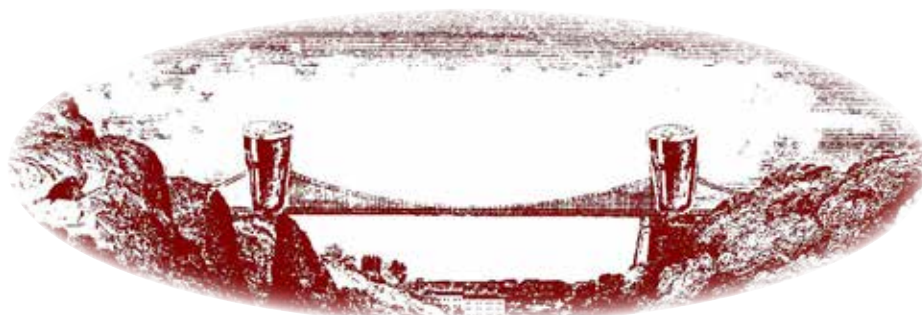




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25 years of RCH brewery

The excellent RCH brewery are celebrating 25 years since their first brew, by launching a new beer to commemorate the event.

The Davey family started brewing at their Royal Clarence Hotel on the seafront at Burnham on Sea in 1984. Two brews were regularly produced – *Clarence Pride* (a best bitter) and the darker *Regent*. As a one-time resident of that town I can recall the beers well and would have to say that they could be a little “hit or miss”. A few years later Graham Dunbavan, a one-time chairman of the Somerset CAMRA branch, left his engineering job to take over as the full-time brewer. Almost immediately the beers became much more impressive and consistent. The old beers were dropped and new ones produced. In 1993 the hotel was sold and the brewery was moved to an old cider mill near West Hewish in Somerset. Brewing now became the main focus of the business, along with a distribution business created to bring beers from all over the country and supply them to pubs, clubs and beer festivals.

With the move came new beers that were to become well known throughout the land – names such as *Pitchfork*, *Old Slug Porter*, *Hewish IPA*, *PG Steam*, *Firebox*, *Santa Fe* and *East Street Cream* were born. *Double Header* and the *Steam Special* series came later. Both the brewery and the distribution business have gone from strength to strength ever since – a new 30-barrel plant was installed



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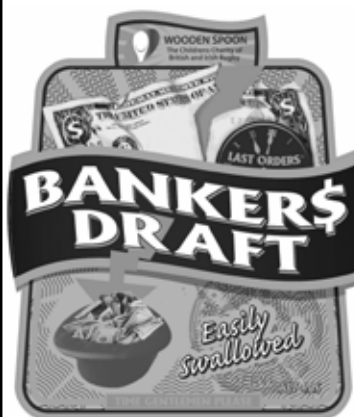
East Street Cream, the excellent 5% strong bitter, has just been named as Supreme Champion at the Tuckers Maltings Beer Festival, the prestigious SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers) event held in Newton Abbot every year.

The new beer is to be called *Steam Silver* and is a golden 4.5% beer using Brambling Cross, Goldings and Pilgrim hops. It is described as a “well balanced bitter with blackcurrant overtones and a lemony zest finish.”

So it's congratulation to RCH on their 25th anniversary and here's to the next 25 years! Thanks for all the beer.

Vince Murray

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Waterside location for Butcombe's newest pub

The latest pub to join the Butcombe estate enjoys a very desirable harbourside location within the Baltic Wharf area. It is the Cottage Inn and is situated next to the Bristol Sailing School, with the Harbourmaster's office and a boat and trailer park in close proximity.

A raised *al fresco* seating area is alongside the harbourside walkway where a Bristol ferry stop is also located. The 20-year-old pub, which has previously been in private hands, has a very busy trade, especially during the summer months, benefiting from its prime position. The interior is open plan, offering various seating options, and the walls are decorated with prints and pictures, many depicting early scenes of Bristol life.

The cask ales currently offered are Butcombe Bitter at £2.60 a pint and Butcombe Gold, with two rotating guests selected from Draught Bass, Bath Ales and Beer Factory beers. Butcombe's Blond Premium beer, Ashton Press cider and Veltins Pilsner are among other drink offerings.

The Cottage is open from 10am to 11pm (10.30 Sundays) with coffees available between 10am and 12 noon. Food from a large and varied menu is served from noon until 9.30pm (9pm on Sundays).

This newcomer makes a different and welcome addition to the Butcombe family.

Other Butcombe news

Butcombe pubs fully participated in the recent April 'National Cask Ale Week', which concluded at the Easter weekend. Various offers and events took place during the week, including two 'food and a pint' offers, free draws, a ladies night and a 'Meet the Brewer' open day at the brewery.

Incorporated during the week was the 'Cask Blond' summer



launch which took place at the Colston Yard, with a free draw ticket being given with every pint of cask beer purchased throughout the day, culminating in the draw for a five-litre mini-cask taking place in the evening. Customers also enjoyed various pizza offerings.

Butcombe have introduced Veltins Pilsner to its pubs. This comes from a 175-year-old German brewery. They also have the distribution rights for the South West region.

Rose Cunningham, the landlady from Butcombe's Woolpack Inn in Weston-super-Mare, has been working with the Business Enterprise Centre, based at Weston College, to improve the skills of her staff. This is a government-backed 'Train to Gain' scheme and involves training for National Vocational Qualifications, in bar and hospitality. Several members of staff are currently participating in this scheme which does seem to be a very worthwhile idea to pursue and perhaps one that many more establishments might consider.

Margaret Evett

(photo of the Cottage on front cover by Richard Brooks)

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PRIDE IN EVERYTHING WE BREW

Tales of the Riverbank

With a solid three days of summer to look forward to this year, there has never been a better time to sit beside the river, supping a decent pint of ale and wondering why it is that you never learn to bring along a jumper even though the sun that was out when you got up is never still out when you get to the pub. The Bristol area is blessed with a number of excellent waterside hostleries. Below are just a few visited on one windy day in early May.

Full details and photographs of all the pubs mentioned can be found on the www.britishpubguide.com web site. Landlords and regulars in these pubs are welcome to update the information on the website whenever they like.

Was it John Keats in his seminal Ode To Autumn who wrote “Down to the river, my baby and I. Oh down to the river we ride” thus evoking the British love affair with the waterways of this sceptred isle? He was right as well: we Brits have always had an affinity with the river.

Rich in heritage, abundant in wildlife and alive with culture, inland waterways are as popular today as they’ve ever been. Half the population lives within five miles of one of our canals and rivers and an incredible 11 million people use them every year as part of their everyday life – as a short-cut to work, walking the dog or simply taking time out and watching the boats.

Many of our rivers and canals were for years the life-giving arteries of British industry. Paddle steamers and packets, horse-drawn barges and agile skiffs carrying goods and people from mill to port, from factory to market. Much of that industry has gone, but the heritage of those bygone days lives on the waterside pubs, many of which used to feed and water the tradesmen of the canals and rivers.



Grain Barge

Now these rivers and canals are rightly seen as great places to spend leisure time. A place to forget the rigours of work, and rejoice in the memory of simpler times. You may be more stressed than a damp plywood bridge trying to support the marching band of the Royal Scots Guards as they double time it back across the river after a heavy lunch, but half an hour in a pub garden by the river, and you’ll be more relaxed than the Cadbury’s Caramel bunny taking Librium while listening to whale song on the pastel coloured Nano.

So, one dry but windy May weekend, I set out to find some of the best pubs in the Bristol area to combine a drop of the fine stuff with watching the world float gently by.

First stop was the **Pump House** in Cumberland Basin, an historic former Victorian pumping house where the docks meet the River Avon. There is a lot of scaffold and fencing around at the moment as part of the operation to replace the lock gates with new ones – presumably the old ones were squeaking a bit. But nonetheless this is still an excellent place to watch the river traffic going by, especially when the gates are opened to let through boats with names like “Lazy Lady”, “Princess Kylie” or “Can I Claim This As A Second Home”. The Pump House terrace is a sun trap at lunch times, and an extensive food menu is complemented by Theakston’s Old Peculier, Greene King IPA or Butcombe Bitter. Plus there is Thatcher’s Traditional Cider for those whose taste runs to the fermented apple.

From the Pump House, it is just a short walk along the waterside – pausing to take a picture of the pub across the water for a couple of paragraphs’ time – to the **Grain Barge**. The Grain Barge is the flagship, literally, of the Bristol Beer Factory’s growing presence in the City. I



Pump House

think this is one of the best places in Bristol to chill. Whether sitting gazing out of the window, or up on deck braving the elements, you have the choice of looking towards the SS Great Britain and the Matthew to your left, or a flotilla of sailing boats and rowing eights to your right, or turning towards the Hotwell Road and laughing at how much of a rush every one is in over there. Bristol Beer Factory beers are unsurprisingly on offer here, with No 7, Bristol Exhibition and Cut Blaster on when I visited. I went for the Bristol Stout, however, whose creamy flavour just suits the British outdoors perfectly.

Being sat on the deck here reminds me of rock legend Bruce Springsteen’s classic 70s paean to water, The River, in which he writes “In a wailful choir the small gnats mourn, among the river salallows”. [Are you sure about these quotes? – Ed.]

The third pub in the ‘Underfall Triumvirate’ was the **Cottage**, over the other side off Cumberland Road. With such a lovely location, this pub has for much of the last twenty years come under the heading of missed opportunity. Beer that was never quite *comme il faut*, food that was a bit too mass catering for the discerning nosher. The view of the



Cottage

water was always magnificent however, and it was a delight to hear that Butcombe Brewery have taken the place over. On my visit, Flower’s IPA was still available, but along side it were Bristol Exhibition from the Beer Factory, and the brewery’s own eponymous Bitter. A tip: because of the way the sun moves, or rather the way we move round it, this is a place to visit in the early evening if you don’t want to end up colder than a freshly shaved chihuahua standing in a snow storm eating a Magnum after extensive dental work.

Next we head toward the centre of Bristol for another floating establishment. If you undertake this journey, I can heartily recommend the Bristol Ferry Company as an idyllic means of moving between these and other pubs in this area. Right in the heart of Bristol, at the bottom of the cobbles in King Street, is the good ship **Apple**. Now, although traditional cider is not for everyone, it is nonetheless something to which the West Country can rightly lay claim as our own. Herefordshire and Worcestershire I’ll give you, but let’s be absolutely clear. Cider is NOT Irish, nor was it Born For Ice. It is, however, available in abundance at Apple. The choice is massive, but the great success of Apple is that it doesn’t seem to attract the sort of wrong ’uns that prejudiced people sometimes associate with ‘rough’ cider. On when I visited were West Croft’s Janet’s Jungle Juice, Rich’s Medium, Cheddar Valley, Heck’s Glastonbury, Old Rosie and Weston’s Perry (note to pony-tailed market-



Apple

ing people [*what's wrong with ponytails?* – Ed.], it is not called Pear Cider. Cider is 'an alcoholic drink made from fermented apple juice'. So Pear Cider is an oxymoron, like Honourable Member, or Scottish Philanthropist).

While I was in the centre I strolled over to Canons Marsh, to see what is on offer there. Not great I have to say. So here's a quick run down. **Lloyds No 1:** Ruddles Best, Butcombe, Greene King Abbot; **Pitcher & Piano:** no real ales on my visit; **Baja:** closed down; **BSB:** no real ales; **MacKenzie's:** no real ales; **Chicago Rock:** no real ales; **River:** no real ales; **Ferry Station:** no real ales. There is, however, one oasis by the water. Though if you're already by the water why would you need an oasis?

Anyway, the **Watershed Bar** is such an oasis. As well as offering Bath Ales' new cider, called Bounders, and their organic lager, they also had on two cracking beers from the Arbor Ales outfit – Sun Kiss and Brigstow Bitter. They have also offered Arbor Harbour, a light, session bitter made just for here, but it wasn't on when I visited. The Watershed is well worth a visit. It's all too easy to see it as just a haven for pseudos who want to discuss the Brechtian elements of Kieslowski's work before



Beeses

watching films that are only any good if they are in black and white, six hours long and with subtitles, but the fact is the café is a vibrant place whose eclectic clientele does it no harm at all.

OK, so that's a sample in central Bristol, but what is there a little further afield. OK, in no particular order. Do you know where Beese's is? There's a very strong chance you don't. It is a lovely little café and bar hidden behind Wyndham Crescent in Brislington. You go through a load of residential streets and, just when you think you've gone hopelessly wrong, you see a sign to the Conham Ferry (and another home-made one for Beese's), then you go down a steep, unmade road past a play area, through some trees until you arrive at a small clearance and parking area. Dump the car there and stroll down and you are met with a beautifully kept garden right on the River Avon and, to your left, a single story bar and café called **Beeses**. If you visit nowhere else this year, please visit Beeses. (It is also possible to approach from the other side of the river and use the Conham Ferry, which is operated by the pub, but check the times). Here, as I sat in the shade of a tree drinking Butcombe straight from the barrel – well, not straight from the barrel, they put it in a glass and gave that to me; I've found that very few bars let you drink straight from the barrel any more – I couldn't help thinking of a passage from the bible. "By the rivers of Brislington, we're in St Anne's, hey hey we wept, when we remembered cider".

As you head further upstream, there are several more pubs to stop at by the waterside. In fact, this is a great area to hire a barge and go



Old Lock and Weir

exploring, though it is equally important on a boat to have a designated driver. **The Lock And Weir** at Hanham is an excellent little boozer, with hard stone floors, low ceilings and an ever increasing terrace overlooking the weir (but not the lock, that's the other side of the island. The ever-reliable Bath Gem is complemented by an excellent pint of Otter Ale and the increasingly uncommon Wadworth 6X. Plus Addlestone's Cloudy Cider and Thatcher's Cheddar Valley, a traditional cider that polarises opinion. Too sweet for some, too dangerously drinkable for others.

Carry on up the river, with the old Somerdale Cadbury's factory on your right, you will soon come to the **Lock Keeper**, a Young's pub on the road from Keynsham to Willsbridge. Lots of emphasis on the quality of the food here, with the large lawned garden over-looking the river rather than the lock, and a conservatory for those who want the sunshine but not the chilly breeze. Young's Bitter and Special are on offer, as well as the seemingly ubiquitous St Austell Tribute, but I went for the old standard Waggle Dance, which seems just right for a summer's day.

Final pub for the moment is further up the river still. The **Jolly**



Lock Keeper

Sailor in Saltford has perhaps the prettiest location of all the pubs we've visited. It sits right by Saltford Lock, with an extensive terrace on the land-side, but the pub garden also extends over the lock to the little island beyond. On a summer weekend, you can sit for hours watching barges and launches pass through, while enjoying a pint of Sharp's Doom Bar or Wells Bombardier and a bite to eat. There is also a wide weir, and if you visit this place on a sunny day without being enchanted by the sights and sounds of this beautiful corner of England, then you need to check your pulse!

We have only had time to visit some of the waterside pubs in the Bristol area, so please do send us reports on the ones we missed out. There are plenty just a little way from the rivers as well, such as the **Globe** in Frampton Cotterell, so keep on, as Shakespeare once said "Rollin', rollin', rollin' down the river!"

The next issue will continue Tales of the Rivebank with one or two Bristol pubs missed this time, such as the Nova Scotia and the Ostrich, plus waterside pubs in or around Bath, and maybe more.

Is there an area covered by the Bristol & District Branch of CAMRA that you would like to see featured in this column in a subsequent issue? If so, send an email to Duncan.Shine@britishpubguide.com and we'll see what we can do.

Duncan Shine

Bristol & District Pub of the Year 2009



THE results of the Bristol & District CAMRA branch Pub of the Year 2009 were announced at the Bristol Beer Festival. The winner is the New Inn at Mayshill and the runner-up is the Seven Stars, Redcliffe, Bristol. Congratulations to them both!

Pictured with temporary certificates are Steve and Katie of the Seven Stars on the left, branch chairman Richard Brooks, centre, and two regulars representing the New Inn on the right (Dave and Alix could not make it to the beer festival that day). The presentations of the real certificates had not yet taken place as Pints West went to press.

The New Inn at Mayshill

Four years after gaining entry into CAMRA's Good Beer Guide the New Inn at Mayshill in South Gloucestershire has been awarded the Bristol & District Branch Pub of the Year for 2009. Run by long-time CAMRA member Dave McKillop and his wife Alix, the New Inn has enjoyed an impeccable reputation both locally and from further afield and this award will rightly re-enforce this interest level.

Dave and Alix started at the pub as managers in 2002 and made a huge impression with their attention to detail. Dave introduced an additional real ale and a weekly pub news letter, and Alix raised the standard in the kitchen by sourcing quality ingredients and introducing an interesting menu. The first time I went into the pub after Dave and Alix's arrival there was a stack of cards on the bar inviting customers to vote for their choice of ale from a list that included seldom seen brewers such as Elgoods and Blackawton, to appear on the bar a few weeks later. Pretty radical stuff I thought. Sure enough, during the nominated week I walked to the pub to find three ales as selected by the customers – that's what I call customer service! From then on



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the New Inn became my local.

A disaster occurred the following year when Dave and Alix went to Bedford to take the tenancy of their own pub, leaving the New Inn deflated with a stand-in manager. Whilst they were improving business at their new pub and building up a loyal custom, the lease holder of the New Inn decided to sell the lease. Pleasantly shocked by this news, Dave and Alix bought the lease and returned to the New Inn following six months away. "Under Old Management" was displayed on the banner outside the pub.

Upon their return trade soon returned to the pre-departure levels, and then some. Dave added another handpump onto the bar and, with top-notch food offerings, smart décor and excellent service, the customers kept coming back.

This was back in 2004 and since then Dave and Alix have steered their steady ship forwards but have ensured a continuously improving business. The restaurant and dining areas are complimented by a cosy drinking area around the bar which is festooned with pump clips of ale from all around Britain. Outside, the garden has play equipment for the kids and a smoking shelter. There is also a large car park but if you prefer, the Bristol to Chipping Sodbury bus' stop right outside.

Dave, a Scotsman, has an eye for his ale and sources mostly from local brewers but also from micros, regionals and sometimes nationals from all around the country. Scottish ale has made frequent appearances over his time at the pub.

The success is also credited to the bar and kitchen staff who are always friendly and accommodating and perform a very effective function.

So congratulations to the New Inn, Bristol & District Branch Pub of the Year 2009.

The New Inn can be found at Mayshill, between Coalpit Heath and Yate on the A432.

Mike Jackson

The Seven Stars - bucking the trend

These are difficult times for pubs with closures occurring at an alarming rate. We have certainly had our share of closures in the Bristol area. Indeed, many industry commentators and plenty of food and drink journalists insist that the only way for pubs to survive or thrive is to have a significant food offering. Perhaps they should pay a visit to the Bristol & District CAMRA Pub of the Year runner up!

The Seven Stars has been managed for just two years by Katie Hardwick and Steve Niven. What they have achieved in that time is astonishing – particularly as, not only is there no food offering, but it has been delivered during a downturn in the economy leading into the current period of recession. Since they took over the running of the pub in May 2007, general trade at the Stars has increased by an astonishing 350% – and keeps rising.

This is no flash modern bar which may open one year and quite likely close the next, as many town-centre bars have done in recent years. The Seven Stars has been around for centuries and survived all sorts of redevelopment, the blitz and the worst that planners can achieve. It is a pub as many pubs used to be – no frills attached.

So, what is the secret of their success? Its simple – visit the Seven Stars and you will get a variety of real ales, fast and friendly service and very competitive prices. Plus, for those who like live music and other forms of entertainment, this is also available on some sessions. More of this later.

Since taking over the pub, Katie and Steve have increased the real ales on hand pump from two to a maximum currently of eight. The pub used to sell about three firkins (nine-gallon containers) a week – it now sells around ten times as much.

What is also of note is that Katie and Steve, although experienced in the trade, are both relatively young in this profession. Indeed, at 23, Katie must be one of the youngest personal licence holders in the city. Having met each other at the Stag & Hounds in Old Market, Katie and Steve recognise the importance of customer service and on my many visits there, I have never had to wait long to be served, neither have I had a short measure and, if you have any questions regarding the changing range of ales, Katie, who looks after the beers, is delighted to help. Katie and Steve are committed to making the Seven Stars a local pub within the city that the people of Bristol can be proud of.

At the time of writing, the real ales are selling for 2.70 each. Better still, the happy hours every day between 2.30 and 6.30 includes real ales for only £2 per pint plus significant discounts on many other drinks, e.g. £3 for a double premium spirit and draught mixer and £7.95 for a bottle of wine. And then there is “Happy Wednesdays” when all real ales are down to £2 per pint all day.

On to that entertainment: this includes the “Acoustic Weekend” presented by Alfie Kingston on Saturdays and Sundays between 3 and 6; Sunday evening is an open Irish acoustic night hosted by Pete Airey and Davey Garner, etc. Other attractions include a pool table (50p per game), dart board, digital jukebox and quiz machine.

Very recently, thanks mainly to the Bristol Radical History Group, funds were raised for a new plaque that is on the external wall of the pub. This is to mark the help given by landlord Thompson of the Seven Stars to Thomas Clarkson to gather evidence which changed public opinion towards the slave trade eventually leading to its abolition. The superb plaque, designed by local man Mike Baker, is well worth viewing. You can purchase an informative booklet regarding this significant piece of local history behind the bar.

Back to the beers: these are sourced from independent breweries from all over the country and they heavily support West Country brewers. The range is constantly changing and it is pleasing to note that the pub often features a variety of styles including golden ales, porters and stouts. The pub also supported the CAMRA mild promotion in May. The pub is always open to suggestions on guest ales.

If you really do need something to eat, the pub sells the usual snacks behind the bar. And, they are happy to allow sandwiches and such purchased from near neighbours in Redcliffe Street and Thomas Street to be consumed on the premises – hopefully supplemented by one of the fine ales!

The Seven Stars is in Thomas Lane, just off Victoria Street near Bristol Bridge, Redcliffe,

Pete Bridle



Katie and Steve outside the Seven Stars
(photo by Andrew Swift)

Paradise found

A photograph of a glass of beer next to an Otter Ale tap handle. The tap handle is red with a white logo of an otter and the text 'OTTER ALE'. The glass is filled with a golden beer and has a white label with the Otter logo.

A logo of an otter standing on its hind legs, holding a beer mug.

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Relax with an Otter

Cheddar Ales celebrates award with a beer festival at the brewery

Cheddar Ales, a microbrewery based at Winchester Farm on the edge of Cheddar village, has won the bronze medal at the British brewing industry awards for its bottled version of Totty Pot porter.

The awards, the highest industry accolades in the UK, are organised by the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) and are voted for by a panel of brewing experts, trade media, CAMRA tasters and licensees. Entrants to the awards must first be regional champions and Cheddar Ales won three awards at the South West event, with Totty Pot scooping gold in the bottled beers category.

"I was overjoyed when the beer won gold in the regional finals last year," says Cheddar Ales' Head Brewer, Jem Ham, "but to win bronze at the national finals is just fantastic for us. It means more people will get to know who we are and that there is something special about the beer we are producing. There's no secret ingredient. We use great raw materials and make the beers as distinctive and as drinkable as we can make them. It's just beer made by beer lovers".

Although it has already gained a strong following in its native Somerset, Cheddar Ales is still a relative newcomer to the brewing industry, and is little-known outside of the county. That is likely to change now that the brewery will be known for making one of the best bottled beers in the country but, with only two full-time staff, there are no immediate plans to become a national brand. The other half of the Cheddar Ales team, John Magill, says, "For now, we would be very happy for the local business to grow further. Hopefully the award will spur more publicans and beer drinkers in Somerset into realising some of the best beers in the country are being made right on their doorstep, and that they should be taking better advantage of the microbreweries in their area."

As you might expect from brewers, Jem and John want to celebrate the award with a pint or two. But two men does not make for much of an office party, so they are instead busy making plans for a beer festival in June. The pair intend to pull together as many of the other championship beers as they can lay their hands on and have a festival in amongst the weird and wonderful vessels of the brewery itself. That alone is a rare and exciting prospect for anyone who is interested in beer, but there will also be other distractions to keep everyone entertained ... and fed. They are hoping to get some local bands to play in the evenings and there will likely be games and other shenanigans during the day. There will also be camping on the farm for those who want to have a drink and stay the night (enquiries to Julian Sayer on 07813 320870 or julians@activemendip.co.uk).

The festival will run for the weekend of 12th to 14th June. Opening hours are 8pm to 11.30pm Friday, midday to 11.30pm Saturday



Cheddar Ales is a microbrewery opened in 2006 by Head Brewer, Jem Ham. The brewery is based at Winchester Farm on the edge of Cheddar village, near the famous Cheddar Gorge. The brewery is a 20-barrel plant and currently produces around 8,000 pints a week.

The brewery currently produces five ales: **Potholer** (Golden Ale), **Gorge Best** (Best Bitter), **Goat's Leap** (IPA), **Mild Cheddar** (Dark Session Ale) and **Totty Pot** (Dark Porter). All beers are available in cask and bottle-conditioned throughout Somerset, or online.

Totty Pot (4.7% ABV) is a dark porter with hints of roasted coffee and a creamy malt finish. The award-winning bottled version is bottle-conditioned. Bottle-conditioning involves re-pitching the product with fresh yeast and a little sugar so that fermentation can continue in the bottle. This allows a natural, gentler, carbonation process to occur and promotes the development of subtle secondary flavours which are often not present after filtering beer prior to bottling. As such it is a process that produces a higher quality, more interesting beer.

Winchester Farm, Draycott Road, Cheddar, Somerset BS27 3RP

and midday to 5pm Sunday. The event isn't ticketed, just turn up and pay on the door. Entry will be £5, which includes a souvenir pint glass and your first pint.

All CAMRA members who can show a valid CAMRA membership card will receive a free pint on entry.

Further details are available from the brewery web site at www.cheddarales.co.uk.



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Inside Wickwar brewery

PROVING once again that the Campaign isn't all work, work, work, the branch enjoyed some recent social visits to local breweries. These included an evening at the Wickwar brewery on 16 April and our first ever official trip to the Great Western Brewery at Hambrook on 12 May.

These trips provide an opportunity to see exactly how and where our local beers are made and chat to the people that make them. Of course it's also a chance to try some top-quality samples so you know just how the beer should taste when you find it in a pub.

Photos by Richard Brooks

A Visit to Wickwar Brewery

On the wet evening of 16th April a party of intrepid travellers from Bristol & District CAMRA visited Wickwar Brewery. Although the Branch has been to Wickwar more than once before, this was our first visit since 2004 when the brewery moved from the premises it had occupied since 1990 into the much grander Victorian tower building where Arnold, Perrett & Co. brewed from 1887 to 1924, and the original Wickwar Brewery Company before them.

The visit started in the former cooper's workshop with a beer or two and a lively and occasionally controversial talk from founder member and chairman Ray Penny, followed by an educational film show about brewing. The beers, which included BOB and Banker's Draft, were in first class condition as we have come to expect. Finally we crossed the road for a look at the fascinating 19th century buildings. Recent restoration and investment have increased the capacity from 80 barrels a week to over 300, and there is still plenty of space for expansion if required. It was good to see such splendid old buildings being used again for their intended purpose.

Altogether Wickwar Brewery have come a long way in the nineteen years since the current company was founded, and the signs are that they are planning significant further expansion.

Norman Spalding



All eyes on the educational film

A Visit to Great Western Brewery at Hambrook

A group from Bristol & District CAMRA was privileged to visit the Great Western Brewery at Hambrook on 12th May – they told us we were only the second group they had invited in over a year of operation!

The buildings were used as a bakery for 200 years before Kevin and Sandra Stone bought them in 2007, and much work was needed to restore the fabric and convert them to their new use. Equipment was brought in from other breweries and some fabricated on site, and it is obvious that much thought went into the overall design. The result is a professional-looking operation with scope for expansion if required. Three beers were sampled in generous quantities, all in tiptop condition as you might expect; they were Maiden Voyage 4.0%ABV, Classic Gold 4.6%ABV and a new honey-flavoured beer (whose name escapes me).

About a quarter of current output is sold through the family-owned pub the Rising Sun at Frampton Cotterell, where our tour took us when we left Hambrook; there is also a thriving trade in off-sales of draught beer from the brewery shop. A range of seasonal beers is planned, and some have been produced already including a stronger beer (Old Higby ABV 4.8%) and a ruby porter. This is definitely a brewery to watch.

Norman Spalding



Brewing equipment at GWB

The pub that changed the world

The *Seven Stars* is one of Bristol's oldest inns. It is also – for those who don't know the city – one of the most difficult to find. Its location, tucked away down an alley well away from the city centre and not too near the docks, was, in the bad old days, something of an advantage. Not only could it escape the prying eyes of the city fathers; it was at a safe distance from all the nefarious goings-on at the dockside.

The most nefarious goings-on, of course, were those connected with the slave trade. Far from being outlawed, however, those who dabbled in this evil trade were honoured by the city. Some, like Edward Colston, still are. Despite official assurances that the slave trade was a well-run business, with the slaves well looked-after, many people harboured grave doubts, fuelled by tales of what really went on.

In 1787, a national association for the abolition of the slave trade was established. One of its founders was Thomas Clarkson, a 27-year Cambridge-educated clergyman who had determined to devote his life to the abolition of slavery. As he wanted to gather as much evidence as possible to use against the slave traders, it was natural that one of the first places he should visit was Bristol.

Abolitionists in Bristol – many of them Quakers such as John Harford and Matthew Wright – were in an invidious position. Bristol had grown rich on the slave trade; to attack it was to attack the basis of the city's prosperity. Clarkson and his co-conspirators – as they were undoubtedly seen by the authorities – had to operate by stealth if they were to get the information they needed.

Clarkson's initial reaction to Bristol was not favourable. On seeing the city for the first time, he wrote that 'it filled me, almost directly, with a melancholy for which I could not account. I began now to tremble, for the first time, at the arduous task I had undertaken, of attempting to subvert one of the branches of the commerce of the great place which was now before me.'

He found most doors closed against him. 'The owners of vessels employed in the Trade there,' he wrote, 'forbad all intercourse with me. The old captains, who had made their fortunes in it, would not see me. The young, who were making them, could not be supposed to espouse my cause to the detriment of their own interest.'

Clarkson had been told, however, that sailors had 'an aversion to enter and were inveigled, if not forced, into this hateful employment'. Disgruntled sailors would, he figured, be the best source of information about the slave trade.

The problem was finding them. He was a middle-class clergyman; the men he wanted to interview would be found in the roughest parts of one of the most dangerous cities in the land. Not only that: he was, as far as the slave traders were concerned, a marked man. He was almost killed in Liverpool, England's other main slave-trading port, by a bunch of roughs hired to assassinate him, and he was obviously keen to avoid a similar confrontation in Bristol.

Fortunately, not all of those who wanted the slave trade abolished were middle class. Clarkson was introduced to a man called Thompson (we don't know his first name), the landlord of the *Seven Stars*. Clarkson described him as a very intelligent man who received sailors discharged at the end of their voyages and helped them find places on other ships. He refused to have any dealings with the slave trade, aware that his reputation – and the reputation of his inn – would be ruined if he sent those who entrusted themselves to his care onto slave ships.

With Thompson as his guide, Clarkson made 19 visits to various public houses in Marsh Street used by masters of slave ships to pick up hands. They generally set out around midnight and returned two or three hours later. From his own observations and from information given him by Thompson, Clarkson gathered ample evidence to confirm his suspicions that sailors were inveigled onto slave ships by lies and fraud. Getting them blind drunk or cracking them over the head in a dark alley were also regarded as legitimate means of recruitment.

Clarkson was also able to prove, using information from muster rolls, that, far from being a 'nursery for British seamen', as anti-abolitionists claimed, slave ships were floating graves for sailors and slaves alike, with far more sailors dying on slave ships than on all the other vessels sailing out of Bristol put together.

The evidence Clarkson collected provided the abolitionists with an unanswerable case for reform. Hard facts, rather than opinion and hearsay, could be used to counter the anti-abolitionists' claims that the slave trade was well-run and well-regulated.

It took 20 years from the time Clarkson stepped over the threshold of the *Seven Stars* for the slave trade to be abolished, but his work in Bristol created a momentum that was unstoppable.

The scope of Clarkson's work in Bristol would almost certainly have been far less comprehensive and have had far less impact if it had not been for the courage of the landlord of the *Seven Stars*. It was Thompson who provided him with an entrée to places he would not have dared go and to people who would not otherwise have trusted him.

Given the importance of the *Seven Stars* not only to Bristol's heritage, but also to national and international history, it is astonishing it is

so little known. Admittedly, the Civic Society put a blue plaque above the door a few years ago, but that was about it until Mark Steeds, local historian, campaigner and pub landlord, decided that something more was needed.

He came up with the idea of a large plaque commemorating Clarkson, and highlighting the role played by the landlord of the *Seven Stars* in the abolition movement. Bristol Radical History Group took up the idea and Mike Baker was commissioned to produce a plaque. The aluminium casting was unveiled at lunchtime on 1 May, the 202nd anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in Bristol and other British ports.

A prestigious line-up of speakers included Mark Steeds, who introduced the *Seven Stars* as 'the pub that changed the world', Roger Ball, from the Bristol Radical History Group,

who gave a stirring resumé of Clarkson's life and influence, Madge Dresser from the University of the West of England, who has written extensively on Bristol's hidden history and the slave trade, and Mike Baker, who described Clarkson one of the 'greatest Britons'.

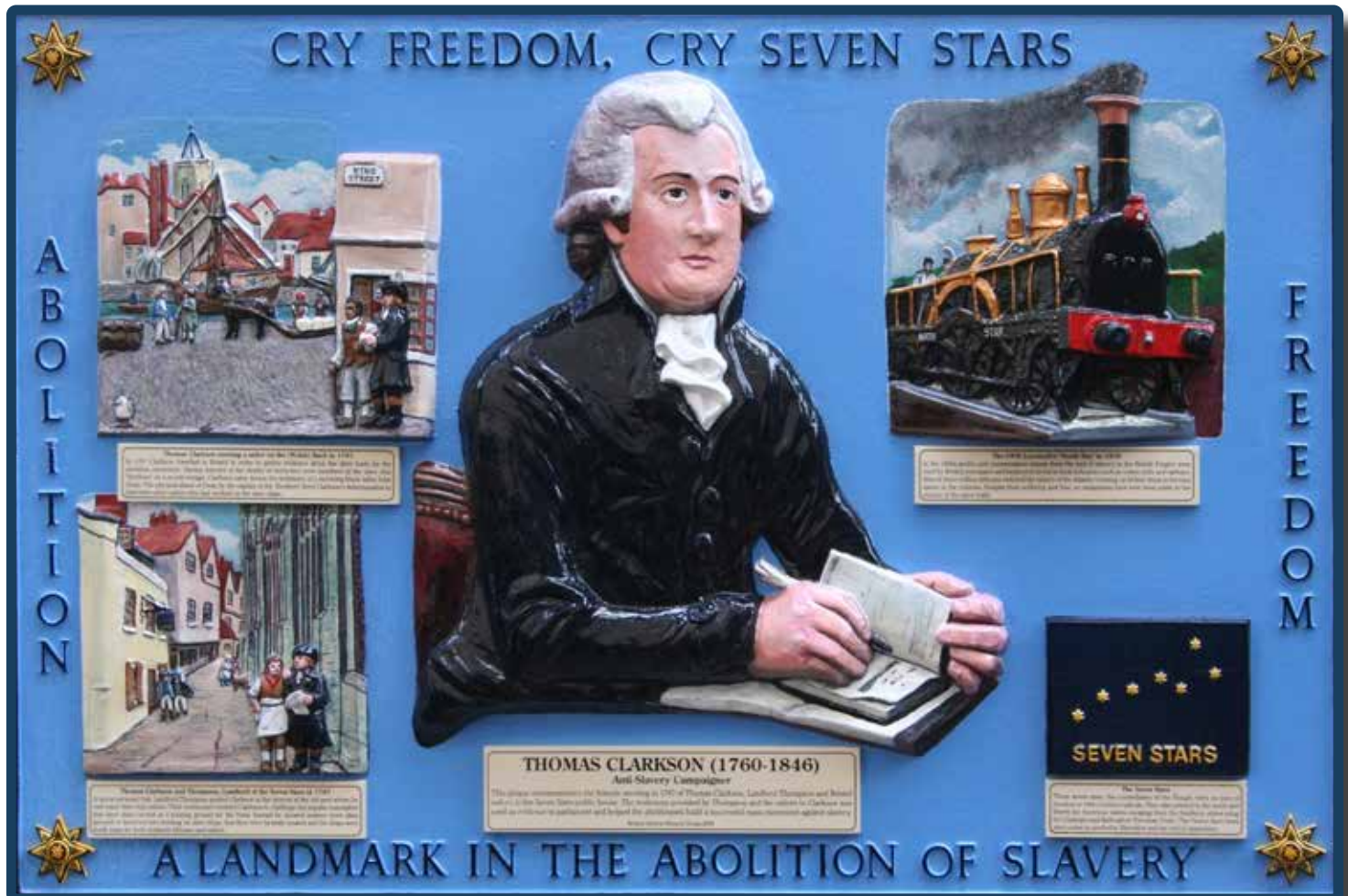
This sentiment was echoed by Paul Stephenson, the well-known local civil rights campaigner, who first came to prominence in 1963 when he organised a boycott of Bristol's buses after the company refused to employ blacks or Asians. The 60-day protest, supported by thousands of local people, ended with the company backing down. Later, his refusal to leave a Bristol pub that had a colour-bar led to a court appearance and national media coverage. His campaigning on these and other issues influenced the framing of the government's first anti-discrimination laws in 1965, so he is well placed to appreciate the difficulties Clarkson



Paul Stephenson



Richard Hart (right) and Roger Ball



and other abolitionists faced and the convictions that sustained them. In a short but powerful speech, he emphasised not only the centrality of Clarkson to Bristol's history, but also his role in the ongoing struggle for civil rights. He also called for Clarkson's name to be taken up by the city council in recognition of his achievement instead of that of the now discredited Colston.

The plaque was unveiled by Richard Hart, a civil rights lawyer from Jamaica who played a key role in the transition from colonial rule to independence in the Caribbean and was Attorney General of Grenada before the American invasion of 1983, since when he has lived in Bristol.

Finally, Steve Niven, who along with his partner Katy Hardwick has turned the *Seven Stars* into one of Bristol's top locals, with an unmatched array of local real ales, was called on to draw the proceedings to a close. As the direct descendant – in business terms – of Thompson, Steve said that he constantly felt the weight of history on him. Even

walking downstairs in the morning, he was aware of walking down the same stairs that Thompson walked down. Looking out in the early hours, he thought of Thompson setting off with Clarkson for some of the most insalubrious haunts in the city, their trepidation tempered by their conviction of the justice of their cause.

Clarkson's and Thompson's story is still an inspiration today, demonstrating not only that if you believe something strongly enough you can change the world, but also that it doesn't matter who you are – be it a Cambridge-educated clergyman or a pub landlord.

The plaque on the *Seven Stars* is a first step towards raising the profile of one of the greatest Britons in a city that has so far paid him scant recognition. That it will also help raise the profile of one of Bristol's best – and most elusive – pubs is another bonus.

If you haven't yet discovered the *Seven Stars*, you'll find it if you cross Bristol Bridge, head towards Temple Meads station along Victoria Street, take the second right into St Thomas Street and then turn right (between the Fleece & Firkin and St Thomas's Church) into Thomas Lane. There really is no better place to toast Clarkson's memory.

Andrew Swift

Speciality evening at the Staple Hill Oak

CAMRA members were recently invited to a 'Speciality Evening' at Wetherspoon's Staple Hill Oak. This took place on the 29th April during their Spring Beer Festival. Helen Bull, the manager at the Oak, thought that a variation one evening would be interesting. A good selection of eight ales were on offer (always a good start!) including beers from both international and British brewers. Moles' Barley Mole and Butcombe's Brunel IPA represented local breweries, the latter selling out in three hours!

A raffle was held, with a free ticket being given with every pint bought. Prizes ranged from bottles of beer, T-shirts, free meals to a tour of Butcombe Brewery. Interesting historical information was available about Staple Hill and the Oak, also information about CAMRA, including membership application forms and previous copies of our Pints West. Congratulations to Helen for arranging an interesting and enjoyable evening.

Margaret Evett

The Phoenix

The Phoenix free house closed at the beginning of the year when the lease expired and the licensee decided to move on. The pub is now up for grabs. Owned by the City Council and maybe in need of a few items of repair (unless the Council have attended to this recently), this could possibly be a great opportunity for someone to revive this old boozer.

Situated next to Cabot Circus but not on a main drag, this surely is a pub with potential. Right in the middle of town, next to the main shopping centre, free of tie and, I would guess, not too onerous a rent.

Can't you just see the five or six hand pumps selling great beer, in sparkling condition, from some of the many small breweries around?

Anyone want to try and turn this into the next real ale free house and 'must visit' pub? Contact the City Council for details.

Pete Bridle

A tale of two brewery tours

CAMRA held its 2009 Members' Weekend and AGM at the Winter Gardens in Eastbourne over the weekend of 17-19 April. In addition to providing members with an opportunity to discuss and debate future CAMRA policy and direction, it also enables members to enjoy a range of social activities. One of these is the chance to visit local breweries on organised tours. The brewery tours arranged included trips to **Harveys**, the official sponsor of the event, and **Dark Star**; both of which appealed to me for different reasons.

Harveys is the largest brewery in Sussex, which has been family-owned for more than 200 years. Situated on the banks of the River Ouse in the centre of Lewes, this is a traditional tower brewery. It is a beautiful example of a Victorian country brewery in the industrial Gothic tradition. Known locally as "Lewes Cathedral", it has been adapted over the past 150 years to house a modern brew plant which still produces beer made in the traditional way for its 48 pubs. A major development in 1985 saw the introduction of a second brewing line, which doubled the brewhouse capacity. Subsequent installation of additional fermenting capacity has seen total production rise to over 380,000 barrels a year. Their flagship beer, Sussex Best Bitter (4.0% abv), winner of the CAMRA award for Champion Best Bitter of Britain in 2005 and 2006, makes up over 90% of the total production. As there is normally a two-year waiting list for brewery tours, this was an opportunity not to be missed.

Compared to Harveys, Dark Star is the new kid on the block. It started life in 1994 as a small-scale experiment on a three-quarter barrel plant in the cellar of the Evening Star pub in Brighton. Rob Jones joined this embryonic brewery a year later, having previously brewed Dark Star (5.0%) at the now defunct Pitfield Brewery in London, which won the CAMRA award for Champion Beer of Britain in 1987. Soon they were producing small batches of single-hop variety "Hophead" beers, which proved to be very popular. In order to cope with increasing demand from pub regulars, other local pubs and beer festivals, and to establish the brewery on a proper business footing, expansion became essential. Thus the move was made in 2001 to a purpose-built 15-barrel brewery on the site of a former dairy farm at Ansty, near Haywards Heath. The brewery has a reputation for producing an excellent range of well-hopped beers, including the best-seller Hophead (3.8%), and growth has been steady over the years; and 2008 saw the commissioning of a new 45-barrel plant. Being one of my favourite breweries, this was another opportunity not to be missed.

I am well acquainted with the beers produced by both of these fine Sussex breweries as I have family connections in Lewes. I usually visit the area three or four times a year for family gatherings, which naturally involve partaking of a few local beers, and one such gathering luckily coincided with the Members' Weekend and AGM. Thus I booked myself on to the Dark Star tour on the Friday evening and the Harveys tour on the Saturday evening.

Organisationally, the trip to the Dark Star brewery was a bit of a disaster owing to a combination of persistent rain and having to wait for the coach for over 30 minutes when setting off from Eastbourne for Ansty, and again when departing the Dark Star pub in Linfield, the **Stand Up Inn**, where we were taken following the brewery tour for a few beers and a buffet. Unfortunately, the catering arrangements were inadequate for such a large party. The brewery tour itself was also somewhat disappointing as there was no tour as such; we were just left to wander round the brewery and chat to the brewery staff. The saving grace, however, was the excellent Dark Star beer available during the evening at the brewery and the pub: the aforementioned Hophead, American Pale Ale (4.7%), which is my personal favourite, and Festival (5.0%).

The trip to the Harveys brewery was a much more professional affair. Having made our own way there, we were greeted by the Head Brewer/Joint Managing Director and raconteur, Miles Jenner. We gathered on the site of the original Georgian brewhouse, where a five-barrel brewing plant has recently been established to take on a multi-faceted role – part museum, part education, part training and part product development. He took us on a detailed tour around the brewery, explaining the brewing process and how the plant had developed over many years. We finished in the tasting room where samples of the aforementioned Sussex Best Bitter, Sussex Mild (3.0%), Hadlow Bitter (3.5%), Old Ale (4.3%), Armada Ale (4.5%), Porter (4.8%) and Star of Eastbourne (6.5%) were available. Prior to our departure, we were advised that a one-off Harveys beer was available a short walk from the brewery at the

Gardener's Arms to celebrate the vast number of guest beers served here over the years. This beer, which was called "You Wouldn't Like It", was a blend of Porter and Imperial Russian Stout (9.0%) which weighed in at 7.14%. The name came from the usual response of the landlord when asked what he was drinking. As you can imagine, this was a popular destination following the tour.

On the Saturday lunchtime, following the Dark Star trip the previous evening and prior to the Harveys trip later in the day, I paid a visit to the **Evening Star** in Brighton, where it all began 15 years ago. I was pleased to find the Dark Star monthly special for April, IPA (6.2%), available together with Hophead, American Pale Ale and Dark Star Original (5.0%), the latter being the brewery's take on the former Champion Beer of Britain (in a cunning move, Rob Jones registered the name of the beer under his, so when he left Pitfield the rights to the beer left with him). Time did not permit a visit on this occasion to their only other pub, which is the **Duke of Wellington** in Shoreham.

So, two very contrasting breweries; both in terms of their history and the scale of their operations. However, what they have in common is a passion for producing a fantastic range of beers using traditional methods.

Dave Graham

Pub News

- Good reports from the **Jersey Lily** at the top of Blackboy Hill in Redland/Clifton. Hayley and Mark Ruggles are currently offering as many as five real ales, and reporting that the turnover is justifying the breadth of choice. Butcombe, Doom Bar, Bombardier, London Pride and Shepherd Neame Spitfire on offer recently.
- That bar on Corn Street which has in recent years been the **Slug & Lettuce**, **Fresco** and **Café Parisa**, is now glorying in the name of **Bristol Stylish Bars**. We wish the venture well, but have to wonder... Similarly, if you remember **Brooklyn** or **Romeo Browns**, then you will be delighted to know it is now apparently the **Funky Greek Bar**.
- The **Red Lion** in Mangotsfield was recently offering Arbor Ales Mild West as well as Jennings Bitter. The Mild was delicious.
- Further afield in Frampton Cotterell, the **Rising Sun**, a long time favourite, is doing particularly well with Great Western beers. *Maiden Voyage* and *Classic Gold* have both been very well received. It is, of course, the brewery tap for Great Western Brewing.
- Classic Gold is also available at the **King George VI** in Filton, along with four other beers, including Doom Bar, Courage Best, St Austell Tribute and a guest.
- The Old Stillage in Redfield reopened in March as the new brewery tap for Arbor Ales. Expect to see one or two always available, including Brigstow Bitter and, just lately Beech Blonde. Arbor Ales are also available at the **Watershed Café Bar** in Canons Marsh, and also the **Greenbank** in Easton.

For whom the Bell tolls - no covenant!

The Bell Inn in Redcliffe is now back on the market, thankfully without a restrictive covenant. It was reported in the last edition of Pints West how Enterprise Inns were trying to sell it with a restrictive covenant preventing future owners from ever operating it as a pub, a scandalous state of affairs in our opinion.

Offers are now being asked for this freehold property of around £165,000 plus VAT. This is an old characterful pub circa 1750 and will require some spend. However it is a bargain at this price and retains a truly capacious lower skittle alley/function room. There is also a small grassed area adjacent that may be negotiable with Bristol City Council for rent or purchase for use as a garden or smoking area. The pub sits directly behind the Ramada Bristol City Hotel with its accompanying 18th century glass kiln base, now a restaurant. The pub has historically also picked up much trade from this hotel's guests. James A Baker are the selling agent and can be contacted on 01225 789343.

Mike Chappell

Inn and Around Portishead

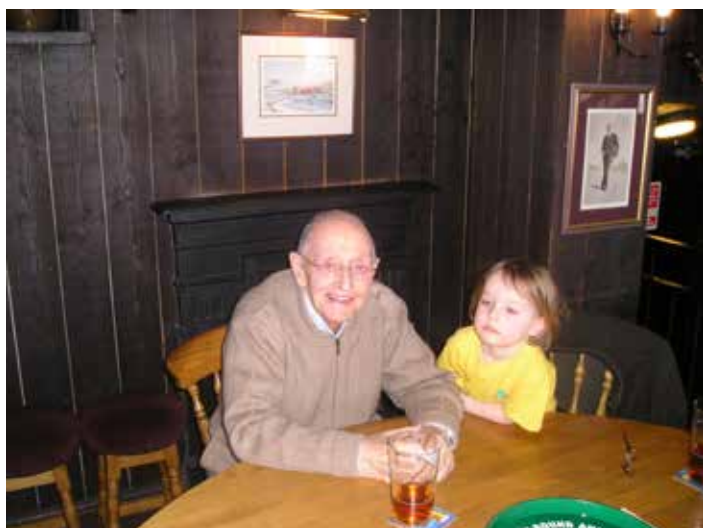
The Clarence House Beer Festival

The snowbound weekend of the 6th and 7th February saw Clarence House Social Club host their first beer festival in its Gordano Suite. Beers on offer included Caledonian Brewery's Over The Bar, Mr Perrett's Traditional Stout and Station Porter from Wickwar Brewery, and Theakston's Lightfoot Bitter and Old Peculier. Beers were kept to a very reasonable price of £2.50 a pint.

Landlord, Nigel Foster and his wife, Trish, were pleased with the success of the festival and aim to make this an annual event. The Gordano Suite seems to be a perfect home for it with plenty of seating.

The Windmill Inn Beer Festival

This year's Easter weekend event showcased a number of breweries rarely seen in town. These included a couple of new breweries – Quercus Brewery from Kingsbridge, South Devon and Quantock Brewery of Wellington, Somerset. There were also appearances from multi-award-winning Otley Brewery, Pontypridd, South Wales and O'Hanlons Brewery, Mid Devon. There is some interesting building work going on at this pub at the moment but it is still fully open and 30 outdoor tables are available



Syd Rendle and his great granddaughter, Emily, at the Windmill Inn

Oldest local drinker?

Syd Rendle, 96 years young in July this year, is seen here enjoying his usual Friday lunchtime pint of Butcombe Bitter at the Windmill Inn. Syd must be one of our older regular real ale drinkers. When he visits the Windmill he is usually part of a family group which covers four generations. A keen real ale drinker, he was recently seen moving to the grooves at the Clarence House beer festival. He enjoyed the music so much he kept his hearing aid switched on throughout. Syd's beer taste is for bitter-tasting ales and he opted for Otter Ale at the festival, rejecting my recommendation as being too lightweight for his taste!

What can we do with pubcos?

I should think all of us will know a local landlord struggling with his pub company with their high rents and inflated prices which the landlord is forced to pay for a restricted list of ales. My own experience is that a landlord who is not in a freehouse pays around 50% more than his freehouse neighbour for real ale. I recently heard a pubco director on Radio 4 defend their policies and describing how they give landlords a good deal. Not true in my experience. Surely, with their bulk buying power, pubcos are in a position to undercut freehouses with the prices they buy barrels. They are either extreme-



The Clarence House Beer Festival

ly inefficient, which I doubt, or else they are keeping huge margins for themselves.

What can we do to support our local landlord? If we boycott his pub, we threaten his livelihood and ultimately put at risk the pub – to be sold for residential use if the pubco does the usual trick of applying a restricted covenant. I suggest we buy nominal numbers of shares in the pubcos so that we can influence shareholder meetings and better examine their practices from the inside.

The thoughts of Chairman Vic

An occasional dip into the thoughts and words of Vic Long, veteran landlord of the Ship Inn, Portishead.

Vic told me of a recent experience when he was approached by a female customer who asked him for a cup of tea because she had been drinking wine at home and didn't want any more. You can assume that this request was dealt with in Vic's usual tactful manner (he is not lacking in opinions on such matters). However, we should not expect young Victor to be offering tea-dispensing services in the near future.

Neil Ravenscroft

The Windmill Inn

PORTISHEAD



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BADRAG - Bristol and District Rare Ales Group

The Mild Month of May

CAMRA has designated May as Mild Month, the time to promote all things mild. And in keeping with that spirit, Bristol during May has become a centre for that British session ale known as mild.

Mild Month got off to a fine start in Bristol on the first Saturday of the month with a **Clifton Mild Ales Trail** led by Laurie Gibney supported by around twenty mild trailers including two from Cheltenham. Seven licensees made sure that at least one mild was available.

The **Portcullis** was the start pub at noon, where Ned, Natz and Joe made us very welcome. They were half way through their May Beer Fest at which their own Dawkins Taverns Mild Month Festival Trail was launched. No less than seven milds were on offer: Arbor Mild West (3.6% abv); Brains Dark (3.5%); Cheddar Mild (3.6%); Stroud Organic Redcoat Ruby (3.9%); Otley Dark-O (4.0%); Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild (6.0%); and Portcullis Brainchild Mild (5.0%), a special recipe brewed solely for the Portcullis by Arbor Ales.

Next, we walked to the **Mall** where manager Wozz Oliphant put on his first mild especially for us, Cains Dark Mild (3.2%) which was enjoyed by all. M&B Mild (3.2%) was being delivered ready for the following weekend and may well become a permanent ale on the bar.

The **Lansdown** was next on our trail where landlord Charles Yaxley greeted us with the award-winning Arbor Mild West (3.6%) and gave us a taster of the same mild with a touch of brandy in it – this received mixed reactions. There was also a second BADRAG style ale on the bar in readiness for the summer – Severn Vale's Session (3.4%).

Paul & Dee Tanner were ready to greet us at the **Victoria** when we arrived. They had three milds on offer: Bazens Black Pig Mild (3.6%), Nethergate Priory Mild (3.5%), and Tring Mansion Mild (3.7%), and also some scrumptious pork pies!

It was a short walk from there to the **Vittoria** on Whiteladies Road, recently taken over by Les & Carol Clayton, where we were surprised to be treated to Cotleigh Nutcracker (3.4%), a dark coloured fruity mild. We had expected Theakston Mild (3.5%), but it was not available on the day. We can report, however, that Theakston Mild was available here throughout the rest of May.

So far we had mostly avoided busy roads, which made for a more enjoyable amble, but the only obvious route to the next pub was to follow the main flow of traffic toward the city centre. Wetherspoon's **Berkeley** on Clifton Triangle was next, where general manager Kelly Farrer provided us with Brains Dark (3.5%) and Cotleigh Nutcracker (3.4%).

The **Eldon House** was to be next on the trail but as building work had started recently was unable to field a mild. However, they promised to do so next year.

So ten intrepid explorers went on to our last but not least watering hole of the trail. Martin Hughes was at the **Hope & Anchor** to welcome us; he had been unable to source a Timothy Taylor Golden Best (an unusual light-coloured mild at 3.5%) that he had hoped to do, but provided a very refreshing Cains Dark Mild (3.2%).

Some of the crowd subsequently called in at the **Bag O'Nails** (officially part of the following week's trail) while others went on home after a very enjoyable and relaxing Clifton Mild Ale Trail.

National Mild Day was celebrated in Bristol on Saturday 9th May, with a **Harbourside and City Centre Mild Ales Trail** led by Pete Bridle and supported at stages by more than thirty trailers, including a few from Cheltenham, half a dozen from Weston-super-Mare and one from Kent. Seven licensees made sure that at least one mild was available. The weather, as with the previous week, was fine but not too scorching.

The **Orchard** on Spike Island was the starting pub where more than twenty trailers congregated between 10:30 am and noon. Stuart Marshall had the award-winning Arbor Mild West (3.6%) on the bar which was enjoyed by all, as were the cheese and onion baps at £1 each, and the pork pies and scotch eggs. Once a good crowd was assembled and refreshed, it was time to move on.

Next up was the **Nova Scotia**. Some missed the point that this was a "Harbourside ... Trail" and took the main road rather than following the waterside route. Here manager Mark Walter and assistant manager

BADRAG, the Bristol & District Rare Ales Group, is a campaigning group within the local branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Its aim is to promote the rarer styles of ale such as porters, milds, light (low-alcohol) bitters, stouts, old ales and barley wines.

In recognition of the group's very successful past campaigning efforts, BADRAG was given the top award from CAMRA's national Promotions & Marketing Committee. The framed award is currently spending time on display in Dawkins Taverns (keen supporters of BADRAG's aims), last seen in the Portcullis in Clifton.

Danny welcomed us with Severn Vale Monumentale (4.5%), bringing ample supplies up on trays from the cellar because all hand pumps were in use. Some tucked into lunch here, including a massive mixed grill. (Calling back on Sunday evening we found the mild had sold out within 24 hours, and at a pub that doesn't usually sell dark ales!)

A short walk took us to the **Adam & Eve** in Hope Chapel Hill. James Thompson is not only the licensee here, but also the chef. Having satisfied the food needs of some of our growing party, he was able to join us for a chat. Cottage Black Prince (4%) was the delightful mild on offer, and James planned to field a Cottage or Arbor mild throughout the month of May. Some drank *al fresco* in the tiny yard at the back usually occupied by smokers; our party didn't appear to include any smokers!

Amanda and Paul at the **Bag O'Nails** welcomed us with two milds, Cotswold Spring Old Sodbury Mild (3.9%) and Downton Chimera Maroonmaker Mild (3.3%), plus various pies and pasties. During the trail people joined our happy band, some for one or two pubs, others for the duration; at this point we counted twenty-six mild trailers.

A little trek followed across the city centre to the **White Lion**, a pub that is even smaller than the Bag O'Nails but which has outdoor seating at the front. This is a Wickwar Brewery pub so the Wickwar mild Penny Black (3.9%), that we had seen in the fermenter on our brewery tour in April, was now on the bar, into glasses and down our throats with relish.

Next on the trail was the **Bank** where licensee Ed Lobbett joined us; he had Moor Millys Mild (3.9%) on the bar for us, which went down well. Here we were joined briefly by a gent from Kent, who had obtained a copy of our trail leaflet and worked out his own one-day trail. Bristol, it seems, is becoming famous for its mild ales in May!

And finally, Steve Binns did us proud at the **Commercial Rooms**. He was there to welcome us and had three milds for us in pint, half or third of a pint glasses. By that time of the day a third of each of the three milds on the bar were just what the doctor ordered. They were Moorhouses Black Cat (3.4%), Banks and Taylor Black Dragon Mild (4.3%) and Arbor Ales Mild West (3.6%).

On Saturday May 16th thirty people enjoyed either part or all of an eight-pub **Kingsdown and Temple Meads Mild Ales Trail**, led by Laurie Gibney. There was a last-minute panic when it was thought a couple of pubs would not be open, but they did us proud and the trail went exceedingly well.

The trail started at noon from the **Robin Hood** in St Michael's Hill, where manager Dorian Gallimore, who took over only six days before, laid on Wadworth's Maypole Mild (3.3%), a new mild for 2009. Next we braved the only rainy walk of the day to the **Green Man** in Alfred Place, where Helen Clarke greeted us behind the bar with two organic milds, Butts Mild Surprise (4.5%), a one-off cask especially brewed for the Green Man and held back for our trail day, plus Spectrum Dark Fantastic (3.8%).

Over twenty trailers then made their way to the **Hillgrove Porter Stores** where Doreen Ashley was behind the bar to greet us with Timothy Taylor Dark Mild (3.5%). This was a rich, creamy dark mild and soon ran out just as the last trailer was served. The other mild on the bar was an equally enjoyable Moorhouses Black Cat (3.4%).

Colston Yard was then reached via the recently re-opened Terrell Street behind the Bristol Royal Infirmary, and as well as enjoying Cains

Dark Mild (3.2%) a number of trailers took the opportunity to eat well from the interesting menu. **Zerodegrees** was next on the trail with a 4% Dark Mild. Then followed a trek down Christmas Steps, up Broad Street and across Bristol Bridge.

The **Seven Stars** off Victoria Street, runner-up Bristol & District Pub of the Year, had the delightful Arbor Ales Mild West (3.6%) at a special trail price of £2 per pint, with live music laid on by licensees Stephen Niven and Katie Hardwick. Sixteen trailers went into the Seven Stars but only five were seen again – maybe they are still there?

Geoff at the Wetherspoon's **Knights Templar** did us proud with Banks & Taylor Black Dragon Mild (4.3%) and, from Pewsey, Three Castles Mad Spring Mild (4.7%). The **Cornubia** had Arbor Ales Mild West (3.6%) and the lovely Arbor Ales old ale Slumberjacks (6.9%) which our trail leader couldn't resist! Finally we arrived at the **Commercial Rooms** for Marston's Merrie Monk Mild (4.5%) and Cotleigh Nutcracker (3.4%).

On Wednesday the 20th, the mild trail hit Weston. Happily it was a dry evening conducive to a pub crawl. The evening began at the **Raglan**, Upper Church Road, where Freddie the landlord was waiting with the very dark and very tasty Milly's (3.9%) from the Moor Brewery, Ashcott. Naturally everyone went for this beer, although having done his duty to the mild, Robin "born to be" Wild indulged in some extra-curricular with the RCH PG Steam.

We made the arduous ten-second journey across the road to the **Criterion**, where Paul Sprackman had Mild Cheddar (3.6%) from Cheddar Ales served straight from the cask. A slightly lighter mild this one and much enjoyed by all.

Moving on to the **Regency** in Lower Church Road, Theakston Mild (3.5%) had made the long trip from Masham, North Yorkshire. Mark Pullen and the team were having a busy evening hosting a birthday party. Our gathering now numbered around 20, including some organizers of the Weston Lions Real Ale and Cider Festival to be held July 23rd to the 26th. Anyone reading this should make a note in their diary and support this festival. It was very good last year and promises to be even better this year.

A short walk to the **White Hart**, tucked away in Palmer Row. Our choice here was Church End Grave Diggers Ale (3.8%) from Nuneaton. Lou often gets beers from this excellent Midlands brewery and this is one of their best. As with the Moor Milly's, the breweries seem to have made a conscious decision not to include the word "mild" in the name of the beer. Mild: the beer that dare not speak its name!

Some of us made a diversion to the **Dragon Inn**, where we had to be strong in ignoring the eight excellent other real ales on offer and sticking loyally to the mild. In this case it was Moor Milly's again and very nice too – my personal favourite of the evening.

The final stop for the evening, inevitably, was **Off The Rails**. A fine end to the evening with the ever-present Mark serving up the multi-award-winning Rudgate Ruby Mild (4.4%) from Tockwith, North Yorkshire.

Another fine mild crawl much enjoyed by a good crowd.

During the previous week, on Thursday 14th, Colin Postlethwaite presented a **Tutored Mild Tasting Session** to nine people at the **Commercial Rooms**, where general manager Steve Binns had four milds on the bar for the tasting.

All four mild trails were better than expected attracting both sexes and all ages, but as Pints West was getting ready to go to press we were still looking forward to another far-flung event, a mild trail awayday (or weekend) in Nottingham.

Laurie Gibney, Tim Nickolls

● **The twenty-fifth BADRAG gathering** took place on Thursday 12th February at the Naval Volunteer in King Street, Bristol. Cellar visits preceded the gathering and were enjoyed by our members. Surprisingly for such an old building, the cellar was of reinforced concrete. It was also spacious, exceedingly neat and tidy, with good temperature control. Arbor Ales Old Knobley (4.5%) was the dark ale on offer; it had been first sold on the previous Tuesday, was tipping well when we visited the cellar, and ran out toward the end of our gathering.

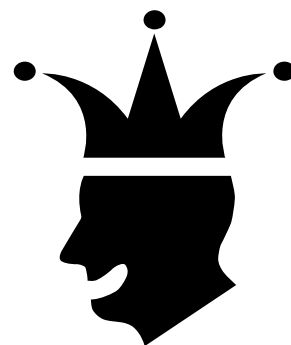
● **BADRAG at Robin Hood's Retreat.** For its April gathering BADRAG visited the Robin Hood's Retreat on Gloucester Road for the first time. The smallish pub proved somewhat overcrowded, as it often is, but eventually we found three tables and some stools to accommodate the twenty or so group members and friends who turned up for this social evening. Of the eight hand pumps, three were devoted to rare style ales especially for our benefit; they were Arbor Ales Oyster Stout (4.6%), O'Hanlon's Original Port Stout (4.8%), and Severn Vale Severn Sins (5.2%).

● **Rare ales event at the Portcullis.** A successful trial of a "rare ales event" took place at the Portcullis in Clifton between the 12th and 15th of March. Ned and Natz, who manage the pub for Dawkins Taverns, did members of BADRAG proud for our gathering on Thursday 12th with six platters of food and no less than six of the seven hand pumps devoted to "rare ales". Locals, visitors and other CAMRA members enjoyed the selection that evening and over the next few days. On offer were Arbor Ales Mild Fest (5.2%); O'Hanlon's Original Port Stout (4.8%); RCH Old Slug Porter (4.5%); RCH Santa Fe (7.3%); B&T'S Shefford Dark Mild (3.8%); and B&T'S Shefford Old Dark (5%). Look out on our web site for the next one!

GRANDAD was *always* a bit of a practical joker.

So I should have known better when he took me down his local. Especially when he blindfolded me. Hand on elbow he steered me to a chair and sat me down. *"Here, sup on this,"* he ordered, holding a glass to my lips. *"What is it Grandad?"* I CHUNTERED, apprehensively. *"Never you mind,"* was the stern reply. *"Just get it down you."* I sipped, timidly, then again, bravely.

Then again, with NARY a care in the world. It was smooth, hoppy and dry. *"It's delicious!"* I exclaimed, ripping the blindfold from my eyes to reveal my Grandad's laughing face. *"Theakstons Mild,"* he chortled. *"I can tell it with my eyes closed. Now you can too."* *"But, even my dad says Theakstons Mild is only for pensioners,"* I protested. *"Aye, your father's just not old enough to appreciate it,"* said Grandad, his eyes twinkling merrily. *"But I reckoned his son would be."*



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Watering Holes in the Desert

brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

In edition 80 of Pints West (Winter 2008), "Watering Holes" featured a piece on the **Waverley** on Severn Road. The article included a wish that licensee Paul Sprackman would consider replacing one or two of their national brands of real ale with something more local. A good turnout of Weston CAMRA members went to the Waverley for our February social and we were delighted to see that Paul had responded positively to this and had replaced Courage Best and Directors with Cheddar Potholer and RCH Pitchfork! Paul reported that both had been well received by his regulars. Unfortunately, on that night we learnt that Paul was leaving!

Having been in situ since the previous April, I suppose in the current pub climate a year in one place almost qualifies for a long-service award. However, the good news is that Paul has re-opened the **Criterion** on Upper Church Road and is keen to make it "a real ale pub." There are now three or four beers on offer. These include Greene King Abbot Ale and one from Cheddar Ales brewery as permanent beers, with additional guests. Some beers are always available straight from the cask – the first time real ale drinkers in town have had this pleasure for some years. On the staff, on a part-time basis, is local legend Andrew White. For many years Andrew was Weston's man on the Bristol Evening Post and it will be nice to see him on the other side of the bar for a change.

The news is also good back at the **Waverley**. Roger, the new licensee, is keen to maintain and grow the commitment to real ale. He has added a fifth beer to the range, which now comprises Charles Wells Bombardier, Greene King Abbot, a beer from the Cheddar Ales range and two guests. On my recent visit the guests were McMullen Cask and Robinson's Dizzy Blonde. Roger says that he is trying to actively involve his customers in the ale choice – getting them to mark the guest beers that are on and getting them to choose forthcoming guests from the Cellarman Guest list, which is kept on display at the bar. Roger says that demand has been very good,

enabling all beers to be served in top condition. Happily no major changes are planned at the Waverley, although Roger is planning to make better use of the garden. A marquee was put up for a recent bank holiday and barbecues are planned for when it stops raining.

The **Ashcombe** is open again under new management. So is the **Bristol House**, although the "business opportunity" sign is still hanging outside so it has to be assumed that the current arrangements are only temporary.

Everyone is looking forward to the **Lions Club Real Ale and Cider Festival**, to be held on the Beach Lawns in Weston from 23rd to 26th July. Last year's inaugural event was a great success, hence this year's being extended to four days, with a much wider range of beers and ciders.

Interesting experience at a pub visited on a recent branch social. A landlord, selling very iffy beer, proudly advised us that he cleans his pipes once a week. Presumably, whether they need it or not. Ho hum.

Tim Nickolls



YOUR TASTING PANEL NEEDS YOU



The Tasting Panel of Bristol and District branch of CAMRA is looking for people interested in tasting Real Ale. We intend running taste training sessions in the Autumn to show you how to identify the various flavours and aromas in Ales, and how we score them. The Panel is involved in the recommendation of Ales for the Champion Beer of Britain judging and compiling descriptions of our local ales for inclusion in the Good Beer Guide. The Panel meets regularly throughout the year to complete tasting cards for the different Ales. If you think you might be interested in training your taste buds, please forward your name and contact details to Colin Postlethwaite, 19 Willada Close, Bedminster Bristol BS3 5NG or email badrag@camrabristol.org.uk

NOTE: You will need to be a member of CAMRA to sit on the Tasting Panel.

Sixth Annual Nailsea Beer and Cider Festival

Nailsea and Backwell Rugby Club

Raising funds for Children's Hospice South West

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Saturday 11 July 12-11 pm
Sunday 12 July 12-6pm

Over 80 real ales and ciders

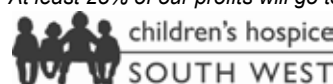
Free Live Music Saturday and Sunday.
 Advance ticket £6.50 includes commemorative glass,
 programme, tasting notes and your first beer.

Ticket entitles you to entry for all sessions
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A Round with Robin

You may remember in Pints West 81 that I wrote that I'd be visiting Leicester beer festival. Well, unfortunately I had other commitments that weekend, so as my hosts in Leicester were agreeable I visited there the week-end before and took myself off to the 33rd Loughborough beer festival instead.

By no means a small festival, with 70 UK beers to choose from, it was held in the Polish Club, where a further 18 beers from Europe and 12 ciders and perries were also available. Despite delights such as *Brewdog Punk IPA* and *Thornbridge St Petersburg Stout* being on draught, my favourite (over two days) was the *Slaughterhouse Wild Boar* (5.2%) from Warwick.

On the first day I had a few hours to kill in Loughborough so after visiting the museum and art deco cinema, I tried three of the Good Beer Guide-listed pubs in the town. The **Albion Inn** is right on the canal side, and has been in the GBG for countless years, the landlord Keith having been there for 22 of them. They have their own beer, brewed for them by the *Wicked Hathern (WH)* brewery six miles away, *Albion Special* (4%). The village allegedly gets its name from the time when, on the old coach road to Derby, it was a den of vice and so a parson in the 1800's named it 'Wicked'! At the Albion I also tried *WH Dobels' Dog* (5%), a lovely stout-like dark mild, and, with some home-made chilli con carne, the *Morgan's Olde Codger* (4.3%), now brewed by *Dow Bridge* brewery, at £2.18p a pint!

A short stroll in the sun led me to the Loughborough & District pub of the year, the **Swan in the Rushes**, a Castle Rock pub with 10 beers including a mild and an oyster stout, mostly on handpump but a few on gravity. Four ciders were also popular when I was there. *Milestone Cromwell Gold* (4%) was my tippie here. After a slight flurry of snow, I headed for the **Tap & Mallet** where, from eight handpumps, my favourite half pint was the *Abbeydale Moonshine* (4.3%).

After the beer festival on the second day I was recommended the **Paget Arms**, a Steamin' Billy pub, where as well as trying the *Steamin' Billy Porter* (4.2%), I had the *Wentworth Painted Lady* (4.6%) and *Beer Works UXB* (4.7%) from Sheffield. This is an excellent pub, with up to 15 beers on draught and selling a good range of bottled microbrew beers too.

At the **Seven Stars** in Bristol in the middle of March, they had a more than usual exceptional choice of beers, of which I'd only had three of the eight before. I tried the others, *Dark Star Saison* and *Dark Star Original*, *Wolf Lavender Honey*, *Harviestoun Top Dollar*, and *Sharp's Spring Mild*! There is normally a great choice on Wednesdays with often a rare brew to try.

Also in the middle of March, Weston-super-Mare town council chose CAMRA member and occasional contributor to Pints West, Mike Kellaway-Marriott (aka Dr John), to be Mayor with effect from 21 May this year. It is not yet clear how this will af-



Inside Tuckers Maltings for the beer festival

fect the town council, but with a few of their members as real ale aficionados, perhaps RCH beers will be served instead of sherry at mayoral functions?

The Bristol beer festival was again a great success, though I felt working four sessions was a bit tiring. The beers were wonderful, my favourite being this time *Downton Chocolate Orange* (5.8%).

At the two GBG pubs in Weston-super-Mare, Colin at **Off The Rails** has been getting excellent brews from the Quercus brewery in Devon, and at the **Regency Mark** has started selling changing guest ales from Websters, Charles Wells and Theakston's. Not to be outdone, Freddie at the **Raglan Arms** has been showcasing beers from Stonehenge and Moor breweries, whereas the **White Hart** continues to surprise with diverse beers from Cairngorm, Caledonian and Churchend, for example. All four of these pubs, plus the Dragon Inn, have sold Mild during May.

At Bath's **Raven** beer festival in early April, mention must be made of some of the rare ales to be had there this year; my first tasting of *Sarah Hughes Surprise* (5%), also *Helston's Blue Anchor Easter Special* (7.6%) and *Wessex Golden Apostle* (4.8%).

This year for my first time I visited the SIBA beer festival at **Tuckers Maltings** in Newton Abbot and, as I was able to stay overnight in Crediton, I attended on both Friday and Saturday. With so many beers to choose from, on the train going there I made a "wish list" of the 37 brews that I'd like to taste over the two days. As is usual, some had sold out by the time I got to them, but I was still reasonably successful with a pass rate of 75%.

On the Friday I met up with Colin and David from Off The Rails, and the beer drinkers from the Weston Lions, and Ken Coles gave me the latest poster for their beer festival in July. The beer of the festival had been chosen on blind tasting as *RCH East Street Cream*, but my favourites on the Friday were *Dartmouth SSS* (8%), *Jersey Best Bitter* (3.6%) – it is unusual to have a best bitter being dark and having a chocolate aftertaste – and *Downton Apple Blossom* (4.3%), which came second in the festival



Some of the Royal Artillery drinkers at the Tuckers Maltings beer festival

speciality beers class.

The following day I was lucky enough to be invited to share a table with the people from the Royal Artillery at West Huntspill, including Graham and Pam Dunbavin from *RCH*, whilst at the next table was the Winerah family from their *Art Brew* farm in Chideock, Dorset. My best beers of that day were a new brew from Somerset's *Berrow Middle Mash* (4.7%) and the *Sherborne 257* (3.9%) bitter. Also worth a mention is the *Castle* brewery from Lostwithiel – all four beers from there were distinctive, especially the mild and the stout.

I have also for the first time started to take part in the Somerset CAMRA pub trail, which has taken me to parts of the county I'd not explored. The GBG **Holman Clavell Inn** near Culmhead is worth a visit, as is the **Rock Inn**, in Dulverton. This may take me away from Bristol during much of May, except for the mild crawls.

Finally I must mention the Reading beer festival to which I went with the Bristol CAMRA coach party expertly organised by Ali and Tony. The range of beers was superb especially in the Locale bar, and it was from here that my beer of the festival came, the *Pitstop Sump* (7%), a brewery that is in suspension as it's changing from a one-barrel to a five-barrel plant! This beer narrowly beat the rest of Britain's beers, *Harveys Olympia* (4.3%) golden ale and *Elland Dark Tranquilly* (4.5%). I recommend this festival!

Robin E Wild

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BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

Castle Inn, Forester Avenue, Bathwick, Bath

Amek Developments, who recently bought the Castle Inn, has applied for planning permission to convert the pub into private housing. There had, by early February, been over fifty objections to the proposal from local residents. Earlier new tenants had taken on the Castle but under difficult circumstances were unable to raise sufficient income to make the pub a going concern. The pub closed for the second time in only a few months on Saturday 6 February. We learned, on Thursday 19 March, that the council's planning committee had voted by seven to six to approve conversion to residential use. The conservatives voted as a block despite local promises to save pubs from closure and the fact that that this decision seems to fly in the face of the council's own sustainable communities policy.

Crown Inn, Bathwick Street, Bath

This pub is up for sale. The previous landlords have left and the pub is currently under temporary management.

Englishcombe Inn, 157 Englishcombe Lane, Bath

Cedar Care Homes has applied for planning permission to convert this large two-bar pub overlooking the Oldfield Park area of Bath, which closed towards the end of 2008, into a forty-bed care and nursing home. Local planning officers had already received a petition objecting to the proposed loss of this pub, signed by over 80 local people, by early February. The application has been refused, despite the recommendation of the planning officers to accept, on the grounds that the development, as proposed, would be inappropriate for the site. Meanwhile the pub site has been fenced off with a high enclosing boards and is virtually invisible from the road

Filos, 1 Beaufort West, London Road, Bath

This pub, which has changed hands twice in the last couple of years, is now closed and up for sale. Towards the end of March rumours began to filter through that the freehold had been sold for just over £300,000 and that the building was to be refurbished and would re-open as a restaurant.

Jubilee, 91 Whiteway Road, Southdown, Bath

This large out-of-town pub, which has been closed for the last few months, is up for sale by James A Baker.

Olde Farmhouse, 1 Lansdown Road, Bath

This pub closed in around early or mid April. Opening hours had previously been erratic. It is believed that the tenants will stay on at the pub until June 2009. At that point the Olde Farmhouse should revert to owners Wadworth.

Pulteney Arms, 37 Daniel Street, Bath

The pub is to be sold. The landlady, who lives on the premises, has been given notice by the owners to leave. It is believed that the Pulteney is to be turned into a gastropub

Rising Sun, 5 Claremont Terrace, Bath

This traditional local pub with skittle alley, situated in the Lansdown area, closed on Monday 23 March for a short period. It as since re-opened under the same managers who run the Rising Sun in Grove Street. It is believed that this former Usher's pub is currently owned by Enterprise.

Rose & Crown, 6-8 Brougham Place, Larkhall, Bath

This Wadworth-owned pub on the eastern outskirts of Bath has a new landlord.

Rose & Laurel, 118 Rush Hill, Bath

This cosy pub, on the southern outskirts of Bath, is under new management.

Royal Oak, Lower Bristol Road, Twerton, Bath

For the third year in a row the Royal Oak is **Bath & Borders Branch Pub of the Year**. Congratulations to John, Becky, Chris, and all the staff who have made the Royal Oak into the branch's premiere real ale (and real cider) venue. The presentation was to be held at the pub at the branch's AGM on Tuesday 2 June.

Weston, 1 Newbridge Road, Lower Weston, Bath

This large pub, close to the Royal United Hospital, has new landlords.

White Hart, 242 High Street, Batheaston

A planning application has been made to convert this large roadside pub in the centre of Batheaston, which closed in 2005, into four residential units by owner Martin Richards and architects Lewis Foster Lewis. Few objections have been received and some of the locals even support the application. It now seems likely that the White Hart will close permanently as a pub and become private residential properties.

Barge, 17 Frome Road, Bradford-on-Avon

Following a short period of closure and some internal refurbishment this canal-side pub re-opened on Friday 27 February under the management of a former landlady who last ran the pub in the nineties. The range is predominantly Moles although there is no business connection to the brewery. The pub was visited by local members on Wednesday 4 March. The refurbishment has given the Barge a more light and spacious feel. The beer range comprised Moles Best, Tap and Rucking Mole along with Fuller's London Pride. The food also looked very good and seemed reasonably priced.

Beehive, 263 Frome Road, Bradford-on-Avon

This canal-side pub remains closed. Its freehold is up for sale. James A Baker is the agent.



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Award for Box Steam

Box Steam Vanilla Porter – the newest beer to join the Box Steam Brewery's beer range – has just won its first award. It was announced as winner of "Beer of the Festival 2009" at the Chippenham CAMRA Beer Festival, which took place at the end of April.

Vanilla Porter is based upon Box Steam Porter, but with an extra addition to every cask of vanilla pods imported from Madagascar. The result is "vanilla sweetness contrasting with roasted barley and chocolate malt bitterness, combining to give a full body yet remaining extremely smooth and drinkable."

This win follows on from last year, where Box Steam's flagship ale, Tunnel Vision, scooped the same award at Chippenham for the second time in three years.

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

New landlords took over this Wells & Young's owned pub on Wednesday 4 March 2009. The St Austell Tribute has been dropped from the beer range, which now consists of Young's Bitter, Young's Special and Charles Wells Bombardier.

Canal Tavern, 49 Frome Road, Bradford-on-Avon

This Wadworth-owned canal-side pub has new landlords. Victoria Kisioglu, who also runs the Turkish Delights Catering Company, and her husband Tarkan took over on Monday 19 January. A new menu and a children's play area are among plans for the pub.

George, Long Street, Croscombe, near Wells

This welcoming community pub has been awarded the accolade of **Bath & Borders Branch Country Pub of the Year**. Congratulations to landlords Vervan and Peter Graham for making the George one of the most pleasant pubs in the area. The presentation was to be held at the pub's annual May Bank Holiday Beer Festival on the evening of Friday 28 May.

Old Down Inn, Emborough

This attractive out-of-the-way pub is to host the large scale Wessex Beer Festival on its grounds in September. Formerly this annual event was held on the Bath & West Show Ground near Shepton Mallet.

Cross Keys, Blatchbridge, Frome

This edge-of-town pub, which closed in around November of last year, has been immaculately refurbished and re-opened on Tuesday 7 April. The new landlords are from of the nearby Masons Arms, which is now closed, whilst the beer range consists of Butcombe Bitter with a possible second beer under consideration.

Farmers Arms, Spring Gardens, Frome

This picturesquely-situated pub, on the northern edge of town, closed in the early summer of 2008 but subsequently re-opened under a new landlord in around the late summer. It closed again in the autumn but re-opened once more around early or mid April.

Lamb, 1 Christchurch Street East, Frome

This Blindman's owned smartly renovated pub, on the edge of the town centre, hosted its first ever beer festival over the weekend of Friday 24 April.

Mason's Arms, Marston Road, Frome

This pub, situated on the very edge of town, has closed following the former landlords' move to the nearby Cross Keys at Blatchbridge.

Packhorse, 13 Christchurch Street West, Frome

This popular much-loved locals' pub closed briefly in mid-March. The closure had apparently been on the cards for some time. The former landlords, Dave and Lel Mills, had run the Packhorse successfully for 28 years and they will be sadly missed. The pub has since re-opened under new landlords

Royal Oak, Oakfield Road, The Broadway, Frome

Jane, formerly landlady at the Royal Oak on Corsley Heath, has now taken over at this pub. Both pubs are part of the Wadworth's estate.

Three Swans, King Street, Frome

This town centre pub closed recently for a brief period but has since re-opened.

Wheatsheaves, Bath Street, Frome

Meanwhile this nearby town centre pub also closed for a short period recently but has now re-opened.

Weaver, Butts Hill, Frome

This pub was reported closed in early April. Little is known of the circumstances surrounding the pub's closure and its future is uncertain.

Old Ham Tree, Ham Green, Holt

A sign at this Wadworth-owned pub states that it is to let.

Ship, Oldford, Frome

The freehold of this Scottish & Newcastle owned pub, which, after a brief re-opening, closed for a second time in January, is now up for sale. The agent is James A Baker and the asking price £325,000.

Bell, off A36, Standerwick

This pub, which was under a relief manager for a long time, closed in mid-February 2009. It was then up for sale as a freehold, leasehold or tenancy. The Bell re-opened in early March. A number of promotions have been introduced such as *Foods from around the World* each Wednesday, senior citizens menu each Tuesday and Thursday lunchtime, a quiz night each Thursday, and live music on the last Friday of each month, all of which it is hoped will bring in the customers. The former connection with Hall & Woodhouse is evident from the beer range of Badger, Tanglefoot and Hopping Hare. Meanwhile a beer festival is to be held over the bank holiday weekend of Friday 23 May.

King's Arms, Stratton-on-the-Fosse, near Radstock

This village pub closed in around November 2008. It has since been refurbished and recently re-opened.

Woolpack, High Street, Sutton Veny

Refurbishment nears completion. New landlords Tim and Abbie Smith, who have purchased the lease, are anticipating that the Woolpack will re-open later this spring. Tim and Abbie were formerly landlords of the Lamb at the Strand and, previous to that, the Angel at Heytesbury.

Longs Arms, Steeple Ashton

This picturesquely-situated locals' pub, which also functions as the post office, has been awarded a Cask Marque Gold Award. To celebrate landlady Caroline Quartley hosted a twelve-hour beer festival on Saturday 4 April with 12 beers, ciders, hog roast, barbecue and live music.

King's Arms, Castle Street, Trowbridge

This town-centre youth-orientated pub closed around mid-April. The doors and windows were boarded up and a large sign advertised that the freehold was for sale. It re-opened shortly afterwards with no obvious changes to the look of the pub.

Rose & Crown, Stallard Street, Trowbridge

This run-down pub, near to the railway station, closed around mid-April. The windows and doors are boarded up. The future of the pub, which stands directly adjacent to the entrance to a major new retail development, is uncertain.

Ship, Frome Road, Trowbridge

This large main-roadside pub closed in around early January. It re-opened on Saturday 14 March.

Sun, Whatley, near Frome

This fairly isolated pub has been closed for several months. An application had been made by the owner to convert the pub into a private residence but permission to do this was refused by the local planning authority.

Steve Hunt

Rucking Mole joins the pack!

ALL YEAR ROUND

Tap Bitter 3.5%*abv*
Smooth malty flavour & clean bitter finish

Best Bitter 4.0%*abv*
Well balanced, copper coloured bitter

Molennium 4.5%*abv*
Deep amber coloured premium ale

Rucking Mole 4.5%*abv*
Clean, dry & malty golden bitter

Landlord's Choice 4.5%*abv*
Dark, strong and smooth hoppy bitter

Molecatcher 5.0%*abv*
Copper coloured ale with spicy hop aroma

IN SEASON

Holy Moley 4.7%*abv*
Spring beer that's heaven 'scent'

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Scrumptious (6.0%*abv*)
Sparkling (6.0/4.8%*abv*)
Bottle (4.7%*abv*)

www.molesbrewery.com

Bristol Beer Festival

The 12th annual Bristol Beer Festival took place at the Brunel Passenger Shed, Temple Meads, Bristol, on Friday 20th and Saturday 21st March 2009. Once again all the hard work put in by CAMRA volunteers paid off in a great festival and crowds of happy customers.

On offer during the course of the event were 140 different real ales and 44 different ciders and perries. Very positive feedback was received about the ticketing arrangements and the new approach of including some beer tokens in the ticket price, so this is a practise we are likely to continue. The organisers are aware that there were some concerns raised about the level of toilet provision in the venue at peak times and this issue will be reviewed for 2010.

The winner of the Beer of the Festival competition was **St Austell Proper Job** and the runner-up was **Cairngorm Trade Winds**. The winner of Cider & Perry of the Festival was **Moles Black Rat Cider** and the runner-up was **Gwynt y Ddraig Cider**.

Generous real ale and cider fans also donated £1,174 to charity at the festival and this has been passed to St Peter's Hospice.

More pictures of the festival are available on our website at www.camrabristol.org.uk.

Richard Brooks



WIN TICKETS TO BRISTOL BEER FESTIVAL 2010



Could you design a logo for the Bristol Beer Festival?

It will need to be printable in a single colour (for example on a festival glass) and ideally should be more creative than obvious images such as a train or the Clifton Suspension Bridge. If the Bristol Beer Festival adopts your logo for 2010 the winner will receive 4 free tickets to the festival. Please send your entry (along with your contact details) by 31st August 2009 to BBF Logo Competition, Steve Plumridge, Garden Flat, 6 Royal York Villas, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR or by email to steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk.

(If adopted, the winning logo will become the property of Bristol & District CAMRA to use as it sees fit.)

Pub News

- Worrying times in Patchway, where the word is that Enterprise Inns are planning to sell off the only remaining pub in the area, the **Britannia**. It may not be a classic heritage pub, but it is the only one left to the community, and at some stage planners must realise the effect on crime of allowing these establishments to close leaving young people with no 'hub'.
- In Hartcliffe, the **Harriers** on Bishport Avenue, which for a long while has looked like it may be doomed, has had a total refurbishment inside and out. It is important that pubs like this have every chance to survive, so it's great to see some investment being made. Not too sure about the colour scheme though (pink with yellow spots)!
- Still in South Bristol, the **Friendship** in Knowle, under threat of conversion to a Tesco store (because we really NEED more Tescos as a community...), and the subject of campaign by the Bristol Pubs Group to save it, now has another big name supporting it. The Bristol Civic Society is trying to get the building listed by English Heritage, which might yet save it. Fingers crossed.
- In Filton, the **Ratepayers Arms**, the only council-owned pub in the area, is starting to thrive, according to the council themselves. It has been given a new look, and they are trying to make it more 'communal'. Further upgrading is planned. Butcombe Bitter and a guest cask ale usually available.
- A lovely gesture by the **Forester's Arms** in Downend. In honour of local butcher Don Hayes, who passed away recently aged 66, the pub was renamed the **Butcher** for the entire weekend of Mr Hayes' funeral.
- Not exactly news, but it passed me by last October so may have done you to. The **Baccy Jar** in Whitchurch, which had a slightly unsavoury reputation, is now the **Court Farm Tavern**, and since changing its name (and undergoing a refurb) last autumn, it is doing much better, thanks. The old unwelcome reputation has been replaced by a pleasant and safe environment. Real ales are on offer, apparently, so I'll go and try 'em out for the next issue.
- In Redcliffe, landlord Adrian Hudd is finding his changing beer policy is very popular at the **Golden Guinea** in Guinea Street (just behind the new hotel). Although it varies, the beer is as often as not from Moles Brewery.

On the plight of the Red Cow

The Red Cow in West Street, Bedminster closed last year – and now faces demolition – after serving ales to the people of Bedminster for over 200 years. The pub was built when West Street was one of the main roads from Somerset to Bristol and Bedminster was still a rural area of fields and farmyards.

The Red Cow public house was, however, sold by Enterprise Inns to a developer, who is now proposing to demolish this, one of Bedminster's oldest original inns, and erect a three-storey guest house!

The reason given for demolishing this ancient building is that it cannot be adapted to a guest house without spending money on correcting certain structural defects.

Why the pub cannot be refurbished sensitively and reused as an inn, with letting rooms, I do not know, but it is something I have called for through the current planning application. It would seem that this planning application, 09/01015/F, is being taken seriously in that it was to go through the Planning Committee on the 3rd June with the decision to allow this application resting entirely with the elected members.

I contacted my local councillor to object to this wanton vandalism of an historic pub and encourage its protection through the expansion of the Bedminster conservation area and addition to the associated buildings of merit list.

By the time Pints West hits the streets – and pubs – we may know the outcome.

Mike Chappell

History of the Red Cow



William Morgan was the first recorded landlord of the Red Cow from 1792 to 1806, although the building could date back to the 1690's. The Red Cow estate had huge lands stretching all the way to Windmill Hill and along the banks of the Malago, with orchards, sheep, and of course a red cow.

Until the 1830's the back room was often used as the district county court of Bedminster, and the coroners court was held here regularly until the early 1900's. The Malago Vale Coal Company opened its first pit on Monday 13th May 1844 just behind the pub, and to celebrate the shareholders dined together at the Red Cow Inn. A year later the inquest into the first mining death from the pit was held here, and in 1851 the inquest when four miners and a lad are crushed when the rope holding the bucket they were descending in broke, and two tons of rope fell on top of them.

Many auctions were held at the inn over the years. One sad case in 1855 was when the then landlord, Charles Puddy, having decided to leave the trade, put all the household, inn and brewery equipment up for auction and the house was to be let!

In 1862, landlord Philip Huxtable had £63.10s in gold and silver stolen from his bedroom by persons who had been drinking in the bar.

Over the years, many people from Bedminster held thier parties and celebrations in the back room of the pub, and I'm sure many older residents will remember the birthdays, engagements and wedding celebrations that they attended there.

Colin Postlethwaite



Tied pubs under official fire

LET me offer you a business opportunity from Megapint (Properties) Plc.

Be your own boss, 24/7. For an investment of a few tens of thousands you will get a retail outlet, which will also be your home, that has been in business for 150 years!

Just pay me, say £40k a year in rent. And the insurance that I arrange. And most of what you sell must be supplied by me too, at the price I set.

Of course, your outlet did lose one in twelve customers last year and may have been through a few careless owners. Oh, and the roof leaks (I did mention you are responsible for all the repairs, even though I still own the building).

Let's stress the positives: if you do well, congratulations! We'll talk more about that when your rent review (upward-only, dear boy) is due. Sound good? Well, buy your local pub!

I must stress this is a wholly fictional illustration.

Most community pubs are owned by one of the big pubcos and leased to your landlord. The pubcos are the unintended result of the last major Government intervention, the 1989 Beer Orders. The then Big Six brewers were obliged to sell off thousands of pubs. Cannily, they sold them in blocks to new pub-owning companies – with supply agreements in place! Many mergers later we now have only a handful of both big brewers and big pubcos. Over a quarter of all pubs in Britain are either Punch or Enterprise.

On the 13th of May the latest Parliamentary report on pubs was published with the surprise recommendation that the pubcos be referred to the Competition Commission.

Amongst the report's findings were that, astonishingly, two thirds of tenants earn under £15,000 a year whereas the pubco may earn two or three times that per pub.

The Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, Peter Luff MP, said: "The report explicitly acknowledges that not all the problems of the pub industry come from the tied pub model. It is clear there are many pressures on any retail business, and pubs are challenged by changing consumer preferences, changes in the regulatory framework and general economic circumstances. Nonetheless, our inquiry found alarming evidence indicating there may be serious problems caused by the dominance of the large pub companies"

The Committee's report said 'repeated slips' by the pubcos 'undermined the reliability of their evidence'.

Spokesmen for Punch and Enterprise defended their businesses, and were confident of exoneration by any further investigation.

Ted Tuppen, Chief Executive of Enterprise said: "For many decades, the tied leased and tenanted business model has provided a low cost of

entry to the pub industry for committed, entrepreneurial licensees who are unable to afford to buy a pub of their own, supported by the expertise and resources of a large company."

Glen Dawkins,
Publican

WARNING
From the Management of the
HOPE & ANCHOR
Exceptional Public House
SPILL BEER
DON'T

Fancy opening a new pub?

And I don't mean take over an existing or former pub, although there are plenty of closed pubs in the area if you want to go down that route. I mean open a pub in a building that has not been a pub before. Nothing too big, just a small retail outlet that was, say, a butcher's, greengrocer's, dry-cleaner's or maybe even an off-licence.

That is just what Martyn Hillier did not so long ago in Herne Village, Kent. The point about this pub is that it was all so simple. With so many closing, Martyn decided to acquire what had been a butcher's shop and converted it into a pub in 2005.

Martyn, who opened the pub (named the Butcher's Arms of course), acquired the premises, obtained planning permission and converted the place into a wonderful, basic boozer. And simple it is, with no lager or alcopops, no games machines, TV, pool table or even food. The pub is all about great real ale from mostly small craft breweries and meeting up with friends for a good social chat. The pub claims that beer is only as good as the banter and you are sure to find plenty of friendly chat from the locals. There are interesting bits and pieces such as the old butcher's block but not much room for anything else apart from the toilets. In fact it is one of the smallest free houses in the UK, if not the smallest. As Martyn says, "Small pub, big appeal".

Martyn, who spoke to the national CAMRA Members' Weekend in Eastbourne recently, was keen to point out that this model could be a great opportunity for anyone who has ever dreamed of owning their own business and running a pub. By doing this, it is your own pub to run as you wish – free of tie. The Butcher's Arms, being so small and with no food, lager, etc, is also fairly simple to run. Being small premises the overheads are very low. Martyn was keen to point out that he makes a very reasonable profit from this tiny pub – no excessive rents to a big pub chain here!

Martyn has been so successful that not only is the pub in the Good Beer Guide, it went on to win the local CAMRA branch pub of the year before going on to win the CAMRA regional pub of the year.

- Key considerations from the Butcher's Arms example:
- Lots of unoccupied retail premises are currently up for grabs
 - Premises can be small, i.e. a single retail unit may be adequate
 - Martyn's advice seems to be keep it simple
 - Great and interesting selection of real ale
 - Does not cost a lot of money to set up the business
 - Overheads are low
 - Customers rule! (within reason)

Of course, starting up any new business has its risks and you may wish to seek professional advice before venturing too far. The correct location and business plan would also certainly help.

Why not have a "butchers" at the web site to get a feel of what may be achieved? Visit www.micropub.co.uk.

Pete Bridle

World's biggest toast



National Cask Ale Week took place during Easter week and over 6,000 pubs nationwide ran events to celebrate Britain's national drink – cask ale.

The week culminated in a bid to smash the world record for the largest toast at 7pm on Saturday, 11th April. 63 pubs in the Bristol area took part, including the Kellaway Arms in Horfield where 90 visitors and regulars alike simultaneously raised their glasses. The current record stands at 485,000 people, apparently, but we have yet to hear if this latest attempt made history by beating it.

Alison Bridle

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Cask Ale Week

National Cask Ale Week ran from 6th to 13th April 2009 and the Bristol & District branch held several events in support of this new CAMRA initiative.

Glen Dawkins owns five excellent pubs in Bristol that offer a warm welcome and feature a range of real ales including many from our local breweries. Monday 6th April was "National Beer Day" and the branch celebrated this with a walking tour of four of Glen's pubs, namely the Portcullis (Wellington Terrace, Clifton), the Victoria (Southleigh Road, Clifton), the Green Man (Alfred Place, Kingsdown) and the Hillgrove Porter Stores (Dove Street, Kingsdown). Pictured above are scenes at the bar in each of the four pubs.

Unfortunately it was just that bit too far for us to also fit in the Miners Arms in St Werburgh's that evening.

As a special incentive Glen Dawkins gave card-carrying CAMRA members 50p off each pint of real ale purchased at any of his pubs during the course of the evening, and a pleasant time was had by all.

Wednesday 8th April was "FemALE" day and we held a special tasting session for adventurous females in the Commercial Rooms, Corn Street, Bristol. Amazingly it appears that only 16% of women have tried cask ale, so this was an opportunity to have some free samples to see what they liked and tell us exactly what they thought. Several styles of beer were sampled and there was some lively debate about them, with a wide variety of comments and opinions expressed. These were mostly positive, however the view from one taster that she thought the flavour of a particular beer "lingered like Listerine" proved particularly memorable.



A vote was taken at the end of the evening and it was interesting that no clear winner emerged, perhaps demonstrating that taste is a personal matter and that "FemALE" is just as varied as any other type of ale.

Our thanks go to the Commercial Rooms for hosting the event.

Richard Brooks

The Brewers of Prague

In the first week of May four of us set off for a four-night trip to Prague, the beautiful capital city of the Czech Republic. We had picked up some ridiculously cheap Easy Jet flights a few months earlier (£42 return) which allowed us to splash out on a posh hotel with swimming pool, sauna, etc. Marilyn and I had visited Prague several times before but for Martyn and Phil this was the first time. There are two main reasons to go there – the truly amazing sights to see and the beer! No prizes for guessing my reason!

Armed with the excellent **Good Beer Guide to Prague and the Czech Republic** by Evan Rail and some good maps acquired previously, I set out to locate the best beer and best pubs possible. Amongst the entries were no less than eight pubs that brew their own beer so these were earmarked as “must do” venues. One of them was not strictly in Prague but in a village called Chyne, a metro then bus ride away. Whilst checking the internet I came across a website called “The Prague Beer Garden” which was bang up to date and I discovered another brew pub had opened in the centre, plus the great news that the Chyne brewery had opened a new outlet in the city itself! So nine brewpubs to get to, only three of which I had been to before. The best way to get around is to buy a one, three or five day pass – this can be obtained at the airport and covers buses, trams and the metro. It even gets you from the airport to town. Prices are very fair.

After checking into the hotel, three of us decided to head out for a beer – and we discovered that we were only about 200 metres from our first target – the **Pivovasky Dum** in Lipova, just off Jecna and right next to a tram stop served by the 6, 16 and 22 trams amongst others. This was one of the three visited before so I knew that going back was a

good idea. We were initially dismayed to see the small queue of people waiting outside the bar which is also a restaurant, but once we joined it we were seated less than two minutes later. We visited three times

during the trip and never waited more than a few minutes. It seems extremely popular with locals as well as tourists. This brewery is the most adventurous of all those in

Prague and loves to experiment with ingredients. On your first visit the best idea is to order a “sample tray” of beers – you get eight different beers in 0.1 litre glasses for around £4. In addition to the three excellent standard house beers – Light (Lezak), Dark (Tmave or Cerne) and Mixed (Polotmave) – there were five others. The Wheat beer and Coffee beer work well. The banana beer is very sweet and the least said about the cherry beer the better. The real surprise comes with the green “Nettle beer” which is actually very pleasant and refreshing. Although it feels like a restaurant they don’t seem to mind if you just want beer – not sure whether that would be the same at absolute peak times though.



Inside Pivovasky Chyne (photo by Vince Murray)

From Dum it is a short tram ride or 10-minute walk to the oldest of Prague’s brew pubs, **U Fleku** in Kremencova. I had also been here before and it is unashamedly targeted at the mass tourist trade at relatively high prices, but you should not visit Prague and not come here. Very much in the style of a German beer hall with oompah music and presumptive waiters, this unique place brews only one beer – and it is strong and black! No lager here! You get a measly 0.4 of a litre for around £1.90 but it’s good stuff. Wave away the offers of the unnamed spirits that you are offered (not free!) and enjoy the beer.

The second day of our trip was a disaster when Martyn mysteriously passed out in a restaurant at lunchtime and was taken by ambulance to hospital. Eight hours later he was finally discharged. Phil and I were glad to get out for a beer and managed to do three more brewpubs in the central area.

First up was the new brew pub discovered on the web – **Pivovasky Most** in Betlemska, very close to the famous Bethlehem Chapel in the Jewish Quarter. This was a pleasant bar / restaurant with a tasty Lezak and an especially good Tmave brew. Prices were reasonable at about £1.40 for 0.51 – especially as many bars in the centre charge a lot more. Next up a short walk away was **U Medvidku** in Na Perstyn, very close to a metro stop. This is a tiny brewery on the top floor of an amazing historic pub. It takes a few minutes to fully explore this warren-like place that includes a large beer and music hall, hotel, beer museum and several small side bars. There are two standard beers – one light and one amber – which are very good. They also brew by far the strongest beer in the country – called X-Beer at a whopping 12.8% ABV and sold in bottles. As a life-long Chelsea fan I took the group back here to watch the Barcelona match the following night and we met up with two chaps we know from Bristol (Russ and Barry). My plan was to buy several bottles to toast our glorious victory – but some dodgy Norwegian referee and a lot of bad luck put paid to that! In my state of shock I forgot to even try the beer!

Final bar of the night was the **Novomestsky Pivovar** on Vodickova. We arrived at 22.50 only to be advised that they were closing despite a lot of people being still there. A bit of gentle begging got us a beer which we had to drink in 10 minutes – not so easy with the lively Czech brews. I had never bothered with this place before, having heard poor reviews of the beer, but the Good Beer Guide advised that the brews had greatly improved. They have but the service and hygiene standards still leave room for improvement. This is another place aimed more



U Bulovsky (Richter)
photo by Phil Cummings



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REFRESHINGLY HOPPY BEERS

News from Bath Ales

Following the introduction of their latest addition, Bath Ales are delighted to announce that *Golden Hare* (4.4% ABV) has beaten over one hundred competitors to become a finalist in one of the most fiercely contended competitions in the beer industry. Golden Hare has been chosen by an expert panel of industry judges along with 15 other finalists to take part in the final stages of the Sainsbury's competition. Each brewery has won a contract that sees 40,000 bottles of their unique brews go on sale in Sainsbury's stores nationwide until mid-September. The two best-selling varieties will then be crowned overall winners, securing a contract to sell their beer in selected Sainsbury's supermarkets for at least six months.

Bath Ales won the competition in 2008 with its complex and satisfying premium ale Barnstormer. Golden Hare, which is described as a "crisp and flavoursome golden ale, bursting with flavour and brimming with condition" is continuing to be in demand, prompting the decision to also make it available in micro-cask from early June.

Bath Ales were also proud at winning another Gold Award with Wild Hare in bottle at the SIBA South West Beer Festival.

Expansion at Bath Ales continues apace. This has included two new 60-barrel fermenting vessels which have been commissioned to keep up with increasing demand for Bath Ales' beers.

The Bath Ales 2nd Biking Bonanza will be taking place this year on Saturday 20 June. Following the success of last year's event, where over £3,000 was raised for the FAB (Frenchay After-Burns) Children's Club, this event promises to be even bigger and better. Head brewer Gerry Condell has been training and will once again walk a route taking in each of Bath Ales' pubs, while the rest of the participants can cycle along the Bristol-to-Bath cycle path. The cycle ride features a stop at the brewery in Warmley, where there will be some complimentary refreshments, food, live music and party atmosphere. Entry cost £10 per adult with proceeds going to FAB. For more information check out the dedicated webpage: www.bathales.com/bonanza.

Finally, a quick update on Craig Lewis, one of the Bath Ales originals. Since last reporting on his health, Bath Ales is very pleased to be able to say that Craig is making a very good recovery

at the mass tourism market. We returned on the Friday lunchtime but were denied access to the giant main beer hall or the restaurant (which were "reserved" but almost totally empty) and shoved upstairs into an uninviting and dirty attic area. We decided against eating and drank up quickly.

On the Wednesday Phil and I decided to get braver and seek out the harder-to-find brew pubs. First up was the **Richter** brewery, based at **U Bulovsky** in Bulovka. This involved a metro to station Palmova, then about five stops on any one of several trams, followed by a very short walk downhill. A pleasant little place with a lot of wood evident inside as well as the brewery itself. This is another adventurous brewery run by a man who spent years brewing in Germany and often brews German-style beers – the Lezak is always on along with another three from the extensive range brewed. On our visit this included a wheat beer, a strong dark lager, and a Polotmave wheat – all were superb, especially the latter. It was quiet on our visit but apparently reservations are recommended at peak times. We then made our way back to Florenc metro station and on to **Pivovasky Klub** about 100 metres away on Krisikova. This is the sister pub of Pivovasky Dum but very different in emphasis with the focus much more on the beer, although we also had several tasty meals here too. There are six draught beers on at a time, including one brewed especially for them by Dum, with the rest constantly changing. There are also several hundred bottled beers from all over the Czech republic and the world. Service was good and prices very fair, except for the foreign beers which were expensive. We were astonished to see that Brewdog Smokehead from Scotland in 33cl bottles was priced at virtually £10 – we sold half pints at Bristol Beer Festival for £1.50! Mind you we were impressed that it was there in the first place! About 10 minutes' walk away on Husitska was **Pivovasky Dvur**,



Give yourself a gold star

GOLDEN HARE is a very rewarding beer. Bursting with flavour and brimming with condition, it's a crisp and flavoursome golden ale. It's smooth yet dry, wonderfully fresh, delightfully zesty – and available on draught right now!

www.bathales.com

bath ales

and is back in his beloved bottling plant, albeit on a part-time basis. Craig wants to thank all the Pints West readers for their get-well messages.

the new outlet for the beers from the Chyne brewery mentioned earlier. This was a nice friendly small bar in a non-touristy bit of Prague. A striking mural of a brewery fills one wall inside and four beers were available. Quite simply these were all magnificent and in my view the best beer of the trip. Special mention must go to the dark Cerne beer and the orangey coloured lezak jedenacetka – incredible flavour at only 3.6%. The evening was taken up by the great football tragedy!

On Thursday we thought it was high time for proper sightseeing and did the tourist bit – old town square, Charles Bridge, look at the castle, etc. There was time for a proper Pilsner Urquell – served unpasteurised from a "tankpub" – very good and unrecognisable from the tasteless rubbish of the same name served at home. Only the Urquell pubs with high beer sales get to sell the real stuff, sadly. We also tried some tasty Bernard beers in a remarkably dingy bar called **Duende** near the Charles Bridge. On the metro back to the hotel I only just prevented some low-life from removing my wallet from deep in my front pocket – this can be a problem sadly in Prague. Unfortunately (fortunately?) I didn't get chance to do anything else to him as he ran off! Phil and I then returned to the Pivovasky Klub and Pivovasky Dvur before joining the others for a very pleasant dinner and more nettle beer at Dum.

A bit more tourism on the Friday and it was off back to the airport. The only brewpub that we didn't get to was the Klasterni Pivovar Strahov near the castle – but as this was the other one that I have visited before I could live with that.

Vince Murray

Good Beer Guide to Prague and the Czech Republic by Evan Rail available from CAMRA books, £12.99, discount for members - www.camra.org.uk. Useful website: www.praguebeergarden.com.

News from Bristol Beer Factory

On Thursday 2nd April 2009 the Bristol Beer Factory launched their new **Bristol Stout** at the Tobacco Factory. This is a different product to the award-winning **Milk Stout** and is intended as more of a "session" drink. The Bristol Stout version is a 4.0% Oatmeal Stout and may be dispensed in a manner so as to appear not altogether dissimilar from a very well known Irish product. The photos show how it appeared at the Tobacco Factory. However, the Bristol Beer Factory have assured us that their new stout is completely "real" and that no extraneous gas mixes with the beer. Having subsequently tried it at the Bag O'Nails in Hotwells, we can also verify that it tastes good when served through a normal real ale handpump.

The launch evening was a great success and the Bristol Beer Factory report that Bristol Stout is selling well in the outlets that are stocking it. Two more conditioning tanks are being added to increase the capacity of the brewery. These are coming a the way from Leeds and will enable increased production of the Bristol Stout. If you

would like to order some Bristol Stout or find out more, call the brewery on 0117 902 6317 or Jemma on 07985 200588.

The Bristol Beer Factory also passed the milestone of their 500th brew a few of weeks ago. They were hoping to brew a special for the occasion, but were so busy it had to be one of the regulars. Still, it's great that the brewery has got this far and is now so busy.

They did manage to produce a special brew to celebrate those fine Bristol waterways, the 'Cut' and the floating harbour, reaching 200 years old. **Cut Blaster** was 4.6% golden and hoppy beer on sale at the Orchard, Nova Scotia, Hope & Anchor, Grain Barge and the Windmill. Just the one brew was produced and this all sold out in the first week.

Bristol Beer Factory **Exhibition** won its first awards at the SIBA Tuckers Maltings event this year. It won Gold in its class and Silver overall. Fantastic news for a great Bristol ale. This means that all of the Bristol Beer Factory regular ales are award winners – No.7, Red, Sunrise and Exhibition – not forgetting that National Champion Milk Stout.

Richard Brooks



Bristol Beer Factory production director Simon Bartlett (left) and brewer Chris Kay toast the launch of Bristol Stout



George II Beer Fest at The Victoria 25th-29th June
Summer Beer Fest at The Miner's Arms 7th-10th August
Two Pub Organic Festival
at The Hillgrove & The Green Man 10th-14th September

The Miner's Arms

Mina Rd, St Werburghs, Bristol BS2 9YQ 0117 9079874 GBG LISTED
Open Mon-Wed 4-11; Thu & Fri 4-12; Sat 2-12; Sun 12-11 Quiz Thursdays 9pm

The Hillgrove

Dove St, Bristol BS2 8LT 9248234 BRISTOL CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR 2007
Open Mon-Thu 4-12; Fri 4-1am; Sat 2-1am; Sun 2-12 Quiz Sun 9pm Food Weds-Sun

The Victoria

Southleigh Rd, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2BH 0117 9745675 GBG LISTED
Open Mon-Fri 4pm-11pm; Sat 12-11; Sun 12-10.30pm Quiz Tues 8.30pm Food from June

The Portcullis

Wellington Terrace, Clifton Village, Bristol BS8 4LE 0117 9085536
Mon-Thu 4.30-11; Fri 12-2/4.30-11; Sat 12-11; Sun 12-10.30 Quiz Thu 9pm Food daily except Mon

The Green Man

Alfred Place, Kingsdown, Bristol BS2 8HD 9304824 Organic & Local Produce
Open Mon-Sat 5pm-11pm; Sun 12-10.30pm Food Wed-Sat 5-9; Sun Roast 12-4

In Deepest Darkest Dorset: The Chetnole Inn

LOOKING for a weekend trip to get away from it all? Then you'd do worse than take a trip to Chetnole, a sleepy village nestled in the rolling Dorset countryside which is home to a church, a post office and the Chetnole Inn.

After a circular walk up hills, across fields and via Dorset's smallest church, the Chetnole Inn was a welcome sight. Offering three top quality ales, four-star accommodation, delicious evening meals and hearty breakfasts, this pub is well worth a visit.

We had Otter Bitter, Sharp's Doom Bar and St Austell's Proper Job, the latter being on particularly top form the night we stayed. That, along with game stew, venison steak, sticky toffee pudding and a cheese board of local cheeses, made for an excellent weekend break.

The landlord has been in residence for two years and has built up a well deserved reputation which means booking your table is essential. Once you're fed and watered you could retire to the beer garden in the company of some sleepy ducks or try your hand at skittles in the back room.

Take the train from Bristol Temple Meads, asking the conductor to stop at Chetnole, and take a short walk to the Chetnole Inn – or drive down the A37. For more information about the Chetnole Inn visit www.thechetnoleinn.co.uk.

Helen Featherstone & Toby Seely



Recollections of Jazz in Bristol

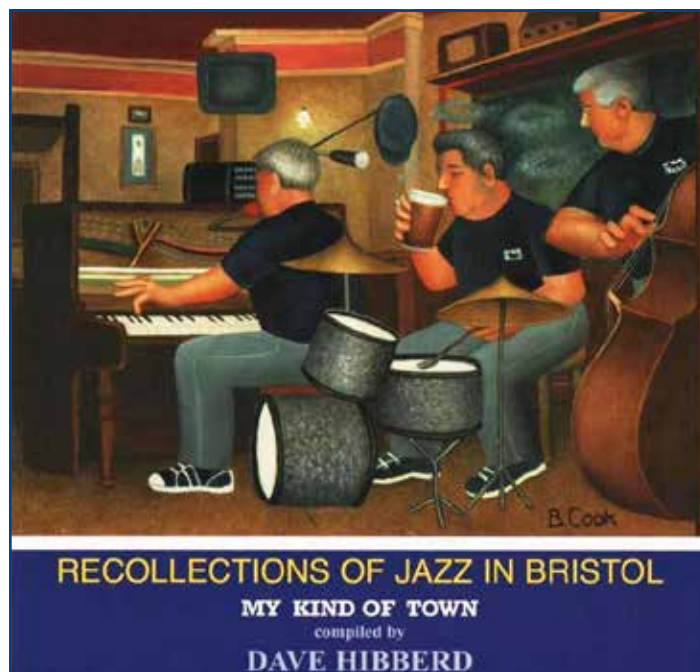
You may not think that a book review on post war jazz in Bristol has much to do with real ale and the drinking fraternity, but this book definitely does. Admittedly centering on jazz and its performers, it also features the venues – primarily pubs.

The great Acker Bilk does the foreword and in doing so mentions the malaise that has afflicted pubs throughout time – redevelopment: "Venues included the Crown and Dove, the Foundry Inn and the Ship on Redcliffe Hill, all of which have since been flattened and built on at least once." Hostelrys such as the Duke in King Street and the White Horse in Bedminster are unthinkable without their jazz offerings – and they've helped put Bristol on the map world-wide. And it's the latter pub that's featured on the cover of this new book, a second edition of the classic that first hit the bookstalls in 2000.

It was decided to re-issue the book after reports that copies were being sold on Ebay for over £30! This new edition, again by Bristol publishers Fiducia, has been enlarged slightly and now features the brilliant work of the late great Beryl Cook, a lady who loved Bristol's pubs when she lived in the city. Because of this association, the book is limited to just 500 copies and is sure to be a collector's item in its own right. In her lifetime Beryl was described as the 'Lowry of the West' for her graphic depictions of social life, but rather than the 'matchstick men and matchstick cats and dogs' of the Salford stunner, the Plymouth painter's work is much more 'cherubic', while both captured the atmosphere and vibrancy of the scenes that they enjoyed.

The White Horse painting, which is in a private collection, depicts the Dave Collett Trio in full flow with Dave Hibberd, the book's original compiler, characteristically playing the drums whilst simultaneously drinking his pint and smoking a roll up! As Fiducia's Roy Gallup says: "It's amazing how Beryl captures the essence of everything, Dave Collett's finger stance when playing the piano, the 'floating drums' and the band wearing trainers (or daps as they're called locally) – which they never did, but the whole somehow generates a happy picture."

If you want to see more of Beryl's work, Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery has acquired two of her works, one depicting some joyous 'Floating Harbour sailors' in a ferry boat, and the other depicting one of the many jazz festivals held in King Street, outside of the Duke itself. In these days of pubs seemingly being marginalised, it's great to see them at their best in contemporary art, and fair play to the Art Gallery for obtaining them.



If you would like your own Beryl Cook, and a slice of local social history, the book costs just £12.50p. If you can't find it in the bookshops, you can purchase it by contacting Fiducia Press at 10 Fairfield Road, Bristol BS3 1LG, phone number 0117 9852795, email address fiducia@blueyonder.co.uk.

Mark Steeds

Pub News

● Following an eleven month closure, the **Swan** at Nibley on the A432 between Frampton Cotterell and Yate has re-opened. It has been extensively refurbished inside and out and is accommodating both diners and drinkers. Four ales from Wickwar are offered.

A Few Swift Halves

Charity raisers

The charity night at the **Old Green Tree** in Green Street in Bath on Wednesday 11 March, raising money for Tiarna Elmer's work with 'Hope for Children' in Uganda, was a great success, with over £800 raised. Palmer's and Blindman's breweries both donated barrels of beer – Blindman's producing a one-off 'Hope' brew – while Bartlett's butcher's (next door to the pub) provided the meat used to make the chilli and curry served up for the occasion. Lots of other local businesses and individuals donated items for the charity auction. Landlord Tim Bethune, the staff of the Old Green Tree, and Tiarna herself would like to say a big thank you to everyone who made the evening such a success.

The annual Parkinsons Fundraiser at the **Royal Oak** in Twerton netted over £280 for the charity. Held on Saturday 2 May, it was hosted as always by the irrepressible Jimmy Mac, joined on this occasion by the 13th Bard of Bath, Master Duncan. Musicians included Ali George, Nick & Justin, Amy & John and With Love From Humans.

Two Bath beer festivals on the same weekend

The annual Charity Folk and Beer Festival at the **Royal Oak** in Twerton looks set to be better than ever, with 40+ beers. Among the acts booked so far are the Smokey Bastards, the Sodburys, Mat Woosey, Strange World and Hodmadodder. The festival kicks off on Thursday 16 July and runs till Sunday 19 July. (www.theroyalok-bath.co.uk)

The same weekend sees the annual Cornish Beer Festival at the **Star Inn** on the Paragon in Bath. As you'd expect, all the beer will come from Cornwall – including some rarities – and proper Cornish pasties will be shipped in for the occasion. Two of Bath's most popular beer festivals in one weekend make a visit to the city on the weekend of 16-19 July doubly unmissable. (www.star-inn-bath.co.uk)

Three years at the Horse

Jase Clarke celebrates his third anniversary at the **White Horse** in Twerton with a weekend-long beer festival on 10-14 July, featuring around 20 beers (with up to 10 on at any one time), all pegged at £2.90 or less, and a eclectic mix of live music. (www.thewhitehorsebath.com)

Heavo-ho and up she rises

The unstoppable rise of the Riser – as the **Rising Sun** in Grove

Street is affectionately known – continues. Four real ales are now on tap most of the time, along with a good selection of cider and perry, and, apart from an excellent open-mic night on Tuesdays in the newly-refurbished skittle alley, and top-notch food, the garden has undergone an astonishing transformation. I'd been told that an old boat propped up in a corner of the yard had been pressed into service as an al fresco seating area, but nothing could have prepared me for the sight that met me as I wandered into the garden at the back of the pub. 'Mediterranean-themed' doesn't do it justice – it was like walking into a set from *Mamma Mia*. The boat sits in a newly-installed water feature, with water breaking in front of the prow before dropping down a miniature waterfall, framed by aquatic plants. At night the mast is lit with fairy lights and there's room for around ten people to sit themselves in the most extravagant bit of pub furniture in Bath. Like the other features in the newly-revamped pub, it was designed and executed in-house, by Nick Etheridge, Jamie Mealing, and chef Kingsley Pillinger.

When the Rising Sun opened in the late eighteenth century it was the embarkation point for pleasure boats to Grosvenor Pleasure Gardens a mile up river, so the nautical theme is very much in keeping with the pub's history. The garden is not only one of the most secluded in the city centre – and a sun trap in summer – it also sets a new standard for style and ambience.

The official opening of the garden, on 15 May, was suitably lavish as well, with a champagne reception, live music – including a wind-up gramophone in a pram – and a barbeque, all presided over by Lady Margaret Oswick from the Natural Theatre Company.

Art Brew

Art Brew, established last year at North Chideock by John and Becky Whinnerah from the Royal Oak in Twerton, is rapidly gaining a reputation as a high-quality, innovative brewery, with new beers appearing regularly. Among those that have appeared so far are:

- **Art Nouveau** (3.9%), a golden session ale, packed full of hops, including the fragrant Bodicea variety.
- **Art Brut** (4.4%), a mild brown bitter, using Fuggles hops.
- **i Beer** (4.0%), a strikingly original golden ale flavoured with vanilla.
- **Dark Brut** (5.2%), a deep ruby-coloured ale, with a reassuring maltiness and a chunky hoppy endnote.
- **Tempest Stout** (4.6%), a well-rounded dark ale with a classic chocolate roasted malt flavour balanced by a rich maltiness.

The newest beer is Mild Peril, a superbly quaffable mild. A range of Art Brew beers can always be found at the Royal Oak in Twerton and in a growing number of top real-ale pubs in and around Bath and Bristol as well as farther afield.







Worth a Visit!

Reputedly Bath's oldest inn steeped in tradition and renowned the world over.

Described by The Campaign for Real Ale as a rare and unspoiled pub interior of outstanding historic interest and listed on the National Inventory of Heritage Pubs.

Serving traditional English ales including:
 Bellringer brewed in Bath
 and Burton's favourite brew Bass.

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TONY MORTON - AN OBITUARY

I AM sure that many members of Bristol Branch will remember Tony Morton who was an active supporter of survey trips and brewery visits between 2000 and 2006.

I regret to have to report that Tony passed away in Riverside Nursing Home in Netham on March 29th 2009, following a battle with lung cancer.

Tony was a very enthusiastic supporter of CAMRA, and held strong views on most subjects, particularly beer, pubs, First Bus and religion.

Tony, who lived in Redfield, worked for the Bristol City Council's Public Transport Group from 1999 until 2008, when he was forced to take extended sick leave.

His friends will treasure their memories of a very sociable, generous and somewhat eccentric friend with a real passion for good ale.

Alan Sibley
 Bristol Branch

The fall of the Castle

One local politician who's taking the threat to our pubs seriously is Bath's prospective parliamentary candidate, Fabian Richter. In July 2008, he celebrated the national Proud of Pubs Week with a pint at the Star Inn in Bath. He declared that, "by raising taxes on all alcoholic drinks, Gordon Brown's government is hitting 37 million responsible drinkers but not addressing problem drinks such as alcopops and super-strength beers or ciders. These tax hikes are counterproductive and hit pubs hardest: more people turn to supermarkets and off-licences to buy discounted booze, with the antisocial consequence of more drinking in the streets."

In a glossy booklet distributed to Bath's voters earlier this year he devoted a double-page spread to the threat to Britain's pubs, featuring successful campaigns to save local pubs in other areas. He also highlighted to the case of the **Castle Inn** in Bathwick, which a property company had bought and applied to convert to a house. He even included a photo of himself sitting outside the pub with a local CAMRA representative.

Sadly, when the application came before the planning committee, it was passed by the narrowest of margins. The Conservatives voted en-block for the conversion to go ahead and for a community resource identified as being of major importance by their parliamentary candidate to be lost for ever.

A man with this sort of influence should go far.

The Englishcombe Inn: 'Not a needed community facility'

An application to convert the **Englishcombe Inn**, in the southern suburbs of Bath, to a care home was submitted to Bath & North East Somerset Council earlier this year. Despite numerous objections and an 80-signature petition, the case officer's report on the application concluded that "there is an adequate provision of pubs in the locality and it is not considered to represent a needed community facility on this basis." The application was turned down, however, on the grounds that the development proposed was inappropriate for the site. No further application has yet been made, but presumably the developers will now take the council's objections on board and come up with a revised proposal.

It doesn't seem right, though, that, after loads of local people who use the Englishcombe Inn have told the council that it's an important community resource, a council official should turn round and tell them that they're wrong and it isn't. It's bad enough to lose your local pub; to then be told – by somebody who's more than likely never set foot inside it – that your grounds for wanting to keep it aren't worth considering really rubs salt into the wound.

A few months ago, when Bath & North East Somerset Council signed up to the Sustainable Communities Act, a spokesman for the council said that it would empower "local communities to raise issues and get their voices heard. It works on the principle that local people know best what is needed for their area." Pity it doesn't seem to have worked for the regulars at the Englishcombe Inn.

Andrew Swift



Michelle Spence, Assembly Manager;
Alan Morgan, MD Abbey Ales; and Duncan Bell

Duncan rings the Assembly Bell

Bath rugby star Duncan Bell officially opened the **Assembly Inn** on Thursday 9th April at 8pm after its full redecoration. The pub – situated in Alfred Street – is the latest acquisition of Bath's brewery, Abbey Ales, who already operate two other pubs in the city centre, the **Coeur de Lion** and the **Star Inn**, and just outside town the **Foresters** at Beckington.

Manager Michelle Spence said, "The Assembly Inn has something for everyone – a main bar for those wanting a relaxed evening with a good selection of good value pub food; a cellar bar for live music and speciality cabaret evenings; and a sports bar for those who like a game of pool or darts or who want to watch their sport on large-screen TV. Obviously, with Duncan and his team mates coming, we will be majoring on rugby."

A full selection of local real ales, including Bath's best-selling local brew Bellringer, will be available at all times, complemented by continental lagers, local cider and stouts from Dublin.

Abbey Ales started brewing in Bath in 1997 and has established a strong local following especially for its flagship brew, Bellringer, and more recently for its latest brew, Heritage, which has been well received in the city.

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We all like to get out and discover great pubs and great ale. But some of those pubs are just in the wrong place: they're too far afield, you never go that way, or you don't actually realize how good they are so they don't come to mind. But I discover great pubs all of the time. As an ornithologist, I often get out in the countryside and often close to great pubs. The CAMRA Good Beer Guide is my obvious companion on my ornithological expeditions; after all, you've got to get refreshed somewhere when you are out in the elements on a cold January day.

There are some great pubs to the south of Bristol and a morning trip to Steart in Bridgewater Bay always yields a good bird count. It is always cold at Steart, probably because it is a winter bird destination so a morning in the marsh hides and kicking along the farm tracks in search of that elusive sandpiper or Dartford warbler is well rewarded with a drop in at the **Crown** at Churchill. One of my favourite pubs, it is a prohibitive 25 miles from my home so an annual visit whilst birding kills two birds with one stone! The open fire immediately welcomes (and warms) you as you walk in the door, and there is always a friendly atmosphere. Most impressive is the ale choice – almost all local brews and always something from RCH. A splendidly hot cauliflower cheese with fresh bread and a fine pint of ale sends me on my way to spend the afternoon at Chew Valley Lake scanning through the masses of wildfowl for that wintering smew or rare grebe. At Chew Valley Lake local pubs are plentiful. Above the



The Ring o' Bells at Hinton Blewitt

east end of the lake the **Ring o' Bells** at Hinton Blewitt is a must-visit. Oldey-worldy with fine fayre, it is a place that is difficult to leave – the birding prospect at your next planned site had better be good!

The opportunity for distraction continues with a need to call in at the **Castle of Comfort** near East Harptree, a large inn with a traditional feel, efficient but un-hurried. The last time I was there the birds joined me in the bar as Buzzard from Cotleigh was my ale of choice. Robust and dark, it is appropriately named. If I leave Chew for a look at the smaller reservoir of Blagdon Lake, I can't pass the **Ring o' Bells** at Compton Martin without calling in. Plenty of outdoor seating ensures a spring or summer visit is very satisfying with buzzard, green woodpecker and roe deer often present at the rear. I keep meaning to drop in on the **New Inn** in Blagdon but haven't done so yet; it's always worth keeping one for another day!

It's a bit of a diversion but if I have a spare hour then the **White Hart** in Midsomer Norton is a worthy National Inventory* (N.I.) pub. Listed on the inventory for its unspoilt three rooms plus the central corridor, this pub is a Victorian gem. Another N.I. bolt-hole is the **Rose & Crown** (aka **Eli's**) at the wonderfully named Huish Episcopi. This is in the Somerset Levels near the RSPB's Ham Wall and King's Sedgemoor nature reserves. The lower-level centre room serves Teignworthy ale from Dalex pumps. There is no bar counter, you just stand next to the bar tender and the pump while your ale is poured. In a less trusting community one can imagine this process being well abused! But this is a special place for a friendly welcome.

Normally you can't keep me out of National Inventory-listed pubs but one that I have never visited is the **Berkeley Arms** at Purton. On the banks of the Severn, it is only a few miles from the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust centre at Slimbridge. But it's evening-only opening hours, and even then not on Mondays or Tuesdays, means that it is difficult to coincide with. But never mind, a day's birding at Slimbridge is complemented by a lunch in the **Tudor**

Arms at Shepherd's Patch. Once again local ales and fine food are a hit whilst contemplating your bird list for the day. In South Gloucestershire, two sites are top rank bird venues on a spring or early summer's evening. Lower Woods near Wickwar is the last local stronghold for nightingales. As dusk approaches I take up position in the thick of the coppice to listen to their fabulous song – one of nature's wonders. The darkness entices tawny owls to call in order to proclaim their territories, and if you're lucky a glimpse may be had of one in the poor light. But don't leave it too late, the **Beaufort Arms** just up the hill at Hawkesbury Upton is only minutes away



The Ring o' Bells at Compton Martin

and I wouldn't want to miss last orders. Once again, a friendly pub offering quality ale and a rare outlet for Wickwar's Screech cider. As one would expect from landlord Mark Steeds, the pub is festooned with historic breweriana and local references, and represents an excellent relaxing end to a day.

Ten miles south is an area of farmland between Marshfield and Tormarton. The only place in the former Avon county to find corn bunting and quail, this is a wonderfully tranquil site to spend the last hours of daylight. A call in at the **Major's Retreat**, formerly Portcullis, at Tormarton delivers a pint of Uley beer. Four other ales are all good but the Uley is the one I am looking for. A proper village pub with a sense of community, the Major's is worth seeking out.

I know that we all exploit opportunities for that change of pub scene or elusive ale. Some slink off from the wife on the shopping trip, some plan holidays so they can visit their special pub, and some take advantage of working away from home. But I like to think that my time spent relaxing is as satisfying as it could possibly be! Long live birds 'n' beer.

Mike Jackson

*CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors (or Heritage Pubs)

The Bag O'Nails

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Bird brews

Looking through the 2009 CAMRA Good Beer Guide index, I found 36 ales named after birds. Some are quite well known, high-impact names such as Wells' **Eagle** or Vale's **Black Swan**. But most are a little bit different from the popular perception. Birds of prey (raptors) are featured in 12 names and Somerset brewer Cotleigh specialize in raptor and owl names for their beers, and they are also enthusiastic supporters of *The Hawk and Owl Trust*. **Peregrine** Porter and **Buzzard** Dark Ale are splendid beers and two of my favourites. Cotleigh also list **Barn Owl**, **Tawny Owl**, **Harrier** and **Golden Seahawk**.

One of the best known bird-named ales is Orkney's **Raven Ale**. The raven is a bird of myth and legend. Its jet black plumage and status as the largest of the 'perching birds' is not reflected in the ale. Being light at 3.8% and nowhere near black in colour, I always feel a little let down, but an ale that matched the formidable character of the raven would not necessarily be what you would want!

The splendidly named **Nightjar** from White Park provokes thoughts of warm summer evenings impatiently waiting for the 'electronic' call of the male nightjar. I have had wonderful experiences of nightjars calling whilst holidaying in Dorset and the south-west of France. They are also heard near Green Ore on the Mendips.

Bowland brewery in Lancashire brew an ale called **Hen Harrier**. The most persecuted of birds, for their habit of feeding on red grouse chicks, their appeal to the ornithologist is immense. When walking in Kenfig dunes in South Wales last winter I flushed one; it flew away from my tramping feet with such grace and agility that I was knocked for six – I had sought that bird for 20 years in the UK and finally I had seen one! Five seconds of absolute awe. My expectation would be that the pint of Bowland beer would have lasted a little longer!

One of my favourite breweries, Black Isle, only produce organic ale. A peninsula off of north-east Scotland, the Black Isle is a wonderful natural landscape that boasts red kites amongst its fauna. Needless to say, this bird names one of its beers (**Red Kite**), as with **Goldeneye** and **Yellowhammer**. The red kite is an unmistakable bird of prey with angular wings and a forked tail. The goldeneye is a diving duck that breeds near the Black Isle and the yellowhammer is a finch-like bunting that lives on the heaths of the peninsula. O'Hanlon's also brew an ale called Yellowhammer.

However, not all bird-named beer tastes wonderful. It is said that the kingfisher, beautiful as it is, tastes unpalatable to any predator so they widely avoid it. So next time you are in an Indian restaurant and are offered a lager, be wary.

Mike Jackson

Pub News

- Les & Carol at the **Vittoria** in Whiteladies Road, Clifton Down are now sporting two handpumps for local/guest ales, as well as the three for their S&N tied products. Interesting beers have featured so far, including a mild from Cotleigh. A pub well worth a visit.
- A new cafe/bar has opened on St Michael's Hill, Kingsdown, in premises formerly occupied by a music shop. Called **Rustic Vine**, it has been trading for a couple of months now and general manager Nathan Thomas says things have been going well. They are "very keen indeed to push real ale sale", and at the moment have two local Bristol Beer Factory ales on, No 7 and Sunrise.
- The **Beehive** at 112 Wellington Hill West, on the border of Westbury-on-Trym and Henleaze has re-opened under new management. It had been closed since just before last Christmas and has recently undergone a much-needed extensive refurbishment. One of the two guys forming the new management team was previously at the Post Office Tavern in WoT. They are starting off with four real ales: Courage Best and Bass as permanent fixtures; with Butcombe and Otter providing the first two guest beers. They say they are keen to develop the real ale side of the business.
- There will be a "Pucklechurch Revels and Beer Festival" at the **Star**, Castle Street, on Friday 12th and Saturday 13th June from 6.30pm onwards. On offer are 28 real ales and 10 ciders, plus live music and food both evenings. Entry by advance ticket only, £5 Friday and £8 Saturday, but half price to CAMRA members – to claim discount contact Derek on 0117 9372137.

Avian pub names

Why, I wonder, are there so many pubs called the **Swan** in South Gloucestershire? Almondsbury, Tockington, Tytherington, Thornbury, Yate, Nibley, Swineford and Winterbourne all have one. The swan is, of course, a bird associated to royalty in as much that all swans are 'owned' by royalty. The name **Swan With Two Necks**, a fairly common pub name and Bristol's finest Bass house, in St. Jude's, is a corruption of 'two nicks'. Herds of swans (that is how a group of swans is described) used to be marked by their keeper with a number of 'nicks' cut into the bill. Swans with two nicks would be distinguished from neighbouring swans which would have had one or three nicks, thus the evolution into pub name, though the pub signs tend to depict a twin-necked swan. The swan, along with dogs and horses, would not be hunted by the commoner, though it was not unusual for the aristocracy to have a swan at the centre of their banqueting table. So perhaps there was an element of status in having a pub named the Swan. Conversely there are pubs bearing the name **Black Swan**. A bird of the southern hemisphere, I'm not sure that it has a place in our folklore.

In Bristol we have the **Old Crow**, the **Blackbirds** and the **Ostrich**, whilst in Weston-super-Mare, the **Nightjar**. In Ashton the **Robins** is named after the Robins that are Bristol City FC, an indirect use from a bird name. More widespread is the pub name **Eagle**. We have one in Old Market, but further there is the **Eagle and Child** – a chilling description of doom, or of the child's saviour? The **Bag O'Nails** was formerly the **American Eagle**, a reference to the bald eagle, but does anyone know why the pub was so named?

The mythical bird-like creature, the phoenix, rose from the ashes to prosper once again. Let us hold hope for our own **Phoenix** in St. Jude's that it may rise from its current closure into a fine Bristol community ale house!

Our natural history is entwined with our traditions and values and the names of birds, trees and geological features remain in our pub and ale names. Long may this association continue for the benefit and well-being of both nature and mankind.

Mike Jackson

Scenes from the Bag

Yet another successful beer festival at the Bag O'Nails captured on camera by Richard Brooks



Readers' Letters

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

steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk

Whatever happened to Mine Genial Host?

Oi be a Brizzle boy, but I travel around a lot with my job. I work on the ships and rigs. So when an old mate of mine phoned up and suggested we meet in our old local pub when I next got back I was all for it.

Wandering into the pub about half an hour before we were due to meet I was faced with a completely empty bar at about 8.30 on a Friday night.

Mine Genial Host, who I did not know from my previous patronage, was sitting at the end of the bar eating his tea, watching a soap opera on a very loud telly and reading the paper. Presumable multi-tasking himself...

After a bit he peeled himself off of his bar stool, wandered over to me and with a monosyllabic grunt indicated that he might perform the chore of serving me a pint.

"What sort of ales do you have these days?" I enquired. "What you see," he responded looking past me at the telly.

I chose an ale I considered even he could not muck up with his clear level of enthusiasm for his chosen career, but in this I was wrong as it was nothing short of awful.

Having to hang about for my mate and not wanting to get chucked out for criticising Mine Host's expertise in the cellar I sat down at the bar to wait while Mine Genial Host went back to finish his tea at the other end of the bar, where he broke wind loudly, picked his nose and went outside for a fag, leaving me alone in the bar with the salt-and-vinegar smelling empty plates and some awful telly quiz blaring away at full pelt as the soap opera had finished.

I should have got half a dozen cans from the supermarket and met up with my mate back at my place, I thought to myself. Whatever happened to the traditional pub welcome for the passing stranger? My mate turned up and we got out of there a bit sharpish, me leaving my drink for the first time ever and him not bothering to order one as Mine Genial Host was still having a fag and chatting on his mobile phone outside.

Having a couple of weeks off I did a bit of a tour of pubs around the parish over the next couple of days and weeks and was not impressed with what I generally found.

Pubs these days seem to be staffed by young student types who have no conversation, or owner/managers who give the impression the customer is a nuisance to be tolerated unless they have known you for 20 years or you happen to be related to their family.

In the late 70's and 80's I worked in pubs in north London and I have also done a couple of shifts in Bristol. My old guv'nor Porky Trotter would have thrown a complete wobbly at the standard of hospitality – or lack thereof – I found on my grand tour of some of the

Bristol hostelryes.

When behind the bar, you were either working or you weren't working. If you wanted to read the paper you could go home and read it and not get paid. If not, pick up a cloth and start cleaning something. Here endeth the pub gospel according to Porky.

Talking to the customers was encouraged and expected as part of the job, on the three-wise-monkeys system of course - see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil. Make no controversial comment or suggestion, but at least waffle on about something, if that was what the customer wanted. The weather is always a good and traditional conversation starter and not too difficult even for PhD students to master.

It seems to be a conversational art that has been long lost to the younger generation of texters behind the bar and the owner/managers seem to be just as bad, and they wonder why their pub is going down the financial tubes as people have stopped coming in.

People go to the pub for a bit of company or to get away from the four walls of where they live, and they telly, and to either meet old friends, who are fellow locals, or to have a chat with some new ones who may be passing strangers, who may become locals.

Mine Genial Host and the bar staff used to be key to facilitating this by including everyone in the conversation, if they wanted to be part of it, and introducing new arrivals to the local bods at the bar while still peddling up and down serving the drink.

You got a "Hello, how are you?" when you turned up and a "Thanks for coming – all the best" when you left, with a bit of a conversation, if invited, in between.

This to me is what a pub is all about. A warm welcome in someone's public house that is licensed to serve drink for money, making the landlord, landlady and staff a living. The brewery might teach about health & safety and how to change a barrel but the conversational art that is the hub of any decent pub and is 90% of bringing the business in in the first place and keeping it once it has turned up is completely overlooked.

There have been a number of patents put on vending machines for pubs whereby you put your money into the machine and out comes your drink. Our Genial Host can then stay upstairs with his feet up watching the telly and there is no need to employ staff.

This would be utopia for the charmless landlord who lacks basic conversation skills; but the above vending-machine scenario is already with us in the form of cheap supermarket booze at home.

And landlords and their badly trained staff should realise that the only weapon left in the pub's armoury to counter the march of supermarket-based drinking at home is the human contact by way of conversation Mine Genial Host and staff have to offer in a welcoming pub environment. If the supermarkets could bottle and sell this they would, but they can't. But they are no doubt working on a form of it. Out on DVD near you soon perhaps. You can already buy a fake fireplace video! So why not a DVD of a decent pub bar to watch at home?

Unfortunately this conversational and personal welcome asset in the great British landlord and pub's armoury is being squandered, either through lack of understanding of

the importance of this aspect of going to the pub or indifference towards it.

So whereas the rents, etc charged by the brewery and the like do not help in the financial struggle to stay open, a lot of landlords and their staff are not helping themselves with their personal isolationism and sheer bloody ignorance towards customers; I say again "customers" who are coming in to buy the ale and provide them with a living in exchange for a decent drink and a bit of conversation.

My Dad used to tell me that wherever you found a church you would usually find a pub nearby. If the church could not help with a problem or situation there was nearly always someone in the pub who could. And like the vicar, priest or parson, our Genial Host the landlord held court in the pub as an equally important part of the community. Whatever happened to all that?

All a lot of pubs seem to want you to do these days is to order your drink, pay for it, drink it and push off. No wonder so many people are pushing off on a long-term basis.

My tour of the town was not all doom and gloom however as I was delighted to meet up with Les, Carol and four-legged Molly, formerly of the White Lion, but now giving a very warm welcome to local discerning ale drinkers and passing trade at the Vittoria in Whiteladies Road, by the BBC – a true British pub!

And holding fort for the working man and an eclectic and highly entertaining collection of energetic old colonels and sundry pirates at the end of the bar are Nick and Izzy and staff at the New Found Out in Totterdown.

Good ale and good company all round. Long may this increasingly rare breed survive and thrive and a "Yo Ho Ho" to one and all mateys!

Steve Kavaner,
Bristol.

I've just picked up a copy of the Spring Pints West and read the 'Pubs in Peril: A Few Case Studies' article. I thought you might be interested in the fate of the Forgemans Arms in Barton Hill and how this relates to the ongoing threat to featured local pubs, particularly (perhaps surprisingly) the Castle in Bathwick...

We live in Barrow Road, Barton Hill, Bristol. The last surviving building from the 'old' Barrow Road (gradually demolished and rebuilt from the 60s onwards) was the Forgemans'. This has now finally been demolished, following closure, deterioration and fire damage. So not only will there never again be a pub on this site, but the building itself has now been consigned to history.

It's bad enough when pubs close, but the demolition of the interesting buildings and local landmarks which they often are is a further sorrow. This is what I hear may lie in wait for the Castle in Bathwick, Bath. Not only has the landlord obtained change of use, but my contacts in Bath tell me they have heard that the fine old building is to be demolished prior to two houses being built on the site. Apparently the Castle is not listed or protected from demolition. This may merit more investigation by CAMRA activists...

But the lesson from two very different areas is that when pubs are allowed to close

not only the social scene, but also the built environment can be changed forever. And of course, once the building is gone you can guarantee there will not be a pub there again...

Cheers,
Ben Malcolm,
By email.
(See updates on the Castle elsewhere. Ed.)

Now, as a drayman for Georges / Courages for 25 years, the article on the Georges Archive brought back the days that are gone, along with the pubs and odd bods that kept them. There was enough of them! Happy days indeed.

Nine pints of allowance beer and a pint or two in every pub. And cheese or ham rolls or home-made pies. We lived like kings!

Hard work but I enjoyed every minute of it. And most of the chaps I worked with lived well into their eighties and nineties.

It must have been something to do with the Drayman's Drink – Home Brewed and Bitter, Oakhill and Bristol Stouts, and of course Georges Barley Wines.

For what it's worth the beer that is nearest to and reminds me of my well spent youth is Titanic Black Ice.

Still as you know there is no bad beer, unless you go to Monte Carlo – £9 a pint!!! And no I did NOT buy any of it.

Mr J Knapp,
Bristol BS4.

My name is Heather Holden and my great uncle Albert Edward Blake was at the Clifton Wood Wine and Spirit Vaults in Thorns Buildings from 1904 to 1909.

I am unable to find any information about the business and wonder if anyone could advise me as to where I could look.

Albert then goes to the Hope and Anchor, Jacobs Wells in 1921 and his wife Ellen from 1925-31.

Regards,
Heather Holden,
Email purpleheather21@yahoo.co.uk.

Pints West: more of the same, please!

At the beginning of the year, we asked local CAMRA members what they thought of Pints West and what, if anything, local branch members would like to see changed. Of the articles that people say that they always read, profiles of local pubs and breweries came top, followed by reviews of real ale pubs in a particular area.

Pints West is obviously a key source of information on real ale in the local area with readers asking for even more "previews of local beer festivals" and "pub opening hours in adverts", "information on what beers are sold at which pubs" or on where "ale for home" is available. One reader added that Pints West has "encouraged me to visit pubs I wasn't aware of".

Not surprisingly, local CAMRA members are also keen to read campaigning articles. Several suggested including more such features aimed particularly at non-CAMRA members and covering issues such as campaigns for full pints, lower beer tax and a halt to pub closures and more prominent display of price lists. Others suggested including commentary from politicians who are also CAMRA members and more generally campaigning for a "fairer deal" for real ale consumers and suppliers. There was some support for more articles on the history of brewing locally and on old pubs, features which are often written in conjunction with campaigns against closures in the industry.

Slightly less popular as far as local branch members are concerned are articles reporting individual or branch trips to other parts of the country or abroad, although branch brewery trip reports – which are usually local – were well-supported. Opinion on geographical focus was divided, as comments such as these show: "There is so much going on in this country, it seems a pity to devote a page or two to foreign visits" and "I'd like to see more about foreign trips and trips to other parts of the UK". One reader added that, although reports from other parts of the UK "are not strictly about our area, I am often tempted to go on the same or a similar journey". The overwhelming view in both comments and 'tick boxes' on the survey suggest that readers want to see even more local news and articles that focus on local pubs, breweries and beers. Suggestions for content included a regular 'meet the landlord' feature, the return of the crossword and competitions, and young and student members' views on real ale in the Bristol area.

There were a considerable number of comments praising the editor and contributors as well as the overall quality and balance of content, including: "always a good and interesting read", "first class", "keep up the good work, an excellent publication", "an excellent newsletter; a very good mix", "this is a very high quality production", "so many excellent contributors", "an excellent read".

One reader summed up the general view: "if I would like to see more of something, it would be everything!".

The multi-award-winning CAMRA magazine you are reading now is produced entirely by volunteers who research, write and illustrate articles and distribute the finished product, all in their own time; the editor, who brings it all together and sets it ready for printing, is also a volunteer. The support of advertisers allows us to have the publication professionally printed.

If you would like to contribute to Pints West's success in providing local pub, brewery and related news and raising awareness of key campaigning issues – or would like to place an advert – please contact the editor.

Lesly Huxley

The Vittoria "The real pub on Whiteladies"

It's great to be back in Bristol, catching up with friends and old customers as well as making new friends and new customers.

We offer up to five cask ales and hope to extend this to six as demand rises.

For those of you who enjoy Malt Whisky there is a fine selection to take your fancy.

The infamous "Chunky Sandwich Lunch Menu" has been resurrected, there's the healthy ones and cholesterol fuelled heart stoppers - the choice is yours.

We have attempted to achieve a comfortable traditional pub environment, a welcoming open fire, WiFi, a scheduled redecoration of the exterior which will include new furnishings and canopies should enhance your visit to the 'Vittoria'.

We look forward too seeing you soon.

Les & Carol Clayton

**20% Discount off our Lunch Menu on production of
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Mike Jackson
Neil Ravenscroft
Norman Spalding
Pete Bridle
Richard Brooks
Richard Walters
Robin E Wild
Steve Hunt
Tim Nickolls
Toby Seely
Vince Murray
Editor: Steve Plumridge

**Thanks to
this issue's
contributors**

Branch diary

Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA.

- **Wed June 3rd** – Explorer trip. Coach departs from Cornubia 6.45pm. Destination South Glos.
- **Wed June 10th** – Committee meeting, Cornubia 8pm.
- **Thurs June 11th** – BADRAG gathering, “Mild Month Wake”, 8pm at the Cornubia (possibly upstairs).
- **Fri June 12th** – Pucklechurch Beer Fest (50% off entry for CAMRA members). A coach will run, if there is sufficient interest, from the Cornubia at around 6.30pm.
- **Thurs June 18th** – ‘Meet & Greet’ social, Kellaway Arms 7.30pm. All members welcome.
- **Tues June 23rd** – Explorer trip. Coach departs from Cornubia 6.45pm. Destination North Somerset.
- **Wed June 24th** – Branch meeting, Cornubia 8pm.
- **Tues June 30th** – Possible brewery trip. Details to be confirmed.

- **Mon July 6th** – Pub of the Year winner presentation at the New Inn, Mayhill. Coach departs 7pm from Cornubia.
- **Wed July 8th** – Committee meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.
- **Thurs July 9th** – BADRAG gathering at the Grain Barge (possibly downstairs) 8pm.
- **Wed July 22nd** – Branch AGM, Horts 7.45pm. Note new time. Don’t forget your membership card!
- **Sat July 25th** – Brewery trip to Otley, by coach from the Cornubia. Full details shortly.
- **Thurs July 30th** Pubs Group meeting, venue to be confirmed.
- **Sat Aug 1st** – Annual Seven Beach line train trip. Approx midday start from Temple Meads, full details shortly.
- **Thurs Aug 6th** – Coach trip to the Great British Beer Festival in London.
- **Wed Aug 12th** – Committee meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.
- **Thurs Aug 13th** – BADRAG gathering at the Old Stillage, Church Road, Redfield, 8pm (Arbor Ales available).
- **Thurs Aug 20th** – City Centre Saunter, to Shakespeare (Prince Street), Volly, Watershed, Lloyds No. 1, Zero Degrees, Colston Yard. 7pm start.
- **Wed Aug 26th** – Branch meeting. 7.45pm. Venue to be confirmed.

Please note that changes and additions (particularly for August) will occur from time to time, so for more details please check the CAMRA website www.camrabristol.org.uk, come to a branch meeting in person, or email Tim at badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk for more information. All coach trips must be booked in advance.



Bath & Borders diary

- **Tuesday 2nd June**, 8:30pm. The Bath and Borders Branch AGM. To be held at the Royal Oak in Twerton, Bath. We will also be awarding the Royal Oak the Branch Pub of the Year award.
- **Thursday 11th June**, 8:30pm. A social at the Castle Inn in Bradford on Avon. Now well into its stride after refurbishment, serving an excellent range of beers.
- **Tuesday 16th June**, 8:30pm. A Bath mini crawl starting at the Assembly Inn, now an Abbey Ales pub, and then on to the Porter, on George Street.
- **Thursday 25th June**, 8:30pm. A social at the Lamb in Clandown, near Radstock. A new 2009 GBG entry with a good beer range and a friendly welcome.
- **Tuesday 30th June**, 8:30pm. Branch Meeting at the Prince of Wales in Dilton Marsh.
- **Tuesday 7th July**. A trip to the Blindmans Brewery, near Frome.

Bath & Borders contacts

Branch socials contact: Denis Rahilly on 01225 791399 or 07711 004501, email denis.rahilly@talktalk.co.uk.
Contact for all non-social matters: James Honey on 01373 822794.



**brought to you entirely by
unpaid volunteers**

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

LETTERS: please email correspondence to:

steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk

or post it to:

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

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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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Inclusion of an advertisement does not imply endorsement by CAMRA.

Weston diary

- **Wednesday 17 June** – Taunton Crawl. Catching 1855 train from Weston, returning back in Weston at 2315. Five pubs to be visited.
- **Wednesday 15 July** – The Criterion, Upper Church Road. 8.30 onwards.
- **Thursday 23 July to Sunday 26 July** – Weston Lions Real Ale and Cider Festival, Beach Lawns, Weston-s-Mare.
- **Wednesday 19 August** – Yatton Crawl. Catching 1910 train from Weston. Four pubs to be visited.
- **Wednesday 16 September** – The Waverley, Severn Road. 8.30 onwards.
- **Tuesday 22 September** – Weston CAMRA branch 10th birthday at Off The Rails. Special beer being brewed for the event by RCH brewery. 8.00 onwards.

Non-members welcome at the above events.

Weston contact

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

Great British Beer Festival 2009

August 4th-8th at Earls Court, London

'Fancy a pint at the biggest pub in the world?'

The Great British Beer Festival (GBBF), Earls Court, is almost upon us once again, celebrating some of the best real ales, ciders, perries and foreign beers from around the world.

60,000 people attended last year's showcase for British real ale and over 1,000 CAMRA volunteers gave up their time to construct the bars, steward, and serve the beer, to name but a few roles. It is therefore no surprise that GBBF organiser Marc Holmes described the event as a 'true success for CAMRA and the real ale and pub industry'.

As well as the variety of beer on show, there's plenty to occupy people at this year's festival, with an array of traditional pub games, live music and tutored beer tastings by some of the industry's leading experts. The festival is also a great opportunity to sample some traditional pub grub and a variety of foreign cuisine.

Tickets for 2009 are now available and can be pre-ordered for a discounted price from the ticketing website at www.seetickets.com/gbbf. With such demand at the door of Earls Court for tickets, pre-ordering is a sure fire way of not missing out on the Festival fun! Tutored tastings can also be booked on this website. If you would like to join some of the beer world's biggest names such as Roger Protz, Jeff Evans, Tim Webb, Melissa Cole and Simon Jackson in a tutored journey of taste and variety, then pre-book as limited places get booked up very quickly.

The Great British Beer Festival offers the chance for attendees to forget the credit crunch blues and sample some of the world's finest



craft beer creations amongst thousands of other like-minded individuals. Join CAMRA at Earls Court in August for what promises to be an unforgettable celebration of Britain's national drink!

Opening times:

Tuesday 4th August: 5.00pm to 10.30pm

Wednesday 5th to Friday 7th: 12noon to 10.30pm

Saturday 8th: 11.00am to 7.00pm

For further information visit the official GBBF website at www.gbbf.org.uk.

Wear Pints West



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

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.

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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.

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