



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

AWARD-WINNING



No. 80
Winter
2008/2009

CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

www.camrabristol.org.uk

PINTS WEST

Multi-award-winning magazine of the Bristol & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale
(incorporating the Bath & Borders Branch)



Local Stouts

ONE beer that is starting to be seen more frequently in real ale pubs is stout – not the nitro-kegs of Guinness, Murphy's or Beamish – but real ale stout. This dark ale comes in a wide range of variations from the sweet milk and glucose stouts through to the drier Irish stouts that were typified by Guinness.

So how has stout evolved to what it is today? Well, historically beers were made from malt that was dried over wood-burning fires. This created a smoked malt that produced a very smoky and bitter tasting dark brown ale. This ale was then stored in enormous vats for many months until the flavour mellowed and it picked up a sour taste (it was now called old ale or stale ale). Landlords would then mix the expensive stale ale with a third of fresh brown ale and a third of pale ale to produce a palatable drink that in the early 1700's became known as porter. A strong version of porter was known as stout porter, which over the years reduced to stout. Eventually a palatable beer was produced from a single brew and became known as 'entire' or 'butt' (porter/stout). Over the last 200 years the beers were termed 'stout' or 'porter' depending more on what was perceived by the market as the most fashionable at the time.

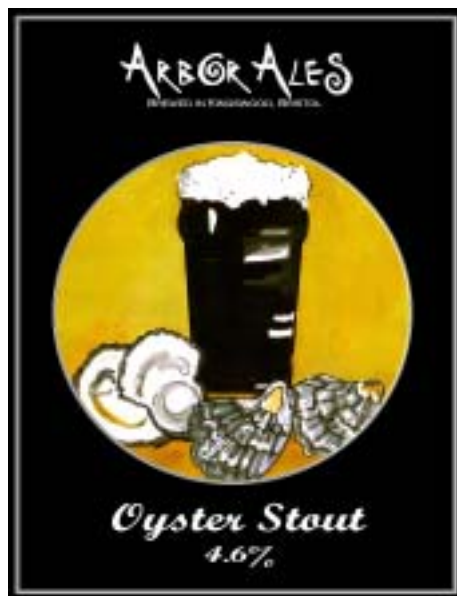
Nowadays, stout is described as being "typically black with a profound dark and roasted malt character with raisin and sultana fruit, espresso or cappuccino coffee, liquorice and molasses, all underscored by hefty hop bitterness. Stout may be dry or sweet and range from 4% to 8% alcohol."

Bristol was a major brewer of porters and stouts during the 18th and 19th centuries, and was second only to London in its exports to Ireland. This changed when Guinness used roasted barley to produce a dry (Irish) stout that was exported to Britain and became more popular than the London porters. By the end of the first world war Guinness was the largest brewery in the world and now sells 10 million pints a day, and its biggest market is Britain. There are five real ale stouts brewed in our region, and each has its own unique taste, and all are worth trying if you see them on a bar.

Arbor Ales - Oyster Stout - 4.6%

Arbor Ales brewer, Jon Comer, says: "We believe that a proper oyster stout should be made with oysters. We've used six different grains, including oats, wheat and roasted barley, and Fuggles hops for that traditional stout character. We've then added whole oysters, shells and all, during the last fifteen minutes of the boil. The result is a smooth chocolaty stout that leaves you wanting more."

This is apparently one of only a couple of breweries in the country that use whole oysters in the beer, and although it's rumoured to have aphrodisiac properties, its popularity is more likely to be due to its fine taste.



This type of stout is generally referred to as a 'food stout', along with wholemeal, oat and milk stouts which originally sprung up in the 20th century to combat the Guinness threat. Doctors used to recommend that invalids and nursing mothers should drink a pint of Guinness a day because of its purity, whereas in Africa, where Guinness is still regarded as an aphrodisiac, the advertisers say, "There's a baby in every bottle."



Bath Ales - Dark Hare - 4.0%

A roasted barley aroma, a deep, dark colour and a smooth-yet-dry taste: all the hallmarks of an exquisite stout.

Bristol Beer Factory - Milk Stout - 4.5%

A dark stout with initial creamy mouth feel followed by a beautiful blend of roasted barley taste and hop bitterness. This luscious stout has been voted 'Beer of the Festival' on



two occasions at the Bristol Beer Festival, and won several SIBA awards.

This is another of the 'food stouts' and derives its name from the use of lactose (an un-fermentable natural sugar found in milk) which provides the creamy sweetness.

Simon Bartlett of the Beer Factory said this award-winning Milk Stout was inspired by another, older, award-winner that was produced on the same site by the Ashton Gate Brewery in the 1900's. It was so popular, that when Georges bought out the brewery in 1931 they had to continue brewing it using a similar label.



Cotswold Spring Brewery - Dodington Stout - 4.5%

A wholesome stout with a rich complexity of flavours. This special ale has a mild taste of coffee on the palate, a smooth finish with a fruity aftertaste.



Wickwar Brewery - Mr Perrett's Traditional Stout - 5.9%

A powerful stout with liquorice and chocolate bursting throughout, and a very long finish. Dedicated to Arnold Perrett & Co. who brewed on the same site from 1860 to 1954.

Colin Postlethwaite

Bristol Beer Festival 2009

The twelfth annual Bristol Beer Festival will take place at the Brunel Passenger Shed, Temple Meads, Bristol on Friday 20th and Saturday 21st March 2009.

Anyone that has attended our previous festivals will appreciate just how popular they are and that they are organised and run entirely by unpaid local CAMRA activists. The huge demand for tickets resulted in our taking a new approach to ticket sales for the 2008 festival and as this proved to be a success we are using the same method for the 2009 festival.

There will be two sales sessions of tickets as follows.

Members only on Sunday 8th February – tickets will go on sale at the Old Fish Market, Baldwin Street, Bristol from 11am until 2pm.

Tickets will only be sold to card-carrying CAMRA members at this session and there is a maximum of two tickets for each valid CAMRA card presented (though anyone who signs up to join CAMRA on the day will also be able to purchase two festival tickets).

On Sunday 22nd February tickets will go on sale at the Commercial Rooms, Corn Street Bristol from 11am to 2pm.

Tickets will be on sale to everyone (including CAMRA members) at this session up to a maximum of four tickets per person.

Simultaneous ticket sales sessions will take place with the same rules at Off The Rails at Weston-super-Mare train station on both 8th and 22nd February.

Tickets will not be held back, so once they have sold out they really are all gone. If there are any tickets remaining after these sessions they will be put on general sale at the Bridge Inn, Passage Street, Bristol from Tuesday 24th February.

This year we are making an additional change to speed up the entry process and stop customers having to queue twice (once to have your ticket checked and once to buy beer tokens). This year the ticket prices for all sessions will include £5 worth of beer festival tokens, which customers will receive on entry enabling them to go straight to the bar.

Please bring the correct cash to the above ticket sales sessions as we will not be able to accept cheques or credit cards. Ticket details and prices are as follows.



| | | |
|---------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| Fri lunchtime | 11:30am - 4:00pm | £10 (incl £5 of tokens) |
| Fri evening | 7:00pm - 11:00pm | £10 (incl £5 of tokens) |
| Sat lunchtime | 11:30am - 4:00pm | £10 (incl £5 of tokens) |
| Sat evening | 7:00pm - 11:00pm | £9 (incl £5 of tokens) |

We strongly advise people to keep an eye on our website www.camrabristol.org.uk as this will feature information about the ticket sales procedure and updates as to ticket availability, as well as the beer and cider lists as they become available.

If you wish to join CAMRA, details are on the website, or you can fill in the membership form in this copy of Pints West. Note that Wetherspoon has kindly agreed to supply all new and renewing members £20 worth of Wetherspoon real ale vouchers as part of their CAMRA membership package!

Richard Brooks

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**Contact the editor, Steve Plumridge
Email steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk**

DAWKINS Real Ale Pubs
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Christmas Beer Festival 11th-15th Dec

The Portcullis
Wellington Terrace,
Clifton Village BS8 4LE
20 Ales 0117 9085536

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The Victoria Southleigh Rd, Clifton, BS8 2BH Tel 9745675
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Clifton Christmas Crackers

THE new Cabot Circus and upgraded Broadmead are still woefully lacking in decent real ale pubs where non-shoppers can be 'parked' whilst they wait to help carry the bags, and where the dedicated shopper can take a well-earned and relaxing break. So for your Christmas shopping, January sales, or simply a pleasant walk with good real ale accompaniments, why not venture into Clifton Village?



The Quadrant

You will be spoilt for choice if looking for a good pint (or glass of wine), human-scale hostelry and a warm and friendly atmosphere; you'll also find a range of small and interesting shops offering a range of gifts that you won't necessarily find even in the designer heartland of Cabot Circus. In both cases, you'll be supporting local businesses.

Getting off the bus (8/8A or 9/9A) on Regent Street, you could do worse than make a start in **The Quadrant** on the corner of Regent Street and Princess Victoria Street; two ales are available (always something from Butcombe, Bath Ales or both) alongside a good wine list and bar snacks, with the added attraction of a seat in the window allowing you

to get your bearings with a 180-degree view and watch the world go by.

After stocking up in the nearby delis, bakery, off-licenses, beauty and clothes shops, retrace your steps, cross the road towards WH Smith's, and after exploring the antiques and small design shops in the Arcade, pop into **The Albion** or Wadworth's **The Hop House**. Both have comfy seating and eclectic décor. The Albion offers a real fire at this time of



The Royal Oak

year, and extensive outdoor seating with heaters. Depending on the time of day they both offer food, and always have a range of real ales and wines.

Back onto Princess Victoria Street, and on the left you'll find **The Somerset House**, with an array of ales served on gravity behind the bar, such as Butcombe Bitter, Courage Best, Bass and London Pride. If some of your party are already getting twitchy about the shopping, the Somerset also offers a free *Wii* to help pass the time. Pop in at the end of your tour, and you might find live music on an open mic night.

A hop and a skip further along Princess Victoria Street brings you to jewellery, shoe,

flower and gift shops as well as the Aladdin's Cave for book-lovers – the Oxfam Bookshop. Turn right into the Mall for more jewellery, unusual gifts, art galleries, designer men's and women's clothes and accessories (including lingerie). Here too are opportunities to take in **The Royal Oak** (offering London Pride, Courage Best, Butcombe Bitter and Sharp's Doom Bar, and good for sports TV and conversation) and **The Mall** (London Pride



The Coronation Tap

and a couple of changing guest beers, wines, comfy sofas and good views). If you are feeling energetic, the Downs are now within sight for a brisk walk. A slight deviation to the left half-way up the Mall will take you instead to **The Coronation Tap** (particularly good for cider lovers) or **The Grapes**, another Wadworth's house.

Leave the shops behind and turn left at the top of the Mall onto Gloucester Row and then Sion Hill for a pleasant walk past the Clifton Suspension Bridge and Georgian terraces. On the left, before you reach Royal York Crescent, you'll find **The Portcullis**, a Dawkins pub that offers half a dozen real ales, a couple of real ciders and a good wine list. They also do Pieminister pies at certain times. You can reach the same point by avoiding the Mall and continuing along Princess Victoria Street to Sion Hill and again turning left – although you may then want to pop into **The Greyhound** en route; at this time of year its recently-opened garden may not be a place to linger, but the beers and homely atmosphere may be enough to keep you there. From the Portcullis, a stroll along Royal York Crescent will take you back to Regent Street where you could make a final stop in **The Clifton** (with open kitchen) before making for the bus stops north or into town.

Of course, there are far too many pubs mentioned here for one foray. Fortunately, Clifton Village has plenty of retail, cultural and leisure diversions within and nearby to make it ideal for repeat visits over Christmas and the New Year period (or, indeed, at any other time of the year). And of course, there are many more excellent stopping places in the wider Clifton/Hotwells areas should you decide to walk down Constitution Hill or to The Triangle and Park Street before heading for home!

Lesley Huxley




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Butcombe's success at the airport

BUTCOMBE Bitter is now definitely on at Bristol International Airport's 'Bar Zero9', following liaison between the brewery and the airport, with the added plus of having the Cask Marque accreditation.

This was awarded on October 7th by Roger Clayson of the Cask Marque Trust to Nagesh Shikaram, the bar manager. Butcombe's Chilled Blond and Ashton Press cider are also available – the airport's 'Sense of Place' initiative encourages local suppliers to market their products to international visitors.

Attempting to witness and record this award proved, however, to be something of an unexpected hurdle! On a wet and windy morning and after a circuit of the car parks, trying to find a convenient space to park, a dash was made to the terminal building.

Surprise and a certain frustration set in at this point when further progress was blocked – no boarding pass equals "no entry"! Various pleas, offerings of ID in the form of passport, driving licence (with photo), CAMRA membership card, etc. and verification of intent were all to no avail. Even an offer to tag along with two heavily armed security guards fell on deaf ears. The only slight hope floated for gaining admission was possibly a visitor's pass. To obtain this prize a lengthy walk to the old terminal, some degree of interrogation and the production of numerous ID documents were required, taking us over the award time slot.

The person most entitled to feel like burying his head in his hands was Roger Clayson from the Cask Marque Trust, who had journeyed from Henley-on-Thames only to fail his test due to a photo-less driving licence!



Roger Clayson from the Cask Marque Trust (left) presenting the bar manager with the award

again, retracing our steps would have presented

There was nothing else for it other than admit defeat and resort to the oft-used help in time of trouble, a cup of coffee, while awaiting the lucky people from the brewery who had passed their test.

A chance encounter, at this time, with four friends complete with boarding passes, could, I suppose, have put temptation our way with the possibility of a quick trip to the bar where, whilst admiring the attractive display that the Brewery had mounted, a pint of Butcombe wouldn't have gone amiss. Then a new obstacle course.

Other Butcombe news

On 1st October, Butcombe Brewery relaunched their Brunel IPA at the Colston Yard. This has become their winter seasonal ale, replacing the cask Blond, which is available April to September.

CAMRA were invited to the relaunch, which was judged to be a very pleasant evening, with complementary drinks and tasty pizzas.

A selection of pizzas is now available at the Colston Yard, these



Martin Love, Butcombe's Sales Director (on the right) congratulating Nagesh Shikaram (the bar manager) and his bar staff.

being supplied by Carl Say of 'Say Pasta'. Carl was a manager for Butcombe a few years ago before branching out into his own business.

The Brewery has now produced a brochure to celebrate their 30th anniversary.

Margaret Evett



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| | |
|---|--|
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| RING O'BELLS <i>Compton Martin (A368 between Blagdon & West Harptree)</i> 01761 221284 | THE BELL <i>Hillgrove Street, Bristol</i> 0117 9096612 |
| PRINCE OF WALES <i>Stoke Lane, Westbury-on-Trym</i> 0117 9623715 | THE LAMB <i>The Square, Axbridge</i> 01934 732253 |
| QUEEN'S ARMS <i>Celtic Way, Bleadon, near Weston-super-Mare</i> 01934 812080 | RING O'BELLS <i>Upper Road, Hinton Blewitt</i> 01761 452239 |
| WOOLPACK INN <i>St George's, near Weston-super-Mare</i> 01934 521670 | CROSS KEYS <i>High Street, Rode, Frome</i> 01373 830900 |
| ROSE AND CROWN <i>High Street, Hinton Charterhouse</i> 01225 722153 | MALT SHOVEL <i>Bradley Green, Cannington, Near Bridgwater</i> 01278 653432 |
| QUEEN VICTORIA INN <i>Pelting Drove, Priddy</i> 01749 676385 | OLD CROWN <i>Kelston, near Bath</i> 01225 423032 |
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Prime Minister asked to act on short beer measures

CAMRA recently visited 10 Downing Street to hand in a 23,361-name petition calling for an end to short beer measures in pubs and other licensed premises. CAMRA launched the full pint petition last year in response to research showing that:

- One in four pints are short measure by over 5 per cent.
- Short beer measures cost consumers a staggering £481 million a year.
- 81 per cent of all adults support new legislation to ensure pub goers are served a full pint every time.

During the 1997 general election the current Government promised that if elected they would "guarantee drinkers a full pint" and that, under Labour, drinkers would get what they pay for. Eleven years on, pub-goers are waiting for this promise to be fulfilled, during which time consumers have been short changed to the tune of over £5 billion.

Speaking at the Downing Street petition handover, Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, said: "We urge the Prime Minister to take notice of the 23,361 people who have signed this petition calling for an end to short beer measures. It is unlawful for consumers to be short measured when buying petrol and it should be



CAMRA's Chief Executive Mike Benner (left) and Pubs Director Julian Hough outside 10 Downing Street

unlawful for consumers to be short measured when buying a pint of beer. The Prime Minister has a responsibility to stick to his party's promise that under Labour, drinkers will get what they pay for.

"The Government takes over 80 pence in tax for every pint sold in a pub. It is about time that instead of simply taking money from the pockets of the pub-going public the Government gives something back by ensuring that consumers are served with a full pint and not 90 per cent or 95 per cent of a pint."

During the last 18 months, petition signatures were collected at CAMRA beer festivals and through an online campaign site.

Government wants to ban happy hours!

DOWN the years, many community pubs have had "happy hour" promotions to tempt people in during what was quieter trading periods. Such a promotion might involve taking, say, 50p off a pint for a couple of hours.

Now, some people in the Government, who obviously know best, want to stop all this. Clearly, it has resulted in all the ills in society as we know them today including arson and looting, rioting in the streets, unwanted pregnancies, and acute liver failure on epidemic proportions.

So, let's hit the local pub, which is simply trying to make a living serving its local community. Pubs have been having happy hours for decades – suddenly they are evil and must be stopped!

There is no doubt that there is a major problem with alcohol-related disorder and I am not one of the people who have to deal with the sometimes very unpleasant aftermath of over-consumption. However, the local pub having a simple price promotion by knocking 50p off a pint for an hour or two is not the root of all of society's ills. Perhaps the supermarkets which are selling beer cheaper than bottled water, and also various alcopops, breezers, WKDs, etc, at very low prices, have something to answer. And some of the city-centre and town-centre mega-bars with a one-demographic customer base are not entirely blame free.

Maybe the Government just wants us to stop being happy.

Leave our locals alone. Support your pub!
Pete Bridle

Great Western Brewery

NEWS from the Great Western Brewery in Hambrook is that they have pretty well completed their brewery shop which should be ready for Christmas. Two of their beers, Maiden Voyage and Classic Gold, are being bottled for them by Bath Ales and available from the end of November.

Maiden Voyage is being bottled at 4.5% ABV and Classic Gold at 4.8% ABV (the cask versions being 4.0% and 4.6% respectively).

At the time of writing, they were planning an open day for Saturday 29th November. This should be taking place while Pints West is at the printers. I can report though that beers were to be available for tasting, with tours of the brewery going on throughout the day. More details were to be posted on their website at www.greatwesternbrewingcompany.co.uk.



Great Western Brewing Company

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Ups and downs in Kingsdown

HARD on the news last month that the **Bell**, Alfred Place, has been taken over, reopened and renamed as the **Green Man** (an organic Dawkins pub), comes more news of changes in the Kingsdown area of Bristol. Three pubs that were closed reopened, namely the **King's Arms**, the **White Bear** and the **Robin Hood**.

The **King's Arms**, a large pub on the edge of the High Kingsdown estate, was selling Wells Bombardier and Sharp's Doom Bar. It was under temporary management but there had been some interest in taking it on a permanent basis. Then it closed again.

The **White Bear** at the top of St Michael's Hill reopened mid September and has been selling up to three real ales. On my last visit they were Whychwood Hobgoblin, Butcombe Gold and Sharp's Doom Bar, but they have also had Wickwar Bob, London Pride and a couple from Otter on other occasions. It's not been opening lunchtimes, and at the time of writing there is a sign outside proclaiming "business to let". There's a possibility it may close again before Christmas.

The other pub to reopen is the **Robin Hood** also on St Michael's Hill. This Wadworth pub is now under the stewardship

of the couple who took over from the Reckless Engineer when Gary left some five years ago. It reopened mid October and has longer opening hours than previously, namely 11 to 11 Monday to Friday, 12 to 11 Saturday and 12 to 10.30 Sunday. Food is also available lunchtimes and evenings and beers are Wadworth's plus guests.

The **Highbury Vaults** has had a bit of a make-over, with the toilets being refurbished and a piece of "graffiti" art on an outside wall (which has now unfortunately been vandalised). An unusual feature inside is a model railway that runs the length of the pub. It runs in a perspex tunnel to keep hands (and drinks) from interfering with it and will be themed according to the season. Also new at the pub are the home-made Highbury Pies, which will be available when normal hot food is not. I have yet to try one myself but they've looked and smelt delicious when they have been served to others. On the beer front, Young's Winter Warmer is now back and will replace Bristol Beer Factory Exhibition whilst it is still available. Bath Ffestivity and Bristol Beer Factory Bristletoe will be on over the festive season and Bradd also wants to get some more



The Robin Hood

St Austell Proper Job (the full-strength version which is normally bottled) as it was so popular last year.

Over at **Bar 155** the London Pride is now in the hands of Darren and Kevin. They have taken over from Pete and Aiden, who have moved down to the Punch Bowl in Old Market.

Pete Tanner

Back in town

Les and Carol Clayton, who used to run the White Lion in the centre of Bristol on behalf of Wickwar brewery, are back in town. They are taking over the **Vittoria** on Whiteladies Road from 4th December. It's good to see them back and we wish them every success.

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Walks and Pubs

ONCE New Year's Eve is out of the way, it's time to take stock, make a few resolutions, and get out for a bit more exercise. And, if that exercise should happen to involve visiting a pub – well, it's always best to break yourself in gently.

As the writers of more walking books than you can comfortably stuff into a rucksack have discovered, country pubs are damned fine places to call into after – or before (or indeed halfway round) – a walk. So here are ten rather fine country pubs with walks on their doorstep – the first four of which can be reached by train.

Cross Guns, Avoncliff (open all day; food served all day)

Avonliff Halt, a request stop on the Bristol-Bath-Weymouth line, lies on the other side of the River Avon from the Cross Guns.



Cross Guns, Avoncliffe

To get there, you have to cross a canal aqueduct. With such an idyllic location, it's not surprising that this pub – serving ales from Box Steam Brewery – is so popular. It's great walking country as well – if you're feeling energetic, you can climb out of the valley and head across country; a less strenuous option is to walk along the canal towpath to Bradford on Avon, a mile or so away, and sample some of the pubs there. Heading the other way, the towpath takes you to Bath, eight miles away – giving plenty of time to work up a decent thirst. Or you could head to the Inn at Freshford, the next village up the line, which also serves Box Steam beers – and catch the train back from there.

Old Spot, Dursley (open all day; food served 12-8 Mon-Thu, 12-3 Fri-Sun)

CAMRA National Pub of the Year 2007, with the Cotswold Way running virtually past its door – if you like drinking and walking it doesn't get much better than that. Hearty servings of locally-sourced food complement the excellent selection of local ales – and, even better, you don't have to drive to get here. Despite the accolades, it's still very much a local's pub – as one or two of the locals may go out of their way to point out – but, with a



Old Spot, Dursley

local as good as this, who can blame them. Cam & Dursley station, with regular trains from Bath and Bristol, is a couple of miles away, and a bus runs between the station and the town on Monday to Saturday.

Horse & Groom, Westbury (open all day; food served lunchtimes)

Across town from the railway station, the Horse & Groom serves its own range of Westbury Ales brewed at nearby Wessex



Westbury White Horse

Brewery (including a superb wheat beer). Good value food is on offer lunchtimes and evenings. It's the perfect place to prepare for – or recover from – a 150-metre climb up to the newly-restored White Horse. The views from the downs are, as you'd expect, breathtaking, and, as likely as not, your rural idyll will be accompanied by assorted bangs and blasts from the army training range to the east. If you're feeling particularly energetic, you can follow the Imber Range Path along the edge of the escarpment all the way to ...

The Organ, Warminster (open all day at weekends; from 4pm on weekdays)

Not many pubs make a comeback after being shut for almost a century, but the Organ has done just that. It closed around 1913, and, after spells as a butcher's and a greengrocer's, is now re-established as one of Warminster's most salubrious – and reassuringly traditional – drinking holes. Just the place to sit by the fire after stretching your legs on the Wiltshire Downs.

The other six pubs all need a car to get to,



Red Lion, Kilmington

but if you get a group together all you have to do is make sure you don't draw the short straw:

Red Lion, Kilmington, Wiltshire (open lunchtimes and evenings; food served lunchtimes)

This is Wessex Regional CAMRA Pub of the Year 2008 – need one say more? On the B3092 one mile north of Stourhead, it is owned by the National Trust and is a proper country pub with stone-flagged floors, roaring fires, great lunchtime food and, of course, excellent ales. The lane beside the pub leads up to a car park from where you can walk to White Sheet Hill, one of the highest points in



Old Crown, Kelston

the area, with superb views, while the landscape gardens at Stourhead, open daily throughout the year, are just a mile or so away.

Old Crown, Kelston (open all day; food served lunchtimes and evenings)

Three miles west of Bath on the A431, this 17th century coaching inn – now owned by Butcombe – is the starting point for a climb up to Prospect Stile – on the Cotswold Way – and Kelston Round Hill.

Crown, Churchill (open all day; food served lunchtimes)

With up to nine beers served straight from the barrel, home-cooked food, a roaring fire and a warren of tiny rooms, the Crown looks and feels like the archetypal country pub. In the same hands for 23 years and winner of numerous CAMRA awards, it's not the easiest of places to find – tucked away at the end of Skinner's Lane (off the A368 west of the



Crown at Churchill

traffic lights) – but it's well worth the effort. The classic walk round here – up to the heights of National Trust-owned Dolebury Warren – starts on the other side of the A38, and if you've not been up there on a clear day you don't know what you're missing.

Beaufort Arms, Hawkesbury Upton (open all day; food served lunchtimes and evenings)

Not only does the Cotswold Way run through Hawkesbury Upton, the village – just off the A46 six miles north of Junction 18 of the M4 – lies at the centre of a maze of



Beaufort Arms, Hawkesbury Upton

footpaths. A couple of them actually start in the Beaufort's car park! The landlord, Mark Steeds, is a member of the Bristol Pubs Group and a driving force behind the Long John Silver Trust, and the pub is crammed with breweriana from the Bristol area. Great pub food – the lamb shank is particularly recommended – and a range of local beers make this an ideal destination after a Cotswold ramble. And, if you're in the mood for a mini-pub crawl, the Good Beer Guide-listed Fox is just down the road.

Hunter's Lodge, Priddy BA5 3AR (open lunchtimes and evenings; food served lunchtimes and evenings)

You're more likely to find cavers than



The view from Dolbury Warren

hunters putting their feet up in this superb, unspoilt hostelry on a crossroads high in Mendips. This is caving country par excellence – there's even an entrance to a cave complex in the pub car park! Not that you have to go underground to work up an appetite for the great – and extremely reasonable – home-cooked food – pasties, chilli, cauliflower cheese, etc. You're not going to want to walk up here in bad weather, but, if it's fine, the area round about, riddled with lead workings going to Roman times and burial mounds dating back further still, is one of the most fascinating and atmospheric places for a brisk winter walk.



Plough and Harrow, Monknash



The Tower at Hawkesbury Upton

Plough & Harrow, Monknash, Glamorgan CF71 7QQ (open all day; food served lunchtimes and evenings)

A little farther afield, but well worth the trip. This is one of South Wales's top pubs, and just a mile or so from some of the most stunning coastal scenery you'll find anywhere. The wonder is that it's so easy to get there from Bath and Bristol – M4 to Junction 35, west on the A473/A48, south onto the B4265 and turn off when you see the sign for Monknash. The pub itself is medieval and originally formed part of a monastic grange (the ruins of the rest of it are around the back). The range of ales (and ciders) is superb, as is the food. Lunch here, followed by a brisk walk along the cliffs along from Nash Point is guaranteed to blow the cobwebs away.

Andrew Swift

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Art Brew

NOT content with bringing the Royal Oak on Bath's Lower Bristol Road back from the dead and winning the coveted title of local CAMRA Pub of the Year two years running, John and Becky Whinnerah have now opened a brewery. This was part of the plan from the start, but, having explored – and dismissed – the possibility of opening it at the Royal Oak, they set about looking for a suitable site.

Eventually, while visiting Becky's parents down in Dorset they came upon the perfect spot – an old barn which had been converted to a furniture workshop but now sat empty – on a farm with its own spring. Set in the rolling Dorset countryside midway between Bridport and Lyme Regis, the views are stunning. The name of the brewery – Art Brew – combines John's and Becky's passion for art and brewing as well as underlining their commitment to the brewer's art. Having served hundreds of different beers at the Royal Oak, they've sampled the best of what's on offer, so they know what they're up against.



The home of Art Brew

The first beers from the five-barrel plant were ready in late September, just in time for the St Alban's Beer Festival, where they met with a very favourable reception. Launch parties were held at the Royal Oak as well as at the GBG-listed Lamb in Axminster, just down the road from the brewery. Art Brew beers are now available in a growing number of pubs not only in the West Country but also as far afield as London and Lancashire. There are also plans to sell mini-casks through a variety of local outlets.

The first three beers from Art Brew are: *Art Nouveau*, a golden session beer, packed full of hops (particularly the fragrant Boadicea variety) and full of flavour despite an ABV of only 3.9%; *Art Brut*, a well-rounded caramel bitter with an ABV of 4.4% and a hoppy finish, making the most of the brewery's gas-fired copper which naturally creates maltier brews; and *i beer*, a golden beer with an ABV of 4%, which balances out a strong vanilla flavour with some equally fragrant and punchy hops.

One thing John and Becky won't do at Art Brew is play it safe. Although *Art Brut* will be their flagship bitter, with *i beer* they have started as they mean to go on, experimenting with new flavours and brewing techniques.



John and Becky on launch night

Vanilla has been used sparingly as a beer flavouring before and then mainly with dark chocolatey brews. John, though, had been itching to try adding it to a golden beer and, although the result is not likely to appeal to the cautious drinker, there have been some rave reviews from the beer festivals and pubs it's been tried out in. There are now plans for a dark winter ale called *Dark Brut* and a spiced dark ale for Christmas called *Born in a Barn*.

As for the Royal Oak, it's now in the capable hands of Chris Powell, who's been John's right-hand man from day one, ably assisted by deputy manager Dave Selby. Three years on, it's such a firm fixture on the real ale scene that it's hard to imagine Bath without it. The Royal Oak is a genuine community pub, which not only promotes real ale with an almost evangelical zeal, but is now the brewery tap for one of the West Country's newest and most exciting breweries.

It's also the venue for the annual Organic Beer Festival from 8th to 14th December. During the festival the Royal Oak will be open all day till midnight Monday to Wednesday, till 1pm Thursday to Saturday, and midnight on Sunday. It is hoped to have beers from Marble Brewery, Organic Brewhouse, Butts, Little Valley and Bartrams, among others. For details, including the entertainment line-up, see www.theroyaloak-bath.co.uk.

To find out more about the Art Brew brewery or to place an order, contact: The Art Brew Barn, Northend Farm, off Venn Lane, North Chideock, Dorset DT6 6JY, or email artbrewdorset@googlemail.com.

Andrew Swift



The view from Art Brew

Palace saved



THE Bristol & District CAMRA Pubs Campaigning Group (Pubs Group) was set up in order to, above all, save our pubs from closure, re-development and change of use. There are many roles that individual pubs can play; community pub, real ale pub, cider house, sports pub, live music pub, family pub, heritage pub – the list goes on. One of our greatest heritage pubs is the Palace Hotel in Old Market, affectionately known as the Gin Palace. When this pub closed in 2005 there was great concern for its future. It changed hands and the new owner applied to change the ground floor bar into an estate agents office. This provoked a huge outcry from pub-goers, historians and architectural professionals not only from Bristol but from all around the country.

The Pubs Group was formed around this time and as a few members were already fighting the cause of the Gin Palace, it became a flagship campaign of the group to get the Palace opened again as a pub.

We persuaded the owner that the best use for his Grade II listed bar was as a pub, so he set to marketing it as such. We put forward contacts that were interested in talking about terms for the tenancy, but none quite made the deal. Then the so-called credit crunch bit harder and interest waned. Meanwhile, a conversion of two shops into a new bar opposite the Palace became Bristol's latest gay pub, adding to the few that are already established in the area of Old Market. Satisfied with the success of this venture, the owner has now established a tenancy on the Palace to operate it as another gay venue.

The Palace Hotel is importantly listed on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors (or Heritage Pubs) due to its magnificent bar back and associated fittings. It is quite unique with its strangely sloping floor, and one of only two pubs so listed in the city of Bristol (and one of only around 265 nationwide). It remains increasingly important to Bristol's pub scene as more and more traditional pub interiors and layouts are lost to so-called improvements, or lost altogether as pubs are converted to other uses.

A great deal of time and effort was put into saving the Palace and we thank all of those who participated. I hope that in the longer term its importance will be more widely recognized and the need to campaign for its pub status will be a thing of the past.

Mike Jackson

Trips and Socials

FOR those of you that don't know, the local CAMRA branch runs a regular series of 'Explorer' and 'Survey' trips, usually two or three times a month, as well as trips to breweries and other events.

Taking the Explorer and Survey trips first, these are an excellent way to get out and about and visit pubs in the Bristol suburbs and further afield which are often very difficult to get to by public transport. More importantly, it also enables us as a branch to monitor the beer quality at those pubs already in the Good Beer Guide (GBG), and also acts as a springboard for those pubs not in the GBG who may be contenders for a future guide.

We usually charter a minibus or something bigger, with most trips departing from the Cornubia in Bristol at 18.45, and returning to the Centre by 22.50 to allow last buses to be caught. These trips are excellent value at £5 a head, and typically visit four or five pubs during the course of the evening, making it a good social occasion too!

Recent trips have visited Clevedon and Portishead, the Keynsham/Saltford/Kelston areas, Wrington, Congresbury and Nailsea, and the East Mendips.

In addition, we also take time out to visit and support some of the breweries in our region.

For example, on November 1st, and in support of BADRAG's 'rare ales promotion', our happy band initially visited the **Cotswold Spring Brewery**. Here, head brewer Nik Milo took us through the brewing process and enlightened us as to what goes on in making the brewery tick. As well as generously putting on several of the brewery's beers for us to sample, bottled beers were also available – including Christmas Old Ale – to purchase, and quite a few participants decided to buy some for sampling at a later date.

We then made the short journey to the GBG-listed **New Inn** at Mayshill, where the landlord Dave had already briefed his kitchen staff to expect an influx of hardened but hungry drinkers in search of good food – and to everyone's credit, an excellent range was served up quickly – and was delicious too! Dave also kindly put on four real ales

at the special price of £1.85 a pint – this offer usually only available to card-carrying CAMRA members on Sunday and Monday evenings. This is an excellent pub and well worth a visit for the quality of the ale as well as the general ambience.

From there, it was then on to the recently relocated **Arbor Ales Brewery** in Kingswood, where we met Jon Comer. The recent move to larger premises has been a success, and Jon gave us an excellent insight as to the current operations of the 5.5 barrel plant and future plans. Not forgetting the range of excellent beers provided for us to sample, although Jon did say that the Old Knobbly will still be brewed, but only on an occasional basis.

We'd like to thank both brewers for their hospitality and in giving up their hard-earned free time to show us around, so do keep a look out for beers from both these breweries in your local pub and give them a try. We are sure you won't be disappointed!

Thanking Jon for his time, we then headed back into the Centre, stopping briefly at the **Staple Hill Oak** and the **Chelsea Inn** at Easton.

A few days later, our mini bus took to Nailsworth, to the home of the **Nailsworth Brewery** which reopened in 2004. Brewer and owner Jon Kemp took us through the problems and challenges in running a microbrewery – with local politics just one of several hurdles to be jumped. The brewery is located beneath the GBG-listed (and now local pub of the year) **Village Inn**, and space is at a premium. With beers such as The Mayor's Bitter and the excellent dark Vicar's Stout available, the time passed quickly. Many thanks to Jon for giving up his evening.

On the return, we stopped off at the excellent **Beaufort Arms** in Hawkesbury Upton, which had an interesting range of ales on, including at least one by local brewery Severn Vale.

If you haven't been on one of our trips yet, why not contact the social secretary at badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk for more information, or keep an eye on the branch website – or check the inside back page in this edition.

Tim Proudman

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REFRESHINGLY HOPPY BEERS

Blasts from our brewery past

PART of what makes one High Street different from another is its architecture and 'street furniture' but lately, though, their appearance seems to have become homogenised, with High Streets up and down the country beginning to look the same.

To try and counter this negative trend, and to record some of our sights and scenes before they all go, the **Brewery History Society** recently conducted a survey of surviving brewery liveries, company and trade marks, as well as examples of brewer's names painted upon walls, etched windows and glazed tile work.

The Bristol and District CAMRA area has suffered from the same malaise, and I wondered if some of our existing gems could be highlighted. Here are a few of the survivors that stand out.

The **Georges Brewery** site redevelopment is thankfully keeping its remaining nomenclature – currently being stitched into the fabric of the new structure.

Old Market has a few more fine examples. Although a little faded now, the much loved **Gin Palace** still proudly proclaims in paint at the side of the pub; "Usher's noted 6d beers". This was the 19th century Usher's of Bristol, not Usher's of Trowbridge! It also has one of those ubiquitous West Country Ales "Best in



the West" ceramic tiles from when it used to be a Whitbread pub in a later incarnation, as indeed does the **Stag and Hounds**.

Almost opposite the Stag and Hounds, the recently refurbished **Punchbowl** has a fine array of glazed tile work surrounding the ground floor elevation and, if they did but know it, they've also got some great Rogers'

signage behind the modern barge board sign.

In past times, High Street pubs all over our locale had Courage Cockerels above their inn signs, but nowadays they're becoming as rare as hens' teeth. Predating the Courage brand, Georges (post-war) used to have their dray horse trade mark in silhouette, and one extremely rare survivor lives atop the **Wingrove** signage in Queens Road, Keynsham (pictured).

If Pints West readers would care to picture any rarities that they know about or find, could they please forward them to the Brewery History Society (email Defunct@BreweryHistory.com), along with the location of the objects, as the BHS would welcome additions to its archive and website at www.breweryhistory.com (entries are arranged by county, along with an index of brewers). If you could copy them to me as well (email mark@beaufortarms.com) the Bristol Pubs Group will also build up a file to add to those we already know about.

If you could also collate details of the remains of any breweries, Jeff Sechiari of the BHS would love to hear from you – his email address is Chairman@BreweryHistory.com.

Happy hunting.

Mark Steeds

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Island in the sea

by your Nailsea correspondent Laurie Gibney

IN my first "Island in the Sea" I explained that Nailsea was near Clevedon and many, many pints ago it is reputed to have been surrounded by the estuary of the Bristol Avon river before that cut through the Clifton Gorge, hence it was an Island In the Sea which translated to "Nailsea".

My early articles in 2002 gave information about some real ale bars in the area including the **Blue Flame**, **Barn**, **Ring of Bells**, **Mizzymeade Social Club**, **White Lion**, **Sawyers Arms**, **Moorend Spout**, **Star**, **Failand Inn** and the **Old Farmhouse** and which are still dispensing three or four real ales.

In later editions I reported about the **Courtyard Wine Bar**, **Friendship**, **Nailsea & Backwell Rugby Club** and the **Corner House** (previously known as the Queen's Head or Braggs) having one or two real ales.

Some of the bars in Nailsea seven years ago had no real ale, but I know of only one which still has no real ale. The **Masonic Hall** and **Glasshouse** have one real ale and two are usually available at the **Royal Oak**, **Grove** and **Nailsea Members Club**.

My February 2004 article started with the words "Use Pubs or Lose Pubs – that is the clear message from a number of publicans in Nailsea and District". Readers must have

responded well for I am pleased to say none in this area have fallen foul of pub closures which are sweeping the country ... yet! The **Moorend Spout** was boarded up briefly in 2005, but has reopened and is thriving. Since then there have been changes in licensees or managers except at the **Blue Flame**, the **Barn**, the **Courtyard**, **Ring of Bells**, and the **Sawyers Arms**.

In October 2003 I pre-empted the "LocAle" campaign launched in Bristol recently to encourage the sale of beers brewed locally within twenty miles or so. I reported that beers on sale at the **Ring of Bells** and **Moorend Spout** were brewed in Yorkshire, Hampshire, Burton, Somerset, Sheffield, London, Bristol, Cardiff, Suffolk and Oxfordshire.

In 2003 I reported that the "Nailsea Team" distributed Pints West to fifteen pubs in North Somerset; that number has increased to fifty, with thanks to our local distribution team of Jill & Mark Ashman, Martyn Howell, Mike Seeley, Alan Sibley, and my wife Mary Gibney.

And away from Nailsea ...

I reported on various trips away from the area and the real ales we found in Dublin, Jersey, Madeira, Poland, Luton, Bath,

Cheltenham, Street, East Lambrook, Scotland, Dorset, London, Birmingham, Cumbria and Porthmadog. I have also reported from time to time on real ale elsewhere in North Somerset, in Backwell, Wraxall, Long Ashton, Failand, Clevedon, Portishead, Kenn, Yatton, Congresbury, Cleve and Bristol, when time allowed and others were not available to provide an article.

And finally ...

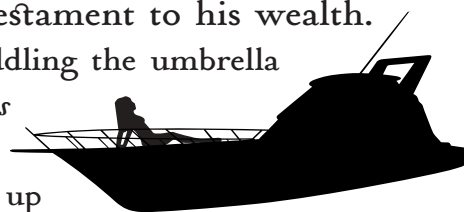
I have been researching and writing "Island in the Sea" about real ales in Nailsea and District every quarter for seven years now, and regret that this must be my last article. To those who have told me they enjoyed reading my articles, and to the licensees who have patiently kept me informed – thank you.

A couple of years ago I became heavily involved in promoting rare styles of real ales (almost unseen in Nailsea yet) such as stouts, porters, old ales, milds, barley wines and low-gravity bitters, under the banner of "BADRAG" (Bristol & District Rare Ales Group). Support for such rare ales has increased beyond expectation. BADRAG is occupying my time to such a degree that "Island in the Sea" will have to sink beneath the waves ... unless you would like to take over? If so, please contact the editor.

"He was the man who had everything, except *Theakstons* OLD PECULIER"

We'd been muickers at school. Then he went into property and made so many millions they ran out of multi's to describe them. Some years later and here I was in the Med, a guest aboard this floating testament to his wealth.

"Aye, I've got plenty of ACKERS," grumbled my friend, twiddling the umbrella in his cocktail, "but no bloomin' pub and no bloomin' *Theakstons Old Peculier*, that's for sure." "Why don't you just go home and get some?" I asked. He snorted, glancing at his trophy wife soaking up the rays beside him, "It's the missus, won't go anywhere it rains." "Ah, I see." I replied, wondering how the leggy Latino lovely liked being referred to as the MISSUS. Then, wistfully, I thought of my very own special rain-spattered corner of Yorkshire. The lady I loved would be there now, behind her bar serving pint after pint of *Theakstons Old Peculier*, dark, rich, and deliciously strong. With my return ticket burning a hole in my pocket, I turned to my mate in exile. "Fancy another *Pina Colada*?" I enquired, smugly.



Georges

IN the good old days, when breweries saw themselves as inheritors of a long and noble tradition, they took a great deal of pride not only in their estates but also in their archives. Sadly, now that the estates of many breweries have been taken over by pubcos, such respect for the past has often gone out of the window – or to be more precise into the skip.

While some material has ended up in repositories such as those at Oxford Brookes University or the Birmingham Reference Library, much has simply been thrown away. Such was the fate of the photographic record of Georges Brewery – a pictorial inventory of all their pubs and off-licences, many of which have long since closed.

Fortunately, part of the collection was rescued from the skip in which it had been so unceremoniously dumped, and, thanks to Martin Gibson, the landlord of Cosies Wine Bar in Portland Square, is now on loan to the Bristol Pubs Group.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of this collection, which, although far from complete, gives a vivid sense of what pubs were like in the Bristol area before redevelopment mania took hold of the city. Many of the pubs have, of course, gone – either demolished to make way for flats, offices or road widening, or converted to other uses.

At a time when pubs are closing faster than ever before, it is sobering to see what has already been lost. If nothing else, it should stiffen our resolve to save what is left. The pictures, which show what pubs looked like 50 years or so ago, will also be invaluable in resolving planning issues and assisting those who want to restore pubs to their former glory.

The photos – some 400 of them – cover not only the whole of Bristol, but also parts of Bath & North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Most date from the immediate post-war years, although many are a good deal earlier. They are mounted on large boards and it is hoped they can be put on public display some time next year. They are also in the process of being digitised, with the aim of making them accessible to the widest possible audience.

To whet your appetite, here a selection of images from the collection, showing some familiar, along with some less familiar – and long gone – pubs from Bristol and beyond.

1. The Bell on East Street, Bedminster, now painted the battleship grey that is now so fashionable when pubs are being given a makeover (witness the Windmill by Bedminster station) and renamed Quinn's Café Bar. The building behind has gone but a new high-rise is taking its place.

2. Just down the road from Quinn's is the Barley Mow – there's no picture of that in the archive, but there is one of the pub that stood at the other end of Philip Street, up past the Apple Tree. The Spring Tavern, though, is



1. Bell, East Street



2. Spring Tavern, Philip Street



3. Coronation Hotel, Dean Lane



4. Berkeley Castle, Redcliff Hill



5. Duke of York, Barton Road

Archive

long gone, a victim of road widening.

3. The Good Beer Guide-listed Coronation on Dean Lane in Southville is still going strong. It's seen here over 50 years ago, when it had an entrance on the corner. Now painted white (apart from the stone wall at the end) it looks a lot more cheerful now than it did then, and, as part of the Hop Back empire, is well worth a visit.

4. Another lost pub – the Berkeley Castle on Redcliff Hill was pulled down in 1961 to make way for redevelopment.

5. Over in the Dings, the Duke of York is better known these days as the Barley Mow, a superbly run Bristol Beer Factory pub. The ground-floor windows have been painted white, but there have been few other significant changes to the façade in the 50 years since this photo was taken.

6. The area around the Barley Mow has been transformed out of all recognition in the last 50 years, and is still in the throes of wholesale redevelopment. This is the Little Black Horse on Wellesley Street – just one of scores of pubs that have been bulldozed in the name of progress – in this case to build the Lawrence Hill roundabout.

7. It's not known if Byron ever came to Bath, and if he did it's extremely unlikely he stopped here. The Byron House at 2 Byron Place on the Lower Triangle is still there, but today, after a spell as the Baroque Bar, it's Illusions Magic Bar, with magicians, musicians and a cocktail bar.

8. This is a building that's seen a few changes since it was a pub. It stands on the corner of Portland Street and Waterloo Street in Clifton, and is now a jeweller's. The distinctive ground-floor façade is largely intact but the rest of the building has been radically altered.

9. A Ford Zephyr adds a touch of Z Cars to this photo of the Wine Vaults on Blackboy Hill. Today, greatly altered, it's the Jersey Lily.

10. Despite the loss of so many fine pubs over the years, the tally of defunct boozers is still rising. This is one of the most recent casualties – the Morning Star on Trenchard Street. It's not been a pub for a while, but the building survived until the site was wanted for an extension to the Colston Hall.

11. The Masons Arms in Kingdown, with its superb green tiles, is little changed today – apart from its name. It's now the Hare on the Hill.

12. Today, the Victoria Inn, on Chock Lane in Westbury-on-Trym, is a Wadworth's pub. It's



6. Little Black Horse, Wellesley



7. Byron House, Byron Place



8. Ccommercial Hotel, Portland



10. Morning Star, Trenchard Street



9. Wine Vaults, Blackboy Hill



11. Masons Arms, Thomas Street



12. Victoria, Chock Lane,



14. Newbridge Inn, Twerton



13. Rising Sun, Frampton Cotterell



15. Queen Victoria, Bathwick

lost its rather fine stained glass and the door to the jug and bottle has been blocked up, but it's still a cracking little local, with a listing in the Good Beer Guide.

13. The Rising Sun in Frampton Cotterell, now the brewery tap for the Great Western Brewery, is another cracking boozer – but very changed from when this photo was taken, with an extension at the front, another on the right and a conservatory on the left.

14. The Newbridge Inn, on the Lower Bristol Road in Bath, disappeared in 1971 to improve a road junction.

15. Another of Bath's lost pubs – the Queen Victoria on Hampton Row in Bathwick. The pub was shut and compulsorily purchased in 1965, along with the rest of Hampton Row, to build a road. The road never materialised, and the Queen Vic, along with the rest of Hampton Row, is still there – although with no chance of reopening as a pub.

16 Finally, a rather damp shot of the Coopers Arms on Carlton Street, just off the sea front

in Weston-super-Mare. There's not much of old Carlton Street left, so it seems likely that the Coopers has been demolished.

Andrew Swift



16. Coopers Arms,
Weston-super-Mare

Cosies Wine Bar may not be a venue familiar to readers of *Pint West* – and its name may not automatically hold out the prospect of a decent pint of real ale – but it's well worth seeking out. Admittedly, due to space limitations, only one real ale is one at any one time, but it's in tip-top condition and is likely to be a little out of the ordinary. A recent visit found Deuchars IPA on tap; on a previous occasion Newman's Red Stag was on offer.

Situated in the basement of 34 Portland Square, facing one of the city's finest churches (now home to Circomedia), it's a friendly place to drop into at lunchtimes or early evenings, with the feel of a real local pub, while later in the evening it's transformed into a music venue. Excellent lunches and snacks are served from noon to 2pm, so if you're in the area and feel like trying somewhere different, why not drop in.

Andrew Swift

Bristol CAMRA campaigning group wins national award

BADRAG, the Bristol and District Rare Ales Group, is a campaigning group within the local branch of CAMRA whose aim is to promote the rarer styles of ale such as porters, milds, light bitters, stouts, old ales and barley wines. In recognition of the group's very successful campaigning efforts over the last year, BADRAG has been given the top award from CAMRA's national Promotions & Marketing Committee.

A spokesman for the Promotions & Marketing Committee said: "The local BADRAG group was only set up a short time ago. In that time a lot of hard work has been put in by the team of volunteers who have shown tremendous enthusiasm in driving forward this aspect of CAMRA's campaigning, as well as supporting all of the other activities within the Bristol and District CAMRA branch.

"As well as producing promotional material for pubs, liaising with pub licensees, dealing with the administration, encouraging breweries to produce rare ale styles, and attending meetings all over the area, these guys also hold down a day job!"

Recent activity led to the appearance of more mild ales during CAMRA's May promotion than has probably ever been seen. Over 50 pubs had on their bars a beer style that has not normally been found in the South West region. This is a reflection of the fantastic campaigning that has taken place.

The group more recently turned its attention to a "make autumn time to brew, sell, taste and enjoy rare ales" promotion, and is looking to expand its Mild Month of May to run throughout the spring.



Brett Laniosh presents the award to BADRAG's Laurie Gibney (right)

The award was presented to Laurie Gibney on behalf of BADRAG by Brett Laniosh, CAMRA's Director of Promotions & Marketing.

Runner-up awards went to the following for their own particular promotions of rare ale styles.

Steve Gibbs of Durham brewery. Steve endorses old-style brewing methods and revives old recipes. He produces a number of dark beers, from a ruby mild to a Russian

stout.

Trevor Readman of the Captain Cook Inn, Staithes. Trevor's love of dark beer means that he puts at least a couple of pins (more in summer) of dark beer on over each weekend. He also holds a number of themed beer festivals at the pub each year, in which milds, porters and stouts are always well featured. He won a special award from Cleveland CAMRA for "Mild supporter of the year" in 2007.

Becky Newman, licensee at the Bricklayer's Arms in Putney, London. Becky and her brother-in-law rescued this pub from closure in 2005, and have since steadily increased the beer range. Even though there's not a huge market for mild in London, the Bricklayer's regularly has both Timothy Taylor Dark Mild and Golden Best on sale, as well as Ram Tam. The Bricklayer's was voted SW London branch Pub of the Year for 2006, and went on to win the London regional award in 2007.

● The **Cornubia** in Temple Street, Bristol, is having a small winter beer festival on the weekend of the 12th to 14th December. Luke Daniels says, "We're are going to try to get another three handpulls put into the pub as a temporary measure for the weekend."

● The **Portcullis** in Wellington Terrace, just down the road from the Clifton Suspension Bridge, is having a Christmas beer festival from 11th to 15th December. This will coincide with the grand opening of its new pub garden.

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Are you a Chelsea supporter?

SORRY if you've paused to read this piece under the impression that it was about football because it isn't. I am referring to the Chelsea Inn, a 'back street boozer' with a difference.

For those of you who have never heard of it, this community local lies in the heart of Easton, arguably Bristol's most cosmopolitan area reputed to be inhabited by speakers of as many as fifty different languages. Situated some distance from the nearest main road, this pub benefits from little, if any, passing trade, relying on local regulars as well as its growing reputation among enlightened and adventurous drinkers from elsewhere who have managed to find it.

Some older readers may remember the pub, on Chelsea Road, by its previous name, Clarence House – something best forgotten in common with a reputation as a den of iniquity. After enforced closure some years ago it was refurbished, renamed and reopened as a community pub serving real ales. When the owners decided to quit early in 2006, the pub was purchased by Celtic Inns who in turn very quickly disposed of the Chelsea, along with the rest of their pubs, to Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries (subsequently renamed Marston's).

Since the Marston takeover in May 2006, the licensee has been Keith Hewett, who hails originally from Jersey. One of the first actions by Marston's was to restrict all ex-Celtic houses to buying beers from their own list thereby removing Keith's best-selling ale, Bath Gem. It was not all bad news because the Marston beer list has increased considerably especially since their takeover of Ringwood and Wychwood. The most popular ale is now Jennings Sneek Lifter – this delicious, dark, strong ale is normally available here in the winter months but seldom seen elsewhere in Bristol.

In common with most small pubs, the Chelsea has scarcely been viable in the last year or so with the result that Keith, who trained as a biomedical scientist, has joined the growing ranks of the part-time publican, having gone back to working for the University of the West of England a couple of days per week. Marston's, aware of the plight of their tenant and not wanting to see their public house closed and sold



off, have recently offered Keith a new deal. In return for a rent increase they have allowed him to stock a wider range of guest ales and craft ciders.

Therefore, the next few months will be make or break for the Chelsea as, if all else fails, Keith will probably return to a full-time job. A new bank of six hand pumps (replacing the original four), together with cellar improvements, is currently being undertaken, thereby increasing the number of ales on offer. In view of this it would be a great pity if this Victorian pub, with its idiosyncratic interior featuring the work of local artists and craftsmen as well as internet access and a homely plethora of second-hand dining tables, armchairs and settees, were to succumb to closure. It is largely a young person's pub, unusual for a local specializing in real ale, and should be supported for this reason alone. Live music features three times a week: jazz on Tuesdays, 'open mike' on Wednesdays and visiting bands on Saturdays – and there is always quality real ale!

Henry Davies



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Socials Review

In August the local branch undertook a crawl of Congresbury's pubs. The highlights were the Good Beer Guide-listed **Plough Inn** (free house with a good selection of beers) and the Young's-owned **Old Inn**. Both these pubs are well worth a visit if you are in the area.

September saw us at the **Raglan** on Upper Church Road. If you live in Weston, like real ale and haven't been to the Raglan, get on over there. The night of our social happily coincided with an increasingly rare delivery trip up the M5 by the excellent O'Hanlon's brewery, based in Whimble, Devon. Three of their beers were on offer – *Yellowhammer*, *Dry Stout* and *Royal Oak*. All were in excellent condition. As usual, Robin (Born To Be) Wild went for a cocktail. This was a mix of the *Stout* and *Royal Oak*. The beer was accompanied by a very nice buffet laid on by Freddy.

A wet night in October saw us in the Hotwells area of Bristol – an easy bus journey from Weston, stopping very close to the start and finish points of the evenings crawl. We began at the **Merchants Arms**. All the usual Bath Ales beers were on, including the mighty *Wild Hare*, their 5% ABV organic offering. Inspired by Mark Steeds' article in the last Pints West, we popped over the river to the **Nova Scotia**. A great pub with bags of character that I would encourage anyone to visit. Several customers were indulging from the good-value menu. Our group made do with the liquids – all went for Wickwar's autumn offering, *Autumnale*. Most were impressed with this new seasonal beer. One described it as tasting like "a young old ale"! *Bath Gem*, *Otter Bright* and *Courage Best* were the other beers on offer.

Back in Hotwells we headed up to the **Adam & Eve**. Only two ales on here – *Bath Gem* again and *RCH Pitchfork*. The latter was superb. We endured another soaking on the way to the **Grain Barge**. Bristol Beer Factory owns this floating pub and four of their beers were available on draught – *No. 7*, *Red*, *Sunrise* and *Exhibition*. Everyone was impressed with the beers as well as the venue.

The final stop of the evening was the great **Bag O'Nails**. As usual, a fantastic selection of ales, with beers from *Elland*, *Hop Back*, *Otter*, *Rugby*, *Great Western*, *Bank Top*, *Dorset* and *Palmer* breweries. Happily we had ensured that we had an hour to spend here before the bus home and all the beers tried were in top-notch condition.

The following night I had the pleasure of witnessing the God-like genius of Wilko Johnson at the **Fleece** in Bristol. This was preceded by some superb *Otter Witch* at the adjacent **Seven Stars**, which has emerged in recent months as one of Bristol city centre's finest pubs. The Fleece had *Timothy Taylor Landlord*. Unfortunately, my beer tasted like it was from the bottom of a barrel and one that had been open for a very long time. Unsurprisingly it was quickly withdrawn from sale, so I had to make do with Newcastle Brown for the rest of the evening.

Over the Halloween weekend, a group of us had a great time visiting Bavaria. We stayed in Bamberg, the home of smoked beer and had a day in Nuremberg. I would love to tell you more but, not for the first time, Vince Murray and Phil Cummings got there first (see their detailed review in Pints West 79).

Upcoming

The most popular social in the Weston branch calendar is invariably the Christmas Seasonal Ales Crawl. This year will be the tenth year of this annual event and it will take place on the 17th of December, starting at the **Raglan** and visiting five or six more pubs that have a seasonal beer on. Non-members are very welcome to join us for the evening.



Paul and Liz Sprackman at the Waverley

Other news

Things are looking up again at the **Waverley** on Severn Road. Paul Sprackman and Colin Hughes took over the Pubfolio-owned pub in April. Paul had previously been the steward at the Working Men's Club and is now determined to both preserve the Waverley's character (and characters!) and make it a genuine real ale pub. Don't expect to find John Smith's Smooth (although I would hope that as a reader of Pints West you would never be looking for it!) – there are no keg beers.

Despite being owned by a pub company Paul says that he is "free of tie" and can choose which beers he stocks. The current permanent beers are *Wells Bombardier*, *Courage Directors* and *Greene King Abbot Ale*. Due to the very good turnover of these beers Paul is putting on a guest beer. At the time of my visit this was *Courage Best*, which Paul reported was not going very well.

Hopefully, some beers brewed slightly closer to home will be given a chance. There are 20 breweries in Somerset, including one of the country's best in West Hensleigh, a stone's throw from Weston. The beers I tried at the Waverley were in very good condition and a regular, on hearing I was in CAMRA, made a point of emphasising to me how good the beer always is.

The Weston branch will be holding a social at the Waverley in the New Year – see diary inside back cover for details.

The **Ebdon Arms**, Wick St Lawrence, is the latest pub in the area to be awarded "Cask Marque" accreditation for the quality of their ales. Danny Solsberg and Rhian Hughes are at the helm.

The **Corner House**, Meadow Street, normally stocks one ale – *Butcombe Bitter*. *Brains SA* from Cardiff was recently added. It is not clear whether this was a "one-off" appearance but the quality was raved about by a local Welsh ale connoisseur.

The **Bristol House** on Milton Road has been looking forlorn for several weeks. This community pub is closed with a board outside advertising the "opportunity" of taking it on. This has been placed there by owners Enterprise Inns. One of their tenants in Kent recently made the national press by staging a 10-day hunger strike, lying in a coffin in his pub, to protest about his treatment at the hands of Enterprise. I am sure this was just an aberration and that this pub company really offers attractive terms to its tenants (he joked).

Tim Nickolls

A Round with Robin

AS I finished the last article mentioning my free bus pass, I feel a word of warning is due to those travellers by bus that a good book (as well as the Good Beer Guide) is useful as connections are never as clever as you think they will be. Sometimes, though, this can work in your favour, as I found recently on a visit to the **George** at Croscombe for their beer festival.

The bus from Weston-super-Mare to Wells leaves enough time for a swift half of *Butts Barbus Barbus* in the **City Arms** before the connection to Croscombe. After some excellent beers (especially *Bath Ales Wild Hare*, *Moor Revival*, and *Box Dark & Handsome*) on gravity dispense, and a game of skittles (with free chips), we returned to Wells, which required a wait of 40 minutes, which we spent at the **Kings Head** where I had the *Moor Merlin's Magic*. As I had to stop off in Axbridge on the way back there was time for table-skittles in the **Crown Inn** (*Sharp's Doom Bar*), and the **Lamb** (*Butcombe Bitter*).

I visited the Dawkins pubs for their recent beer festivals, with excellent programmes and tasting notes, and the **Green Man** (previously known as the Bell) had the most unusual selection. My favourites were *Batemans Summer Swallow* at the **Miners Arms**, *Spectrum Black Buffle* at the **Green Man**, and the *Orkney ales Scapa Special* and *Orkney Blast* at the **Portcullis**.

It has been my privilege to serve beer at the Somerset CAMRA beer festival at Minehead West Somerset Railway Station in September and at the Bath & Borders CAMRA beer festival at Bath Pavilion in October. Both festivals had about 90 beers to choose from, and though it was difficult I can say I could choose my favourite at each from beers not tried before. At Minehead the *Millstone Three Shires* (4%) yellow ale had not only astounding fruit aroma but the taste and aftertaste were as satisfying. At Bath I found that *Possession* was a beer that suited my palate. This is a straw coloured beer from the *Blackwater* brewery in the West Midlands. It had real depth of flavour and the hoppiness bought out the complexity well after the last drop. Although many stronger beers were selling out by the end of the lunchtime session most punters seemed to have overlooked this one, perhaps because it was a mere 4.2%. My second favourite at Bath is also worth a mention: *Gathering Storm* (4.4%) from Leeds was a superb smooth stout, eminently quaffable.

On my travels I have been to a few pubs, but not only those in the Good Beer Guide. Thanks to some of the smaller bus companies it is possible to get to villages in Wiltshire that sometimes had no services at all. However that hasn't stopped me walking to a few as well. On a stroll along the Kennet & Avon canal east of Devizes, I called in to the **New Inn** at Coate, about a mile south of the canal, which had *Wadworth* beer from the wood; the *Henry's* was exemplary. On another trip to Wiltshire we went via Bradford on Avon (always worth a visit) to Holt, to visit the Good Beer Guide-listed **Tollgate**. This is rather posh, with magnificent flowers and a large menu, but welcoming and I had a good pint of *Pewsey Three Castles King Alfred*. On a warm day recently I walked from Bath to Wellow using much of the old railway line from Tuckers Mill, which is now a cycleway. At Wellow I had a much needed pint of *Butcombe Bitter* at the **Fox and Badger**, and the public



The King's Arms, Brislington

bar is almost something close to National Inventory standards. Another pub I'd not been to before, though have passed by hundreds of times, is that great survivor the **Kings Arms Inn** at Brislington, surrounded by 1970s buildings. Although much of the interior has been altered there are enough hatches, doorways and small windows to give the feel of what it used to be like – probably an old coaching inn, as the outbuildings stretch back along former Grove Road (now Hollywood Road). The beers were *Courage Best* and *Sharp's Doom Bar* on my last visit here and on my first visit the lady behind the bar was reading *What's Brewing!* The **Wheelwrights Arms** at Monkton Combe is also worth a visit for the well kept beers, but the *Libra* bus is not very frequent, so it is easiest to stroll from the Warminster road by the Limpley Stoke viaduct as buses stop there every the half hour.

In October I visited friends in Sussex where in Newick, a small village north of Lewes, in the Sussex weald, they are lucky enough to have three pubs, and as only one is in the Good Beer Guide, I present a quick run down on them in case you are ever passing. For many years the **Bull** at Newick was in the Guide, but formerly as a free house. It is now a *Shepherd Neame* pub, no bad thing really as it promotes real ale, and differs from the other two pubs. When I was there they had *Jack* (3.6%), *Kent's Invicta Ale* (4.1%) and *Spitfire* (4.5%), and the smell of cooking was a delightful accompaniment to the beers drawn from new handpumps. (This pub now opens 11am to 3pm and 6pm to 11pm during the week.) Almost opposite is the Good Beer Guide-listed pub, the **Royal Oak**, where the *Harvey's Sussex Bitter* is served to near perfection. For those wanting to drink a *Fuller's London Pride* this is available too. This is a very friendly pub, and the walls are covered with cricketing mementos as the local teams meet here. This pub too is now closed in the afternoon. The third pub is the **Crown** and is open all day. This is a *Greene King* pub, where the footballers hang out, and the *Morland Original* bitter is served along with the *Abbot and IPA* beers. Pub games abound with a rather unusual slot for the 'toad in the hole' (a Sussex game). Pubs I liked in Brighton are the **Heart & Hand** in North Road, and the **Royal Standard** in Queen's Road, both selling *Harvey's Sussex Bitter*.

I have been a frequent visitor to the **Commercial Rooms** and the **Seven Stars** in Bristol, especially on Wednesdays; now I wonder why that would be...

Robin E Wild



Bath & Borders Branch

Pub and brewery news

Art Brewery at the Royal Oak, Lower Bristol Road, Bath

John and Becky Whinnerah of the Royal Oak have opened a new micro-brewery in North Chideock in Dorset. A feature of the new brewery is the use of water from the premises' own natural spring. The brewery's first three beers were launched at the Royal Oak on Thursday 9th October. The Art Nouveau is a hoppy session beer, the slightly stronger i-Beer has a strong hint of vanilla, whilst the Art Brut is simply fabulous. The Art Nouveau and i-Beer featured at the Bath Beer Festival.

Bear, 6-10 Wellsway, Bath

This large pub, which closed earlier this year, has re-opened as a sort of half-diner, half-pub venue.

Castle Inn, Forester Avenue, Bathwick, Bath

This pub, tucked away behind Bathwick Street, has closed following a slump in profits that the licensees have blamed primarily on the smoking ban. The landlords David and June Skelton said that they are very sad to be leaving the pub, which was their home for seven years, but claim that they had no choice. The pub, which is in a cul-de-sac, does not benefit from passing trade and Mr Skelton said that it had not been well supported by locals. Mr Skelton went on to say in a recent article in the Bath Chronicle: "We have tried everything to stay here; we have even tried to serve food but we do not have a commercial kitchen and to make all the renovations would cost too much money. We have loved living here and are obviously very sad to leave. We hope to stay in the city but do not wish to return to the pub industry. Of course we feel bad for the handful of really loyal customers but unfortunately we cannot continue with so few loyal people. The pub culture has changed and the smoking ban has hit us terribly." The couple, who have run the pub on their own over the years, have had only one day off since they moved into the premises. Meanwhile Mr Skelton has used his second job as an engineer to supplement the income from the pub. A wake was held when the pub closed in around August. Since then the lease has been acquired with the intention, we gather, to re-open the premises as a pub.

Englishcombe Inn, 157 Englishcombe Place, Bath

This large pub, on the outskirts of the city, is up for sale (for a cool million so we gather).

Rising Sun, 3-4 Grove Street, Bath

One of three pubs in Bath called the Rising Sun, this one has recently undergone a major internal refurbishment, and has been greatly improved. Interesting beers and good food available here: well worth a visit.

White Hart, Widcombe, Bath

It is believed that this pub has been recently refurbished. In fact it was dramatically refurbished only a few years ago and was at that time transformed from a rather down-at-heel bikers' pub to an elegant modern bistro-style pub. The new refurbishment has, we understand, increased the emphasis on food and fine dining.

Northend Inn, 41 Northend, Batheaston

The planning application to convert this recently closed invaluable community pub to residential use has been refused. The pub remains closed.

Horseshoe Inn, Bowlish, near Shepton Mallet

This pub, which closed many months or even some years ago, has been refurbished and re-opened. The Branch intends to include the Horseshoe in an upcoming minibus trip of the Wells and Shepton Mallet area.

Barge, 17 Frome Road, Bradford-on-Avon

Still a one-man show, plus a new chef, and managing to keep four decent real ales. Range consists of an own-branded beer from Hidden, Young's Bitter and two guests. Meanwhile this tucked-away canal-side pub has made it at the very last moment into the 2009 Good Beer Guide.

Beehive, 263 Trowbridge Road, Bradford-on-Avon

This excellent canal-side pub closed in around September. Trade had dropped off whilst prices had crept up. Meanwhile landlords Mark and Belinda de-camped to their narrow-boat. Then the pub closed. The future of the pub is uncertain. We fear that the owners Punch Taverns could easily be tempted to sell it off as residential development given the Beehive's relatively idyllic location.

Bunch of Grapes, 14 Silver Street, Bradford-on-Avon

A new lease-holder has taken this pub, and has gone into partnership with Mark, who stays on as chef and manager. The two public rooms have had a smart three-day makeover, wi-fi access is available and there is a new menu. No changes to beer range and the quality remains good.

George, 67 Woolley Street, Bradford-on-Avon

Landlords Julie and Jim Lynch, who met at the pub six years ago and married in 2005, are leaving the George at the end of November. The pub, locally renowned for hosting live music, have organised a series of farewell gigs and after Christmas will travel the world. The lease is to be passed on to a couple who are intent on keeping the pub as a live music venue.

George Hotel, High Street, Codford

The George, which was Wiltshire's Restaurant of the Year in 2006, has been named in the UKTV Local Food Heroes Awards competition as placed in the top 20 for the south west region. The award celebrates businesses that champion food with great taste and which, showing awareness of seasonality and animal welfare and ethical issues, has a strong local connection.

Cross Keys, Lye's Green, Corsley, near Warminster

This pub has changed hands, with former landlord Fraser having taken over the George in the nearby village of Nunney. Temporary landlords have been running the pub since around August. Arrangements for the future management of this Wadworth-owned pub are still to be sorted out.

Farmers Inn, Spring Gardens, Frome

This slightly out-of-town pub, which closed earlier this year, has recently re-opened.

Ship, Oldford, near Frome

Sign up outside advertising lease.

Cross Keys, 20 High Street, Rode

Landlords Jess and Steve White left the pub in around August. Temporary landlords have been running this Butcombe-owned pub since then. At the time of writing I am still waiting to hear if any permanent landlords have been appointed.

Woolpack, High Street, Sutton Veny

Still closed for what is gathered to be a major refurbishment. Metal shutters up over windows and doors.

Fox & Hounds, Tytherington, near Frome

A major extension, mainly for dining, has been added to this tucked-away out-of-town pub.

Sun Inn, Whatley, near Frome

This pub closed a few months ago. Its future is uncertain. A

worrying sign is the recent erection of metal shutters over doors and windows suggesting a long-term or permanent closure.

Organ Inn, 49 High Street, Warminster

The Organ Inn, which was re-opened as a pub after 93 years of closure in 2006, held its first beer festival over the weekend of Friday 12th September. It was on a modest scale, with around a dozen beers and a half dozen ciders, but none-the-less was well attended and a successful event – the first, we hope, of many.

Charlie's Bar, Market Place, Westbury

This Grade II listed town-centre wine bar/bistro-style pub, which closed for refurbishment in the spring of 2007 and re-opened January, is bidding to attract more custom with a coffee menu and outside cafeteria-style seating. The extensive refurbishment included excavation work on the cellar, restructuring the cellar walls and a complete refit of the bar. Inside there are exposed stone walls alongside wood panelling. Pictures on the walls include olden-day images of Westbury and the town's football team. The bar features a juke box, fruit and games machines, pool table, darts, cribbage, karaoke nights and live televised sport.

Red Lion, off A36, Woolverton

This Wadworth-owned roadside pub, which was extensively refurbished and extended earlier this year, was recently visited by a branch member who found its new open-plan design to be very smart indeed.



Stephen Hunt

Forthcoming events

Bath and Borders Socials and Meetings Diary

● Tuesday 2nd December, 8:30 pm.

A social at the *Foresters Arms* in Beckington, near Frome. A lovely Abbey Ales pub in a pretty village.

● Thursday 11th December, 8:30 pm.

A social at the *Bell* in Buckland Dinham. A great pub with a good range of beers and an enthusiastic landlord.

● Thursday 18th December, 8:30 pm.

A social at the *Rising Sun* in Grove Street in Bath. Highly recommended by our local experts!

● Tuesday 23rd December, 8:30 pm.

A mini crawl of Holt in Wiltshire, starting at the *Tollgate* and then going on to the *Old Ham Tree*, just down the road.

Also...

Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd January 2009

Fifth Bradford-on-Avon RFC Winter Warmer Weekend . . . at the RFC Club House, Winsley, near Bradford-on-Avon, only three hundred metres from the number 264/265 bus stop.

Opening times: Friday 7pm - 11pm, Saturday 1pm - 11pm, Sunday 1pm - 4pm.

A dozen seasonal beers and four ciders/perries available. Free entry.

No live music – quiet and relaxed throughout all sessions (although things might get busier around 4pm to 7pm on the Saturday as there are two home games during the afternoon!).

More details on our web site – www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk

Branch contact (for all non-socials matters):

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IT must say something when a beer festival gets its own entry on Wikipedia. In this respect Bath joins the illustrious likes of Cambridge, which hosts the longest-running annual event in the country, and the Great British Beer Festival, now held each August in London's Earls Court. Perhaps it has something to with the passing of thirty years.

In all that time the venue of the Bath Beer Festival has been the Pavilion. Originally, though, the festival was a spring event, held every April until 1989, then the following year it switched to autumn and has been held on the middle weekend of October ever since.

This year, as in previous years, we aimed for a beer selection to balance local with the far and wide whilst endeavouring to showcase as many brewing styles as possible. With a range of over eighty beers this was not too difficult to achieve.

Among the "locals" was the branch's newest brewery. In fact the *Art Brewery* is located in Dorset, but was set up by John and Becky Whinnerah, landlords of the Royal Oak in Twerton. On offer at the festival were the *Art Nouveau*, a hoppy session beer, and *i-Beer*, slightly stronger and with a distinct flavour of vanilla, both in tip-top condition.

Keener-eyed punters may have noticed a distinctly Halloween theme to this year's beer festival (not actually intentional; it simply turned out that way) with beers such as *Abbeydale's Last Rites*, which at 11% was the strongest beer available, *Blackwater Possession*, *Hambleton Nightmare*, *Harviestoun Number of the Beast*, *Hop Daemon Incubus* and *Leeds Brewery's Gathering Storm*.

This year's festival also featured an expanded range of cider and perry, whilst on the foreign beer bar we had for the first time some beers served on draught.

Attendance was down this year, especially on the Saturday evening session. In the end this was inevitable. On top of the credit crunch we had the added nuisance of weekend engineering work on the local rail network with no trains at all stopping at Bath on Saturday, and replacement buses running to and from Bristol, Swindon and Westbury.

We had noticed in the last few years that customers were tending to drift away at around 10pm on the Saturday evening session. (We assumed that they were off to have a night-cap or two in the many excellent pubs in central Bath and taking advantage of the fact that many of these close late on Saturday.) By 10:30 our staff would find themselves standing around selling very little beer and getting bored. So this year we closed at 10:30 on Saturday. Bad move! Sod's law dictated that at 10:30 this year we still had plenty of thirsty customers in the hall. So next year we'll probably stay open to 11pm.

The Pavilion is already booked for next year and, credit crunch chaos and the rail network allowing, the thirty-second Bath Beer Festival will be held on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th October.

Stephen Hunt, Denis Rahilly

News from the Bristol Beer Factory



THE Bristol Beer Factory is busier than ever and has just purchased some more casks to increase their stock level. They have also undergone some recent rebranding and have launched a new set of pump clips. Production Director Simon Bartlett said, "I think that we have now come up with a fantastic set of brand designs which really gives you a Bristol feel."

The launch was held at the brewery's pub, the Barley Mow and was very well attended. Flowing freely all night was their newly-brewed special Christmas ale, *Bristletoe*, which is 4.3% ABV and described as being "packed with flavour". It will continue to be available throughout December and should also be appearing at the Grain Barge, Racks, Nova Scotia, Hope & Anchor, Port of Call, Highbury Vaults, Windmill and Pipe & Slippers, and doubtless many more.

The Lounge group (Banco, Deco, Tinto, Porto, The Lounge, etc.) are in the process of changing their keg Flowers IPA over to their own

brand of real ale called *Toga Man*.

Toga Man is brewed by the Bristol Beer Factory and, surprisingly, tastes very similar to *No.7*! This move means that real ale fans will now be able to get a pint of locally brewed real ale in "Lounge" bars.

The Bristol Beer Factory and trying to install beer engines in as many of these as possible, but due to physical and technical issues in some venues, the beer will still need to be dispensed through a T bar.

In November, *No.7* won the champion beer award at the Rochford Beer Festival, an event with up to 200 ales to choose from and 4,000 attendees.

Red has made it into Sainsbury's – not in casks, not in bottles, but in pies, as Pieminister have just started to sell their ale pie into Sainsbury's. This they have chosen to make with Bristol Beer Factory's dark, fruity ale, *Red*. Great news for both Pieminister and BBF.

Richard Brooks

News from Bath

THE **Crown** in Bathwick has had a makeover and now presents a much more welcoming face to the world. The old layout, though, is unaltered, with that imposing staircase leading up from the main bar reminiscent of those wonderfully stylish bars in old westerns. Beerwise, things have been transformed as well, with Box Blind House, Blindman's Golden Spring and Bath Ales Gem all on offer on a recent visit.

Round the corner from the Crown, the **Castle** on Forester Avenue has reopened, after a short closure, under new management, with Courage Best and Abbey Ales Bellringer on offer.

The **King William** on the London Road continues to champion local breweries – a recent visit found ales from Cottage Brewery, Palmers and Stonehenge.

Palmers also features regularly alongside Bellringer and other guests at the **Coeur de Lion** in Northumberland Place. Renowned as Bath's smallest hostelry, it's no longer quite as small as it was. A new kitchen has been installed, freeing up the space where the old one was for use as a drinking and dining area. Possibly the best pub in Bath to sit outside and watch the world go by on a sunny day – if you can find a seat – as the nights draw in, the



The Crown in Bathwick

Coeur comes into its own, hidden away down a narrow alley, with the lights streaming through its stained glass windows, it's the sort of place, you feel, that Dickens would have felt at home in. And now you can take your drinks upstairs as well.

Talking of Dickens, the **Old Green Tree** held a book signing on 23rd November. As

Pints West went to press before the event, I can't let you know what happened, but Charles Dickens was billed to turn up and sign copies of his books as well as give some festive readings, assisted by characters from his novels, courtesy of Not Quite Black and White Theatre Productions.

The **Ram** in Widcombe hasn't appeared in the Good Beer Guide for a few years now, but the range and quality of the beers on offer – along with some of the best value pub food in Bath – make a detour across the river well worthwhile. If you haven't been to the Ram for a while, you'll also be surprised to see that a new bar has opened upstairs. The manager, Michelle Spencer, who used to run the Boater in the city centre, is also booking some top local bands – for more information visit www.therambath.com.

Phill Butler, better known as Phill the Pint, celebrated the tasting of his 5000th different beer at the Royal Oak in Bath on 20th November. Four special beers were brewed for the occasion: Cheddar Ales Barbara's Revenge, Blindman's Phill the Pint, Box 5001 Phil's Oddities and Art Brew Scooper. All were well received, the last named being especially noteworthy as the strongest beer – at 6% ABV – from Art Brew so far. It was a superb tippie and made those lucky enough to sample it even more eager to taste Art Brew's winter ale when it arrives.

Andrew Swift

The Barley Mow

WHEN Wadworth brewery closed the Barley Mow in the Dings some time ago, an awful lot of people thought “that’s it for another pub – more chuffing flats!”

Well, they were wrong. The recently formed Bristol Pubs Group (part of Bristol & District CAMRA) heard about the closure. They publicised the closure and along came a white knight in the form of local brewery, the Bristol Beer Factory.

On May 22nd, the Barley Mow reopened its doors after Bristol Beer Factory took on the freehold and carried out an extensive refurbishment.

Originally the pub was known as the Duke of York when built in 1914 – it was then owned by Georges Brewery of Bristol. It changed to “The Barley Mow” about 30 years ago when it was taken on by Wadworth. It is now one of the few surviving pubs in the Dings – it is believed that there were once as many as eight.

Interestingly, although the pub was built in 1914, rumour has it that there was a pub on the site from the 1820’s.

This great little pub is now building up an increasing level of trade. It is very much a traditional locals’ pub situated in a very central area that was once very densely populated, but slightly off the beaten track. However, the Dings area has gone through many changes over the years with Temple Quay 1 & 2 developments, new hotels and residential apartments going up recently. The Barley Mow is once again serving



the local community. With its reputation growing, people are also visiting from further afield to sample the warm welcome and great beers.

Landlord Andy Bridges and his hardworking team of Andy 2, Antony, Nicky and Liz are proud as punch of this little, cosy, gem of a pub. And now, with Christmas around the corner, the atmosphere at the “Mow” is becoming even cosier by the minute, now that the open fire has been flashed up and the mulled cider has been warming. The full range of the Bristol Beer Factory ales on tap are soon to be joined by the Christmas special “Bristloe”, and with Pieminister pies and homemade savoury tarts being the flagships of the menu there is plenty on offer to keep the winter chills at bay.

The next few months will see the introduction of a more extensive events program. On Tuesday evenings Bristol-based arts collective “Squeaky Hill” will be bringing you the silliest craft competitions and musical bingo. Wednesday is pie & pint for £7. Thursday brings you the ever so popular pub quiz and board games competition on alternate weeks. Friday is Tech-Mow night incorporating Vinyl Vibes, Pod Idol, Xbox RockBand party and YouTube nights. To top it all off there is live music at the weekends, curry and a pint on Saturdays for £5.95 and an open mic night every third Sunday night of the month. There’s a lot of fun to be had in this little corner of Bristol.

Pete Bridle

*The Barley Mow, 39 Barton Road, “The Dings”, St Philips, Bristol BS2 0LF
Tel: 0117 930 4709*

Opening hours: Mon 5-11, Tues - Thurs 12-3 & 5-11, Fri - Sun 12-11.



Somerset cider legend goes down in CAMRA folklore

A PIONEERING figure in the world of real cider has added an extra chapter to his already successful resumé by winning the CAMRA Pomona Award for 2008.

Roger Wilkins, of Wilkins Cider, Lands End Farm, Mudgley, near Wedmore, Somerset, scooped the award for his lifelong devotion to producing some of the most renowned cider in the county. Wilkins’s contribution to the industry is so well-appreciated that customers have been buying from the farm for over thirty years.

The Pomona Award is named after the Roman Goddess of apples and is presented by CAMRA to the person, place or thing that has done the most to promote real cider or perry, primarily over the previous twelve months and, secondarily, where there is no outstanding contender in the last twelve months, for ongoing work.

Roger Wilkins, Pomona winner, said: “I am delighted to receive this recognition for doing something that I love and for carrying on the tradition of farmhouse cider-making that my grandfather taught me. I must also thank all the people who have supported my work over the years, and I hope they have enjoyed my cider.”

Wilkins has been winning CAMRA awards since the 1980’s, most notably taking the Cider of the Year accolade at both the 1988 and 1989 Great British Beer Festivals. He took over the family business after the death of his grandfather in 1969, and to this day produces up to 20,000 gallons of cider per year. Wilkins also has a concern for tradition, keeping alive the ancient tradition of ‘wassailing’, held every January.

Sarah Newson, vice chair of CAMRA’s Cider & Perry Committee, said: “This phenomenal contributor to the industry thoroughly deserves this award for his sheer enthusiasm and commitment to producing the best real cider. With his farm overlooking Westhay Moor Valley, Roger could not produce cider in a more stunning location. Maybe these surroundings have been the inspiration for his continued success!”

Real cider is a long-established traditional drink which is produced naturally from apples and is neither carbonated nor pasteurised. As cider is made from apples, perry is made from perry pears, which tend to be smaller and harder than dessert pears.

As the fruit ripens throughout September and October, it is milled and pressed. The juice is then left to ferment and mature until April/May when it becomes ready to drink.

Wear Pints West



YOU can now wear Pints West. T-shirts, polo shirts, sweat shirts and fleeces are now available to order with an embroidered Pints West logo on the left breast. All are available in navy, black, bottle green, grey, red, dark royal, purple or burgundy, and in sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL. All except the fleeces are also available in jade, sky blue, gold and white.

Prices are:

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| T-shirt | £11.50 each |
| Polo shirt | £14.50 each |
| Sweat shirt | £16.50 each |
| Fleece | £19.00 each |

Postage & packing is £3 for a single item, plus £1 for each additional garment ordered.

Make cheques payable to "Bristol & District CAMRA", and post your order to **19 Willada Close, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 5NG**.

Email enquiries to badrag@camrabristol.org.uk. Please allow up to 4 weeks for delivery (delivery in time for Xmas cannot be guaranteed).

PINTS WEST CLOTHING ORDER FORM

| | Price each | Quantity | Size | Colour |
|-------------|------------|----------|-------|--------|
| T-SHIRT | £11.50 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| POLO SHIRT | £14.50 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| SWEAT SHIRT | £16.50 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| FLEECE | £19.00 | _____ | _____ | _____ |

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

Add postage & packing £3.00 for single garment plus £1.00 for each additional item ordered.

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....

POSTCODE

EMAIL ADDRESS (in case of queries)

Cabot Circus – where are the pubs?

THE reaction to Cabot Circus appears to be very favourable. Let's hope it is a success and brings lots of people into Bristol.

There does appear to be something missing though. I have wandered around the retail centre a few times ... but a pub cannot be found anywhere. Am I missing something here? I am sure that at least two pubs were demolished to make way for the new development. Pubs are, after all, part of the way of life in this country – although there does seem to be an awful lot of people in high places who want to seriously undermine this pleasure.

All is not lost. Exit the complex via the enclosed bridge leading to the car park and, at ground level, you find yourself right next to the **Phoenix**! This is the perfect antidote to all of those shiny, sparkling shops. The Phoenix is a plain and simple friendly pub that has been there for years. No pretensions here: Draught Bass, served straight from the cask (gravity fed), in large volumes. I have never had a bad pint of it there and some people claim that it is the best Bass in the city. And, at £2 per pint, it is excellent value. You can get back to simple pub pleasures in the Phoenix – a game of pool, a chat with the regulars or bar staff and a decent pint at a sensible price.

Not far away, in Little Ann Street, is another great little pub – the **Swan With Two Necks**. Again, a good pint of Bass is on offer at this lively pub which had a small extension added in recent years. Still lots of character.

Again, not far away is the **Volunteer** in New Street – a wonderful looking building and a place to visit if you enjoy fermented apples.

So, please support these pubs. They have served their local communities for many years and are now waiting to serve you.

Pete Bridle

Perry or Pear Cider?

PERRY is the traditional name for an alcoholic beverage made of fermented pear juice. It is made by a process similar to that used in making cider, and often has a similar (i.e. quite high) alcohol content.

Perry has been common for centuries in areas where pears are grown, for instance the West Country and Wales, and also parts of France such as Normandy and Brittany, and parts of Sweden.

Many readers will be aware that a number of products described as "pear cider" have appeared in recent years. Some are advertised extensively on TV and elsewhere; and some even boast of their other flavours, being infused with juice from strawberries, blueberries, etc. One of the most heavily advertised ones is St. Helier, which is produced in Jersey and bottled under licence for Intercontinental Brands of Harrogate in Yorkshire.

Without wishing to discourage people from trying new things, or from drinking what they enjoy, CAMRA is keen to point out that descriptions such as "pear cider" are likely to confuse rather than illuminate. This term obscures what the main ingredient of the drink is and whether it is made by traditional methods.

Whether there are any apples in pear cider is not clear from the advertising, but the marketing seems to be aimed at cider drinkers rather than traditional perry drinkers.

Cider can only be made of apples, and in a similar way the drink made by fermenting pears is called "perry". By sticking to this traditional distinction, confusion is avoided, and there can be no such thing as "pear cider".

Norman Spalding

Inn and around Portishead

The Phoenix

I thought it about time that I had another look at a personal favourite of mine, the Phoenix. I had a chat the other day with mother and daughter licencees, Monica (or Mon) and Dawn Smith. Monica was born down the road and has lived in Portishead all her life. For the last 17 years she has held the licence here. This is a local pub!

The Phoenix looks and feels a bit different and is no worse for it. Tucked behind the High Street, opposite the Poacher and behind the Ghandi Indian restaurant, the pub has a well-tended garden in the front which benefits from Mon's attention. Walking in, you'll notice that the bar itself is small and the room layout is unusual. By the time you get to the bar, you'll probably have someone talk to you. When me and the wife visited, the lively Liz (AKA Wiz) was behind the bar and we benefited from her very own pronunciations of local place names. Monica's husband, Tony, was not in attendance so we did not get entertained by his colourful banter.

The Phoenix is a free house and use Marston's to source their beer. The main real ales are Pedigree and Marston's Bitter. In the cooler months Dawn supplements this with guest ales and she puts some thought into their timing. For the Halloween period the guest ale was Wychwood's Hobgoblin. For Christmas, she is looking at using Jennings's Redbreast, and Rosy Nosey from Bateman's. Before then, Thwaite's Lancaster Bomber is coming but I don't think this is themed. In addition to two or three excellent real ales (and I can't think of other regular Marston's beers local to us) there is a real cider in the form of Thatcher's Heritage.

Most importantly, both the Hobgoblin and Thatcher's tried were perfect and this has to be a priority. However, the friendliness of the people both sides of the bar – although I am not sure about the Mansfield Smoothy – make this pub a bit special. It is the sort of place where you check your watch when you finally emerge to be surprised by how long you had been in it.

White Hart, Weston in Gordano

I mentioned in the previous editions that it's déjà vu time in the village of Weston in Gordano, a couple of miles outside Portishead, in that Craig Roper has returned as manager of the White Hart. This time the licensee is Lyn Palomares, who is mother to Rhea, Craig's Partner, who frequently gets "roped in" for barmaid work. As such, the atmosphere is expected to be very much that of a family pub at the hub of the village. Food is a big part of things here and it is available as restaurant or bar meals with prices to suit.

Three draught real ales are provided and when I visited last I tried the Exmoor Ale which was in excellent nick. Also on tap are Butcombe Bitter and Courage Best. Real cider is available from Thatcher's.

Clarence House beer festival

I am pleased to say that I have persuaded landlord, Nigel, to hold Clarence House's first real ale festival, using the excellent Gordano Suite which has room for 200 drinkers. The festival will take place on the evenings of Friday the 6th and Saturday the 7th of February 2009. Tickets will cost a very reasonable £5 in advance and £6 on the door and this price will cover your first two pints of beer.

Doors will open at 7pm both evenings and drinking will continue until 11.30pm. Tickets can be obtained at the club bar or by writing to Clarence House, High Street, Portishead, BS20 6PY enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope and with a cheque payable to Clarence House.

The club currently present Courage Best and Butcombe Bitter as their real ales but may be able to expand this range if the festival proves popular. So I would urge you to get your tickets early for this new event.

Stella tops poll

Congratulations to Stella Artois! In a recent survey in and around public areas of Portishead, Stella easily made itself known as the beer of choice of local litter louts. This little survey was concluded once 100 dumped alcoholic cans and bottles were counted to make the percent-



Dawn, Mon and Liz of the Phoenix

ages easy. Not surprisingly, 81% were lager (28% were Stella, with Carlsberg and Foster's in respective silver and bronze medal positions), 15% were cider and 4% bitters. One can of Boddington's and three of John Smith's Smooth were the only evidence of "bitter louts" and there were no representatives of what we would see as the "real ale" world. One discerning drinker left an untouched, full Carlsberg can! The contents were ceremoniously poured away.

The story had a green ending because the cans and bottles found a home in the recycling bins which were no more than 50 yards away from where most of them had been dumped in the first place.

I must admit that, when I started this survey, I thought that it would confirm that the litter problem caused by alcoholic drink was related to lager drinking pretty well exclusively. At the end, I'm convinced the common thread here is that the rubbish originates from discounted booze sold by supermarkets, whether it is lager, fizzy cider or bitter. There was no sign of bottles originating from what most of our readers would see as quality beer sold at full price. My personal solution would be to ensure each can or bottle has the shop of origin printed on it and then local councils carry out spot checks and ask the shops to contribute to the cost of clearing up after their customers.

Another milestone

Having recently survived celebrating 65 earth years, Vic (the Legend) Long reached 35 years as landlord of the Ship, Portishead in November and is now looking forward to the next 35.

Neil Ravenscroft

News from Arbor Ales

THE last half year has been a really busy time at the Arbor Ales brewery in Kingswood. The new five-and-a-half-barrel plant was installed in September and, according to brewer Jon Comer, not a moment too soon as it was becoming impossible to meet demand with the old two-and-a-half-barrel brewery. Having solved one problem, another has taken its place: producing enough beer is one thing, finding enough casks to put it in is quite another!

Sales have been increasing month by month with October proving to be the busiest yet. The new regular bitter, *Brigstow*, seems to be going down really well as is the *Oyster Stout*. The beers are appearing in an increasing number of outlets too.

Having promised BADRAG (the Bristol and District Rare Ales Group) a stronger version of the popular *Mild West* to coincide with CAMRA's autumn "rare ales promotion", it then proved difficult to find the time, not to mention the spare casks, to produce it. Jon says, however, that it should be available sometime in late November or December, together with a new Christmas beer.

Henry Davies

Yet another trip to Flanders

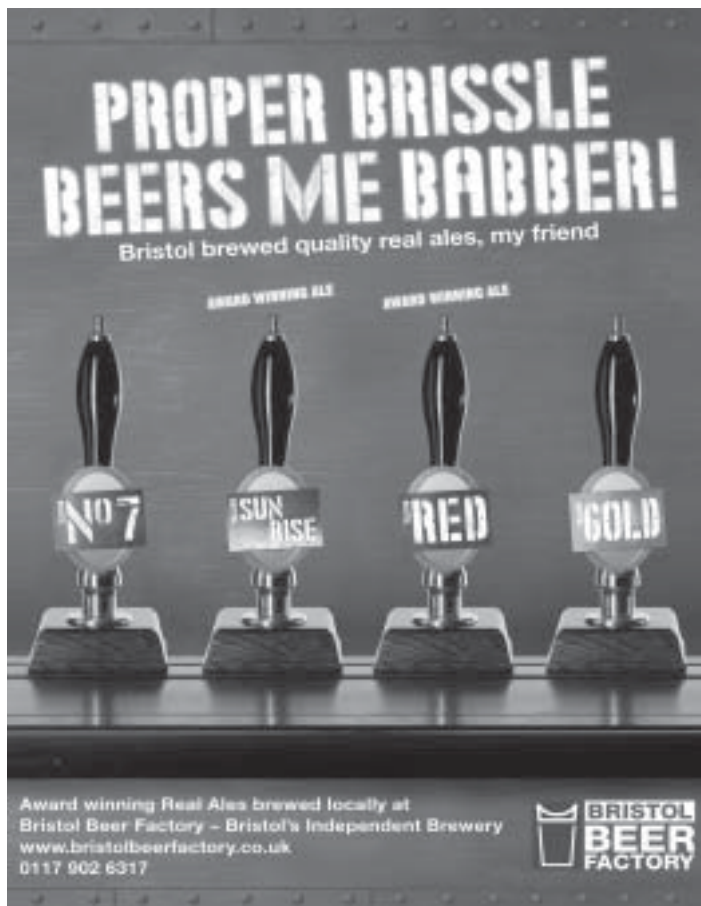
A frequent visitor to Flanders in Belgium goes over again but this time gets to some less well known bars in less well known towns.

I HAD some annual leave booked for September and, due to saving up for a major holiday next year, had not booked anything. I decided that a short break was the order of the day and wondered where to go. After all of ten seconds indecision I decided: let's go back to Flanders. I've only been about 20 times and that's nowhere near enough! My wife, Marilyn, and Phil Cummings were easily persuaded so we set off by car to Dover. Once again we took the excellent Norfolkline car ferry to Dunkirk (about £50 return for car and passengers at civilised times of day and a very pleasant ship). We also booked the same hotel as last time in Bruges – the *Mantovani* in Schouwvegerstraat just off T'Zand square.

Over the last few years I have developed an understanding with Tim Webb, author of the indispensable *Good Beer Guide to Belgium*. Before I go to Belgium, Tim emails me his up-to-date database for the area that I am visiting (basically an advance copy of his next unpublished edition). In return Tim asks me for reviews of any bars that he needs more information on, plus any other useful information that I uncover. It works well.

Our first evening was spent in Bruges, checking out both old favourites and some new leads from Tim. First up was **Dickies** bar in T'Zand – run by an amiable Portugese chap with a fondness for Brits (except those who ask for lager) and a strong dislike of Americans and especially the French! We have visited this bar / restaurant many times and enjoyed sampling his excellent beer list of about 100. Sadly he is in a legal dispute with the freeholders (a local brewery) and expects to be evicted in a few years – it is all over his insistence on stocking his own choice of beers – all sounds sadly familiar! We couldn't walk past the **Brugs Beertje** in Kemelstraat – still my favourite bar in the world and where everything was as it has always been including the 250 beers – without stopping for a few swift ones. Very nice they were too!

Next we tried to get into **Erasmus** in Wollestraat but were told,



Brouwzaele

"Sorry we are too busy with food". Another attempt two days later was met with, "Sorry we only serve drinkers until 09.30." (It was 09.35.) We had been refused on previous occasions too and have now had enough. This bar has the greatest selection of ever-changing draught Belgian beers in the country, but food has taken over almost completely – we can vouch for the excellence of the food but at over 40 euros per head it is not a cheap night out. It is just so frustrating that the great beers on offer are made so hard to sample. We are unlikely to return, sadly.

About 100 yards back towards the main square is a new bar simply called **@ThePub** – a totally inappropriate name for a serious beer bar in this beautiful mediaeval city. Predictably it had drawn a crowd of unruly Brits – on this occasion a foul-mouthed mob of middle-aged golfers on tour. Otherwise it was a pleasant bar with over 100 beers.

On the other side of the square, at 82 Vlamingstraat, Tim had listed a new bar, **Poatersgat** – situated opposite **Zolder** – a great cellar bar that has sadly been closed for months. Poatersgat means "monk's hole" and it is in the basement of a church, accessed via a tiny entrance that is easily missed. It is a truly weird and wonderful bar – furnished and decorated in haphazard fashion, quite smoky (no smoking ban in Belgium yet!) and with a superb beer list of around 120 exceptionally well chosen beers. I simply could not see such a place existing in the UK as it would never pass the health and safety regs, but we loved it. We returned several times over our three days, including in the small hours of Wednesday with the staff of the *Beertje* and Johann (a familiar face in Bristol as he visits the *Cornubia* several times a year). We gave in and left feeling worse for wear at 2.30am, but the barman informed us that the others stayed on until 6am! On a Wednesday too!

On our second morning, I kept a promise to Tim to check out **Bierboun**, an unusual new venture in Langestraat about a quarter of a mile out of the central square. This is basically part off-license / part tasting rooms. The friendly owner was very pleased to see us at 10am – he had over 100 beers for sale to take out and about 45 in a self-service fridge to drink at one of three tables at the rear, which was somewhat basic. All drink-in beers were priced at 2 euros – compared with between 3.50 and 5 euros elsewhere. I was delighted to find an eight-month-old *Orval* in the fridge whilst Phil tucked into a 10% *Pannepot* – what an animal! We bought some interesting and unusual take-out beers and moved on to Ghent by train for the day.

This was our fifth visit to Ghent and we were pleased to revisit a few old favourites such as the **Waterhuis Aan De Bierkant** (great as always) and the **Trappistenhuis** (good but strangely unfriendly compared to a few years ago). We then made our way out to the St Pietersplein area to try out a bar that we had not got to before, **Brouwzaele**, and a new venture called **Planck** which is an old boat moored almost opposite. Brouwzaele was a pleasant surprise with around 100 beers and a very impressive central bar (see pic) – friendly service too. Planck has an unappealing exterior (see pic) but a surpris-

ingly plush and chic interior where 90 beers and a limited food menu is on offer – something truly different even for Belgium which is noted for its eccentric bars. Particularly odd was that the beer menu was scribed in dark-brown font, on a mid-brown wooden platter, and the only lighting was dim candlelight – almost impossible to read and only in Belgium!

We had planned to eat at the famous **Hopduvel** pub on the other side of town and took a tram there – only to discover it closed with a note in the window. A kindly local translated this for us as “closed for good”. What a terrible shame and I had the dubious honour of breaking the news to Tim by text.

We found a nice restaurant back in town before heading back to Bruges. This time we revisited the consistently excellent and well hidden (down an alleyway off the main square) **Garre** and also **Cambrinus** nearby. The latter has a superb list of 400 beers and decent food but still feels horribly commercial with indifferent service. It also has the most ridiculously cumbersome and hard-to-use beer menus.

As we had the car with us we had vowed to get to a few new places. It does seem however that many bars outside of the main cities operate very limited and erratically applied opening hours. Tim’s notes suggested that two of the four recommended bars in Geraardsbergen (about 50 miles south-east of Bruges) should be open on Wednesdays. Sadly they were all closed! It was a nice little town though and Marilyn did persuade me to buy her a nice pair of boots! We headed for the **Pedo Beer Warehouse** at Sint Lievens Houtem which Tim had advised would be open until 7pm. We arrived at 5.55 to see a sign saying “close at 6pm”! Thankfully the staff and a few customers were standing around a small set of beer fonts enjoying a few beers and waved us on in. We were able to fill the car boot with some exceptionally cheap quality beer from a range of 200 to 300. Back in the town centre, the recommended **Golden Leeuw** was open and thriving so we stopped to refresh ourselves. This was a pleasant and Tardis-like place that was huge on the inside – it offered about 80 beers from a pretty safe list. We tried two other nearby bars, both of which were closed – making one out of the seven that we tried that day actually open!

Our ferry home was not until 18.00 and, with a long drive ahead, I was unable to drink. The Pedo has provided many of our take home




Planck

beer needs but stocked none of our favourite lambic beers, so we headed out to the **Rotseart Beer Warehouse** at Zedelgem, near Bruges. This had a good selection of lambics but we got a shock when they only took cash or Belgian payment cards. We had to use the last of our euros and put some bottles back on the shelf. From there we drove to Ostend to visit an old favourite, the **Botteltje** in Louisastraat, still very good with 300 beers (coffee for me!) and looking smart after a major refurbishment. We had never driven down the slower coast road to Dunkirk, so did so now. This follows the tram lines for about 25 miles. It was a glorious day and the coast looked great – only spoilt by the fact that there are miles and miles of high-rise flats all the way along that throw a big shadow over the seafront! We stopped twice along the way, firstly in Middlekerk at the **Iceberg** café, a pleasant little long café with 80 beers on, and secondly in Koksidge at **Noas Bar**, a large high-street establishment offering 10 draught beers and over 100 in bottles, plus a selection of coffees for me! Phil’s turn to drive next time though!

Vince Murray

The Windmill Inn


PORTISHEAD



6 Real Ales in excellent condition including:
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To contact us please ring 01275 843677.



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The Hare on the Hill
Dove Street, Kingsdown, Bristol

The Merchants Arms
Merchants Road, Hotwells, Bristol

The Salamander
John Street, Bath

The Wellington
Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol

The Bridge Inn
Passage Street, Bristol

The Swan
Bath Road, Swineford

The Eldon House
Lower Clifton Hill, Clifton, Bristol

Casks and beer boxes available for parties and functions
 Contact bath ales on 0117 9474797 or email hare@bathales.co.uk
www.bathales.co.uk

Readers' Letters

Readers are welcome to send letters to Pints West Editor, Steve Plumridge, Garden Flat, 6 Royal York Villas, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR

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A Swindonian in Bristol

A few of us went out in Bristol one Friday afternoon in September on a kind of ale quest. Not being from round these parts (I live in Swindon) I got in touch with Bristol CAMRA for some ideas of where to go. I actually left it a bit late (away on holiday) but your social secretary, Tim Proudman, got back straight away and came up trumps. A couple of guys that went out also had some of the same pubs in mind so it worked out well.

I've knocked up a little account of our activities which I've attached.

Cheers,
Darren Bond,
Swindon....

From work, and after a suitably sized greasy fry-up from Greedy's café, we got the train from Abbey Wood to Temple Meads. From there it was a short walk to *Ye Shakespeare* and the start of our afternoon ale extravaganza. My day started with a Bath Ales Gem. I found it had a slightly cream-soda-esque aftertaste with a minimal head but apart from that a nice pint. The pub was very busy and we were stood with a multitude of lunchtime office drinkers that had spilled out onto the path outside.

It wasn't quite the atmos we were looking for so we headed to *The Cornubia*. A true gem of a proper pub tucked away behind the

main road, although the considerable surrounding building works were a little off-putting when sat outside. I had an Isle of Purbeck's Solar Power. A very lively little number, which took a couple of attempts to pour: I believe the term is 'over conditioned'. I really didn't like this golden-coloured ale all that much – it had a strong yeasty smell and an aftertaste of smoked parmesan cheese. Not something I'd rush back to.

We headed to *The Bridge Inn* next. The ale choice was limited and so rather than have another Gem, an Acrix from Dowbridge brewery in Leicestershire was the order of the day. Although a relatively weak beer at 3.8%, this was not reflected in its strong flavour and I found it very pleasant to drink and could have easily had another.

Unfortunately time was not permitting another and, set neatly down an alley, we found *The Seven Stars*. Upon entering we were greeted with a display of the Good Beer Guide 2009. After speaking to the enthusiastic gentlemen guarding the books it came to light that for the first time this actual pub was in the guide and, seeing as this year's edition had only just been released that day, it seemed a good place to promote it. Coincidentally, and to our excitement, the pub had a veritable plethora of ales on and so, completely spoilt for choice, I opted for an Otley OBB from the Pontypridd brewery. I was hobnobbing with booksellers Vince Murray and Phil Cummings and so didn't have chance to really appreciate the finer points of the brew, but it was very nice. Soon enough it was time for another and so, on recommendation from my new found CAMRA friends, I had a Hop Back Entire Stout – very dark with a strong, subtle smokey flavour to suit, which went down a treat.

Unfortunately my companions for the afternoon deemed it was time to leave and

so we headed across the Bristol Bridge and happened upon *The Crown*. The limited tables outside made the large interior a surprise, although the range of beer was somewhat lacking. With really not much to choose from, a Brain's Smooth had to suffice – to me, a very bland beer with an over-processed generic taste. Thankfully we hastily made plans for the next venue. Time was getting on and we thought it would be prudent to experience some life and so headed to King's Street.

Straight in, then out, of *The Llandoger Trow* as nobody spied a drink they liked and across the street to *The Old Duke*. Discrepancies start in my notes now but I think another Bath Ales Gem was imbibed. One of our party also thought it a good idea to get a round of Old Bristolian cider from *The Apple*.

After this a short walk was in order so we headed to *The Shakespeare* (yes, different to *Ye Shakespeare* and cause of some confusion when we initially met up!). A very nice choice of beer, where an Everards Tiger was my tippie. I'd had it before and knew it was nice, so that must have been the reason for not taking any notes (that, or I can't read my own hand writing). Home time was approaching fast and so after some (very) brief farewells, a couple of us headed back to the station.

Time appeared to be on our side and so a pint of something was attempted in *The Reckless Engineer*. Half a pint of something later and the 19:30 train to Swindon beckoned. I never realised travelling to Swindon took so little time on the train...

The Ram, Widcombe

I am one of the supervisors of the Ram in Widcombe, Bath. We receive your magazine in the pub and after reading your autumn edition I felt I had to email you regarding ourselves.

The magazine contained an article regarding the Royal Oak in Widcombe, Bath. Here it mentions the landlord, Simon Wynne, being the previous landlord of the Ram. Our new landlady, Michelle Spence, has just celebrated her first year and has incorporated a lot of changes. We now have five real ales and offer a wide range of entertainment. This leads me on to the article about Bath's live music pubs. Here it only mentioned three live music pubs. We offer live music every weekend and have become very popular with bands.




It would be great if people could be made aware of how the new landlady has turned the Ram around.

With thanks,
Samantha Cox (by email).

Rucking Mole joins the pack!

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Another pub crossed of my list...

I'M sure many readers have often found themselves idly turning the pages of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide, or Pints West, or searching online through websites such as Beer In The Evening or the British Pub Guide, and fancied a visit to an attractive but distant pub. In the last edition of Pints West, Vince Murray wrote of a visit to the classic *Red Lion* at Ampney St Peter, one of those on my pub "hit list". Well, another longstanding pub I just had to visit was the *Bridge Inn* at Topsham, Devon.



The Bridge Inn, Topsham

So it was that on a rare sunny Saturday at summer's end I found myself on a train with Vince and Marilyn Murray. We found the cheapest way to procure tickets was to buy two each – Bristol to Taunton return and Taunton to Topsham return. This saved us in the region of £8 each, and there was no need to change trains! We filled the time between arriving at Exeter St David's station and departing for Topsham with a visit to the adjacent Great Western Hotel. This well known beer mecca dispenses a fine range of beers of mostly local origin. I was delighted to have O'Hanlons Yellowhammer as my first beer of the day.

Topsham is an attractive small town on the Exe estuary, 20 minutes from Exeter by train. When arriving simply walk away from the town centre, going right down Elm Grove Road and then bear left onto Bridge Hill; the Bridge Inn is on the left. Easy to recognize due to its salmon pink coloration, the Bridge's car park and garden command a delightful view, overlooking the meandering River Clyst and the meadows forming its flood plain.

If you are a fan of traditional pubs you will love the Bridge. A true free house, in the same family for more than a century, little appears to have changed here for much of that time. A range of small rooms are decorated in traditional style, and the ambience is unbroken by piped music or machines. Service is from a hatch facing into the car park, or through a window if you are inside. This remains the only pub officially visited by the Queen – I wonder if she enjoyed it as much as we did! The beer is served by gravity dispense, that is, straight from the barrel. Mugs are still the default beer glasses here. Food is confined to tasty sandwiches, ploughmans and the like, with local chutneys a feature. On our visit six beers were on, Otter Bright in particular being in superlative condition. We loved the Warrior IPA, at 6% one of four beers featuring which were of 5% strength or over. Frequent visitors have reported some real heavyweight beers being available here, a rare treat in a pub as opposed to a beer festival. The clientele was varied, with families, football fans, cyclists, locals and those such as us, just seeking out a memorable, classic pub.

Sadly, the traditional feel extended to the opening hours, with the pub closing at 2pm. This seemed madness, with the garden teeming with people keen to enjoy more beer, but it did provide us with the



The author & Marilyn Murray at the Bridge (photo by Vince Murray)

impetus needed to explore the rest of the town. We wandered around the harbour and main streets, but with Marilyn finding slim pickings we retired to the *Exeter* in the High Street. Here we were accorded a warm welcome and had a choice of watching rugby union or golf's Ryder Cup as each was on its own big screen at two ends of the bar. The friendly and enthusiastic landlord was proud of his beer, and served a fine pint of Teignworthy, enjoyed whilst we planned our train back to Exeter.

A stroll around Exeter's main shopping area yielded very little, so we retired to the *Well House Tavern*, a busy pub majoring in South West beers, with striking views across to the cathedral, and then moved onto the *City Gate Hotel*, a smart bar serving the range of the Youngs/Wells/Courage beers, and a fine pint of St Austell Tribute as a guest beer. A very pleasant garden includes some very large goldfish!

Then on to our last stop, St Austell brewery's *Mill on the Exe*. Clearly a very popular and busy place, the Mill has an idyllic view, the extensive terrace and outside area overlooking the weir and Millennium footbridge. We stopped to eat a pleasant, good-value meal, and of course enjoyed the excellent St Austell beers. Besides their tasty best bitter style beer, Tribute, IPA and Proper Job were also available. The latter has been a favourite of the three of us ever since first tried at the Bristol Beer Festival in 2007 (all credit to Paul of RCH brewery for the recommendation!).

From here a short walk took us back to St David's station. So, where to next?

Phil Cummings



View from the Mill on the Exe

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009

FOR those not already aware, the latest edition of the *Good Beer Guide*, CAMRA's indispensable companion to all informed real ale fans, is now in the bookshops. Teams of unpaid volunteers all over the UK give their time and spending-money throughout the year to painstakingly research local beer-friendly pubs (dirty work but someone has to do it!) and come up with the best 4,500 in the country.

Each area of the UK is allocated a number of entries to the Guide, and our branch is charged with finding up to 63 pubs, in what was more or less the former county of Avon, which are worthy of a sought-after entry in the blessed book. Of the 63, a maximum of 39 can be in South Gloucestershire and Bristol, and 24 in North Somerset. Given the very high number of pubs in these parts that serve real ale, and the boom in availability of independent beers, competition for places is very fierce.

A very involved year-round process results in us whittling all nominated candidates down to a manageable list around November each year. We then make considerable efforts to revisit these pubs before holding a vote in March. This vote decides which pubs will make up our allocation in the book. Usually more pubs are voted in than we have allocation for and some sadly have to miss out. The results are a closely kept secret until the book is published in early September.

Each year we see some pubs exit the Guide (not necessarily an indication of any fault on their part) and others come in as new entries, and we always seek to carry out the official local launch in one of the new entries. This year we chose the *Seven Stars* in Thomas Lane, just off Victoria Street, Bristol on a Friday in September.

Steve and Kate have transformed this historic old pub in the last few years into one of the very best beer pubs in our area. Now with up to eight frequently changing beers on the handpumps, don't be surprised to see offerings from the likes of Hop Back, Otley, RCH and Otter, as well as the regular Sharp's beers. All the beers (at the time of writing) are £2 per pint until 6.30pm each day and an incredible £1.50 per pint all day on Wednesdays – much cheaper than even Wetherspoons! A well deserved new entry.



Kate and Steve (centre) at the GBG launch in the Seven Stars

Altogether there were 10 local new entries in the new edition. Tragically there were to be 11 but Barry, the genial landlord of the *Robin Hood* on St Michael's Hill, Kingsdown, passed away suddenly in March, and the pub was later closed for some time (though it has reopened recently). I feel sure that he would have been really proud had he known that he had made it.

Four of the new entries are in Somerset. Three are pubs that have featured before but impressed sufficiently last year to regain their places – the *Ship* in Temple Street Keynsham (Marstons plus guest beers), the *Regency* in Upper Church Road, Weston-super-Mare (four or five well known real ales), and the *Plough* in Congresbury – a proper free house



All smiles at the Colston Yard (photo by Terry Evett)

selling five or six changing beers. The fourth is making its first ever appearance in the Guide and is really a most welcome addition – the *Golden Lion* in Broad Street, Wrington. This is an excellent and very welcoming free house which has a real community feel. The owners have decided not to do food but to concentrate on the wet trade, including four changing real ales mostly from independent local brewers.

As well as the Seven Stars, five other pubs made it as new entries in Gloucestershire and Bristol. Two of these are making very welcome returns after impressing under relatively new owners or managers. The first of these is the *Orchard* in Hanover Place near the SS Great Britain – an excellent community free house that serves two or three changing beers as well as a great selection of real ciders.

The second is the *Annexe* in Seymour Road, Bishopston, very close to Gloucestershire County Cricket Club. This excellent free house offers around five regular beers plus one or two changing guests and makes an excellent refuge before, during or after the cricket.

Another pub coming back into the Guide is the *Cross Hands* at Winterbourne Down – another great free house offering a good selection of beers, and another that declines to go down the food route to profit.

The final two new entries are rare examples of brand new pubs – somewhat bucking the trend of pub closures well documented of late! The first of these is the *Colston Yard*, Butcombe's wonderful conversion of the former Smiles brewery and tap that had seemed doomed never to be a pub again only a year ago. The second is Bristol Beer Factory's *Grain Barge*, the former Shoots floating restaurant in Hotwells. This has become a real "happening place" since converting to a pub, specialising in good food and live music as well as the brewery's fine ales. Just as well that we never held the "launch" here as they may have taken it literally!



Ashley Bird of the Annexe (photo by Tony Durbin)



Phil Giorgetti of the Golden Lion, Wrington (photo by Tim Nickolls)

As well as the new entries, a number of pubs can consider themselves unlucky as they received enough votes to be eligible for consideration but there simply weren't available slots this time. These were the *Wellington*, Horfield and the *Swan*, Swineford (both Bath Ales pub); the *Three Brooks*, Bradley Stoke; the *Lansdown*, Clifton; the *Chelsea Inn*, Easton; the *Adam and Eve*, Hotwells; and two Wadworth's pubs, the *Queen's Arms*, Hanham and the *Red Lion*, Staple Hill (since changed hands). Down in Somerset the *New Inn* at Cross and the *Princes Motto* at Barrow Gurney were similarly worthy but unlucky.

As you may now gather, compiling the local section of the Good Beer Guide is far from easy and consumes a lot of time. We run many subsidised minibus trips to our more distant or rural pubs and all members are welcome to attend these, which are always very pleasant evenings (details from Tim Proudman, Social Secretary – see branch



Staff on the Grain Barge (photo by Richard Brooks)

diary). We would love to see more members getting involved in nominating, reviewing and selecting our entries.

The only criteria that members use when voting for the Good Beer Guide is consistency of beer quality. A good range of beers is a bonus but a pub with a single beer is also perfectly eligible too. To illustrate how a pub can blow its chances, I will relate a short story, if I may. One other very well known Bristol pub serving an impressive range of ales was initially voted into the 2009 Guide. A week or two later a less "well known" branch member bought two pints and realised that the beer was unfortunately barely drinkable as it had gone off. He asked to change the beer and was flatly refused by the landlord himself who said "there is nothing wrong with it". When the landlord noticed that the drinker had gone to sit with a group that he knew as active CAMRA members, he rushed over to apologise and swap the beer! The inference was very clearly that he was only concerned because of who was involved. CAMRA is not about seeking preferential treatment for ourselves and the pub was promptly removed from the upcoming book after a unanimous vote. The landlord paid a high price indeed for his indiscretion. Aspiring licensees please note – you never know who you are serving and the only way forward is only to serve real ale in the correct condition consistently. Of course, odd mistakes can happen, but they need to be handled well.

Vince Murray

Suggestions for new entries to the Good Beer Guide, or constructive comments on those that are in, are welcome – email your comments to Vincent.Murray@blueyonder.co.uk.

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CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2009

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- Information features section, containing articles on beer, pubs and brewing, plus brewers 'going green' to combat global warming.

Craft Beer Revolution Gathers Pace CAMRA Celebrates Success of Independent Brewers

Britain is the craft beer supremo with more breweries than at any other time since the Second World War, according to the 2009 edition of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

"Over 70 new breweries have been founded between the 2008 and 2009 editions," says editor Roger Protz. "That follows 80 new breweries in 2006 and a further 80 in 2007. Britain now has more than 550 craft breweries and many of them are enjoying spectacular growth."

"SIBA, the Society of Independent Brewers that represents the majority of small

brewers, reports that in 2007 its members saw an average increase in sales of 11% while sales of Stella Artois, the country's biggest-selling premium lager, fell by 10%.

"The reason is simple: more and more drinkers are looking for taste and character in beer rather than the tasteless fizz offered by global brewers."

"The craft brewing fraternity is no longer confined to the minnows. Major brewers, including Marston's of Burton-on-Trent and Wolverhampton, and Fuller's of West London, have applied to join SIBA despite already

being members of the British Beer and Pub Association."

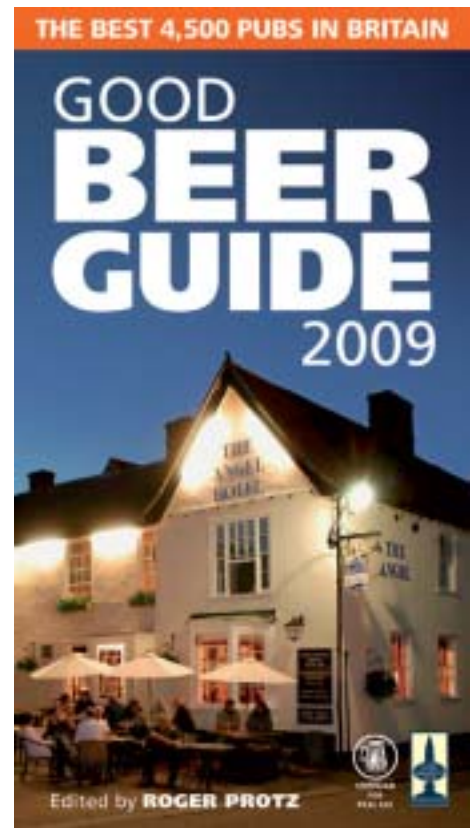
The Good Beer Guide cites as examples of the success of craft brewers:

- Wye Valley in Herefordshire, which started life as a brew pub, moved to the former Symonds cider factory and is now brewing close to 20,000 barrels a year.

- Triple fff Brewery in Alton, Hampshire, winner of the Supreme Champion Beer of Britain award at the Great British Beer Festival in August, began production with a five-barrel plant in 1997 and has just opened a new 50-barrel

brewhouse where it brews twice a week.

- Moorhouse's of Burnley, Lancs, was on the point of closing in 1987 but was rescued by businessman Bill Parkinson, who has pumped more than £3 million in to the



company. A new brewery will come on stream in 2010, capable of producing 40,000 barrels a year.

Protz continues: "Long-established regional family breweries are also faring well. Bateman's of Wainfleet in Lincolnshire dates from 1874 and had its best year ever in 2007. Managing Director Stuart Bateman told me that year beer volumes were up, turnover was up and profits were up. Sales of real ale grew by 10% and 21 of its pubs are showing significant growth in spite of the smoking ban and the duty increase. Its only problem is keeping pace with demand: it can produce 30,000 barrels a year but needs to increase that to 40,000 if it can squeeze in additional fermenting vessels."

Timothy Taylor of Keighley, West Yorkshire, celebrates 150 years of brewing this year. Its Landlord best bitter has been named Champion Beer of Britain for a record three times. In the past decade, a total of £10 million has been invested in new brewing capacity, doubling production from 30,000 barrels a year to 60,000.

"These success stories show that drinkers are moving in droves to full-flavoured beers in preference to bland global lagers," Roger Protz says. "In particular, more and more consumers are concerned with how beers are made and the ingredients used. They prefer beers made and sold locally rather than driven thousands of miles. The success of craft brewing really fits the green, carbon-conscious attitudes of modern consumers."

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This new service will coincide with the launch of Good Beer Guide 2009 on 15 September. To use it, simply text 'camra' to 38880 (your standard network charges apply). You will then receive a text message with a web link to download the application, which will automatically install on your phone. Screen prompts help you set up and use the application, there is a clear breakdown of charges, and full instructions are provided. Depending on the tariff, this indispensable service costs from as little as £5 pence per day! (plus your standard network charges)

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British brewers are going green

CAMRA charts the development of carbon-conscious brewers

INCREASING numbers of British brewers are showing their concern for the environment and saving on carbon footprints by adopting energy-efficient methods, according to the 2009 edition of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

In one instance, ground-breaking work has been carried out by **Adnams** brewery in Southwold, Suffolk. The company has invested £5.8 million in a new warehouse complex that uses solar power and collects rainwater on the roof that is used for cleaning and even staff showers. A further £3.7 million has been spent on the third update to the brewhouse in just ten years. New vessels include a mashing and boiling regime that is energy efficient and environmentally friendly, with steam and water recycled.

The experience of Adnams has so impressed **Wadworth**, the family-owned brewery in Devizes in Wiltshire, it plans to install its own energy-efficient brewhouse. Several breweries, including **Hall & Woodhouse** in Dorset and **Greene King** in Suffolk, are moving to light-weight bottles. Mark Woodhouse of H&W says the use of light-weight glass is "the equivalent of taking 360 cars off the road for a year".

In Cornwall, the **St Austell** brewery's moves to energy efficiency include managing director James Staughton swapping his executive 'Mercedes' for a 'Smart Car'. Head brewer Roger Ryman says the company's plans are aided by its success in the real ale market. "Ten years ago we were producing 15,000 barrels a year but we've grown to 45,000 barrels. The more beer we brew, the better the utilisation of our plant."



St Austell has installed a new steam boiler and the result is more energy with less steam pumped into the atmosphere. A malt mill dating from 1916 was only 55% efficient and it has been replaced by one with 85% efficiency. Two new compressors in the refrigeration plant have increased efficiency by a third. Improved water efficiency and heat recovery mean less water is used for each brew.

The brewery is sourcing its barley in Cornwall and having it malted in Newton Abbot in Devon. It will install its own bottling line in 2009. "15% of our production is now in bottle and packaging is currently done in Stockport and Blackburn – both at the other end of the country," Roger Ryman says. "So there will be a drastic reduction in our use of diesel when we bring bottling in house. We will also move to light-weight bottles."

Shepherd Neame, Britain's oldest brewery, dating from the 17th century and based in Faversham in Kent, is determined to stop both steam and carbon dioxide escaping to the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide, a natural bi-product of fermentation, is trapped in modern vessels, while steam is injected into the coppers. "We no longer boil out the contents of the copper," says production director Ian Dixon. "So there's no steam leaving the brewery. We save £45,000 a year for each copper."

Good Beer Guide editor Roger Protz applauds the work by craft brewers to become more energy efficient. "They are helping the environment and putting something back into their communities. They deserve praise for their initiatives. Brewing is one of Britain's last remaining major industries and its showing admirable concern for the environment by using locally-sourced ingredients, cutting back on steam and CO₂, and moving to light-weight bottles."

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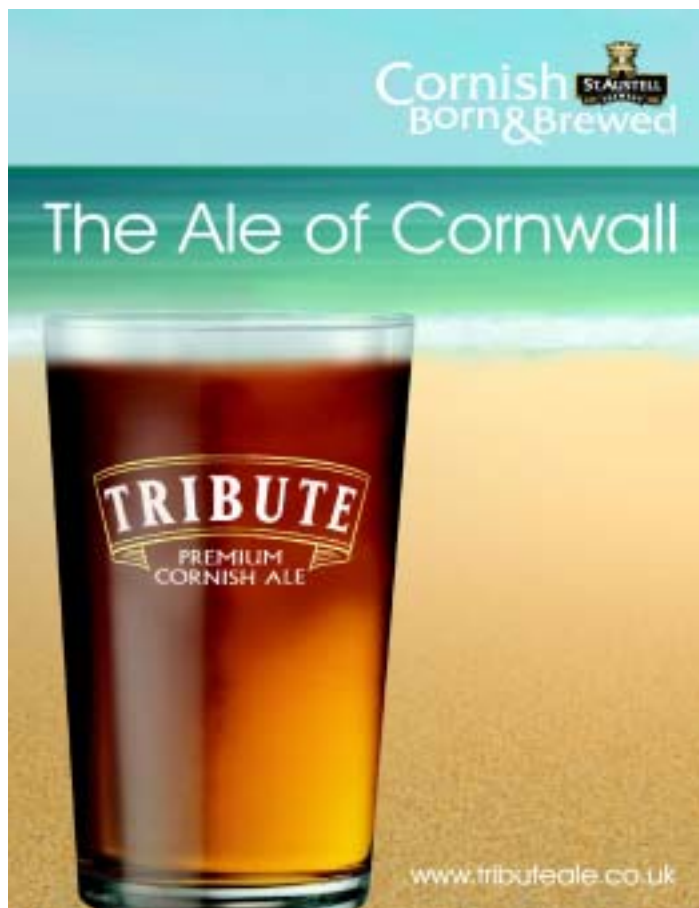
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Published by the Bristol & District Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale, November 2008 ©

Next edition: February 2009 (probably).

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CAMRA Good Beer Guide: suggestions for future entries, and comments on existing ones, can be made to our GBG co-ordinator, Vince Murray, care of the editor (above).

Further information on all aspects of CAMRA can be had from Ray Holmes on 0117 - 9605357 (home).

Trading Standards Officers: contact numbers for problems such as consistent short measures, no price lists...

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Design & Layout: Steve Plumridge.

Printed by Workbrands Ltd, Ferodo House, Willway Street, Bristol BS3 4BG
www.workbrands.co.uk.



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Diary

Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.

(For more information on local events attend our branch meetings, check the diary section on our web site at

www.camrabristol.org.uk, or email
badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk)

● **Tues 2nd Dec** - Explorer/survey trip to west Mendips, depart Cornubia 6.45pm.

● **Wed 10th Dec** - Committee meeting, Old Fish Market, 8pm.

● **Thurs 11th Dec** - BADRAG gathering, Eldon House (back room), 8pm. All welcome.

● **Fri 12th Dec** - Branch Christmas social at our pub of the year, the Duke of York in St. Werburgh, from 7.30pm.

● **Wed 17th Dec** - Explorer/survey trip to the Bedminster area. Details to be confirmed.

● **Mon, 22nd Dec** - Gloucester Road crawl. We will start at the Inn on the Green - arrive there any time from 7pm with a view to departing at 7.45pm. Then Wellington, Annexe, Robin Hood and Prince of Wales which is just a few metres from the bus stop to enable people to get into town or back up the Gloucester Road.



● **Sun Jan 4th** - Westbury Wobble social, meet Post Office Tavern at midday before visiting some of the local pubs. Wash away those Christmas and New Year blues!

● **Thurs Jan 8th** - BADRAG gathering, upstairs at the Nova Scotia. Starts 8pm.

● **Wed Jan 14th** - Branch meeting at Horts, 8pm start.

● **Thurs Jan 15th** - Pubs Group social. Frampton Cottrell area. Starts Live & Let Live. 1850 X42 or 1920 (342) buses from Bristol bus station, all welcome.

● **Wed Jan 21st** - Explorer/survey trip to east Mendips. Bus departs from Cornubia 6.45pm

● **Thurs Jan 29th** - Pubs Group meeting, Cornubia, 7pm.



● **Wed Feb 4th** - Explorer/survey trip. Bus departs from Cornubia 6.45pm

● **Sat Feb 7th** - Provisional - brewery trip, details to be confirmed.

● **Wed Feb 11th** - Committee meeting at the Cornubia, 8pm.

● **Thurs Feb 12th** - BADRAG gathering, Naval Volunteer, 8pm.

● **Tues Feb 17th** - Explorer/survey trip. Bus departs from Cornubia 6.45pm

● **Wed Feb 18th** - Provisional - brewery trip, details to be confirmed.

● **Wed Feb 25th** - Branch meeting, upstairs at the Naval Volunteer, 8pm.

Weston diary

○ **Wednesday 17 December** - 10th Annual Seasonal Ales Crawl. Visiting pubs/hotels in the town centre offering a Christmas or Winter beer. Meet at The Raglan, Upper Church Road from 7.30. Depart 8.00.

○ **Friday 19 December** - Bath Seasonal Ales Crawl. Train from Weston 6.30. Crawl will start at The Star.

○ **Wednesday 21 January 2009** - Two-pub town social. 8.30 The Three Queens, Oxford Street (now back with its original name after several years being absurdly called the Pig and Truffle), then 9.30 The White Lion.

○ **Wednesday 18 February** - The Waverley, Severn Road. 8.30 onwards.

○ **Wednesday 18 March** - Beer & Skittles at The White Hart, Palmer Row.

Non-members welcome at the above events.

Weston contact

Tim Nickolls: 01934 644925 (evenings) or email tim.nickolls@virgin.net



Bath & Borders

See page 21 for forthcoming events of the Bath & Borders branch.

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NEARLY a dozen local breweries supported the Bristol launch of the LocAle campaign. This was in the form of a beer festival at the Commercial Rooms, Corn Street Bristol, which started with a meet the brewer session on Friday 3rd October. The launch proved very successful with a huge demand for locally brewed real ale on the day. Unfortunately the Commercial Rooms was shut for much of Saturday due to a technical problem, however this did mean that there was still some local ales available for lucky customers on the Sunday.

Pictured are Commercial Rooms manager Steve Binns (left) and Bristol & District Branch Chair Richard Brooks (centre) plus representatives from Arbor Ales, Great Western Brewing Company, Butcombe Brewery, RCH, Wickwar Brewery and Bath Ales.

CAMRA LocAle is an initiative to promote pubs that regularly stock locally brewed real ale. The scheme builds on a growing consumer demand for quality local produce and an increased awareness of "green" issues. This is your chance to support the local economy, reduce carbon footprint and try the many quality beers that are being produced locally but are too seldom seen in local pubs.

Promotional material is being distributed to venues that regularly stock local real ale. Remember you can promote real ale that is brewed locally to you wherever you are located. If you are a licensee that would like to sign up to be involved in the LocAle campaign then please email camra@camrabristol.org.uk.

Aside from doing your bit for the environment and reducing road congestion and pollution by drinking locally brewed real ale, this is a chance to promote a local industry, our local



identity and sample some great local beer. So look out for LocAle promotional material when you are in pubs and encourage the licensee in your local to support our LocAle breweries!

The contact telephone numbers for the local breweries that supported the launch and are taking part in the LocAle campaign are:

Abbey Ales 01225 444437, **Arbor Ales** 0117 9570899, **Bath Ales** 0117 9474797, **Bristol Beer Factory** 0117 9026317, **Butcombe** 01934 863963, **Cotswold Spring** 01454 323088, **Great Western Brewing Company** 0117 9572842, **Matthews** 01761 472242, **RCH** 01934 834447, **Wickwar** 01454 294168.



Zero Degrees also supported the launch. Although they don't actually sell beer to the free trade, you can drink it in their Bristol brewpub so they certainly qualify as being part of the LocAle campaign. All the other breweries listed will be very pleased to receive enquiries from any outlets that are interested in stocking their beers.

Check out www.camrabristol.org.uk to find out which pubs in our branch area are officially stocking LocAle and for full contact details of our local breweries.

Richard Brooks

(Photos above and on front page taken in the Commercial Rooms)

