such as a recent Blueberry Pancake & Maple Syrup Sour. A new, welcome addition to the bar snacks is a range of cheese and biscuits and there have been some great themed food evenings in collaboration with the nearby Loves Café.

The **Duke of Oxford** has been nice and busy on several visits that I have made recently. There are normally three or four ales available, often featuring beers from New Bristol Brewery. Slight cloud is that it is up for sale. If you have £800,000 knocking around and fancy a challenge, you know what to do!

The nearby **Fork 'n' Ale** also seems to be bouncing back nicely. Great selection of beers (their own Epic Beers and high quality guests), live music and good food. Happily, the building is currently part of an exciting project being managed by North Somerset Council. The Grade



Music night at the Fork 'n' Ale

II-listed building was constructed in the mid-19th century and is having a major external facelift as part of the Council's Heritage Action Zone Shopfront Enhancement Scheme. This will restore the frontage to its original façade and reinstate the original stained-glass windows.

Epic Beers have announced that their annual **Brews, Blues & BBQs** will be held at the brewery in Hewish on Saturday 2nd July.

July provides a double-header of local beer festivals, as the **Weston Lions Beer Festival** returns, running from Friday 29th to Sunday 31st July.

So, all things considered, I feel that in Weston we are currently in a much better position than we might have expected. This is testament to the efforts of the pub landlords and their teams, who did all they could to try and make their pubs a welcoming place during the periods of hard restrictions and also to the huge numbers of loyal pub-goers who have demonstrated just how important public houses still are to many people.

Tim Nickolls

Epic Beers (Pitchfork Ales & 3D Beer)

Epic Beers, incorporating the Pitchfork and 3D Beer brands, continue to produce quality beers from their base in West Huish, just north of Weston-super-Mare. In addition to their regular beers and ever-changing one-off / occasional brews, they are currently working on a beer to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. *Glorious* is a 5.2% ABV chestnut premium bitter made with Sovereign hops. 500 litres of this brew is to be barrel-aged for 70 days in an oak cask that was previously used for both sherry and malt whiskey. The barrel-aged beers will be available in 750ml bottles and only 70 bottles will be produced. The remaining barrel-aged beer will be racked into cask and offered to pubs who have supported them the most and continually stock their beer, whilst the rest of the brew that hasn't been barrel-aged will be available generally in pubs who stock their beers.

Epic were delighted that their innovative 'Beer Drive Thru' was shortlisted for the SIBA Business Innovation Award. They were up against formidable opposition from Brew York, Thornbridge and Bullhouse. Well deserved recognition after being one of those brewers to keep cask available in each and every lockdown. Unfortunately Epic didn't win this time but still a terrific achievement to make the final. They have also recently launched a new business called Beer Bantz, selling personalised beer-related gifts on-line from beerbantz.com. Best not to visit if you're not broad-minded though.

Epic's popular 'Blues, Brews and Barbecues' event is back at the brewery on Saturday 2nd July this year from 12 to 7pm. A full range of Pitchfork and 3D beers will be on offer along with other drink options and five live bands. Tickets range from £10 to £15 depending on how soon you buy, and are expected to sell out quickly. Check their website for details.

Vince Murray



A Round with Robin

In the weeks that lead up to Christmas I always like to visit Bath to see if I can find a pint of Abbey Ales' festive beers, usually the Twelfth Night, but sometimes Chorister or Whitefriars. So, on Thursday 16th December I went to the **Coeur de Lion** where I found the Twelfth Night (5%) in perfect condition at £4.70 a pint. As it is such a small pub it is inevitable that one is drawn into conversation with other pilgrims to Bath. I met two such people looking for Bath Ales Festivity and so was able to take them to the **Salamander** just around the corner from the Coeur. I stayed to drink a pint of the Festivity (also 5%) which was selling at £5.20 a pint. From there I proceeded to the **Royal Oak** at Twerton but found it not open until 4pm so walked to the **Golden Fleece** for a pint of Otter Ale (4.5%) which was only £3.70 and watched darts on the big screen. My reason to visit the Royal Oak was because Ralph's Ruin, the pub's brewery, often has a Christmas beer. This year's offering was the Little Russian Ralph (9.5%) Russian style stout, so I had a half pint of it for £2.40, also a half of Ralph's Ruin Ivory Tower (4.5%) at £1.70.

The following evening was the Weston-super-Mare sub-branch 'Festive Ale Crawl' where we visit Weston-super-Mare pubs and if they have a festive ale on, we drink it, if they haven't, we move on to the next. Our first port of call was the **Criterion** where the regular customers hadn't been drinking Bath Ales Festivity quickly enough for the landlord and so it had been reduced to £2.50 a pint. Two early-birds at the pub had four pints of it before moving on – I was happy with one pint. We next went to the **Regency** but left as no Christmas ale could be seen – I discovered later that Festivity had been on here all day but Mark Short, the landlord, had taken it off, afraid there would be none left for the CAMRA crowd! It got put back on 10 minutes after we'd left. We tried the **Black Cat**; some stayed for keg beer but I and others went to the **Brit Bar** where three festive cask ales were available: Brass Castle Christmas Kitty (5%), Stonehenge Rudolf (a hoppy red ale, also 5%) and Quantock Brewdolf (3.9%), all at the usual price of £3.90 (£3.50 with CAMRA discount).

The *London Drinker* CAMRA magazine was, like *Pints West* and *Exe Ale*, also back in print in December. Those who follow this column may remember I was keen on the Selsdon micropub, the **Golden Ark** in the village where I was brought up and I mentioned it in an earlier *Pints West*. I was delighted to see that it had received two awards from the Croydon and Sutton CAMRA branch, for 'Croydon Pub of the Year' and also 'Lockdown Hero' pub as it was the only one in Croydon to deliver cask ales for take-away during the lockdown.

I mention *Exe Ale* magazine as some of our sub-branch members had desired to go to the Exeter Winter Ales Festival on 22nd of January, but

finding it had many Covid restrictions in force we decided to go on an Exeter pub crawl led by Somerset CAMRA member Max French who had phoned pubs in advance to find if they were open and also that they had no restrictions. We started after a trek along the River Exe from Exeter St David's railway station to **Topsham Brewery Taproom** which is no longer in Topsham but at the canal basin, aka Exeter Quay. It is a good use for an old warehouse and there are many seats inside and out. A good range of beers on cask and on keg, the former now served by hand pumps. I tried halves of Topsham cask ales Ask Your Father (3.8%) and Topsham Heroes oyster stout (4.2%) which came to £4 for the two. Next an uphill walk back into the city, passing the cathedral to tiny Martins Lane, made even narrower by building works to the **Ship Inn**, allegedly where Sir Francis Drake quaffed ale (or would it have been sack?). It was quite a busy pub but with five hand pumps including Greene King and Devon ales, the bar staff were efficient and yet friendly. I had a pint of Hanlons Yellowhammer (4.2%) which was £3.69 with CAMRA discount. Leaving there it was only a short way to the **Turks Head** next to the ancient Guildhall. The pub is almost as old but has recently started to brew its own beer and so I had a half pint of Turks Head Witches Brew (4.5%) at £2 which was very satisfying. There are seats upstairs and in the half-basement with a very old fireplace. Staying on the same side of the road we found our next pub, the **Little Drop of Poison**, previously the Old Mill according to a hanging sign outside. This is another pub that intends to brew its own ale but at that time only had Hanlons Port Stout (4.8%) for £2 for a half pint. We crossed Fore Street and found a mews lane where a corner house is the **Fat Pig**, though it used to be the Coachmakers Arms. Fat Pig Brewery is in Exeter too but they had none of their own beer on cask. However, a small room with a large table suited us and I drank halves of Hanlons Brewers Blend (4.5%) and Powderkeg Idler (3.9%), the two halves costing £4.50. From there we took a roundabout route across the river and through St Thomas eventually getting to Exwick where we got lost in new housing; but by asking locals we found the best pub of the day, the **Thatched House Inn**, local pub of the year (Exeter CAMRA), which dates from the 1600's. Here I drank a pint of Hanlons Citra (4%) which was £3.50 a pint (50p CAMRA discount off £4). We found a much easier route back to St Davids railway station which passed the **Great Western Hotel** where I had time for a half pint of Epic Pitchfork (4.3%) at £1.95. This pub had five hand pumps with Somerset and Devon beer at reasonable prices.

Robin E Wild



Wear Pints West

T-shirts, polo shirts, sweat shirts and fleeces are 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.

The best way to order yours is to send an email with your requirements to: clothes@camrabristol.org.uk – you will then be contacted with instructions on how to pay (preferably by bank transfer).

Alternatively, post your written order, including your name and address, plus either a contact email address or phone number, to:

**Pints West Clothing, 19 Willada Close,
Bedminster, Bristol BS3 5NG**

along with a cheque for the correct amount, made payable to:

CAMRA Bristol & District

Please allow up to four weeks for delivery.



Prices, inclusive of postage and packaging, are:

T-shirt	£17.00	each
Polo shirt	£20.50	each
Sweat shirt	£22.50	each
Fleece	£26.50	each

Pinkers Brewery

Pinkers Craft Brewery is a Weston-super-Mare microbrewery producing, in the words of owner and brewer Scott Pinkstone (pictured), "funky forward-thinking craft beer in a sustainable way for a sustainable future, because we care about your taste buds and also about the environment."

Pinkers seem to be going from strength to strength at the moment. Having had a successful tap takeover at the **Nailsea MicroPub** on the 4th of February, by the time you read this another one will have taken place, this time at the **Fallen Tree Micropub** in Clevedon – not just for one day but a whole week.

Another tap takeover is planned at the **Brit Bar** in Weston-super-Mare, probably in May. Pinkers beers are also on tap and in cans at the **Vaults** and they are in talks with them to organise a cheese and beer pairing evening, both dates yet to be confirmed.

Scott is also launching a new beer named *Monster Mash* (a nod towards the 'See Monster' installation due to be sited in the Tropicana). *Monster Mash* will be a big flavour IPA heavily hopped with Amarillo at 4.7%. New brews in the pipeline include a milk stout and a Belgian-style beer and saison.



In future developments, Scott says that he is planning to purchase a new five-barrel fermenting vessel to increase capacity and so help the brewery keep up with demand.

Find Pinkers Craft Brewery on Facebook or their web site www.pinkerscraftbrewery.co.uk for more information.

Trevor Perks

Zerodegrees' hidden awards

In the lost year of 2020 when not a *Pints West* was to be found (in printed form anyway – online editions were still produced), breweries were still brewing, brewing competitions were still being held, and Zerodegrees brewer Simon was still entering them.

It so happened that at the SIBA awards held at Beerex in Liverpool that year, Simon's *Cloud Waltz* Vienna lager won the 'National Best Session Lager' gold award. This was after it had already won the SIBA South West gold award, alongside a silver Award for *Downtown* pale ale, and a bronze award for *The Bohemian* pilsner, all brewed in Bristol by Simon and delivered to the competitions in key kegs.

I'm sorry we couldn't congratulate you at the time Simon, but better late than never: very well done!

Back to today, the specials keep coming, and currently you can expect to find 3.9% *Mystery Harvest* best bitter, 4% *Charisma Enhancer* porter, the ever-popular and very tasty 4.7% *Cloud Waltz*, 6% *California Common* lager, and 6% *Bold and Brazen* IPA. Reappearing soon will be the previous 4.6% core beer *The Beast* black lager.

Roy Sanders

Clevedon Brewery

The easing of Covid restrictions has been welcome news at the brewery, and they are looking forward to an exciting 2022. The brewery will be supporting events and markets local to Clevedon where you can purchase their range of bottled beers.

Director Julie Baird said, "We are excited that the Sunday markets are back so we can get back out meeting people."

The **Clevedon Brewery Tap Room** is also very popular and *Blonde* is once again available on tap. In anticipation of better weather and lighter evenings a new gazebo has been acquired to replace the one damaged in the recent storms. More music evenings, quizzes and barbecues are planned and Julie said, "Brewer John is continuing to brew up a storm to keep our thirsty customers happy."

Full details of opening times and events at the **Tap Room** can be found on WhatPub and the brewery Facebook page.

Richard Aldridge

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. Since its formation in 1994, Dartmoor Brewery has gone from strength to strength producing top quality ales using the finest local ingredients, which remain highly regarded across the South West by licensees and real ale drinkers.

JAIL ALE
ALC 4.8%

IPA
ALC 4.0%

LEGEND CASK ALE
ALC 4.4%

BEST
ALC 3.7%

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

DARTMOOR
BREWERY

News from Bath & Borders

Pubs of the Year

We are pleased to announce that the **Star Inn**, Bath, is this year's Bath & Borders Pub of the Year. Our Rural Pub of the Year is the **Three Horseshoes**, Bradford-on-Avon.



The Star Inn, Bath (photo by Martin Ansell)

The **Star Inn** is arguably Bath's most famous pub. First licensed in 1759, the historic interior, which was installed in 1928, is included in CAMRA's National Inventory. For the last twenty or so years the Star has been the principal outlet of the nearby Abbey Ales brewery. Bellringer here is served in a time-honoured fashion – under gravity, often via large glass pitchers to your table – but the pub also serves a wide variety of other beers from near and far. Complimentary snuff is available. The pub's multi-room layout is made up of four drinking areas, the smallest of which consists of a single bench often occupied by older customers, and sometimes referred to as 'death row'. The Star doesn't serve meals, but delicious rolls are often available; 'cheese night' is every Thursday and live music features on Fridays from 8:30pm whilst a pub quiz is held on the first Sunday of each month.



The Three Horseshoes, Bradford-on-Avon (photo by Den Rahilly)

The **Three Horseshoes** is one of the handiest pubs from a public transport point of view in the whole of the branch's area, being only a two-minute walk (if that) from Bradford-on-Avon station. An old coaching inn on the edge of the town centre, the architecture includes an old wooden door where the horses used to go through to a yard. Behind the pub there is a terrace with seating, where you can watch the trains go by. There is often live music at weekends. At the bar there are three constantly changing beers, often from local breweries, but can be from further afield.



The Hop Pole Inn, Limpley Stoke (photo by Hugh Steele)

Hop Pole saved for the community

A long-standing campaign to save a beautiful 16th century pub, the **Hope Pole** in Limpley Stoke, from the hands of developers has been successful. On Friday 25th February it was announced that, following huge local support, the freehold of the Hop Pole had been bought from the previous owners Wellington by the community. A celebration was held outside the pub on the evening of the 25th. The Hop Pole has been closed since 2018. Shortly afterwards the pub was registered as an Asset of Community Value, and a community group, the Limpley Stoke Community Benefit Society, was formed with the purpose of mounting a bid for the pub. An offer of £200,000 to buy the pub had previously been rejected, and there was a fear that the Hop Pole might close permanently. With time running out, the group extended its share offer for an improved bid, which was accepted. The campaign to save the pub has been supported along the way by CAMRA, the nearby community-owned Packhorse, Wiltshire Heritage and Limpley Stoke Parish Council. The Hop Pole is the fourth pub in the Bath & Borders branch area to become community-owned, the others being the **Bell** in central Bath, the **Packhorse** at Southstoke and the **Cross Keys Inn** at Corsley, near Warminster.

Bath and surroundings

In late November a planning application was made to Bath & North East Somerset Council to convert the **King William** on the corner of London Road and Thomas Street into purely a café and restaurant. On the ground this change has to all intents and purposes had already happened. This small freehouse, a pub since 1850, was, in any case, highly food orientated, and recently it changed its name to **Town + House by Always Sunday**. The planning application reference is 21/05175/FUL.



The ex King William (photo by Martin Ansell)

In the city centre the **Raven** is hoping to expand into the former estate agents premises next door (11 Quiet Street) and significantly extend the pub. A planning application has been made for change of use of the premises to a drinking house with extended food provision, including various internal alterations. (As it is a Grade II listed building, there are two applications, 21/05204/FUL for the change of use and 21/05205/LBC for the internal alterations.) The plans show a new bar and snug on the ground floor and a function room on the first.



Belvoir Castle, Bath (photo by Martin Ansell)

A proposal that would have seen the demolition of the historic skittle alley at the Grade II listed **Belvoir Castle**, just off the Lower Bristol Road, and the loss of the pub's outdoor space to make way for a development of nine apartments, has finally been seen off by the planning committee of Bath & North East Somerset Council. The scheme had been given the go ahead in 2018, but the permission was later quashed in the High Court as unlawful. The Bath Preservation Trust was among those speaking out against the proposal on, among various grounds, the risk to the pub's viability. The application was recently brought back to the planning committee, who refused it.

There are plans for a residential development of the car park of the Grade-II listed **King's Head** in Upper Weston, on the western outskirts of Bath, for seven new apartments and a ground-floor retail unit. This is in addition to a separate application to convert the currently closed pub into bakery, café and restaurant.



The Bear, Bear Flat (photo by Martin Ansell)

Various threats to a life-size model of a polar bear, nicknamed Snowy by locals, from the roof of the **Bear** on Bear Flat, have been seen off. Originally there had been a proposal to remove this local landmark completely. Then revised plans were made to retain the bear but paint it brown. But thanks to the efforts of the Bear Flat Association and

its 'Keep Snowy Snowy' campaign, the bear will stay white. The pub, which seems to have been closed recently, will have reopened on Friday 11th March.

We have recently discovered that the **White Lion** at Batheaston was re-let last year by owners Wellington and has been converted into a boutique café, which opened in September. The venue is licensed and appears to be selling bottled beer, but there's no sign of any beers on draught. It is, in effect, a former pub, and the skittle alley has gone. This leaves Batheaston village with only one traditional pub, the **George & Dragon**.

We have also learned that the **Hope & Anchor** at Midford, south of Bath, is on the market as the current owners are retiring.



The Lamb and Fountain, Frome (photo by John Macarthur)

Landlady of Lamb & Fountain in Frome passes away aged 99

Freda Searle, who may well have been the oldest landlady in the UK, died in November 2021 at the grand age of 99. Known to her customers as 'Mother', Freda had run the **Lamb & Fountain**, believed to be the oldest pub in Frome, since 1969. She refused to make any major changes to the pub: walking into the Lamb & Fountain is like walking into the 1950s. Freda believed that pubs were for drinking in, and that restaurants were for eating. Her daughter Sue has said that Freda's last wish was that the pub should remain unaltered, and Sue plans to go on running the Lamb & Fountain without changing a thing. The pub is included in CAMRA's Regional Inventory of historic interiors.

More news from Frome

The multi-level, multi-roomed **Old Bath Arms** on Palmer Street has reopened. On the southern outskirts of the town, the **Cross Keys** at Blatchbridge closed on 19th February owing to the departure of Lisa, landlady for the last nine years. Hopefully this is a temporary closure of this Wellington-owned pub.

Bell Inn at Buckland Dinham closes

The lovely Buckland Dinham village pub, the **Bell Inn**, is currently closed. The previous landlords held a farewell party on its doors on Friday 11 February. The future of this Stonegate/Ei-owned pub, the only one in the village, situated midway between Frome and Radstock, is uncertain.

Continued on next page

News from Bath & Borders

Continued from previous page

Organ Inn, Warminster, under threat of permanent closure

A planning application has been submitted to convert the **Organ Inn** on the High Street in Warminster into a private residence. The application reference is PL/2021/11143. The deadline for comments was 31 December and the decision deadline set for 24 January, although at the time of writing there seems to have been no decision. The pub effectively closed at the start of the pandemic and operated for a while as an off-licence. It did not subsequently reopen in 2020 as it was not economically viable to do so. Landlord Dan Keene left the pub at the end of 2020 and started a new business, the **TAPhouse**, an independent off-licence and craft ale bottle shop (see more below), a few doors down on George Street in early 2021. The owners of the pub, Four County Inns, have been advertising for somebody to run the pub but without success. Four Counties acquired the pub, which had been closed since 1913, in 2003. It reopened, following an extensive internal refurbishment by Dan, in the summer 2006. It immediately became a gem and go-to venue for cask beer and cider. We made it our branch Pub of the Year in 2019.

It would be an enormous shame if the Organ were to be lost. Although there are other pubs in the town centre, none of them are really anything like the Organ, with its quiet, traditional interior, friendly atmosphere, three-bar layout, skittle alley, enclosed courtyard, and a range of ever-changing interesting guest beers and ciders. For most of the period Dan ran the pub, he held an annual beer festival, showcasing Wiltshire beers, each September. The permanent closure of the Organ will be a great loss to the town.

TAPhouse, Warminster, now open for tastings

The **TAPhouse**, which former landlord of the Organ Inn Dan Keene opened last year as an independent off-licence and craft ale bottle shop, is now open for tastings. Since the new year customers can sit in and drink in the newly opened tasting room. Dan is running the TAPhouse, which stocks a vast array of beers and ciders from both local independent breweries and producers as well as from further afield, in the spirit of the emerging café culture, rather than as a micropub.

More news from Warminster

The freehold of the **Weymouth Arms**, one of oldest licensed premises in Warminster and originally a private house, is up for sale with Christie & Co with a guide price of £650,000. It is being advertised as a boutique bed & breakfast and bar. The pub, which has a Tudor fireplace and a lovely walled courtyard, has been principally a food-orientated business for many years. This may be quite old news, but we have recently noticed that the freehold of the **Old Bell Hotel**, a large, imposing Wadworth's pub in the main shopping street, had been up for sale with an asking price of £975,000, the selling agents being James A Baker. We are not certain whether the Old Bell is still on the market, or even whether it sold. At any rate the pub is about to reopen (as of early March) under new management. James Sullivan-Tailyour, who coincidentally began his long career in the hospitality industry as a barman at the Bell over 40 years ago, is set to return to the 15-bedroom 17th-century coaching inn, which closed two years ago, as its new manager. The Old Bell will join the **Swan Hotel** in Bradford-on-Avon, where Mr Sullivan-Tailyour has been manager for over ten years, as part of the Wiltshire Inns group. Plans for the Old Bell include converting the 'Chimes' bar into a Thai restaurant.

In the villages south of Warminster

The **Bath Arms** at Crockerton was still undergoing a major renovation when last visited by a branch member in mid-January. This handsome old village pub, just off the A350 south of Warminster, closed suddenly around three or four years ago. The pub was bought from Wellington by the Chaffinch Pub Company in November 2020. We are hoping that the pub will be once again open soon. When it does, there should be no brewery tie, with beers, ciders and lagers to be sourced only from Wiltshire and Somerset breweries. Further down the A350, the **George Inn** at Longbridge Deverill is now serving Deverill's Advocate from the nearby Wessex Brewery, along with London Pride. Taking the minor road across to the Wylle Valley, the **Woolpack** at Sutton Veny has had a makeover. The hours were rather limited when visited in January, but landlords Abbie and John are hoping to open on more evenings soon. Inside the Woolpack has a café style décor and atmosphere, with soft furnishings and cakes: a sort of modern take on a country pub.

In and around Trowbridge and Bradford-on-Avon

The **Canal Tavern** in Bradford-on-Avon has reopened following a short period of closure during January for refurbishment. Early reports suggest that this attractive canal-side Wadworth's pub has become more restaurant-like. In the historic and picturesque village of Steeple Ashton, to the east of Trowbridge, the **Longs Arms** has reopened following a quite long period of closure. In Trowbridge the **Anchor and Hope** on Frome Road is up for sale with selling agents Fleurets. The asking price is £350,000.



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Latest on the Three Daggers

Three Daggers beer is available once again at the [Three Daggers](#) pub and farm shop in Edington. The on-site brewery still exists, and the equipment looks to be in good working order. Due to the loss of brewing staff over the course of the pandemic the beers are, we understand, being brewed for the time being at Stonehenge brewery in Netheravon. We do not yet have any information on if or when brewing will return to the Three Daggers brewhouse.

A new venue in Westbury

The former White Horse County Park premises on the edge of Westbury has been transformed by local estate agent Jordan Daykins into a new hospitality venue. Renamed the [View](#), due no doubt to its location directly underneath the imposing edifice of Westbury White Horse, this new venue will open in three stages over the spring and summer. First to come on stream will be the bar, whilst an event room for weddings, live music etc should be launched in May, and finally an à la carte restaurant should open its doors in around July. Mr Daykins, director of the Daykins Estates property agency, went to view the building on Coach Road back in November, and made the decision to snatch it up himself.

Cross Guns at Avoncliff reopening after extensive maintenance work

The historic and picturesque [Cross Guns](#) overlooking the river Avon and in the shadow of the mighty Kennet & Avon canal should have reopened on Friday 18 March following a two-month period of closure for extensive maintenance work.

Plans to relocate bar of historic George at Norton St Philip and changes at the Fleur de Lys

Plans are afoot to change the internal layout of one of the branch's oldest pubs. The [George](#) is a Grade I listed Tudor inn located in the village of Norton St Philip, south of Bath. The history of the building goes back to 1397. Nowadays it's very much a food-orientated pub with accommodation with its 14 en-suite bedrooms. Owners Butcombe have put in a planning application to Mendip District Council to move the bar into the barn on the south side of the building, freeing up the original area for dining. The intention is to maximise space by concentrating the pub facilities in the new bar area. This would, however, take away the core of the inn and change the atmosphere and experience of this historic inn for the casual drinker. The branch has lodged an objection. The application reference is 2021/2160/FUL. Directly opposite, some modifications have been made to the bar at the also-historic [Fleur de Lys](#). At the time of writing (early March) the Fleur's opening times have widened to 9-11 Thursday and Friday, 12-11 Saturday and 12-6 on Sunday, whilst its kitchen has reopened and serving food to eat in and take away.

New housing proposed at the Bell at Rode

The [Bell](#), situated on the A361 at the edge of the village Rode, has been shut since 2017. A planning application has been submitted to Mendip District Council to build on land adjacent to the pub. The new development would not affect the large car park to the rear nor the beer garden. The parish council, however, have objected as they believe that, for various reasons, the new housing would affect the future viability of the Bell.

Prince of Wales on Dunkerton Hill near Peasedown closes

Sadly, the [Prince of Wales](#), an attractive country pub on the A367 south of Bath and just to the north of Peasedown St John, is to close permanently. The pub served customers for the last time around two years ago. It has been closed and boarded up since then and has now gained planning permission to be converted into private dwellings.

Lamb at Clandown closed

The [Lamb Inn](#) closed in early January. We have no idea why, or whether it will reopen at some point. This deceptively large pub, situated off the A367 on the hill overlooking Radstock to the north, had closed before, for around six years, before reopening in late November 2018.

And on into Midsomer Norton

Owners Admiral Taverns are looking for a new tenant to run the [White Hart](#) in the town centre. This pub has a uniquely unspoilt interior and is listed in the local CAMRA inventory of historic pub interiors.

Steve Hunt



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Solution to the cryptic crossword on page 37

Across: 1 Oddfellows Arms, 9 Dray horse, 10 Corgi, 11 Pints, 12 Sprinkled, 13 Cyrillic, 14 Pilsen, 17 Locums, 19 Spylgass, 22 Deny limit, 23 Chaps, 24 Eking, 25 Improprmtu, 26 Maltly east beers. Down: 1 Old Speckled Hen, 2 Drahter, 3 Ethos, 4 Lordship, 5 Wherry, 6 Ascending, 7 Marbles, 8 Birds nest soups, 14 Lamplight, 16 Epitaphs, 18 Candida, 20 A sample, 21 Empire, 23 Coomb.

Hard seltzers: the booze industries' most cynical move yet

COVID aside, beer is having a really challenging time right now.

The half-baked arrangements for the UK leaving the EU; the rise and rise of the anti-alcohol lobby as a political force; and the stark changes required of all industries if we are to have a bash at mitigating climate change, make for a potent mix of problems to be faced in the next few years. Yet talk to an American beer writer and even climate change pales into insignificance compared to the impact of RTDs.

For the unfamiliar, the letters RTD stand for "Ready-To-Drink", and refer to a catch-all category of alcoholic beverage that includes ready-mixed cocktails, alcopops and what some UK producers were calling "alcoholic sparkling waters" until the decision to run with the North American term "hard seltzers".

These cheap concoctions of water, alcohol, flavouring and carbon dioxide sound pretty unappealing, but hang back while the marketers speak. The standard sales lines in the US describe hard seltzers as low in carbohydrate or sugar-free; acceptable to drink anytime-anywhere; suitable for vegans; totally gluten-free; and sold only in 100% recyclable containers. So with their zingy tastes and all, what is not to like?

Essentially, these are post-hipster, low cal alcopops and oh dear are they popular. Currently in North America the early successes of hard seltzer have seen the best qualified industry pundits expecting to see beer's 71% share of the alcoholic beverage market fall to around 58% within five years, causing not just the usual suspects among the big brewers, but also the likes of Coca-Cola to make major moves into a promising market.

The fact that the alcohol in these things can be derived from brewing meant that the Boston Beer Company (think Samuel Adams) was able to produce one of the early leading brands, leading to normally savvy US craft beer drinkers misguidedly offering the category some love. Had they applied a moment's thought, they might have realised that craft made alcohol and the type that comes from fast and furious large-scale fermentation taste virtually identical, though only the latter has that most appealing quality of cheapness.

Sceptical industry observers in Europe point to the fact that neither 'hard' nor 'seltzer' is a word with accepted coinage this side of the

Atlantic. Indeed in Germany, where the word seltzer originates, it refers to an antacid, or "liver salts". "Hard" is no better, with many European countries, including the UK, restricting its use when marketing alcohol. Making positive health claims for alcoholic beverages is a no-no too.

I look at it differently. For me, aiming a drink that is bright and sparkling at a population obsessed with becoming slimmer and sharper seems pretty smart. Proof, such as it is, comes from Bristol's last bastion of conservative beer buying, Sainsbury's supermarket on Clifton Down. Although this store stocks not a single beer from any of Bristol's 20 or so breweries, the clear demand to sell RTDs has led to shelves being rammed (see photos).

Fair enough, not all of these tins contain hard seltzers as such. About a third are ready-mixed drinks, such as gin and tonic, for people who find putting two liquids into one glass at the same time really difficult.

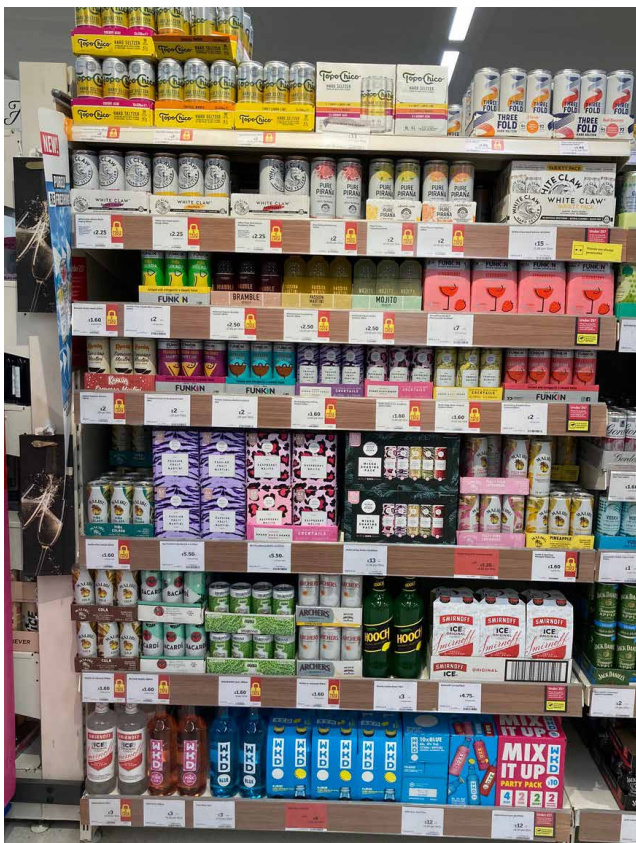
More seriously, hard seltzers may be an issue around which the concerns of the anti-alcohol lobby and those of informed beer consumers might coalesce. Hard seltzers are firmly aimed at taking a part of the beer market – being gluten-free, vegan-friendly, low in carbohydrate, suitable to drink them anywhere and blah blah. They are also designed to be alcoholic soft drinks, with no flavour barrier to consumption by all, including children. The alcohol in hard seltzers is not just cynical, it is potentially dangerous.

In the US, the neo-Prohibitionists have been posting images on social media showing dishevelled and pished young people captioned with some of the marketing straplines about healthy lifestyles, and I found myself applauding. The UK equivalent might picture their suitability for necking at bus stops on the morning commute to college or work – so much more acceptable than cans of super-strength lager.

While I am extremely wary of working with a lobby that thrives on carefully contrived innuendo, backed by cherry-picked data, I might just join those concerned about the rising number of directly alcohol-related deaths despite lower alcohol consumption, in calling for hard seltzers to be abolished.

The world got by without RTDs in the first two thousand years after Christ. Another few years without them won't threaten civilisation.

Tim Webb



From our foreign correspondent

The story so far. Our regular travel columnist Tim Webb has been forced by COVID and circumstance to relocate to nether Devon, an experience he equates to moving abroad, to a land where classy beer is not a given.

It is sobering to realise that by the time this piece appears, I will have been living at the farm for nearly a year. Most of that time seems to have been spent applying in triplicate for permission to make the building more traditional; asking reputable local craftspeople very nicely for consideration as someone worthy of becoming a client; trying to figure out what makes someone mask up to walk alone across pasture; and hoping to discover a really good beer outlet within a twenty-minute drive of my new home.

So as 2022 re-opens the world, I realise my partner and I had been together nearly two years, before last month, for the first time, going abroad together. Having been on the road with beer as my excuse, for much of the six years spent in Bristol, busting out of purdah felt good, despite our triple-vaxxed bodies being subject to £300-worth of statistically pointless molecular and antigen tests.

Back home in the Devon Gateway however, progress is less dramatic.

Progress to date

Last time, I mentioned the appalling position of the pub estate in my new locality. Of the nine within cycling distance of the farm, two were surviving, one appeared to be teetering, one had changed hands, three were closed and up for sale, and two existed only in the mind of an Ordinance Survey map maker.

It would be wrong to say there has not been some positive progress. Down in the village, the teetering pub is now upright and in the village beyond, the new people at the [Ashill Inn](#) have retained the confidence of the locals and are firmly in survival mode. However, it's not all good news.

Of the three pubs that were up for sale, all are now off the market. One is transitioning from a public to a private house, one is to become some sort of residential home, and we await news of the fate of the third, though as a roadhouse with no local housing and little passing traffic after evening rush hour, my hopes for it are limited.

As for the complete absence of a decent beer shop, the only progress is that Waitrose in Wellington, while still some way behind Morrisons in Tiverton, has expanded its range of better brands from bigger brewers. (Yawn.)

The bigger picture

Last May, I received an email from a stranger in Inverness, the UK's northernmost city and a full ten hours by road from Bristol, which she thanked me for mentioning in *The World Atlas of Beer*. She asked if I knew that since COVID it had become possible to order up to 112 different Bristol-brewed beers to be delivered to her door, six hundred miles away, within a couple of days.

Devon's breweries have a long way to go before they will earn such a distribution network, but as the snowdrops pop up and the occasional crocus appears, it is becoming clear that they are mustering some fire power.

None of the county's 50-something breweries is more than forty years old, yet despite their relative youth a clear divide can be seen between those created in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The older group consists of a dozen or so brewers that are almost all well-established cask ale brewers with strong local followings and some sales across the Peninsula, such as Otter, Dartmoor, Teignworthy, Summerskills and Clearwater. With sales highly dependent on pubs, the COVID times have been hard for them, even if the wave of conservative tourists in the summers of 2020 and 2021 helped maintain their buoyancy.

The younger breweries, in contrast, are venturing into more assertive beers, and tend to have responded to the COVID restrictions with more creative ideas, seen mostly in what they make and how they sell it.

Getting round the trade ban

Selling beer in Devon is, I imagine, much like selling beer in most other parts of the UK. On the surface, breweries of all sizes are

allowed to offer their beers to pubs and other licensed venues, and to supermarkets and other off-licenses. Except of course they can't really.

Most of the on and off trade markets are in reality tied to contracts that may not look exclusive, but which have add-on clauses that make them effectively so. Deep discounts, strategically timed to leave a business heavily indebted to one supplier for a long period; free supply and maintenance of taps that may only be used to serve that company's beers; or most frequently large contracts signed by the people who really own the pub or store, paying no regard to local demand or circumstances.

Newer breweries have taken therefore to less conventional methods of selling beer. No decent farmer's market is without its small local brewery, some rotating their beer stall between different two and more producers. Farm shops are good targets too, with a few happy to risk a punt on cases of not-so-mainstream beers.

In 2019, six years after starting up, New Lion brewery in Dartington, near Totnes, became a community project, attracting 300 mostly local shareholders, a move that helped it survive COVID. When draught sales ceased, production moved rapidly to bottle-conditioned ales hand-filled in packs of six for home consumption. When they restarted and pubs were reluctant to pay the extra for a small batch beer, they acquired the lease to run a taproom in a community centre – surely the UK's only village hall to sell a range of a dozen beers from a local brewery that include not just palatable, well-hopped 4.9% ABV Pandit Ale but also 75cl bottles of a barrel-aged imperial stout or two.

Time to show some initiative

The Devon pub scene is a real mixed bag. Always a place renowned for "family pubs", serving adequately cooked pub grub and serving this alongside the usual suspects on handpull, in knocked-through lounges where dogs and children are welcome, in recent years more than our fair share have morphed into excellent gastropubs, serving imaginative food in well-designed restaurants, many of which make a point of keeping a decent range of beers from genuine local breweries. None within 20 minutes of the farm, sadly.

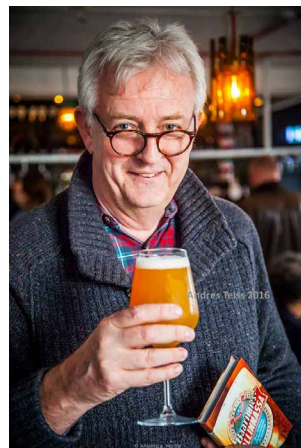
However, with the average pub now serving a population of 1,500 people, and Devon having over 300 villages with fewer than that number of inhabitants, it amazes me that these are yet to support a single micropub. The very communities that city dwellers are said to be flocking to fill, post-COVID and with working from home ever more sustainable, do not think to make space available for a place to socialise over a beer or cider.

The reason that I am writing this column is that I am convinced that the future of beer in Devon will be the future of beer in Britain.

There is a national, possibly even international debate going on about whether it is possible to make money from brewing decent beer. In reality you can, provided by "making money" you mean earning a decent living. If what you really mean is making shedloads of dosh, then think again.

Next time I will outline the types of decent living being made.

Tim Webb
Between lives



Tim Webb is the author of *The World Atlas of Beer* and *Pocket Beer Book* (with Stephen Beaumont) and *Good Beer Guide Belgium* (CAMRA Books, with Joe Stange). He no longer lives in Clifton. (Photo of Tim Webb by Andres Teiss.)

Directory of breweries in the Bristol & District CAMRA branch area

Arbor Ales

181 Easton Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 0HQ
www.arborales.co.uk

Ashley Down

15 Wathen Road, St Andrew's, Bristol, BS6 5BY
Not currently brewing but hoping to resume soon.

Basement Beer

32 Upper York Street, Bristol, BS2 8QN
www.basementbeer.co.uk

Bath Ales

Hare House, Southway Drive, Warmley, Bristol, BS30 5LW
www.bathales.com

Brewhouse & Kitchen

31-35 Cotham Hill, Clifton, Bristol, BS6 6JY
www.brewhouseandkitchen.com/venue/bristol

Bristol Beer Factory

The Old Brewery, Durnford Street, Bristol, BS3 2AW
www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk

Butcombe

Cox's Green, Wrington, Bristol, BS40 5PA
www.butcombe.com

Cheddar Ales

Winchester Farm, Draycott Road, Cheddar, Somerset, BS27 3RP
www.cheddarales.co.uk

Clevedon

Unit 1, Tweed Road Industrial Estate, Tweed Road, Clevedon, BS21 6RR
www.clevedonbrewery.co.uk

Dawkins Ales

Unit 2, Lawnwood Industrial Units, Lawnwood Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 0EF (also has premises in Timsbury, Bath)
www.dawkins-ales.co.uk

Epic Beers (Pitchfork Ales & 3D Beer)

The Brewery, West Hewish, Weston-super-Mare, BS24 6RR
www.pitchforkales.com www.3d-beer.com

Fierce & Noble

25 Mina Road, St Werburghs, Bristol, BS2 9TA
www.fierceandnoble.com

Good Chemistry

Unit 2, William Street, St Philips, Bristol, BS2 0RG
www.goodchemistrybrewing.co.uk

Hop Union (rebranded from GWB)

20 Bonville Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 5QH
www.gwbrewery.co.uk

Incredible Brewing Company

214-224 Broomhill Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 5RG
www.incrediblebrewingcompany.com

King Street Brew House

King Street, Welsh Back, Bristol, BS1 4RR
www.kingstreetbrewhouse.co.uk/brewery

Left Handed Giant

Unit 3, Wadehurst Industrial Park, St Philips Road, Bristol, BS2 0JE
www.lefthandedgiant.com

Little Martha

23 Oxford Street, St Phillips, Bristol, BS2 0QT
www.littlemarthabrewing.co.uk

Lost and Grounded

91 Whitby Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 4AR
www.lostandgrounded.co.uk

Masquerade

Had been (but no longer?) based inside Fierce & Noble brewery
www.masqueradebrewing.co

New Bristol

20a Wilson Street, St Pauls, Bristol, BS2 9HH
www.newbristolbrewery.co.uk

Newtown Park

Unit 8/9, Wadehurst Industrial Park, St Philips Road, Bristol, BS2 0JE
www.newtownparkbrewing.co

Moor Beer

Days Road, St Philips, Bristol, BS2 0QS
www.moorbeer.co.uk

On Point

Herbert Street, Bedminster, Bristol, BS3 1FJ
www.onpointbrewco.com

Pinkers

148 Quantock Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 4DP
www.pinkerscraftbrewery.co.uk

Portishead

The Port Bar, The Precinct, High Street, Portishead, BS20 6AH
www.portisheadbrewing.com

Tapestry

Unit B, Totterdown Bridge Industrial Estate, Totterdown, Bristol, BS2 0XH
www.tapestrybrewery.com

Three Engineers

The Cow Byers, Winterbourne Medieval Barn, Church Lane, Winterbourne, BS36 1SE
www.threeengineersbrewery.co.uk

Twisted Oak

The Brewery, Yeowood Farm, Iwood Lane, Wrington, BS40 5NU
www.twistedoakbrewery.co.uk

Volunteer Tavern (brewpub: New Street Brewing)

9 New Street, St Judes, Bristol, BS2 9DX
www.volunteertavern.co.uk

Wiper & True

2-8 York Street, St Werburghs, Bristol, BS2 9XT
www.wiperandtrue.com

Wookey Ale

www.wookeyale.co.uk

Zerodegrees

53 Colston Street, Bristol, BS1 5BA
www.zerodegrees.co.uk

Directory of breweries in the Bath & Borders CAMRA branch area

Abbey Ales

The Abbey Brewery, Camden Row, Bath, BA1 5LB
www.abbeyales.co.uk

Blindman's

Talbot Farm, Leighton, Nr Frome, Somerset, BA11 4PN
www.blindmansbrewery.co.uk

Box Steam

The Midlands, Holt, Nr Bradford on Avon, Wilts, BA14 6RU
www.boxsteambrewery.com

Dawkins Ales

Unit 7 Timsbury Workshop Estate, Hayeswood Road, Timsbury, Bath BA2 0HQ (also has premises in Easton, Bristol)
www.dawkins-ales.co.uk

Electric Bear

Unit 12, The Maltings, Brassmill Lane, Bath, BA1 3JL
www.electricbearbrewing.com

Frome (was Milk Street)

Unit L13, Marshall Way, Commerce Park, Frome, BA11 2FB
www.fromebrewingcompany.com

James Street

Bath Brew House, 14 James Street West, Bath, BA1 2BX
www.thebathbrewhouse.com

Kettlesmith

16, Greenwood Industrial Estate, Bradford-on-Avon, Wilts, BA15 2AU
www.kettlesmithbrewing.com

Plain Ales

Unit 17B/C, Deverill Road Trading Estate, Sutton Veny, Wilts, BA12 7BZ
www.plainales.co.uk

Ralph's Ruin

The Royal Oak, Lower Bristol Road, Twerton, Bath, BA2 3BW
www.ralphsruin.co.uk

Three Daggers

47 Westbury Road, Edington, Westbury, Wilts, BA13 4PG
www.threedaggers.co.uk

Twisted

9 Commerce Close, West Wilts Trading Estate, Westbury, BA13 4LS
www.twisted-brewing.com

Wessex

Longbridge Deverill, Wilts
www.quaffale.org.uk/php/brewery/348

Wild Beer

Lower Westcombe Farm, Evercreech, Shepton Mallet, BA4 6ERs
www.wildbeerco.co

Verse

Chapter One, 1a Piccadilly Place, London Road, Bath, BA1 6PL
www.chapteronebath.co.uk/verse

Yonder

The Workshop, Rookery Farm, Binegar, Somerset, BA3 4UL
www.brewyonder.co.uk

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Cryptic Crossword

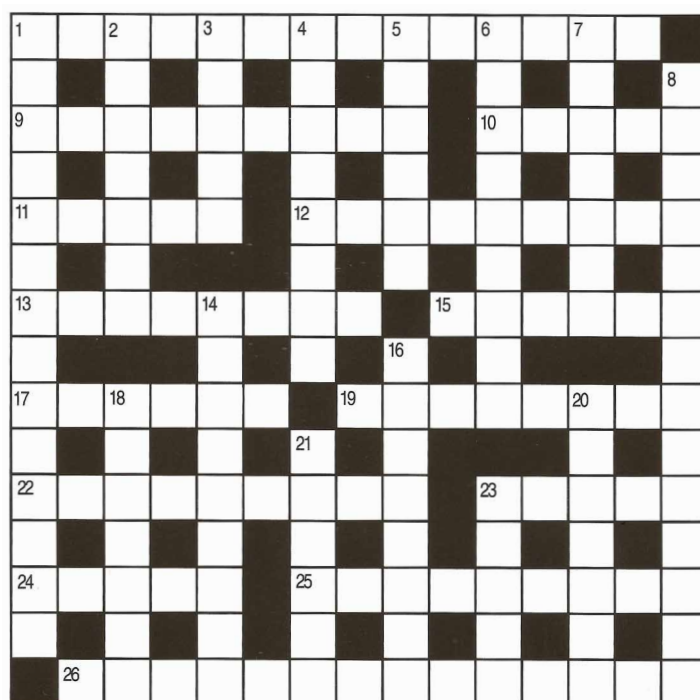
Compiled by Pete Taberner (solution on [page 33](#))

ACROSS:

- Secret society pub for strange blokes displaying upper limbs (10, 4)
- Backyard beast pulling pints (4, 5)
- Brewdog making out small company rig (5)
- Casks need time inside to produce beer (5)
- Fizzed-up beer on tap that was spread around (9)
- Appropriate script for the stout Russian (8)
- Two Poles pile into Czech beer town (6)
- Al has left local, I hear you need female temps to fill in (6)
- Spot a drink in fictional Bristol harbourside inn (8)
- Say no to recommended alcohol ration (4, 5)
- Leggings to be worn in *Chums*? (5)
- The first Edwardian monarch is making it last (5)
- I mop around confused Trump – it was spontaneous (9)
- Flavoursome ales around London brewery area (5, 4, 5)

DOWN:

- A bottle of Greene King helped Ken's cold treatment (3, 8, 3)
- Randier when tipsy so put glass down here (7)
- Find some quiet hostelry for community spirit (5)
- Test cricket ground's trendy spot for the title (8)
- Why err making Woodforde's homebrew kit (6)
- Going upstairs to a heavenly blonde from Oldenshaw? (9)
- Easy to lose these when you're very drunk (7)
- Sons tried pub's exotic Chinese dishes (5, 4, 5)
- Could provide illumination for the Shirehampton pub (9)
- Funeral features pastie consumed with HP sauce (8)
- To be frank, a yeast you don't want in your beer (7)



- Take sip from half a Bass – that's sufficient (1, 6)
- Marston's old brew that could strike back! (6)
- Express surprise at finding M&B in Devon valley (5)

Pub companies (pubcos)

Who are they and what do they do?

CAMRA's Pub and Club Campaigns Committee is seeking to raise awareness among members and drinkers generally about the companies that control many of our pubs. This is the second in a series of articles that will provide the facts on pub company practices and operations, explaining in particular how their business models work and what this means for both licensees and, ultimately, us as customers. The aim is to let the facts speak for themselves so that people can make up their own minds about the positive or negative effects of these practices on our pubs and the folk who run them.

2. The current pub company scene

A pub company is simply a company that owns pubs and there are literally hundreds of them, many with only a handful or even just one pub. We'll concentrate here, though, on the bigger companies who, between them, own over half the country's pubs.

Stonegate

Founded in 2010 with the purchase of 333 pubs from Mitchells & Butlers, Stonegate grew quite slowly over the next ten years, making a series of acquisitions including brands like Slug & Lettuce, Walkabout and Be At One, until its pub numbers totalled 765. All the pubs were managed houses. A seismic change came in 2020 when Ei Group was bought for £1.27bn, making Stonegate the largest pub company in the UK with 1,270 managed pubs and, as a result of the Ei purchase, 3,200 leased and tenanted businesses.

Ei itself had been founded, as Enterprise Inns, in 1991, initially with 333 pubs from Bass. The company built up its estate, gaining 2,200 pubs in batches by buying them from other companies or taking them over. In 2002, 1,864 pubs were bought from Whitbread and in 2004, 4,054 from Unique. By this time, it owned nearly 10,000 pubs and was in the FTSE 100 list of top companies. However, it was loaded with debt and the 2008 financial crash required a good deal of retrenchment. Ei also started building up its managed estate, including pubs on retail agreements under the Craft Union brand (we'll look at this operating model in the next article). By the time of the sale, it was down to fewer than 4,000 pubs.

Punch Taverns

The first article included a brief history of Punch to illustrate the volatility around pubco development. In summary, it grew quickly to around 8,000 pubs, suffered under the crash, sold a lot of pubs including its managed division and was taken over in 2016. 1,900 pubs went to Heineken and 1,300 to Patron Capital, who retain the Punch brand. At takeover time, all pubs were leased or tenanted but it's also now pushing retail agreements (which it calls Management Partnerships). Some pubs were sold but in June 2021 it announced the purchase of Youngs' tenanted division, bringing the current total to 1,282.

Admiral Taverns

Admiral was founded in 2003 by two families and grew quickly to 2,300 pubs by 2007. Many of these were 'bottom end' houses disposed of by other pub companies. The financial crash had the usual consequences for over-extended businesses and numbers were down to 1,700 by 2011 and continued to fall. By 2017 it was in the hands of Cerberus Capital Management who sold up to a joint venture by Magners cider-makers C&C Group and estate investor Proprium Capital Partners, by which time there were 845 pubs. The acquisition trail was hit in 2019 with 137 pubs coming from Marston's and 150 from Heineken. The big one arrived in July 2021 when Admiral bought 674 Hawthorn pubs from property firm New River taking the estate to over 1,500.

Admiral's pubs are all tenanted or leased and tend to be wet-led community operations. It has a relatively good reputation in the trade though there's certainly no aversion to flogging off pubs as 'development opportunities'.

The first article, 'A potted history of the pubco', appeared in the last edition of *Pints West*. This second article talks of the current pub company scene. Future articles will cover topics such as the pub company business model (i.e. how they make their money); their operating models (tenancies, managed houses, retail agreements); the tie and how it operates; the Pubs Code; and areas of reported concern.

Star Pubs & Bars

In 1995, Scottish & Newcastle, one of the original 'Big Six' breweries, bought another of them, Courage, making the combined group Britain's biggest brewer. By 2011, the pub arm, then known as S&N Pub Co, had 1,500 tenanted pubs and 600 in management. Come 2008, Scottish Courage was gobbled up by international brewer Heineken and the pub business rebranded as Star Pubs & Bars. Many pubs were sold but then, in 2017, as previously mentioned, 1,900 were snapped up from Punch. Again there were disposals and the estate currently stands at 2,500.

Star vigorously promote their retail agreement scheme, Just Add Talent. In 2020, it was fined £2m for breaches of the Pubs Code (which we'll cover in a later article)

Greene King

In 1995, Greene King was a long-established family brewer with 900 pubs, nearly all in East Anglia and the South-East. It then embarked on a ferocious acquisition trail, swallowing up many breweries (the likes of Morlands, Belhaven, Morrells and Hardy & Hanson) and other pub companies. GK itself is now owned by a billionaire Hong Kong property developer. It has some 3,100 pubs, restaurants and hotels, of which 1,200 are tenanted or leased. Its strategy seems to be to move in the managed direction and the 'Pub Ready' retail agreements are pushed hard. GK was once renowned for not letting other people's beers in its pubs but now have a more enlightened attitude.

Marston's

The company was known as Wolverhampton & Dudley until 2007 when it rebranded as Marston's, one of the many breweries it had taken over in recent years. At that time, 2,500 pubs were owned but the total is now down to 1,400. The tenanted estate, in particular, has been reduced through sales such as 200 to New River in 2013 and 137 to Admiral in 2019. In late 2020, the company took on the running of 156 Brains pubs in Wales. Also that year, Marston's merged its brewing operations with Carlsberg but this does not directly affect the pub business.

Mitchells and Butlers

Formed originally out of the old Bass estate, M&B have 1,650 pubs and restaurants. The multitudinous brands include Ember Inns, Toby Carveries, Nicholsons and All Bar One – as can be seen, the emphasis is on food. Pubs are mostly managed though around 50 are on a lease arrangement.

J D Wetherspoon

Since opening its first pub in 1979, 'Spoons has expanded to 925 pubs and 50 hotels, all managed. Plans for 18 new pubs are in the pipeline.

Wellington

Owned by the billionaire Reuben Brothers, the company leases all its 850 pubs on a free-of-tie basis.

(All figures believed to be correct at the time of writing in 2021)

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