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CAMPAIGN  
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# PINTS WEST

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



The magnificent view of the lake from  
the garden of the New Inn, Blagdon

# The Orchard

## exceptional cider house

**C**AMRA's South West region has named its Cider Pub of the Year as the popular Orchard Inn, located in Hanover Place, just off the Cumberland Road in Bristol. The presentation of the award took place on Saturday 22nd August.

The Orchard Inn is a delightful, back-street pub, with around 20 real ciders and perries available, plus three or four cask ales. The one-bar street-corner local is close to SS Great Britain and is a ten-minute stroll along the harbourside from the city centre. You can even arrive by ferry. Long known for its range and quality of real ciders, the pub has also been commended for its fine range of real ales. It serves food weekday lunchtimes and it has a reputation as a good community local.

The Cider Pub of the Year award is judged from nominations received from branches or individual CAMRA members. The criteria include the quality of cider, atmosphere, welcome, value for money and how CAMRA-friendly the pub is, i.e. does it support CAMRA's aims. The Orchard deservedly came out top from entries judged in the South West area which included pubs in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, South Devon, North Devon, Somerset, Bath and Bristol.

Stuart Marshall took over the reins at the Orchard earlier this year and what was already a very good pub has now become nothing short of excellent for cider drinkers, and real ale fans have not been short changed either! One of Stuart's first changes was to introduce a fourth hand pump, primarily for stronger, and preferably darker beers. He also has four ciders on the bar, but what came next was a real tonic for cider drinkers in Bristol . . .

As host of the legendary 'Cyder Sundays', Stuart has now taken the idea further and stocks many more ciders in the cellar – what a choice for the discerning cider drinker with potentially twenty ciders to sample! Some rarities have been seen such as the excellent Ashill, but Stuart regularly has Burrow Hill, Hecks (including the perry), Wilkins, Crossmans and West Croft, to name a few of the selection. With all-day opening, a revamped menu, good rolls and pies available to soak up the cider, and papers to read while you indulge in your favourite pastime, what more could you want? He also has



concerts such as the amusing Somerset Paddies to lighten the mood and get into the cider-drinking spirit.

To put it another way, it's a cider festival all year round!

*Richard Walters & Richard Brooks*



Stuart Marshall receiving the award from Jean Cotte of CAMRA

Photos by Richard Brooks

## CAMRA's not just about beer

**S**o you thought CAMRA was just a beer organisation? Well let me tell you, it certainly isn't. For over 30 years, CAMRA has also supported both real cider and perry. And in 1988, when even I was a lot younger, a committee was set up within CAMRA to deal exclusively with both drinks.

So what do we actually do? Well, there is so much cider information floating about in CAMRA that we aim to pull it all together and, where needed, let people know about it. After all, there's no point in keeping it to ourselves. For example, there are no breweries in the UK that we don't know about, but we are continually discovering new cider makers, sometimes families who have been making it for generations and very few people outside of their village know about them. This tracking down of producers is an ongoing challenge.

We have also given help and advice to new producers, who may be setting up for the first time. This can be anything from technical to telling them where they can buy equipment to actually finding the apples for them. We also liaise with producers' organisations and even attend the Parliamentary Cider Group's annual reception.

We also have our own definition for cider and perry. This is what we, as CAMRA, accept as real cider and perry, in the same way that we deal with real ale, rather than some of the fizzy concoctions that you see in pubs.

These days, virtually all CAMRA beer festivals sell cider and perry, so we can offer advice to anyone running the cider bar. There are even cider training sessions that take place for CAMRA members every year at the Great British Beer Festival. And in the distant past, we even had four National Cider and Perry Exhibitions in London.

We even publish a cider guide, with information on producers and listing pubs throughout the UK where you can drink it.

And there's still more! May is the month when the winner of our Cider and Perry of the Year winners are announced, after a very comprehensive judging at the Reading Beer and Cider Festival.

Also, for the last few years, CAMRA has dedicated October as Cider and Perry Month. Many local branches now run cider events during the month. These can range from trips to cider makers through to encouraging local pubs to try real cider, often for the first time. This has encouraged a lot of pubs to continue selling it, once they realise that there is a market for it.

October is also the month when we publicise the winner of our Cider Pub of the Year, where judging has taken place throughout the previous six months.

And yes, there's still more. In October we also have the annual cider trip, which is open to everyone, not just CAMRA members. On a very sober day, we visit two or three cider makers, where there is usually a demonstration of how to actually make the drink. And then, of course, we are forced to sample it!

And then there is perry, the sister drink to cider, made with perry pears. No, not the appalling "pear cider" that has appeared in recent years, but a drink that most people don't even know exists. I am not putting it too strongly when I say that without CAMRA perry would be well on the way to disappearing altogether. Even now, it is mainly seen at beer festivals, rather than in pubs.

These are just some of the things that we do. So you see, I was right all along. CAMRA's not just about beer.

*Mick Lewis*

# CAMRA launches new 'Cider' book

*'Sweet cyder is a great thing, a great thing to me' (Thomas Hardy)*

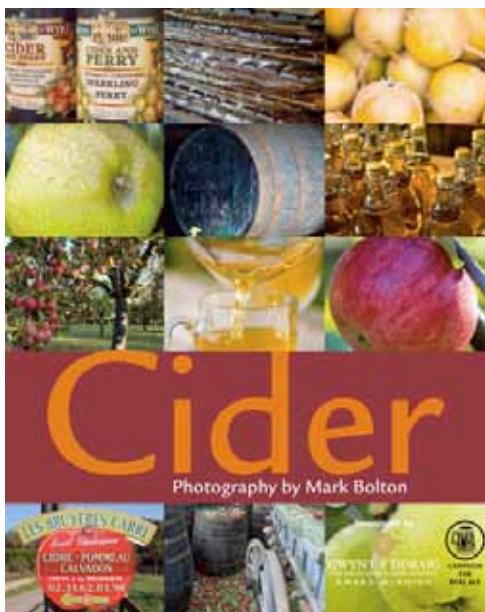
CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, has released a new book unearthing the secrets of one of Britain's most legendary craft industries – the production of cider and perry.

'Cider' is a lovingly-crafted exploration into the world of apples and pears, celebrating some of the industry's pioneering characters and events, whilst travelling the length and breadth of cider country to form one of the most comprehensive cider and perry publications to date.

'Cider' is written, compiled and visualised thanks to a collaboration of leading experts on the subject, bringing together freelance journalists, producers and even self-confessed enthusiasts from the CAMRA membership! Due to this panel of knowledge, no stone is left unturned for the reader, with information on where to find cider retailers at home or abroad, how to match cider with food, and, as a light-hearted aside, how to produce your own cider or perry!

Andrea Briers, Chair of the CAMRA National Cider and Perry Committee, said: "This book is a lavishly illustrated, true insight into the world of cider and perry making, and one that captures some of the characteristics making this industry so treasured. The cider and perry world is simply brimming with diverse customs and history, and to a majority of people this element of Britishness remains undiscovered."

In homage to the work of European producers, 'Cider' also devotes attention to Spanish, French, Austrian and German producers that have influenced the industry. As the book notes, "the temperature climate of



Europe's Cider Belt gives rise to a landscape and a culture that's all pastures and orchards."

Domestically, cider is currently undergoing a revival in the noughties, and 'Cider' lovingly reports that, "In the past five years, the number of producers has blossomed and more real cider and perry is now being produced than 15 years ago. Most of these cidemakers are hobby producers, though several are reaching the tipping point where they are able to pack their day jobs in and produce full time."

Briers continues: "CAMRA's National Cider and Perry Month in October has been a catalyst for change over the last few years and has really helped raise the reputation and renown of craft producers. The aim of this 'Cider' book is to make more consumers aware of one of Britain's oldest drinks, and to champion the delights of fresh, well-crafted produce coming from some of the nation's most innovative artisans."

According to 'Cider', one of the ten best locations in the land to purchase real cider and perry is here in Bristol, namely Bristol's Slow Food Market, Corn Street, Bristol ([www.slowfoodbristol.org](http://www.slowfoodbristol.org)). It says: "The quality and range of produce offered for sale at the market all conform to the principles of Slow Food, which supports traditional, regional and seasonal foods. Oliver's Cider and Perry, and French cider importers Quality French Ciders have stalls."

'Cider' is available from all good retailers, as well as from the CAMRA shop ([www.camra.org.uk/shop](http://www.camra.org.uk/shop)), priced £12.99 for CAMRA members, and £14.99 for non-members.

## Perry – what it is, why it matters

When they wish to draw attention to the organisation's successes, people in CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale) often think of such things as the huge growth of the micro-brewery movement, or the Campaign's ultimately successful lobbying for flexible licensing hours. Paradoxically, though, one of CAMRA's most illustrious successes has been the preservation of a style of drink that some drinkers would still be hard pressed to identify: real perry.

Consider this: the programme for the recent Great British Beer Festival lists perries from around 25 producers, selected from many more up and down the country. Yet a generation ago, when CAMRA's involvement with cider and perry was in its infancy, we would have struggled to name as many as 25 producers making any real perry whatsoever. What's more, while many of those producers were from the traditional perry-producing counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire, others came from such places as Mid Wales, Hampshire, and Norfolk in which the drink was until recently no more than a distant memory, if even that.

So what is perry exactly? The dictionary definition, accurate but somehow unappealing, reads "fermented pear juice". More usefully, it can be regarded as the equivalent to cider, but made from pears not apples. But not any old pears – unlike cider, which can be made, if you wish, from dessert or even cooking apples, perry can only successfully be made from specific varieties of "perry pears". Hard, fibrous, and (by the standards of a dessert pear) frequently mis-shapen, these varieties, of which dozens are recorded though many are now very rare, have developed over many years to suit the soil and climate conditions of the "Three Counties" of Herefordshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire which have been their historic heartland.

Real perry is made in essentially the same way as real cider, though many producers who make both contend that perry-making requires the greater skill. The character of the resulting drink shows as much variety as real cider, but as a broad generalisation perry can be said to be subtler and more delicate than cider, often bearing comparison to a high-quality white wine. Colour is typically lighter than cider, often with a greenish tinge by contrast with the gold to orange tones of a typical cider. And

the presence in perry pears of an unfermentable sugar known as sorbitol dictates that even perry that is fully fermented out will still have a certain residual sweetness. Perry also lends itself particularly well to bottle fermentation to produce a naturally sparkling drink, and some spectacularly good examples of this style are now available.

By now you will be wondering where you can buy and enjoy some real perry, and it must be admitted that it's still not as easy to find as it should be. One of the best places to start will be your local CAMRA festival – virtually all of these now have a cider and perry bar where a greater or lesser range of perry will be available, and they are generally staffed by enthusiasts who will be able to tell you where to get it in your area. More and more of the pubs that take beer seriously nowadays sell real perry too – in recent years, those of us in CAMRA who spend some of our time assessing pubs for their cider and perry offering (tough job, but somebody's got to do it) have found impressive ranges of perry in counties as different as Derbyshire and Dorset.

It would be wrong to close without referring to the unfortunate term "pear cider" which has come into use lately. This is of course a logical nonsense – perry is made from pears, cider from apples, and the two drinks are separate and distinct. The term seems to have arisen from the industrial cider-makers' practice of making vaguely cider-style drinks "flavoured" with other fruits (frequently in essence or concentrate form). In their denatured world, a bottle of pear flavouring is just another way to impart some empty novelty to a sweet fizzy drink targeted at the inexperienced or undiscerning. In the interests of clarity, it would be preferable if the term "pear cider" were never used at all: it should certainly never be used (and happily hardly ever is) to describe the true traditional product – **real perry**.

*Rhys Jones*

**Cider drinkers in Bristol are amongst the luckiest in the country. The number of pubs now serving a real cider on handpump has blossomed. There are of course the old classics like the Coronation Tap and Cotham Porter Stores. And more recently there is the Apple barge on Welsh Back. But so many others are now deciding to offer their customers real traditional cider alongside their real traditional ales. A most welcome trend.**

# Champion Beer of Britain 2009

## Ruby Mild shines through!

Rudgate Ruby Mild of York, North Yorkshire has been voted the best beer in Britain – CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain 2009 – after a year of local tastings panels and regional competitions culminated in a final judging at the Great British Beer Festival held at Earls Court, London in August.

Ruby Mild, which has an abv of 4.4%, is described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2009 as a "nutty, rich ruby ale, stronger than usual for a mild."

The York-brewed real ale was chosen as the overall winner from over sixty finalists in seven categories (Best Bitters, Bitters, Golden Ales, Milds, Speciality, Winter Beer and Strong Bitters) including beers from tiny micros to major regional brewers.

Roger Protz, chairman of the final judging panel, said: "It's a tremendous boost for the mild category. It's good



to see a classic British traditional beer making such a comeback in the age of golden ales and much paler beers in general. The judges were impressed by its rich, fruity character, and the fact that it's quite hoppy and bitter for a mild ale. Its victory should invigorate the whole mild ale category."

An elated Craig Lee, Rudgate's brewery owner, said: "It's an excellent achievement. We've come

close in previous years, and we are really proud to have won the Champion Beer of Britain. It's unbelievable, and we hope our beer helps popularise the cause of real ale."



Final judging at the Great British Beer Festival

## The results in full

**Champion Beer of Britain:** Rudgate, Rub Mild (York, North Yorkshire)

**Second:** Oakham, Attila (Peterborough, Cambridgeshire)

**Third:** West Berkshire, Dr Hexter's Healer (Thatcham, Berkshire)

### Category winners

#### Mild category

**Gold:** Rudgate, Ruby Mild (York, North Yorkshire)

**Silver:** Bank Top, Dark Mild (Bolton, Lancashire)

**Bronze:** Highland, Dark Munro (Birsay, Orkney)

#### Bitter category

**Gold:** Surrey Hills, Ranmore Ale (Guildford, Surrey)

**Silver:** Butcombe, Bitter (Bristol)

**Joint Bronze:** Humpty Dumpty, Little Sharpie (Reedham, Norfolk); Tripple fff, Alton's Pride (Alton, Hampshire)

#### Best Bitter category

**Gold:** Southport, Golden Sands (Southport, Manchester)

**Silver:** Buntingford, Britannia (Royston, Hertfordshire)

**Joint Bronze:** Evan Evans, Cwrw (Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire); Thornbridge, Lord Marples (Bakewell, Derbyshire); Vale, VPA (Brill, Buckinghamshire)

#### Golden Ale category

**Gold:** Dark Star, American Pale Ale (Ansty, West Sussex)

**Silver:** Adnams, Explorer (Southwold, Essex)

**Bronze:** St Austell, Proper Job (St Austell, Cornwall)

#### Strong Bitter category

**Gold:** West Berkshire, Dr Hexter's Healer (Thatcham, Berkshire)

**Silver:** Thornbridge, Kipling (Bakewell, Derbyshire)

**Bronze:** Grain, Tamarind IPA (Harleston, Norfolk)

#### Speciality Beer category

**Gold:** Nethergate, Umbel Magna (Pentlow, Essex)

**Silver:** Wentworth, Bumble Beer (Wentworth, South Yorkshire)

**Bronze:** Amber, Chocolate Orange Stout (Ripley, Derbyshire)

#### Winter Beer of Britain winner (announced in January 2009)

Oakham, Attila (Peterborough, Cambridgeshire)

#### Bottled Beer of Britain winners (sponsored by Travelodge)

**Gold:** Titanic, Stout (Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire)

**Silver:** Great Gable, Yewbarrow (Gosforth, Cumbria)

**Bronze:** White Shield Brewery, White Shield (Coors, Burton-on-Trent)

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# Award for Butcombe

Butcombe's Bitter received a silver award in CAMRA's recent Champion Beer of Britain competition – quite an achievement for a beer that made its first appearance 31 years ago. It was the first beer Butcombe ever brewed and for a long time was the only one. It is still their best seller, accounting for 75% of production.

Butcombe Bitter has a strength of 4.0% ABV and can be described as a notably bitter beer ... amber in colour, clean tasting, refreshingly dry and distinctive. It is made with 100% English malts together with a blend of traditional English hop varieties.

Three times it has been amongst the finalists in the Champion Beer of Britain competition – this time it has justly been recognised for the superb beer it is.

For those beer drinkers out there who, maybe like me, are not entirely enamoured with the Christmas season and its accompanying razzamatazz, here's at least one piece of promising cheer. Butcombe are planning a seasonal ale suitable as an accompaniment to the traditional fare. It will be a reddish-ruby coloured beer with an ABV of 4.2%, using English hops including Bramling Cross, with Maris Otter and Vienna malt. The latter is possibly less well known, but is a rich aromatic malt which should lend a deep colour and full flavour. The beer will also be distributed by Waverley and Punch Taverns so keep a look out for it.

Another piece of good news from the brewery comes in the form of a decision to brew their Brunel IPA on a year-round basis. The relaunch for this popular beer will take place at the Colston Yard on the 1<sup>st</sup> October from 5 to 7 pm. This is usually a very pleasant evening event so, if you haven't been before, why not come along?

Butcombe are also planning to focus on a brewery of the month for guest beers, with October featuring the beer Patois 4.5% ABV from Randalls in Guernsey, which is rarely available here.

Margaret Evett

## Pub News

- A warm welcome awaits you at the recently re-opened **Red Lion** on Worrall Road in Clifton, up near the Downs. This lovely two-roomed pub has been serving three real ales on handpump, which were Courage Best, Sharp's Doom Bar and award-winning Butcombe Bitter on a recent visit. A couple of ciders were also on handpump in the form of Thatcher's Traditional and Cheddar Valley. All those sampled were in good form. The pub opens from 4 o'clock Mondays to Thursdays (with "happy hour" up until 6 o'clock), but opens from noon on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. A pub well worth supporting.
- Following a meeting with owners Scottish & Newcastle, Les and Carol Clayton at the **Vittoria** on Whiteladies Road, Clifton Down have finally been granted the Cellarman's Reserve portfolio. This has given them the opportunity to obtain a greater selection of the less run-of-the-mill British ales. There can now be anything up to six real ales on at any one time and reports we've been getting have been very favourable (even from other landlords), such as "I will now be supporting that pub after enjoying the beers I had" and "Les is an excellent landlord – great to have a proper pub on 'The Strip'!"

## Certified Organic

Dawkins Green Barrel, the beer brewed for Dawkins Taverns by Matthews in Timsbury, has, after many months of inspections and form-fillings, finally got certification from the Soil Association meaning it can now be badged 'organic'.

Given the brewery's size constraints, Dawkins will only be able to roll it out slowly to all their pubs. From the end of August it was be permanent in the Green Man, Portcullis and Hillgrove, and in the other Dawkins pubs (Victoria and Miners Arms) as guests in September.

In September they will be running a stamp promotion at all five pubs: one stamp for any pint of organic beer (or glass wine), eight stamps qualifying for a free pint.

The first few days of October will see the Portcullis hosting another "Festival of Champions" event in which all the Champion Beer of Britain winners should be presented.



To sample perfectly kept Butcombe Bitter, Gold and Blond, plus numerous guest beers, why not visit a Butcombe pub...

### RED TILE

Cossington, near Bridgwater  
01278 722333

### THE SWAN

Rowberrow (off A38 south of Churchill)  
01934 852371

### RING O'BELLS

Compton Martin (A368 between Blagdon & West Harptree) 01761 221284

### THE BELL

Hillgrove Street, Bristol  
0117 9096612

### PRINCE OF WALES

Stoke Lane, Westbury-on-Trym  
0117 9623715

### THE LAMB

The Square, Axbridge  
01934 732253

### QUEEN'S ARMS

Celtic Way, Bleadon, near Weston-super-Mare 01934 812080

### RING O'BELLS

Upper Road, Hinton Blewitt  
01761 452239

### WOOLPACK INN

St George's, near Weston-super-Mare 01934 521670

### CROSS KEYS

High Street, Rode, Frome  
01373 830900

### ROSE AND CROWN

High Street, Hinton Charterhouse  
01225 722153

### MALT SHOVEL

Bradley Green, Cannington, Near Bridgewater 01278 653432

### QUEEN VICTORIA INN

Pelting Drove, Priddy 01749 676385

### OLD CROWN

Kelston, near Bath 01225 423032

### COLSTON YARD

Colston Street, Bristol 0117 3763232

### COTTAGE INN

Baltic Wharf, 0117 9215256

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Organic Beer Fest jointly at The Green Man & Hillgrove  
10th-14th September. 40 Ales

Rare Ales Night at The Portcullis 18th September

Festival of Champions at The Portcullis 1st-5th October

### 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 0249818 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 daily til late

### 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 12-2.30-11; 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-Thu 5-11; Fri 12-2.30 & 5-11; Sat 5-11; Sun 12-10.30 Food: Wed-Sat til 9; Sun 12-4

# Your pubs need ... YOU!

**T**he Bristol & District CAMRA Pubs Campaigning Group (shortened to Pubs Group) was launched in February 2008 during 'Community Pubs Week'. A number of people had come together who all had one thing in common – we were all sick of seeing our pub heritage under constant attack, ultimately leading to closure and loss.

## The aims of the Pubs Group are to:

- Promote use of community pubs;
- Campaign against the closure of pubs that are or could be viable;
- Campaign against unsympathetic alterations of pubs.

## Our first 18 months have seen us make positive ground in:

- Highlighting to the trade that the Barley Mow in The Dings was available for purchase – this was then saved by Bristol Beer Factory;
- Insisting on the restoration of the Queen's Head at Willsbridge's historic interior following partial destruction;
- Successfully opposing a change of use, and persuading the owner of the "Gin" Palace in Old Market that his building should be offered as a pub;
- Influencing Enterprise Inns to drop a restrictive covenant on the sale of the Bell at Redcliffe;
- Challenging the use of restrictive covenants elsewhere;
- Making significant representation of pub interests on many planning applications in our branch area, as well as with local councils;
- Lobbying MPs regarding issues such as the excessive levels of duty on beer and the unfair competition from the off-trade, i.e. mostly supermarkets;
- Raising the issue of the plight of pubs in the media including newspapers, radio and TV.

## To assist the process, we have ongoing information on:

- Closed and threatened pubs;
- Pubs in our area with unchanged historic interiors;
- Parties that may be interested in acquiring pubs.

We meet bi-monthly (in a pub), usually in a city-centre location.

These meetings are opportunities to discuss our current campaigns and how we take them forward. We also communicate between meetings via email and telephone as necessary.

But it's not all work! We have a social calendar where we hold a quarterly get-together, usually exploring our area's pubs. We have sampled "Treasure Island Trail" pubs around Bristol docks, Frampton Cotterell's pub offerings and a heritage pub crawl by coach to destinations to the south of our area, as well as other events. We are currently planning our next "social" event that will be held in early October.

We are an active group with a vast knowledge, not only of pubs, but also of legislation, planning, pub design, the licensed trade, brewing and pub history. Members of the group do not have to be CAMRA members or even drink real ale but must have the passion and desire to protect the Great British pub. Expert knowledge as such is welcome – but not essential.

Our coverage includes Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North and West Somerset (basically the former Avon area). We are seeking members from all areas. If you would like to join us then contact Pete Bridle ([pbridle@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:pbridle@blueyonder.co.uk)) or Mike Jackson ([mikejackson6@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:mikejackson6@blueyonder.co.uk)) or come on one of our socials (see diary near back). You will be welcomed and will be among like-minded people.

Mike Jackson

## Restrictive covenants: *A campaigning victory!*

**I**n previous editions of *Pints West*, the issue of the major pub companies (pubcos) applying restrictive covenants as a condition on the sale of pubs has been documented. The net result of this restriction is that whoever should purchase the pub off the pubco would not be able to operate the place as a pub once the sale was completed.

The really good news is that the two largest pubcos have now decided not to impose these restrictions on any current or future sales.

This issue was brought into sharp focus locally not so long ago when Enterprise Inns, the second largest pubco in the UK, attempted to sell the Bell in Redcliffe, central Bristol. They attached a restrictive covenant to the sale conditions. Locals were outraged that this pub, which is around 250 years old, would no longer be able to trade in the future as a result of this covenant. The matter, as well as being reported in *Pints West*, received a high media profile in the local press as well as being prominently featured in the licensed trade publications, as well as in CAMRA's national newspaper, *What's Brewing*.

There are many other examples of this practice both locally and around the UK.

The sense of outrage was felt as the application of restrictive covenants when pubs are sold is a grossly anti-competitive practice. Pub companies have used these when selling pubs in an area when they have other pubs from their own estate nearby. They must be afraid of the competition that a new operator in one of their former pubs could bring to their remaining pubs nearby. Why else would they apply such a restriction, for example, to the Bell in Redcliffe? Could it just be something to do with the fact that Enterprise has

other pubs very close by?

At a time when community pubs are closing at such an alarming rate, it is a disgrace and a public outrage that pub companies and others apply these restrictions thus ensuring that these pubs are lost forever. What sort of commitment does that show to community pubs by businesses that are into running pubs?

Bristol CAMRA Pubs Group is aware that there are independent pubs operators who are interested in acquiring premises that, for example, Enterprise are closing. We have seen, time and time again, pubs run by either national brewers or pubcos that they believe are unviable. However, in the right hands they can be returned to thriving community locals. Witness two recent national CAMRA Pub of the Year winners as examples – the Old Spot in Dursley and the Kelham Island Tavern in Sheffield. Both are now wonderfully successful community pubs.

Was there ever a valid justification to close much loved local pubs with this tactic to stifle competition?

The good news is that, following powerful lobbying by CAMRA, both Enterprise Inns and Punch Taverns, the two largest pub companies in the UK, have now stated that they will not apply restrictive covenants to any pub that they sell now or in the future. Indeed, Punch have said that they will be prepared to lift these restrictions on pubs sold in the past and Enterprise would be prepared to consider such requests on a case by case basis.

Let's now hope that, in the spirit of these changes, when any pub operator decides to off-load any outlet, they will be prepared to sell the premises at a realistic price to interested parties who may want to retain the place for what it was intended, i.e. a local pub serving its local community.

Pete Bridle





**GOING? . . . . White Hart at Bitton**



**GOING . . . . Friendship at Knowle**



**GONE . . . . Wheatsheaf at Winterbourne and Rose & Crown at Iron Acton**

## The Bell at Congresbury

Veteran pub, the **Bell** at Congresbury, has been closed for about three years. Latterly known as Cromwells, it is a large road-side pub with a car park and garden.

It has been acquired by a developer who wants to demolish the pub and build "affordable homes" on the site as well as a retail outlet that could be occupied by one of the supermarket chains. This is typical of the way our pub heritage is being reduced. Not only is this the loss of yet another pub, but also a piece of local history and a threat to the livelihoods of local traders.

Local people are campaigning against this insensitive development and are calling for something that represents both the historic significance of the Bell site and the future requirements of Congresbury. This pub destruction is happening all too often with the **Friendship** at Knowle, and the **Golden Lion** at Frampton Cotterell currently under threat from development proposals. The **Ship & Castle** at Ashton and the **Red Cow** in Bedminster have both been demolished in recent months and will not be replaced by another pub. Surely enough is enough. Join the campaign to save our pub culture (*see opposite*).

Mike Jackson



**Under threat ... the Golden Lion at Frampton Cotterell**

## Coming to a pub near you

After an eight month battle, the **Friendship Inn**, Knowle – owned by Enterprise Inns – has been lost forever to Tesco Stores. Bristol Pubs Group, the Bristol Civic Society, local councillor Gary Hopkins, local traders and a large number of Knowle residents were fighting against this. 1,600 people signed a petition objecting.

The loss is down to the cunning application Tesco submitted, and the way planning departments are required to consider planning applications; that is, does the plan breach any relevant policies? The fact that a supermarket chain submitted this and intended to later change it from a pub had to be ignored.

The plan was received by the Council in early December 2008 – when the public have their attention on Christmas. The site address quoted was "Land adjacent to" the pub – not that of the pub. The application was for an extra twelve car parking spaces for pub use – not supermarket use. Had this car park been a supermarket's, it would have been rejected!

To later convert the pub to a supermarket will require no planning application. Also, the place already has a licence to sell alcoholic drinks. Tesco was offered a property in Broadwalk shopping centre, but they declined this. Across the road from the inn are two family-run shops which will suffer heavily when Tesco moves in. Trade will also be drawn away from Broadwalk. The majority of locals did not want to lose their community pub. Nor did they want a Tesco store. Those few feeling the pub was run to a poor standard do not realise there are keen landlords who could turn this around.

There were various concerns over the plan. With a supermarket, the car park would fill quickly, especially at peak traffic hours, with a lot of cars frequently going in and out. Some would enter the car park, find it full, so reverse out with restricted views of the road. A high risk of accidents would arise, along with traffic congestion.

Trees in the beer garden would be felled – Bristol Pubs Group tried having a tree preservation order (TPO) put on these. The decision was that a plan of the trees to be felled should be stated, but a TPO was unnecessary. In addition, air and noise pollution would increase considerably, thus affecting the wildlife; yet the Council is aiming to have Bristol voted as the European green capital!

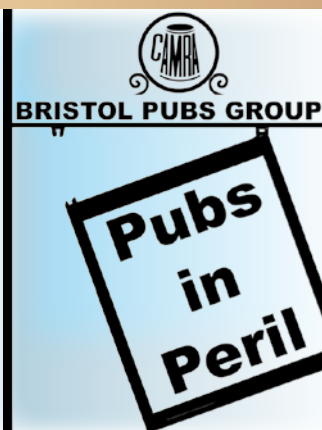
Three planning committee meetings have had to be sat to come to a decision. The councillors felt their hands tied by Government guidelines preventing a refusal on the plan. A large beer garden would be reduced in size to a degree, but a large area still left. What is to become of this? A petrol station is the probable intention.

This is not the only pub supermarkets have considered buying. Pubcos like Enterprise Inns and Punch Taverns are keen to sell off

some pubs, with the pub use discontinuing. Selling to supermarkets needs no covenant on the sale saying "the property must not be used as a pub", or "no draught ales are to be sold on the property".

Any idea what's happening to the pub down the road from you?

Tim Belsten



# A tour of pub gems

On a bright Saturday morning in July, a coach packed with members of the Bristol & District CAMRA Pubs Campaigning Group and friends left from central Bristol for a trip around some of the great classic pubs in our branch area.



Queen's Head, Willsbridge

Our first stop was the wonderful **Queen's Head at Willsbridge**. This fantastic multi-roomed pub is featured on CAMRA's national inventory of outstanding pub interiors – one of only three in the Bristol & District CAMRA area. The pub kindly opened for us at 11am (usual opening time on a Saturday is noon). The only real ale on sale at the time of our visit was Courage Best – which, following the closure of the Bristol Courage brewery a few years ago, has been brewed at John Smith's brewery in Tadcaster and now at the Charles Wells brewery in Bedford. The landlord tells us that this ale is very popular with his locals and it was in good condition on our visit. The Queen's Head has had a period of closure in the last year. If you enjoy multi-roomed classic pubs, this one is well worth a visit. It also sold a couple of real ciders and has a small garden at the rear.



Unusual beer engine in the Old Crown at Kelston

Our next stop was the Butcombe-owned **Old Crown at Kelston** on the A431 between Bristol and Bath. This is a lovely flagstone-floor pub with several cosy rooms and a delightful bar with a very unusual set of old hand pumps. The beers served here were in great condition. This pub has a delightful garden and, as it was warm and sunny, most of our party (there were 19

of us on the trip) made our way out to the garden. Unfortunately, some pesky wasps decided to bother us. They were so persistent that most of the group decided to reduce the risk and made their way back inside to finish off their pints of fine ale.

Next on the tour was the **Ring O'Bells at Hinton Blewitt** which is about two miles off the A37 at Temple Cloud. This is a charming small pub situated on the village green. It has a pleasant bar and a front paved area with seating – no wasps here fortunately! As well as the main drinking area, there is also a separate dining room. The pub, also run by Butcombe, featured a guest ale from Nethergate, the unusual and spicy Umbel Ale. It was so good, we finished off the cask!

Next stop was the **New Inn at Blagdon**. This is a gem of a pub owned by Wadworth. A selection of the Devizes-based brewery beers were on offer and, again, all the ales tried were in good



Ring O'Bells, Hinton Blewitt

condition. This pub has stunning views over the lake (see front page) and, as the weather was still good, we all took advantage of this as the ale was consumed. It is worth nipping outside for the view if at all possible but, if the weather is inclement, this pub also has a lovely interior. Our thanks to the landlord for agreeing to stay open a little later than he would normally on a Saturday lunchtime session.



New Inn, Blagdon

The wonderful **Crown at Churchill** was our next pub to visit. This pub has been the local CAMRA branch pub of the year finalist on several occasions won the competition a few years ago. It is a charming and rustic pub which serves around eight real ales straight from the cask. It has been a long-term entry in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide. It is very popular with locals, and lovers of traditional pubs with stone floors, real fires, wooden seating and no pretensions should enjoy their time here. It also has outdoor drinking areas.



The Crown at Churchill

The 14<sup>th</sup> century **Black Horse at Clapton in Gordano** was our last pub to visit before we made our way back into Bristol. This is a real community pub that was once the village lock-up. It features flagstone floors, exposed beams and settles. It also has a huge fireplace and another room across a narrow passageway. Beers such as Bass, Shepherd Neame Spitfire, Webster's Green Label and Butcombe bitter feature and, again, all the beers tried were in good nick. The pub is extremely popular and also has a large garden with a children's area at the far end.

When we got back into Bristol, as this was a tour of classic pubs, we finished off at the **King's Head in Victoria Street**. This is another pub that regularly features in the Good Beer Guide and is also on the outstanding pub interiors inventory. It is a very narrow pub in parts with an unusual seating area behind a screen, often referred to as the tram carriage. There are some very good photographs of old Bristol and the ornate fittings behind the bar

are well worth the visit alone. Beers from Sharp's, Wadworth, Hook Norton and others have featured. Thanks to the pub for opening early Saturday evening for us.

This was one fantastic day out – great pubs, wonderful ales in great condition and good company. Plus quite a few laughs along the way.



Black Horse, Clapton in Gordano



The King's Head



Bristol CAMRA trips are open to all members and are very good value for money. Why not consider coming along on a social trip soon? See [www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk) or the diary in Pints West for further details.

Pete Bridle

Photos by Lesly Huxley and Tim Belsten

## Cotswold Spring is expanding

Cotswold Spring brewery, now in its fourth year, has added a new office and dedicated off-sales shop on its brewery site at Codrington, just off Junction 18 of the M4. This will improve the presentation and amount of stock available for the customers; the shop will also have a chiller allowing the sale of real ale direct from casks to continue.

Moving the office and off-sales shop out of the actual brewery building into separate premises will allow more 'elbow room' for head brewer, Nik Milo, to improve the cooling of the brewery and provide better storage for the bottled beers.

When I recently visited Nik, he advised that a new brew is likely in the coming months, a wheat style, name still to be confirmed. The brewery is also considering either a lighter version of its 'Olde English Rose' or a new brew using some lager hops. This new product will sit in the cross-over market somewhere between beer and lager, which they hope will encourage lager drinkers to experience real ales.

John Worlock, one of the Cotswold Spring's directors, told me that he was pleased to see the brewery represented once more at this year's Great British Beer Festival, with the 'Gloucestershire's Glory' well received. John was also pleased that JD Wetherspoon has again selected one of their beers for a three-month run, this time the 'Codrington Royal' and hoped for many more chances to introduce Cotswold Spring beers to a wider public.

'Olde English Rose' continues to win awards, most recently in July, gaining Silver in the Bitters & Pale Ales (up to 4.0%) category from SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers) Wales & West district.

Cotswold Spring can be contacted by phone on (01454) 323088 or by emailing [info@cotswoldbrewery.com](mailto:info@cotswoldbrewery.com), and their web site is [www.cotswoldbrewery.com](http://www.cotswoldbrewery.com).

Steve Matthews

## Tales of the Riverbank part 2

WE did promise you a continuation of the Tales of the Riverbank article that featured in the last edition of Pints West. Unfortunately the author, Duncan Shine, is unable to bring you part 2 due to other commitments. Apologies to those who've been waiting with eager anticipation.

## Pub News

● The **Lamb and Lark** in Burchells Green Road, Speedwell is currently closed with the licensee's name no longer above the door and the inn sign removed. The planning application to convert this pub to a private dwelling has now been accepted (subject to conditions).

● **Campbells Landing** opposite the pier in Clevedon appeared threatened with closure in April, though was still open when Pints West went to press, but with no real ale. There was an "A370" cider on hand pump that our researchers enjoyed, bottles of Theakston's Old Peculier, Marston's Pedigree and Mann's Brown hidden on the bottom shelf, and nine keg fonts! B&B accommodation and food appeared to be the prime focus of the pub.

● The **Butchers Arms** in Yatton closed suddenly in mid-June and at the time of writing has not reopened.

● The **Pelican** in Chew Magna was closed and for sale in late July.

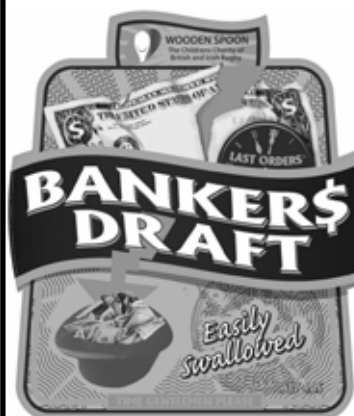
● The **Albert** in Bedminster closed in early July and had notices in the window saying "closed until further notice".

● The Enterprise-owned **Three Sugar Loaves** at the bottom of Christmas Steps in central Bristol closed a couple of weeks before Pints West went to press.

● The **Robin Hood** on St Michael's Hill in Kingsdown, previously owned by Wadworth, was also still closed as we went to press, but there were signs of activity visible through the window so perhaps we can look forward to a grand reopening soon.

● The **White Lion**, Wickwar's pub in the centre of Bristol, has a new landlord with a proven track record, having previously run the Vittoria on Whiteladies Road and the Langford Inn at Langford.

## Malt, Hops, Yeast & Water!



## What's in Yours?

Make it yours at  
**THE WHITE LION**, Quay Head, Bristol City Centre.

Also available direct from the brewery in 18 and 36 pint polypins or delivered direct to your door.

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# Cryptic Crossword

## ACROSS

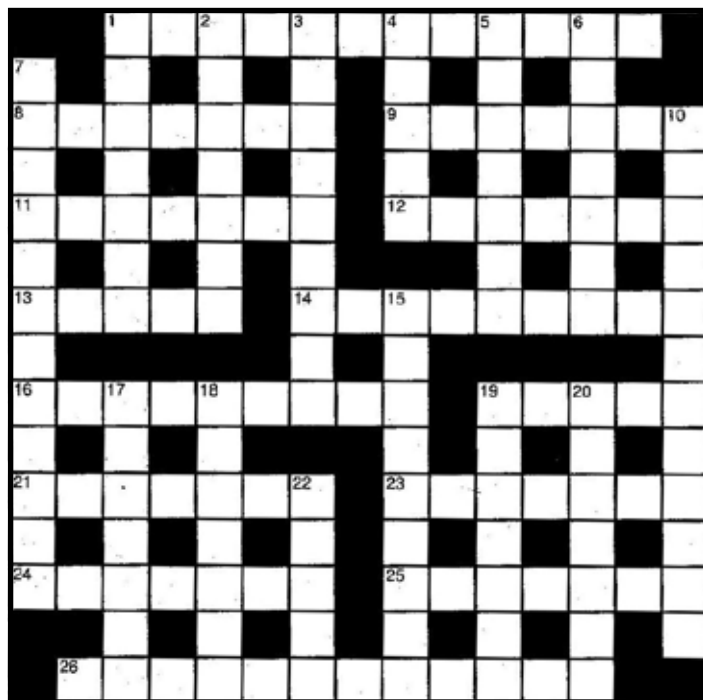
1. A plain ideal brew sent out East (5,4,3)
8. Hampshire beer for the hot summer period by the sound of it (3, 4)
9. A plug for real ale when it's on (4, 3)
11. Describing one of those who's legless (7)
12. Medical Officer consuming shrub cocktail in the quadrangle (7)
13. Great lager for the heavy drinker (5)
14. Swallowing ale with initial greed becomes a qualified success (3, 6)
16. Pub with a church feature - a bright business venture? (9)
19. Indicating ready to go for Aussie nectar (5)
21. Where beer goes down when they're open (7)
23. Tons of beer? (7)
24. Old fashioned honesty illustrated by tenant's genuine link to brewery (7)
25. Signs of sunburnt pussy at the pub (3, 4)
26. King Charles's cure for the suffering drinker (4, 2, 3, 3)

## DOWN

1. Light beer from Durham for the lusty old singer (4, 3)
2. Planner or drinker of sound non-bottled beer (7)
3. 'Trouble over beer storage facility' said the landlord (3, 6)
4. A right endless bore in the pub garden (5)
5. Eros returns to look at ugly mug (7)
6. Drunken brat consuming ale after hours (4, 3)
7. With this Suffolk beer trend Basmati is served up (6, 6)
10. French scientist is in grand scheme for cleaning beer containers (12)
15. Mashed up the brew I'd avoid. Give it this (4, 5)
17. Drunken Ivan ran around. In a heavenly state! (7)
18. Top coat editor put on when he got sozzled (7)
19. Scraped away to revamp dead bar (7)
20. Young business conducted in sombre wing collar (7)
22. Dusty bottles for the old maids left here (5)

Crossword set by Peter Taberner.

Solution can be found on page 21.



## News from Blindmans and Matthews breweries

Despite our less than golden summer, Matthews' summer beers continue to please. Conygre Gold, the August offering at 5% ABV, is rich and fruity in the continental style. Even if the sun doesn't shine, this is a definite drop of liquid sunshine. Stuart Matthews also has something to cheer about in that he has been awarded an Organic Licence from the Soil Association. This means that Dawkins Green Barrel - which Stuart brews especially for Glen Dawkins' pubs - can officially be described as a genuine organic beer. Stuart Matthews promises more special organic beers in the future.

The topical and humorous twist to the names of some of Blindman's beers continues with Ashes Glory for July and August - perhaps some should be shipped to the England team for the final match to restore winning ways. At 4.0%, it's a pale golden ale. Dirty Cash - the pump clip has a picture of the Houses of Parliament - has an innocent ABV of 3.8% but hides a malty finish. Meanwhile, their regular beers continue to be available, including the ever popular Icarus.

Kirsten Elliott



**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](http://www.bathales.com)




## blindmans brewery

**Award-Winning Real Ales Brewed with Natural Spring Water**

Buff 3.6%	Golden Spring 4.0%
Mine Beer 4.2%	Icarus 4.5%
Eclipse 4.2%	Siberia 4.7%

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[www.blindmansbrewery.co.uk](http://www.blindmansbrewery.co.uk)

**\*\* ALES ALSO AVAILABLE VIA SIBA DDS \*\***

**The Lamb Inn, Frome**  
 1 Christchurch Street East, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1QA Tel. 01373 472042  
 Renovated to an exceptional standard The Lamb is steeped in brewing history.  
 8 hand-pumps serving a selection of hand crafted real ales, fine wines, and a selection of home cooked meals served daily in a warm relaxing atmosphere.  
 7 en-suite B&B rooms with private parking. Conference facilities.

# Bristol Beer Factory

A new chapter will be written in the history of brewing on the site of the former Ashton Gate Brewery when the Bristol Beer Factory opens the doors on its new visitor centre in September 2009.

The visitor centre, part of a larger complex which will include a small theatre, cinema, bakery and possibly cheesemaking, will feature displays of old brewing equipment, historical photographs from the brewery and sample ingredients including malt and hops. Visitors can also take a guided tour of the working brewery to get a better understanding of how beer is produced before sampling a range of Bristol Beer Factory's award-winning ales.

In spite of the recession, demand for Bristol Beer Factory beers has grown by 20% in the past year. Four extra conditioning tanks were installed earlier this year and the extended premises mean that the brewery now produces 40 barrels a week. Two new members of staff joined in the spring, Brett Ellis who is learning the art of brewing under the excellent tutelage of head brewer, Chris Kay, whilst part-timer Nuria helps out with analysis as each brew matures.

Bristol Beer Factory production director, Simon Bartlett, comments: "2009 has been another busy year for Bristol Beer Factory. We continue to win awards, and demand for our beers was such that we made a major decision to further invest in equipment and staff to meet that demand. The visitor centre provides us with an opportunity to share our passion for real ale – showing people the art of brewing and encouraging visitors to support their local breweries."

This year also sees a welcome return of Factoberfest, organised and hosted by Bristol Beer Factory. Some 20 brews from eight to ten local microbreweries are on offer, with BBF promising another outing for its popular Bristol IPA – a sell-out at Factoberfest in 2007.

Comments head brewer, Chris Kay: "Factoberfest is a celebration of the great, quality beers being produced in this region. It's a superb opportunity to try some of the new offerings from local brewers as well as a chance to savour some traditional favourites, all within the relaxed environment of the Tobacco Factory. Live music, a great range of beers and, we hope, some late autumn sunshine – what better way to celebrate!"

Factoberfest takes place on Saturday 10th October from 12 noon with tickets available on the day or in advance from the brewery.

*Richard Brooks*



# Seven Stars – farewell to Katie and Steve!

It is with some sadness that we say goodbye to Katie and Steve who have turned around the fortunes of the Seven Stars so successfully in the last two years. At the time of writing, the pub is one of the most popular free houses in Bristol.

Katie & Steve have increased the turnover at this pub radically. The pub has become so successful that it is the Bristol & District CAMRA Pub of the Year runner-up for 2009.

They will now be offering drinkers at a pub in Worcestershire (the Wheatsheaf on Bromyard Road, Whitbourne) the same kind of excellent real ales that drinkers have been able to enjoy at the Stars. That is good news for the local drinkers up the M5 – particularly as they are reopening a village pub that has been closed for around a year.

Katie and Steve are very grateful to Bristol CAMRA. So much so that, until the date of their departure, all card-carrying CAMRA members can enjoy any of the real ales any day of the week for just £2 a pint. The pub is also having a Scottish real ales festival in early September.

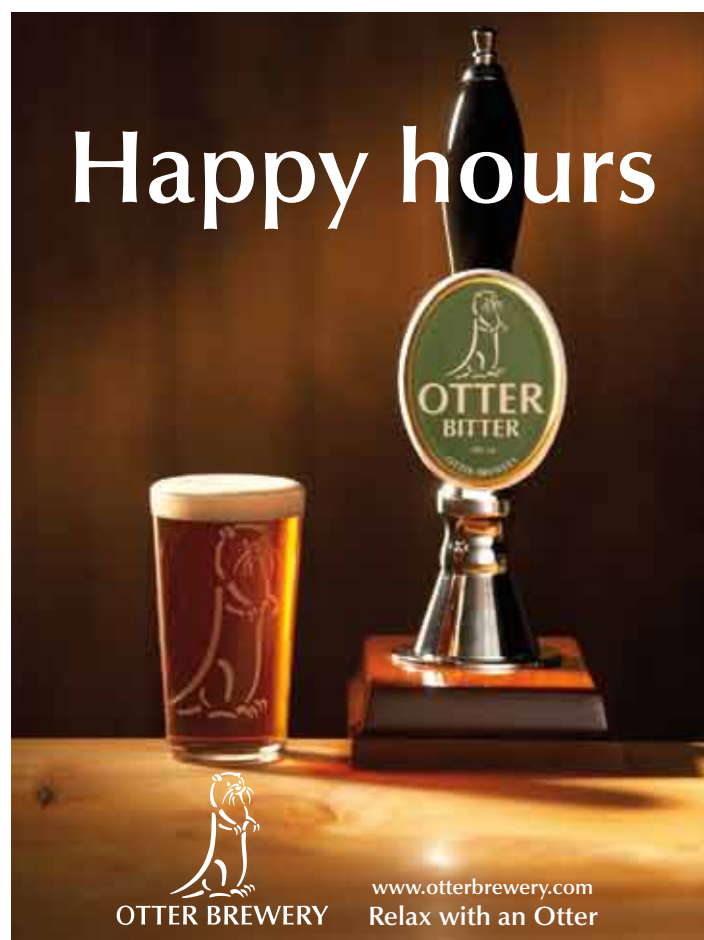
Let's hope that the new people who take over will maintain the same outstanding standards set by Katie and Steve. It's not rocket science – just a regularly changing range of great real ales from quality micro-breweries at competitive prices in top-notch condition. And service with a smile.

Good luck Katie and Steve!

*Pete Bridle*



# Happy hours



OTTER BREWERY

www.otterbrewery.com  
Relax with an Otter

# CAMRA launches new edition of Good Beer Guide Belgium

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is celebrating the release of a new edition of one of its best selling beer and travel guides, 'Good Beer Guide Belgium', with a competition to win a weekend away in Brussels.

Author Tim Webb has been touring Belgium to find the best places to visit, the best restaurants to go to and the best beer to drink; as well as educating the reader about how and where to enjoy Belgian beer in the UK. Combining travel information with a specialist knowledge of Belgian beers provides an interesting insight into a beautiful country that produces some of the world's most interesting beers.

Webb said:

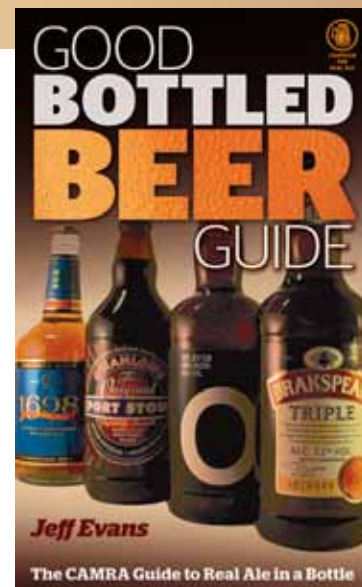
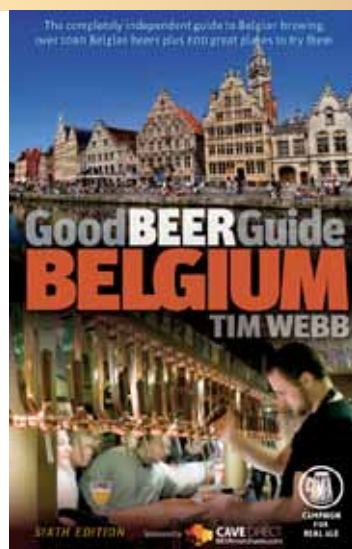
'Nowadays the book is a travel guide, with sections on getting there, understanding the country, specialist tourism, bringing beer home and UK suppliers. At heart it is still about politics and in particular the dynamic between the global dream makers selling white sliced beer and the artists who create the interesting stuff.'

Containing information on beer styles, Belgian brewers, and the places to drink the beer in Belgium provides all the reader needs to know about beer and travel in Belgium; as well as including some quirky trivia about the Belgian brewing industry.

This new edition is a great companion for anyone travelling to the country, and its imagery of some fascinating Belgian landmarks and scenery, as well as images of beer guaranteed to whet the appetites of both novices and connoisseurs alike.

Webb continued:

'Good Beer Guide Belgium is what happens if you look into why people travel and figure out that a lot of us do it to be somewhere else and enjoy something you can't get at home. The Belgians make the finest, most enjoyable and extraordinary beers on Earth - the fact that they don't realise it is a bonus. It's great to be a tourist with a weapon that puts you ahead of the locals.'



## Good Bottled Beer Guide

The new edition of this pocket-sized guide is a must for all real ale fans who enjoy a fresh glass of their favourite real ales at home.

The book is a comprehensive guide to all bottle conditioned real ales brewed in the UK, and is completely revised, updated and redesigned, to include a special section highlighting the best 500 bottle-conditioned beers.

The guide lists beers by style, with information about the range of styles available and recommendations for matching beers with food. The book also includes features on how real ale is brewed and bottled, how beer matures in a bottle and information on CAMRA's Real Ale in a Bottle Accreditation Scheme.

Also included in the guide is information about where to buy British and foreign bottled beers, as well providing notes on foreign beer styles and a section highlighting the best examples of foreign bottled beers.

The new design means the guide is slimmer and gives the reader easier access to all the information they could need about bottled real ales – a must for any real ale fan!

Available now to order for £10.99 (members' price) or £12.99 (non-members' price).

### Redcliffe Bay Beer Festival, Portishead

The fifth Redcliffe Bay Beer Festival takes place on the nights of Friday, 27th and Saturday, 28th November at Redcliffe Bay Hall. As usual, emphasis will be on local, independent breweries. However, beers from another area in the UK will also be featured – it was South Yorkshire in 2008. Last year's favourite beer was Kelham Island's Pale Rider. The aim will be to have over 30 real ales and three or four ciders on tap on the main night, Saturday. To achieve this range, polypins will be used.

Although all the proceeds will go to charity – the Children's Hospice South West – the event is run by local CAMRA members who take their beer seriously. Tickets for each night will be just £5 to cover entry, tasting notes and a commemorative glass. For those of you who like music, there is a DJ on the Friday night to keep your toes tapping. Food such as pasties and rolls will be on sale at all sessions. In order to give the greatest variety of beer to as many people as possible, seating is not available in the evenings.

Following last year's success, a Saturday lunchtime tasting session is also being offered from noon till 2.30pm which may appeal. At this, numbers will be restricted and everyone will be able to sit comfortably at tables. For £12.50 each at the lunch session you will get a commemorative glass and tasting notes and then all your drinks will be included for this price. At this session, 20 draught beers will be available for you to try either in taster portions or half pints.

Tickets are being sold between 7 and 9pm on Monday, 21st September at the Poacher, Portishead High Street and then at the same time on Wednesday, 23rd September at the Ship, Redcliffe Bay. Otherwise, you can get tickets by writing to Neil Ravenscroft at 27 Denny View, Portishead, BS20 8BT with your cheque payable to 'The Children's Hospice South West' plus a stamped addressed envelope. Tickets for the evenings are expected to run out by the end of September. No tickets are available on the door and tickets are non-refundable. CAMRA members will be welcomed and the Hall is on the main Bristol to Portishead bus route.

Neil Ravenscroft

## The Windmill Inn

PORTISHEAD



6 Real Ales in excellent condition including:

Courage Best, Bass, Butcombe Gold, Butcombe Bitter and 2 other guest ales.

The Windmill Inn is situated next to the Portishead Approach Golf Course on Nore Road.

To contact us please ring 01275 843677.

# Inn and Around Portishead

## A Review of Local Beer Choice and Prices

Having choked on my beer a bit by parting with £3 plus for my pints at certain pubs in Clifton recently, I started to put together a review of what is charged for real ale in my manor and what the choice is. The pubs included are in Portishead unless stated otherwise. The review was carried out in June and July this year. In some of these pubs the 'guest beer' features quite often whilst at others, like the Windmill, there is a policy of frequent changes and the guest beers included here were virgins as far as the Windmill goes. I've shown an 'R' to indicate regular beers and 'G' for guest ales in the table here.

## Any conclusions?

Of the fourteen establishments covered, none featured real ales at over £3 and it is still possible to have a night out for a tenner if your capacity is pints. Courage Best certainly doesn't have the stranglehold it once had although it is still in half of the pubs and is seriously challenged now by Butcombe Bitter (also seven pubs) and more recently by Sharp's Doom Bar (four). Six of the places have four or more real ales available with good variety (with the Windmill and the Black Horse both giving a choice of six). These are good times here in terms of beer choice and they're getting better. Vic Long of the Ship has recently added a guest tap – Keltek's Golden Lance when I was last there – to add to his stable of three regulars which include a Bass that people come miles to sup. Mike Pelengaris of the Royal Inn is making a mark in real ales by adding a fourth real ale and a second guest ale. Landlord Ian at the Kings Arms, Easton in Gordano, is preparing to make room for up to two real ales behind the bar to be served straight from the cask. This would be a big help if he holds a beer festival and at the least he will have a second guest ale on soon.

Neil Ravenscroft



Mark Hazelton, landlord of the Poacher

## The Poacher, Portishead High Street

Undoubtedly one of the stars of the local real ale scene is the Poacher. Landlord Mark Hazelton's efforts to increase the range of ales sold and the excellent condition he serves them in has been rewarded by inclusion in the Good Beer Guide (2008 and 2009). When I visited his pub a few months back I was greeted by a slightly more svelte Mark (slightly less now) minus one kidney and one tumour. I am glad to say he has recovered well from his medical problems aided no doubt by the fact that his body had been kept in peak condition.

Courage Best has recently been replaced at the Poacher as the only regular ale by Sharp's Doom Bar which has proved to be very popular. The beers appearing on the guest taps are shuffled in order to give a good range of tastes and strengths. My personal taste being for crisp, fruity beers, I tried the Wye Valley HPA and found it to be near to perfection.

One of the changes Mark has introduced is regular live music on Friday nights. With no entry charge and the usual excellent range of beers, the pub is attracting good crowds for these sessions.

Neil Ravenscroft

### The Poacher

R – Sharp's Doom Bar	£2.70
G – Wye Valley HPA	£2.90
G – Wickwar BOB	£2.70
G – Adnams Broadside	£2.90

### The Albion

R – Greene King IPA	£2.35
R – Abbott Ale	£2.60
R – Old Speckled Hen	£2.60

### The Royal Inn

R – Sharp's Doom Bar	£2.75
R – Butcombe Bitter	£2.65
G – Exmoor Gold	£2.75
G – Cheddar Potholer	£2.75

### The Windmill Inn

R – Courage Best	£2.50
R – Butcombe Bitter	£2.50
R – Butcombe Gold	£2.70
R – Draught Bass	£2.60
G – Coastal Brewery's Angelina	£2.50
G – Coastal's Second Fiddle	£2.70

### The Ship Inn

R – Otter Bitter	£2.50
R – Butcombe Bitter	£2.70
R – Draught Bass	£2.70
G – Keltek Golden Lance	£2.50

### The Phoenix Inn

R – Marston's Pedigree	£2.65
R – Marston's Bitter	£2.50

### The Royal Oak

R – Courage Best	£2.50
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### Clarence House

R – Courage Best	£2.50
R – Butcombe Bitter	£2.55

### The White Hart, Weston in Gordano

R – Sharp's Doom Bar	£2.65
R – Courage Best	£2.55
G – Exmoor Houndog	£2.65

### Brewsters

R – Butcombe Bitter	£2.55
R – Shepherd Neame Spitfire	£2.65

### The Black Horse, Clapton in Gordano

R – Butcombe Bitter	£2.70
R – Courage Best	£2.70
R – Webster's Green Label	£2.20
R – Wadworth 6X	£2.80
R – St Austell Tribute	£2.80
G – Otter Ale	£2.90

### The Priory, Portbury

R – Butcombe Bitter	£2.45
R – St Austell Tribute	£2.65
G – Adnams Explorer	£2.80

### The Kings Arms, Easton in Gordano

R – Courage Best	£2.70
G – Arbor Ales Brigstow	£2.70

### The George, Abbots Leigh

R – Courage Best	£2.70
R – Sharp's Doom Bar	£2.75
R – Bath Ales Gem	£2.85
R – Otter Bitter	£2.70

# BADRAG - Bristol and District Rare Ales Group

**B**ADRAG, the CAMRA Bristol & District Rare Ales Group, will be organising a number of events during the Autumn to support rare ale styles.

This "Rare Ales Autumn Season" kicks off on **Thursday 10th September** with a social gathering at 8pm in the **Mall** in Clifton, Bristol (BS8 4JG) where a mild will be available. M&B Mild (3.2%), contract brewed at the Victorian Highgate Brewery, has featured recently. The group may later move on to the Lansdown.

- The main event of the season takes place at the **Portcullis** in Clifton (BS8 4LE) at 8pm on **Friday 18th September**. This rare ales event will build on the successful one run there by Ned and Natz in support of BADRAG last February, when six of their seven real ale handpumps were devoted to rare ale styles. It will continue over the weekend. Visit [www.dawkins-taverns.co.uk](http://www.dawkins-taverns.co.uk), [www.badrags.co.uk](http://www.badrags.co.uk) or [www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk) for more details.

- On **Thursday 8th October** Colin Postlethwaite will lead a Bedminster Rare Ales Trail starting at 7.30pm in the **Tobacco Factory** (BS3 1TF), where Bristol Stout is a regular on the bar, then walking to the **Hen & Chicken** (BS3 1JF) for 8.30pm and the **Robert Fitzharding** (BS3 1BN) for 9.30pm.

- On **Friday 23rd October** Dave Jane will lead a Kingsdown Rare Ales Trail starting at 7.30 in the **Hillgrove Porter Stores** (BS2 8LT), followed by the **Green Man** (BS2 8HD), **Highbury Vaults** (BS2 8DE), possibly the **Robin Hood** (BS2 8DX), and **Colston Yard** (BS2 8DJ).

- Ed Lobbett will be leading the Bristol Central Rare Ales Trail starting at 7.30pm on **Thursday 12 November** in the **Bank Tavern** (BS1 2HR), walking to the **Seven Stars** (BS1 6JG) and **Commercial Rooms** (BS1 1HT).

- On **Friday 27 November** Henry Davies will lead an East Bristol Rare Ales Trail starting at 7.30pm in the **Staple Hill Oak** (BS16 5HN), then by bus to the **Van Dyke Forum** (BS16 3UA), **Chelsea Inn** (BS5 6AU) and **Old Stillage** (BS5 9LA).

- The Autumn Rare Ales programme will culminate with a BADRAG Christmas social at the **Naval Volunteer** (BS1 4EF) in King Street, Bristol on **Thursday 10th December** from 8pm.

Thanks to the licensees who are giving BADRAG style beers a chance, particularly to those who have given a permanent pump on the bar over to such rare ale style beers, and also to drinkers who support them!

**T**he Mild Month of May has been celebrated in Bristol and District in a modest way for some years, but has really taken off since BADRAG was formed a few years ago with fifty pubs taking part, and in 2009 it attracted mild ale enthusiasts from across the south of England.

Prompted by the notable enthusiasm and assistance of licensees, BADRAG will be organising a *Mild Festival Trail Passport* in 2010 which will run from approximately mid April to mid June, consist of six organised trails, several socials and tastings, and will allow people to do their own trail to complete their passports. It's a festival spread over many pubs.

Ed Lobbett of the Bank Tavern has had some excellent artwork prepared for the passport scheme, and will be "marketing" the scheme to other licensees. Glen Dawkins and his five pubs that have run a passport scheme for the past two years are joining this wider Bristol & District Mild Festival Trail Passport. This year BADRAG visited Notting-ham where the local CAMRA branch has organised a similar passport scheme for some years.

Mild Drinkers will take their passport to pubs on the trail, where the passport will be stamped to indicate that they have bought some mild ale in that pub. Upon completion the passport will be handed in and prizes will be awarded. The programme has to be put together by the end January for printing in Pints West, so early offers from licensees, breweries and individuals to sponsor prizes or help in other ways would be gratefully received! Offers to Ed Lobbett of the Bank Tavern, to any member of the group, or to BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk by email.

**O**ne of the rare ale styles that we particularly associate with the colder autumn weather are "old ales", one of Britain's finest and rarest ale styles.

Old ales are made with the one of the longest fermentation periods of any real ale – indeed only super strong barley wines are fermented for longer. Old ales are full-bodied with a malty richness and complex

**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.**

**BADRAG would encourage readers, including licensees, to enjoy rare ales and will be organising a number of events during autumn to support rare ale styles.**

character. Fermentation characters such as fruity-estery flavours contribute to the flavour profile but considerable variation is evident within the style. Some old ales are very light in colour but may still show a solid body. Others are darker and show notable malt features or strong bitterness. Old ales often have a higher alcohol content than others but not necessarily so.

Old ales, barley wines and strong ales are some of the rarest ales to be found on bars, possibly because the British have a reputation for gulping beers down, instead of sipping them and savouring the aroma and taste; the stronger versions are often only sold in half or third pints. Some locally brewed examples include *Arbor Ales Old Knobbly* (4.5% ABV) and *Slumberjack* (7%); *Arkells Kingsdown Ale* (5%); *Blindman's Icarus* (4.5%); *Bristol Beer Factory Exhibition* (5.2%); *Cotswold Spring's Codrington Old Ale* (4.8%) and *Uncle Dick's Cottage Ale* (6.3%); *Cottage Norman's Conquest* (7% or 5%); *Exmoor Beast* (6.6%); *Moor Old Freddy Walker* (7.3%); *Wadworth's Old Timer* (5.8%); and *Wickwar Old Arnold* (4.8%).

Others include *Theakston's Old Peculier* (5.7%) which is the most widely found old ale; *Anker Gouden Carolus Ambrio* (8%); *Blue Anchor Spingo Special* (6.7%); *Brewdog Paradox* (8.5-11%); *Highgate Old Ale* (5.3%); *Marston's Old Empire* (5.7%); *Otley 08* (8%); *Palmer's Tally Ho* (5.5%); *Phoenix Wobbly Bob* (6%); *Robinson's Old Tom* (8.5%); *Sarah Hughes Ruby* (6%); *White Shield No1* (10.5%); *Woodforde's Headcracker* (7%) and *Norfolk Nip* (8.5%); *York Centurion's Ghost* (5.4%); and *Young's Winter Warmer* (5%).

You may also find bottled old ales in more enlightened bars, supermarkets and corner stores, ales such as *O'Hanlon's Thomas Hardy Ale* (12%); *Fuller's Vintage Ale* (8.5%); *Gale's Prize Old Ale* (9%); *Broughton Old Jock* (6.7%) and *Greene King Strong Suffolk Ale* (6%).

And finally, look out this autumn for the new Champion Beers of Britain, all of them "rare ales": first *Rudgate Ruby Mild*, a mild at 4.4% ABV; second *Oakham Attila*, a barley wine at 7.5%; and third *West Berkshire Dr Hexter's Healer*, a strong ale at 5%.

Laurie Gibney



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## “He was the man who had everything, except *Theakstons* OLD PECULIER”

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

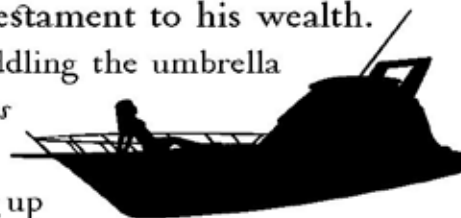
*“Aye, I’ve got plenty of ACKERS,”* grumbled my friend, twiddling the umbrella in his coçktail, *“but no bloomin’ pub and no bloomin’ Theakstons Old Peculier, that’s for sure.”* *“Why don’t you just go home and get*

*some?”* I asked. He snorted, glancing at his trophy wife soaking up

the rays beside him, *“It’s the missus, won’t go anywhere it rains.”* *“Ah, I see.”* I replied, wondering how the leggy Latino lovely liked being referred to as the **MISSUS**. Then, wistfully, I thought

of my very own special rain-spattered corner of Yorkshire. The lady I loved would be there now, behind her bar serving pint after pint of Theakstons Old Peculier, dark, rich, and deliciously strong. With my return ticket burning a hole in my pocket, I turned to my mate in exile.

*“Fancy another Pina Colada?”* I enquired, smugly.



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# Watering Holes in the Desert

## brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

### Weston Whispers

Since the last edition of Pints West, the local branch has enjoyed some excellent socials. The second weekend in June saw a beer festival held at the **Cheddar Ales** brewery. CAMRA members got a free pint which, in effect, meant free entry as the normal £5 admission also included a free pint. A very good selection of ales was on offer, alongside the full range of Cheddar beers. There were a few grumbles over being charged £1.50 a half (compared with £2.50 a pint for most beers), particularly from those who like to use beer festivals as an opportunity to sample a range of different beers. I know halves create more washing up, but.....

Also in June we undertook a crawl of Taunton town centre pubs. Unfortunately, our train to Taunton was half an hour late arriving at Weston which meant having to dive into **Off The Rails** to pass the time. A rather strangely named beer called "Martin & Su Charity Beer" from the Brentwood Brewery, Essex, was sipped to pass the time until the train arrived. Upon arrival in Taunton we were met by Alan Walker, Somerset CAMRA chairman and friends.

The evening's entertainment started at the Good Beer Guide-listed **Wings Club**, run by the Taunton branch of the Royal Air Force Association. Clubs supporting real ale are rather rare these days and it was good to see the South West's Sharp's and Cottage breweries represented by Doom Bar and You Cannot Be Serious respectively.

We then made the lengthy journey across town to the **Racehorse** on East Street. This excellent pub with bags of character is not in the 2009 Good Beer Guide but the esteemed Mr Walker says that he feels it is the best pub in town and we wouldn't argue. The beers were St Austell's Tribute, Dartmoor and Proper Job. Most people went for the latter, which is a top-notch beer and served in perfect condition at the Racehorse.

The **Castle Green Inn** was the next port of call. A very large pub which has been through many guises over the years. It is currently putting a strong focus on local beers and the three on the night were Exmoor Silver Stallion, Cotleigh Nutcracker and Otter Amber. Due our late arrival in Taunton we only had time for one more stop. This was the **Plough** (ex Harpoon Louie's) across the road from the station. Beers straight from the cask here – Cotleigh Barn Owl and Exmoor Gold. A very pleasant evening.

Our July social was held at the **Criterion** where we had a very good choice of ales – RCH Hewish IPA and Butts Traditional straight from the cask, and RCH East Street Cream, Cheddar Pot-holer and Arbor Ales Oyster Stout. The Criterion holds a quiz every Tuesday, which usually has a team or two of CAMRA members. New quizzers always welcome! We had a nightcap of Newmans Summerberry Stream at the **Royal Hotel**, which doesn't promote its real ales very well but is always worth a look.

July also saw the **Real Ale and Cider Festival 2009**, organised by the Weston branch of the Lions Club. This ran from Thursday to Sunday. There were plenty of CAMRA members among the throng each day. I attended Thursday evening and was delighted to see the excellent range of beer strengths and styles available from all over the UK. As I was planning on visiting again later in the festival I took things fairly easily. My favourite beer of the evening was Mid-night Bell from the Leeds brewery, closely followed by Lakeland Gold from the Cumbrian Hawkshead brewery. Honourable mentions too to Cairngorm Black Gold, Acorn Barnsley Gold and Wessex Russian Stout, very dark and very heavy, weighing in at a mighty

9% abv. Unfortunately my plans for other eagerly-anticipated beers on the 40-strong list were rather derailed by the incredible success of the festival. On arrival at around 7 o'clock on the Saturday evening, there were only around ten beers left and these were disappearing rapidly. Emergency supplies had been shipped in from Cheddar Ales to keep the large crowd happy.

The event was well attended, good value (£2 to get in, then £2.50 a pint for all beers) and it raised over £6,500 for the Prostate Cancer Charity and other local charities. Here's to next year!

In September we will be having our normal third Wednesday social at the **Waverley**. In addition we will be holding a tenth birthday social on Tuesday 22nd September. It was 22nd September 1999 that a few local CAMRA members attended a Bristol and District branch meeting at the Woolpack and decided to form our own local sub-branch. All members and non-members are very welcome to join us at our anniversary social, to be held at **Off The Rails** on Weston railway station on the 22nd. Off The Rails was the logical choice for the event as CAMRA members have sunk more pints there than anywhere else over the past ten years and Colin Hicks, the landlord, has been a staunch champion of real ale over that period. We are delighted that our local RCH brewery will be brewing a special beer for the evening ('Weston Desert Ale') – so for beer "tickers" it is a must.



Scenes from the  
Lions Club  
Real Ale and Cider  
Festival



Disappointing news from the **Nut Tree, Worle**. I paid a visit with the intention of writing a positive piece in support of the many efforts that have clearly been going on in recent months to increase trade and establish the pub as a key part of the local community. Unfortunately the licensee, Carol Bramley, advised me that she was about to leave. After three and a half years she had finally given up trying to make ends meet, coping with an onerous lease and trying to have a constructive relationship with Scottish & Newcastle (S&N), who hold the head lease. Things have got particularly difficult since the smoking ban and Carol has tried all sorts of initiatives to generate enough business to make the pub viable. S&N refused to re-negotiate the terms of her lease or beer-purchasing arrangements and Carol has had enough. This is a great shame, as the Nut Tree could and should be a great pub. It is very nice internally and externally. This attractive building is owned by that well-known local company, the Royal Bank of Scotland. Carol says that it is only the RBS and S&N who make any money out of the pub – an all too common story.

Tim Nickolls



Ten years we've been  
crawling in this desert. Do  
you think they're getting the  
real-ale message yet?



# The Old Inn, Hutton

There was great anticipation in local CAMRA circles towards the end of June when word got round that John Hayes was taking over the Greene King-owned Old Inn in Hutton. John established a great reputation when running the Coopers Arms in Highbridge for 25 years, making it a Good Beer Guide regular and one of the best pubs in Somerset. He left in 2005 and nothing much had been heard of him since.

John took over at the Old Inn on 30 June. I visited the following day but John was surrounded by workmen (removing all signs of Greene King) and salesmen, so only a brief greeting was possible. I went back again recently for a chat with John.

John said that he had spent much of the past four years since leaving the Coopers in France. However, he had been keeping an eye on the local pub



scene, sensing that the problems engulfing the industry could throw up some good opportunities. John heard that the Old Inn might be available, resulting in him acquiring the pub "lock, stock and barrel" from Greene King who, it appears, are disposing of a number of their pubs at the moment.

All signs of Greene King's ownership have disappeared both in livery and, more importantly for real ale lovers, in the range of beers on offer. This is not intended as a slur on Greene King, who are one of the strongest supporters of real ale in the country. However, their beers are commonly available and most ale fans (certainly most CAMRA supporters) prefer to see local beers in their local pubs, with the occasional something different from farther afield. John certainly is committed to delivering this. The beers on at my visit were the locally-produced RCH Hewish IPA and Steam Silver, Butcombe Bitter and Idle Grunter from Yorkshire. John says that he plans to have the Hewish and Butcombe as permanent beers, with two guests. However, Fuller's London Pride has been so popular that this too may force its way into the permanents. The sales of real ale are going so well that John is planning on a revamp of the cellar that will allow him to increase the number of ales to six, with the likelihood of some stronger beers appearing – one of the features from his days at the Coopers.

Aside from the cellar, John is carrying out works on the roof, toilets and kitchen. Food is available 12-3 and 6-9 Mondays to Saturdays and 12-7 on Sundays. A new menu is to be introduced around the middle of September when the kitchen upgrade has been completed. No one need worry about any material changes to the pub. John says that his main objective is to "restore it to its original splendour."

The changes at the Old Inn are great news for the local real ale scene in general and in particular the lucky locals in Hutton – John has even seen some of his old Coopers customers from Highbridge make the journey to Hutton.

My advice – get out there soon.

Tim Nickolls

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# A Round with Robin

It would appear that the **Claverham beer festival** always has a theme to it. This year was the first time I had been there, and the theme was *Beers from the Borders*, and with well written notes the 35 beers had much to recommend them, being from Northumberland, Durham and the Lake District. With no entrance fee and the beers all priced at £2 a pint it was a surprise that it wasn't better attended on the Saturday afternoon session, a very warm and sunny day with tables in the courtyard making it conducive to drinking hoppy beers.

Maybe the festival is a bit difficult to find; perhaps clear directions to the hall should be included in next year's publicity. The only downside was that the brewery that had supplied the beers was unable to get those Scottish brews asked for by the organisers except for one, Williams Harvest Sun from Alloa. Having tried one of the rare *Hesket Newmarket* beers at the **White Lion** festival earlier in the year, I was looking forward to seeing if they had any from this Cumbrian pub brewery. I was amazed to find they had three, the *Great Cockup Porter* (3%), *Helvellyn Gold* (4%) and *Old Carrock Strong Ale* (6%).

I expect some of my regular readers are fed up with me recounting my favourite beers at festivals, but I do so only as a guide to the breweries which many have found a useful marker at other festivals. To this end I would recommend the *Durham* brewery – whose beers

improved this last quarter under Paul's direction, but has yet to have the exciting diversity of beers that Freddy gets at the **Raglan Arms**. It is also good that in the recession, the price of beer at the Raglan has gone down to £2.30 a pint, which for the likes of beers from Cotleigh, O'Hanlon's, Hidden, Stonehenge, Taunton and Moor keeps me happy!

It's good too that those RCH beers, which were surprisingly difficult to find locally though only brewed five miles away, are now easier to find. Not just the preserve of **Off the Rails** and the **Woolpack**, and occasionally the **Dragon**, they are now to be found at the **Criterion**, **Raglan Arms**, and the **Old Inn** at Hutton. However, try as they might, my local pubs will never have the range that the Bristol **Seven Stars** has normally at any one time!

The recent beer festival at the **Royal Oak** in Twerton was highlighted by a new beer from *Art Brew*, *Bongo Friendee* (4.9%), but a special beer *Quercus Julian House*, the *Marble Ginger* and the *Mallinson's Station Best* were all delectable.

The **Weston beer festival** held at the end of July, was in the words of the chief organiser, John Holland, "too successful" as they nearly ran out of beer on the Saturday night. Although I'd had over half the 41 beers before, I was pleased with the programme which brought beers from over 17 counties. Two new local beers were showcased, the *Cheddar Bully Bitter* (3.8%) and the *RCH Puxton Park* (4.5%). Once again, as explained above, the quality expected of *Coastal* brewery from Redruth in Cornwall didn't disappoint me as their *Golden Sands* (5.8%) narrowly beat the *Cairngorm Black Gold* (4.4%) as my beer of the festival. I enjoyed working here on the Friday in the good company of the members of Weston Lions Club.

Isn't the power of the email a wonderful communicator? Recently Luke at the **Cornubia** sent our editor, Steve, an email informing him of the unusual ale coming to that pub. Steve duly emailed his usual Pints West contributors, and I picked up on that and emailed others of my acquaintance who would also like to try the *Brewdog Zeitgeist* on draught. Consequently on the early Friday evening when I entered the usually fairly quiet Cornubia at that time of day, at least nine CAMRA members were imbibing this now classic Scottish brew, normally only available in bottles. Nectar!

Robin E Wild



Skittle alley at Royal Oak, Hardington Moor

I first drank at the Twerton Royal Oak – to you as consistently producing great ales, and in the case of Claverham, their *Magus* (3.8%) dry bitter just beat their strong ruby bitter *Evensong* (5%) as my favourite beer. It was good, too, to see six ciders for sale, including two from *Broad oak* at Clutton.

As mentioned in the last 'Round', I have been visiting Somerset pubs as part of the Somerset CAMRA trail, and to that end a group of us went to the **Royal Oak** beer festival at Hardington Moor. Off the beaten track, **Sonny's**, as it is also known, is a great village pub with a most unusually decorated skittle alley; it has to be seen to be believed. The *Downton Honey Blonde* was delightful on this hot and sunny May Saturday.

Two excellent Somerset pubs also visited were the **Masons Arms** at Lower Odcombe (which brews its own beers) and the **Green Dragon** at Combe St Nicholas that is full of wood carvings made by the current landlord who also carved the fantastic green dragon that hovers menacingly outside the pub. The landlady here was for many years working at the **Coronation Tap** in Clifton.

The Weston-super-Mare pubs I visit regularly continue to have a good range of beers for sale. The **White Hart** continues to major in the unusual beers from around the country, whilst the **Criterion**, opposite the Raglan Arms, has much



The Green Dragon, Combe St Nicholas




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# The Royal Oak returns

Following a period of closure and a pleasing renovation, the John Cabot on the corner of Ashely Down Road and Gloucester Road re-opened in July and reverted to its old name, the Royal Oak. This Enterprise-owned pub is now under the new management of Neil and Olivia Greenwood, who live locally.

They have tasked Bristolian, Scott Castleton with management of the cellar and bar, and the good news on the real ale front is that the pub stocks Butcombe Gold, Sharp's Doom Bar, Bath Gem and Timothy Taylor's Landlord. There is also Thatcher's Heritage cider on handpull. Scott is very keen to maintain the beers in good condition and hopes to vary the range in the future. Additionally, another beer may be added to the range which maybe served on gravity.

The pub has a comfortable two-roomed interior with wooden floorboards and raised area. There is a child-friendly garden at the rear (no dogs allowed) which incorporates its own small terraced vegetable patch. In the winter months there will be a real fire and wood-burning stove. Disabled facilities are also available.

The pub employs two chefs and even makes its own bread on site. Beer features strongly here, too, in the batter and gravy. In the summer months, weather permitting, a barbecue is on offer in the rear garden on



Saturdays and the Sunday roasts are proving to be increasingly popular. A nutritious children's menu is also offered. You can also turn up for breakfast on Saturdays between 10 and 12, and there is a substantial choice offered.

The Royal Oak is a welcome addition to the improving real ale scene locally. Opening hours are 11am to midnight Mondays to Thursdays; 11am to half past midnight Fridays; 10am to half past midnight Saturdays; and 10am to midnight Sundays.

Pete Bridle (photo by Ali Bridle)

# The Good Dog Guide

*Sonic the Ale Hound takes you on a tour of local pubs which let dogs take their well-behaved humans for a good pint of real ale.*

There are a lot of great pubs for a dog to go for a drop of tasty real ale in the Bristol area, but sadly not all of them will allow us to take our humans in with us. So in this first of a possible series of articles I will attempt to outline a few easy pub crawls where the humans are welcome too.

A month or so back I told the humans to take me to the Mendips – I offered to drive but they gave me some nonsense about me not being able to reach the steering wheel, so I had to leave it to them. Anyway I was well up for a few licks of real ale so maybe it was for the better! Our first stop was the **Castle of Comfort** near East Harptree in Somerset. Actually it is a large pub on a crossroads in the back of beyond – the post code is BS40 6DD if you have one of those fancy SatNav things (I am working on one which barks in dog language so I can understand it too!). The main road is the B3134 which passes directly outside. I was allowed to take the humans into the lower bar inside, plus the covered area outside and the large beer garden. They were not allowed into the big dining area though it was possible to eat the very nice and well-portioned food in the other areas. On this occasion though I was only there for the beer and very nice it was too. As I am small and have trouble with the large beer glasses I have to lick my beer off of my man's fingers – both the Otter Ale and the Butcombe Bitter tasted lovely too! After a good run around the beer garden and a chat with a nice lady poodle (thought I had pulled for a moment) I was all for trying the other two beers but the humans wanted to move on. Our next stop was arrived at by turning right out of the pub car park and driving about three or four miles along the B3134 – you soon come to the classic old **Hunters Lodge** just outside the village of Priddy (postcode BA5 3AR) – also about a mile and a bit from the A39 just south of Green Ore. We weren't sure on the policy here for admitting humans and it seemed for a moment that the landlord Roger wasn't either. When the humans asked if we could all come in he scratched his head and said, "Well I suppose it's alright." Poor chap has only been in charge there for about 45 years so maybe he hasn't decided yet? (Seriously, even though we were made very welcome we left with no idea what the policy on dogs is! So best to check). We enjoyed a great few hours here and I got to lick cracking beers from Glastonbury brewery and Cheddar Ales as well as more Butcombe Bitter. The humans seemed to really enjoy their bowls of Chilli but kept telling me that it was "too spicy" for me to try as dogs don't like spicy food (how wrong they are!). A few crumbs of bread did come my way which helped to soak up the beer licks at least. Nice secret beer garden at the rear too. What a great pub. We then drove into the village of Priddy – the man human was speaking a bit oddly by now which seems to happen when he has some beer but the lady was fine as she was drinking coke (can't say I am keen on that I much prefer the beer but it helps her drive nicely apparently). Next stop was the **Queen Victoria**

**Inn** in Pelting Drove Priddy (BA5 3BA), which is owned by Butcombe and serves two or three of their beers plus a guest ale. The humans were almost as welcome as me here – this is a lovely old pub that has three log fires plus an outside drinking area and is popular for its food too. I enjoyed my licks of Butcombe Bitter and Gold, but was starting to feel tired now so told the humans to take me home. What a great night for my first ever pub crawl!

A couple of weeks later I got the itch to go out drinking again and this time I told the humans to take me to **Hawkesbury Upton**, just off the A46 – coming from the M4 junction 18 driving towards Stroud you turn left just after Petty France and just before the turning to Tetbury and Cirencester. This is a lovely old Cotswolds village that is blessed with two very nice pubs, both of which allowed me to take the humans into their public bar areas but not the lounge bars. First stop was the **Beaufort** in the High Street which is a splendid place – I have often heard my man saying that he wished it was a lot nearer Bristol. The pub was extremely busy because the local golf society were having their annual event there, but we managed to squeeze into a corner and were made very welcome by the landlord Mark Steeds, a fellow contributor of Pints West articles. Four excellent beers were on from Bristol Beer Factory, Severn Vale, Wickwar and Otter, and I enjoyed some very high-quality licking indeed. The humans seemed very pleased too – I had managed to get three of them into the pub this time! We dragged ourselves away for the short walk back down the High Street to the **Fox Inn** (so close that both pubs have the same GL9 1AU postcode). We were made welcome in the public bar and pool room here too. Three beers were licked – Bath Ales Gem, Cotswold Spring Old Codger and Ringwood Best. I was ready to go home now and we walked back to the Beaufort to collect the car. This was too much for my man human who dragged us back in there for "one for the road". I think sometimes he wants to lick too much beer as he often seems a bit tired and groggy the morning after. This doesn't happen to me as I am careful how much beer that I lick and know my limits. My humans have insisted that I must avoid licking some strange other drink called "lager" as apparently it is poisonous and not good for you at all! I do not understand why some humans seem to like this horrible drink – I don't want to even try it and I much prefer the lovely different real ales that I have been able to try on these trips. I recommend that all you dogs out there persuade your humans to take you to some of the pubs described. "Paws" for thought and you know it makes sense!

I can feel the itch coming on again so I am off to plan my next crawl. See you in a pub soon.



*"Don't call me half pint"*

Sonic "The Ale Hound" Murray  
(just don't call me half pint)



# Hops and Glory

As part of a nationwide reading tour to promote his latest book “Hops and Glory: One Man’s Search for the Beer that Built the British Empire”, Pete Brown was invited by the Bristol Beer Factory to step aboard their floating pub, the Grain Barge, in July. The book describes his attempt to re-create the 18,000-mile journey taken by the old East Indiamen ships that took India Pale Ale (IPA) from England to India in the 18th and 19th centuries. Pete used to work in advertising, specialising in beer accounts such as Heineken and Stella Artois, until he realised that writing books about beer was even more fun and entailed drinking even more beer. His books treat beer with both the respect and reverence it deserves.

His first book “Man Walks into a Pub: A Sociable History of Beer” takes the reader on a well-lubricated pub-crawl through the amazing story of beer, from the first sacred sip of ancient Egyptian bouza to the last pint of lager on a Friday night. It’s an extraordinary tale of yeast-obsessed monks and teetotal prime ministers; of how pale ale fuelled an Empire and weak bitter won a world war; of exploding breweries, a bear in a yellow nylon jacket and a Canadian bloke who changed the drinking habits of the nation. It’s also the history of the rise of the pub from humble origins through an epic, thousand-year struggle to survive misunderstandings, bad government and misguided commerce. The history of beer in Britain is a social history of the nation itself, full of catastrophe, heroism and an awful lot of hangovers.

Having written about why we drink the beer we do, the way we do, Pete discovered that several countries produce, consume and celebrate beer far more than we do. The Germans claim they make the best beer in the world, the Australians consider its consumption a patriotic duty, the Spanish regard lager as a fashionable new drink and the Japanese have built a skyscraper in the shape of a foaming glass of their favourite brew. Obviously the only way to discover what’s going on was to go on the biggest pub crawl ever. Drinking in more than 300 bars in 13 different countries, his second book “Three Sheets to the Wind: One Man’s Quest for the Meaning of Beer” describes his pursuit of saloon-bar enlightenment. It is not just a book about travel or the fascinating world of beer, but a book about the role of beer in the world and what it tells us about ourselves.

Pete’s latest book “Hops and Glory” is about the greatest journey beer has ever made. This is the journey that gave birth to IPA – a strong and heavily hopped pale ale created in England around the end of the 18th century and exported via the old sea route to India for the colonial market – made at a time when most brewers couldn’t even deliver their beer to the next town in good condition. Weaving first-class travel writing and new historical research with assured comedy, the book provides

a wonderfully entertaining description of a groundbreaking experiment to re-create the finest beer ever brewed.

IPA came into existence because of the need to provide beer for the thirsty British ex-pats and colonial soldiers in India. Before refrigeration or modern brewing techniques, the Indian climate made it impossible to brew locally, so beer had to be imported. Prior to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, this involved a sea journey that took anywhere between three and six months – sailing the length of both the west and east coasts of Africa and traversing the Cape of Good Hope – through rough seas and harsh climates. This journey took the beer from England’s temperate shores into the tropics and across the equator, not once but twice, and it wasn’t exactly chilly in India when it arrived.

When ordinary beer was sent on this journey, it arrived flat, sour and undrinkable. This problem was solved when it was recognised that high levels of alcohol and copious amounts of hops helped preserve beer, and IPA was born. This was brewed to a typical strength of 7% abv and had bitterness levels far in excess of what is commonplace today, other than in the more extreme British and American beers so revered by hop-heads. Not only did this hoppy, alcoholic concoction survive the journey, it also went through an amazing, unexpected conditioning process on board that left it light, bright and sparkling – perfect for the sun-drenched climate of India.

Pete took a cask containing 4.5 gallons of authentic IPA (7% abv and packed full of hops), brewed specially in Burton-on-Trent based on recipes dating back to the 1850s, on a three-month sea journey to India, in the hope that the conditioning process would work the same way as it had all those years ago. It was not possible to reproduce the original sea journey, which no ship had attempted for almost 150 years, but he managed to piece together an approximate re-creation. It comprised journeys by barge, cruise ship, container ship and a century-old tall ship that captured the romance of great sea voyages. “Hops and Glory” tells the story of this epic journey halfway around the world and, most importantly, what his real IPA tasted like at the end when it was sampled in Calcutta.

During the event on the Grain Barge, Pete read some highly amusing extracts from “Hops and Glory” and, after answering questions and signing copies of the book purchased on the night, stayed around for a chat with the audience over a few beers. We were treated by Bristol Beer Factory to a celebratory IPA they had brewed specially for the occasion that was available for one night only from a mini-cask containing nine pints of this experimental brew. Not surprisingly, a good time was had by all. Many thanks to those enterprising folk at the Bristol Beer Factory for hosting such a prestigious event.

*Dave Graham*

## Beer events in the Tobacco Factory

I’ve had the joy of going to two beer-related events at the Tobacco Factory recently. The first, a beer Science Café; the second, a cheese and beer tasting. Between them, these events combine my three enthusiasms of beer, cheese and science!

Chris Kay, head brewer at the Beer Factory (Red, No 7, Exhibition, Sunrise and the award-winning Milk Stout) featured in both of these events. In the Science Café he covered the history and science brewing in under half an hour. As with all Science Cafés, there is then a short break followed by chat and discussion. This one was no exception with Chris answering questions on how he came to be a brewer (he studied microbiology at university), where the Beer Factory gets its hops from (all from Herefordshire and Worcester), and whether beer is vegan (generally it’s not because of the isinglass used to clear the beer) amongst other questions. The lively group also discussed the difference between cask and keg beer, what makes lager lager, how Belgian beers get their unique flavours, what happened to the Smiles yeast strain, and whether brewing is art or science.

This was a great evening which allowed us all to ask questions depending on our interest. Chris was able to provide answers, comment and opinion with enthusiasm and knowledge. This carried on during the beer and cheese tasting evening where more enthusiasm and knowledge were also provided by Jess and Todd from Trethowan’s dairy and Mark the baker who is about to start a commercial bakery in the buildings next to the Beer factory.

A hungry crowd of twenty five people were given the chance to try five different cheeses with five different beers along with an excellent

range of breads. The cheeses: Caerphilly, Single Gloucester, Old Ford, Ragstone and a blue Stilton-like cheese were paired with Beer factory Gold and No 7, Anchor Porter, Meisel’s Weise beer and the cherry Kriek beer. We tried the beer and cheese combinations as recommended by Chris and Todd, but were encouraged to try out as many different combinations as we wanted.

So what worked for me? The sweet smokiness of the porter went well with the mushroomy, lemony Caerphilly. The weisse beer created a rich experience when combined with the Single Gloucester. The soft creaminess of the Old Ford goat cheese went well with the Gold and also, surprisingly, the Kriek which cut through the richness of the cheese. However, when paired with another goat cheese, Ragstone, the Kriek dominated the flavours. The Meisel’s was a much better combination. Finally the stilton-like cheese was consumed. I particularly liked it with the porter, although others liked the Kriek. Why the phrase ‘stilton-like’? Well despite being made in the same manner as Stilton, this cheese is made with unpasteurised milk, while Stilton (due to it’s protected and registered status) is only made with pasteurised milk.

If this has whet your appetite, then do it yourself at home. Talk to the nice cheesemongers in Trethowan’s Dairy shop (the Glass Arcade next to St Nicks market in Bristol) who will help you choose and offer advice on how to get the best flavour from your cheese. Select a range of bottled beers and start experimenting for that perfect beer and cheese combination. Some beer / cheese combinations don’t work, but many do and in surprising ways too. You could even write in to Pints West and let us all know if you find any magical pairings. Go on, you know you want to!

*Helen Featherstone*

# The Eldon House

The Eldon House on Lower Berkeley Place, off Jacobs Wells Road, reopened on Friday 21 August after three months' closure for extension and redecoration. Was it all worth it? Well, yes, if visits on the Friday opening and following Sunday are anything to go by. This has been a popular pub since coming under the ownership of Rab Clarke, formerly of the Bridge Inn, Passage Street. It retains three separate areas including front bar with views to Brandon Hill, and cosy back bar with original windows. The biggest change is to the room to the left of the bar, which has been extended with a half-glass conservatory style roof, a mix of stone paving and wide wooden floorboards and new seating. A coat of cool pale grey/blue and cream paintwork on walls and wood throughout give the whole place a simple, refreshed and airy feel without losing the character of this original side-street local. The extension gives extra space but also incorporates the bay window with stained glass that was the outside wall, opening up the view to the upper bay and making the most of the view of surrounding trees through the glass roof.

On the bar is a new plinth with three handpumps serving Bath Ales Gem and Golden Hare and guest Roosters Hedgehog on our initial visits. Without advertising the re-opening, there had been sufficient trade to get through two casks of Gem by Sunday afternoon. Managers Pauline Child and Alec Mant have been here for a while and Alec hopes to extend the range to a fourth real ale over time. Pauline's mastery of the kitchen continues with food available every day, including an all-day breakfast on Saturdays from 11am, Sunday Roasts (including nut roast) and a traditional menu of baguettes, jackets, burgers, variety of mains and desserts, Mon-Thurs 12.00-2.30, 5-10pm, and all-day 12-10pm Friday and Saturdays. The specials board continues to feature a range of temptations. Free wifi is available (get the code from bar staff) and outside seating has also had a revamp. It's good to see the Eldon open again and with no loss of form!

Lesley Huxley



## Beeses beer festival

BEESSES Riverside Bar & Tea Gardens are hosting their fourth beer festival from Friday 11th to Sunday 13th September and will have around twenty ales and eight ciders. Once again they will be concentrating on local and nearly local breweries. Tickets are £5 a day and £12 for the whole weekend. Each ticket includes a free pint, with purchasers of weekend tickets getting a free pint on each day. The festival also includes a live music programme.

Once again, the Bristol Ferry Boat Company are running two public trips from Bristol city centre on the Saturday and Sunday, departing Welsh Back at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. on each day. Anyone interested in one of those trips can ring them on 0117 927 3416.

See the web site at [www.beeses.co.uk](http://www.beeses.co.uk) for further information.

## News from Arbor Ales

The newest beer from Arbor Ales, Jolly Jack Tar, should be on sale by the time people read this. Brewer Jon Comer describes his latest creation: "It's an 8% IPA brewed with ten of his favourite hops from six different countries. There will be a limited number of bottles (bottle-conditioned) as well as the normal cask version and an oak-aged version. The latter is currently sat in an oak barrel in a dark corner of the brewery."

Jon also says that business is doing really well, with sales over the summer unexpectedly high. "It must have been all that rain in July! We did put a bit more thought into the range this year, though, and launched two more golden beers for the summer months: Sun Kiss at 4% and a new version of the Single Hop, also at 4%. Both have been very well received, with the Sun Kiss quickly becoming our best seller."

Jon's next move will be bottling at some point in the autumn. At this stage, the plan is to get the more popular beers bottled forthem, leaving them to concentrate on bottled-conditioned versions of the others.

SP

### Crossword solution

Solution to the crossword on page 10.

Across: 1. India pale ale, 8. Dog Daze, 9. Beer Plaster, 19. Abbraded, 20. Brewing, 22. Shelf. Down: 1. Iggy Pop, 2. Drifter, 3. Ale seller, 4. Arbor, 5. Eyesore, 6. Late bar, 7. Adam's bitter, 10. Pastewursting, 15. Wide berth, 17. Nirvana, 18. degre, 16. Inspired, 19. Amber, 21. Throat, 23. Barrel, 24. Realite, 25. Red lion, 26. Hair of the dog, 11. Ampule, 12. Rhombus, 13. Super, 14. Law

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**Oyster Stout**  
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# Avon (Brewing Company) calling

The county of Avon was abolished back in 1996. More than a decade later, the name Avon lives on in many of our institutions and businesses. A recent addition to the fold is the Avon Brewing Company (ABC), which is located in the old tram shed on Russell Town Avenue, now the Russell Town Avenue Industrial Centre, adjacent to the City Academy in Redfield and a short walk from Lawrence Hill station. An invitation to a sampling session at the brewery in July was an opportunity not to be missed.

This is a six-barrel plant which started production in the spring of 2008 under the direction of brewer Keith Smith., who initially brewed on a part-time basis but has recently gone full-time after giving up his day-job. The brewery uses organic malt from Warmminster Maltings and organic hops from Charles Faram. They aim to minimise their environmental impact by sourcing their ingredients as locally as possible and recycling as much as possible; with the spent grains being fed to Gloucester Old Spots and the spent hops being composted. Almost all of the ingredients will have travelled less than 100 miles from field to glass if the beer is drunk in the Bristol/Bath area.

The first year of production concentrated on a single beer named, rather appropriately, Gurt Lush, which is a Bristolian phrase for "really nice". This is a 4.5% abv golden ale, with citrus, floral and honey notes to give a fresh, lively taste, which is well balanced between hops and malts and very easy to drink. A second beer called Re-Session, which is also a rather apt name in the present economic climate, has just been introduced. This is a 3.7% abv copper-coloured bitter, with the dark malts giving complexity and hints of chocolate to complement the caramel malt taste, but sufficiently well hopped to balance the malts and give a full flavoured session ale.

ABC beer has proved to be rather elusive to date in local pubs. Even when we planned to have Gurt Lush on at the Bristol Beer Festival in March, we were thwarted by an extended power cut at the brewery which meant that there was none available at that time (hopefully we will have better luck next year). I have recently had Gurt Lush on a couple of occasions at the Old Spot in Dursley, CAMRA's National Pub of the Year in 2007. Keith says that the Sugar Loaf in Easton is a regular outlet, with other outlets in the Bristol/Bath area being more sporadic. They have recently joined

SIBA's Direct Delivery Scheme, which should improve their access to the market, and are looking to add a couple of new beers to the range.

The brewery can be contacted on 0117 955 3353.

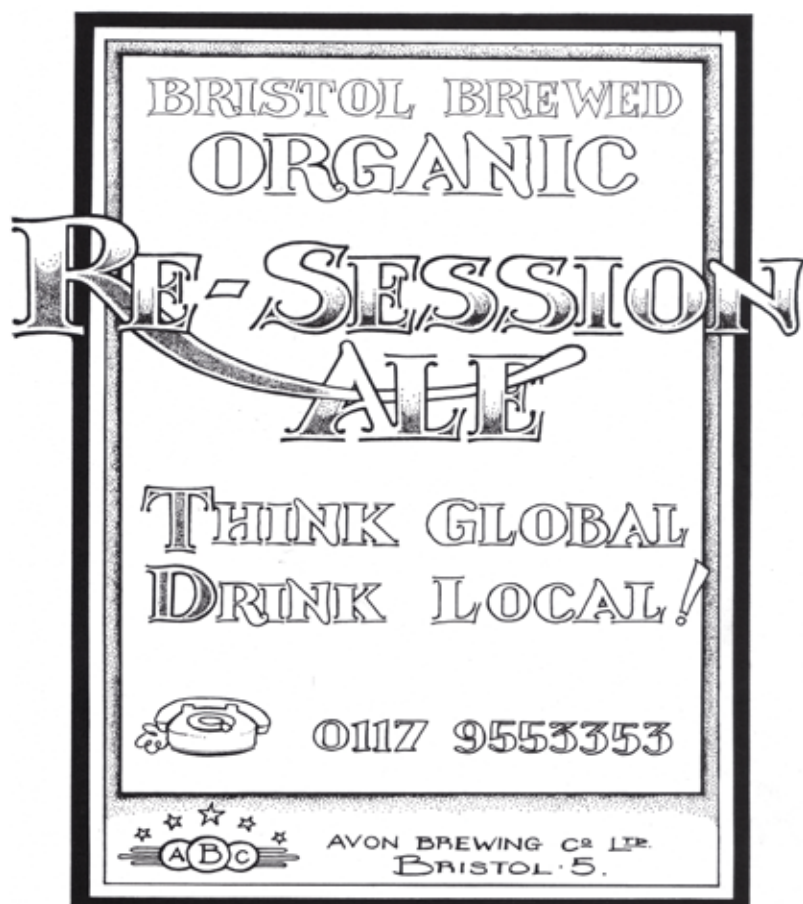
*Dave Graham*

## Pub News

● The **Quinton House** near the Triangle in Clifton has been boarded up for about a year now. However, the good news is that it is about to reopen. Patrick Gomm who used to have the Artichoke near the bus station has bought the freehold from Punch Taverns and has been refurbishing the pub with a view to opening it up again soon, possibly sometime in September. He has initial plans for three real ales and a cider or two. He'll probably end up with two permanent beers and a changing one, and will be influenced in his choice by customer demand. So get in there and start drinking the beers.

● The **Albion** on Spike Island, not far from the SS Great Britain, has reopened as **River City**. The pub had been closed for years and never looked like opening again. However, it has been rescued by Rob and Alison Merchant who used to run the Orchard nearby. They bought the dilapidated pub and have completely transformed the place. It now looks very smart and comfortable. There is a nice selection of food available, including made-to-order sandwiches and tapas dishes, and real ale drinkers are catered for with local offerings from Great Western Brewing (GWB) and Cheddar Ales.

● News has reached us that the **Golden Guinea** in Redcliffe (near the General Hospital) will be reopening in September. The lease has been taken by former manager Steven Wallace who is refurbishing the pub with reclaimed materials. Steven wants to turn the place into a thriving back-street pub. Let's hope that the real ales on offer will also tempt people back in and make the Golden Guinea into another great real ale pub in the area.



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# Branch socials report

Hello to another action packed report on Branch activities over the past three months.

May finished on a high note with the Pub of the Year runners-up presentation at the **Seven Stars** in Bristol. A good turn-out of members was noted, who were all the happier still when the price of all real ales was reduced to £2 for the evening. Steve & Katie have transformed this pub into a great ale house featuring a wide range of tasty real ales from around the country.

June started off with an Explorer trip to various pubs in the Littleton, Thornbury and Oldbury areas, including the **Anchor**, with a good range of beers as ever.

This was followed up by a trip to North Somerset, visiting a grand selection of more out-of-the-way pubs such as the **Railway** in Yatton (very hand for the station), which featured Otter and Butcombe beers served direct from the cask; the **Golden Lion** in Wrington; and the **Plough** in Congresbury where we were able to enjoy a beer in the spacious garden on what was a very warm and sunny evening.

We paid a visit to the **New Inn** at Mayhill early in July to present them with their Pub of the Year winners certificate. Again,



Branch chairman Richard Brooks (right) presents the Pub of the Year certificate to Dave and Alix McKillop at the New Inn

there was a good number of members on hand to toast Dave McKillop and colleagues, and we thank them for continuing to serve great ale in a great pub. Dave kindly provided hot snacks as well as having the four ales on at a special rate for the evening.

Brewery trips have been a bit short on the ground recently, but this was put right at the end of July, when the good folk at

**Otley Brewery** near Pontypridd invited us over for a look around the brewery and to taste some of the products. A full coach of 24 members duly arrived at the allotted time, and spent a most enjoyable couple of hours entertained by Charlie as he took us through the brewing history and processes, and offered us a few anecdotes about working in a small brewery. Three great ales were also sampled and we didn't miss the opportunity to purchase bottles of the various Otley brews too. Otley Brewery do deliver to Bristol and only last weekend I noted a couple of brews on sale in the Seven Stars. We thank Charlie and all the staff at Otley for their hospitality.

But the trip didn't stop there, as we then drove the short distance to the excellent Otley-owned **Bunch of Grapes** for a bite to eat and more Otley beer, before beginning our return journey via Good Beer Guide-listed **Fagins Ale & Chop House** at Glan-y-Llyn which was excellent and served a number of well-kept beers including some from Otley.

Lastly, we popped in at the **Bell** at Caerleon which perhaps we caught on an off day as the beers weren't in as good a nick as they should have been for a GBG-listed pub. Still, the pint of perry I had was most enjoyable.

August saw another of our well-supported trips to outlying pubs, and this time including the **Old Inn** at Clevedon and the **Windmill** near Portishead, which has excellent views over the Severn Estuary. We finished off at the excellent **Poachers** on the main street before a brief visit to the **Black Horse** in Clapton in Gordano.

Our Explorer and Surveyor trips are designed to help members visit good real ale pubs usually in outlying areas where public transport is limited or non-existent, especially in the evenings. We usually use a comfy 24-seater coach from Aztec, and usually visit between four and six pubs in an evening. A great way to discover new pubs, so if you'd like to come along, just check the socials diary elsewhere, visit the website or email me at [badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk) for more details.

And if you've found a hidden gem which is worthy of possible inclusion in a pub feature in Pints West or inclusion in the Good Beer Guide, then please let us know!

Tim Proudman  
Social Secretary

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# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

## Belvoir Castle, Lower Bristol Road, Bath

This pub closed on Thursday 11 June and the "To Let" sign that was at the front of the pub has been taken down. The landlord was known to have been negotiating an acquisition of the lease but was unable to agree terms with the owners, GRS Taverns. It is believed that the pub's interior is being refurbished and work is evidently going on inside. We also believe that the pub will be re-named the Victoria Works.

## Devonshire Arms, Wellsway, Bath

This pub closed briefly in the early summer but has since re-opened.

## Englishcombe Inn, Englishcombe Lane, Bath

A fresh application has been submitted to convert this large roadside pub, which closed towards the end of 2008, into a nursing home. The application had been turned down by Bath & Northeast Somerset Council on technical grounds and it is believed that the new application attempts to address these.

## Filos, London Road, Bath

This once again closed pub is to be refurbished as a café and bar.

## Griffin Inn, Monmouth Street, Bath

An extensive restoration of this pub is underway and looking good.

## Horseshoe, Combe Down, Bath

This pub, on the southern edge of the city, has closed. There is a *To Let* sign attached to the pub.

## Old Farmhouse, Lansdown, Bath

We would like to correct and apologise for our entry for this pub in the last edition of Pints West. The present landlords have no plans to leave and the pub is open all normal hours.

## Pulteney Arms, Daniel Street, Bath

Has been sold to business partners Neville Leaning and Martin Cooper and will soon be refurbished. We believe that one of the aims of the refurbishment will be to build up the food side of the business.

## Rising Sun, Grove Street, Bath

A stunning new garden featuring a boat opened on Friday 15 May.

## Rummer, Newmarket Row, Bath

Has closed and is undergoing a major internal refurbishment. We

believe the intention is to turn the pub into an Italian style restaurant or bistro. Bath Heritage Watchdog has received evidence that work was being carried out that affected the character of this listed building and this has been reported on to the planning enforcement team of Bath & Northeast Somerset Council.

## White Hart, Batheaston

A recent application to convert this former roadside pub, which closed in 2005, into flats has surprisingly been refused.

## Crown, Bathford

It is believed that this pub had closed for a month or two but has since re-opened.

## Dove, Corton

It appears that this pub may have closed for a while and subsequently re-opened.

## Hungerford Arms, Farleigh Hungerford

This pub, which was closed earlier this summer, re-opened on Saturday 25 July.

## Faulkland Inn, Faulkland, near Radstock

The builders are in; something is happening.

## Farmers Arms, Spring Gardens, Frome

This edge of town of town, which closed for a third time in the space of a year recently, re-opened on Saturday 18 July. We gather that the pub is now owned by Four County Inns and has a new landlord. This all sounds good; could be worth a visit.

## Bell, Leigh-on-Mendip

Has recently closed for a second time since last autumn but has once again re-opened. A new landlord has taken over and is making strong efforts to revitalise the pub. Some internal refurbishment is underway and we believe that a more major revamp is being planned.

## Ship, Oldford, near Frome

The freehold of this attractively situated is still on the market. It seems to be up for sale simply as a property rather than as a pub.

## Bombay Nights, formerly the Wych, formerly the Axe & Cleaver, Southwick

This former pub, which after many revamps over the course of twenty years, was eventually converted into an Indian restaurant a few years ago. The business, however, closed completely this summer. (It would be nice to imagine that it might re-open as a pub again.)

## Bell, Standerwick

New landlords Darren and Matthew hosted a first beer festival over Whitsun bank holiday weekend. It was on a small scale but was adventurously, given the time of the year, held out of doors. Beers were from Cottage, Milk Street and RCH. There were also ciders from local producers.

## King's Arms, Stratton-on-the-Fosse


The new landlord is a real ale enthusiast with four beers available and, when recently visited by a local branch member, was offering a discount offered to Camra members.

## Woolpack, Sutton Veny

This pub, which has been closed for several months for a major refurbishment, has recently re-opened. The customer area has been greatly expanded and the pub now does food. The beers are from Ringwood.

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## Chicago Rock Café, Park Road, off Silver Street, Trowbridge

This town centre diners and clubbers venue has closed and is undergoing conversion into a Lloyd's No.1 bar, which we believe will open around late August or early September. Interestingly it will be just round the corner from the only Wetherspoon's pub in the whole of west Wiltshire, the Sir Isaac Pitman.

## King's Arms, Hilperton Marsh, Trowbridge

A spectacular accident, in which a BMW car crashed through the pub garden wall into the kids play area, occurred at this pub in May. Fortunately nobody was hurt.

## Ludlow, Market Place, Westbury

Has been bought by local pub owner and landlord Chris Pitcher. This sounds good; could be worth a visit.

Steve Hunt

# Bath & Borders diary

○ **Tuesday 1st Sept, 8:30pm.** A mini crawl of the western side of Trowbridge. Start at the Dursley Arms on Dursley Road and then on to the Anchor and Hope on the Frome Road.

○ **Thursday 10th Sept, 8:30pm.** A mini crawl of Twerton in Bath. Start at the White Horse in Shophouse Road and then on to the Royal Oak on the Lower Bristol Road. Two fine pubs in one evening.

○ **Tuesday 15th Sept, 8:30pm.** A social at the Somerset Arms in Semmington, near Trowbridge. This pub has recently reopened under new management who seem very keen on serving a wide range of mostly local ales. Looks interesting!

○ **Thursday 24th Sept.** A minibus crawl of the pubs of Wells. We'll be driving straight to this fine city and visiting a number of good pubs.

○ **Tuesday 29th Sept, 8:30pm.** The Branch Meeting, at the Prince of Wales, Dilton Marsh.

○ **Friday 16th and Saturday 17th October.** Bath Beer Festival at the Pavilion, Bath.

## Bath & Borders contacts

Branch socials contact: Denis Rahilly on 01225 791399 or 07711 004501, email [denis.rahilly@talktalk.net](mailto:denis.rahilly@talktalk.net).

Contact for all non-social matters: James Honey on 01373 822794.



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£1.50 discount is available to card carrying CAMRA members at each session but please note that this discount is claimed at the event itself. The full price must be paid when ordering tickets in advance.

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# A mini-guide to Bath's real ale pubs

## to tie in with the Bath beer festival

If you're thinking of coming to the Bath Beer Festival on 16th to 17th October, you'll probably want to take in some of Bath's excellent pubs at the same time. Most of them are only a few minutes walk from the festival in the Pavilion, and several of them serve excellent food all afternoon, so you can enjoy a leisurely meal with real ale before or after visiting the festival. A couple have wide-screen TVs and several have gardens, so here is a quick guide to what's on offer and where, complete with sketch map to guide you in the right direction.

### 1. Assembly, Alfred Street

A ten-minute walk from the Pavilion brings you to the latest pub in the Abbey Ales estate. Named after the nearby Assembly Rooms, with sporting fixtures on TV and food served from noon to 5pm on Saturday and from noon to 2.30 and from 5.30 to 8pm on Friday. If you've not visited before, this friendly two-bar local, more like a classic London pub than anywhere else in Bath, is definitely worth the ten-minute walk up from the pavilion. ([www.theassemblyinn.com](http://www.theassemblyinn.com))



Assembly

### 2. Bell, Walcot Street



Bell garden

Local CAMRA Pub of the Year 2004 with an excellent garden in the old carriage yard at the back, nine real ales generally available, a selection of tasty rolls and a vibe all its own. It's also a great music pub, but for that you'll have to come back on Sunday lunchtime. ([www.walcotstreet.com](http://www.walcotstreet.com))

### 3. Coeur de Lion, Northumberland Place

Still Bath's smallest pub, even though it's recently expanded upstairs. Another excellent Abbey Ales pub with an outdoor seating area, possibly the best place in Bath to watch the world go by of an afternoon. Food served from noon to 9pm in the week, noon to 6pm Saturday and Sunday. ([www.coeur-de-lion.co.uk](http://www.coeur-de-lion.co.uk))



Coeur de Lion



Old Green Tree



Curfew

### 4. Curfew, Cleveland Place West

A Wadsworth's pub in an old wine merchants, with snug, upstairs sports lounge and a patio suntrap at the back. Snacks and meals generally available. Opens at 5pm on Friday, all day from noon on Saturday and Sunday. ([www.thecurfew.co.uk](http://www.thecurfew.co.uk))

### 5. Old Green Tree, Green Street

What is there left to say about the Old Green Tree, with its three small wood-panelled bars (the central one standing room only), National Inventory listing and excellent selection of local real ales? If you haven't visited, it's time to fill the gap in your education. Lunch stops at 2.45 but the bar stays open all day.



Pig & Fiddle

### 6 Pig & Fiddle, Broad Street

A good selection of real ales and reasonably-priced no-nonsense food from 11am to 6.30pm (6pm on Saturday). Major sporting fixtures on wide-screen TV. Large and invariably busy patio area. ([www.thepigandfiddle.co.uk](http://www.thepigandfiddle.co.uk))

### 7 Raven, Queen Street

This used to be Hatchetts before a revamp and renaming won it the accolade of local CAMRA Pub of the Year 2006. A wide and constantly-changing selection of real ales, plus a good range of food (pies and sausages a speciality) lunchtimes and evenings. ([www.theravenofbath.co.uk](http://www.theravenofbath.co.uk))

### 8 Rising Sun, Grove Street

A pleasant walk along the river bank and through a Georgian



*Raven*

tunnel will bring you to the newly-renovated Rising Sun, with the most stunning garden feature in Bath. Food served lunchtimes and evenings in the week, and throughout the day on Saturdays.

## 9. Royal Oak, Pulteney Road

Not to be confused with the other Royal Oak in Twerton (see below), this Royal Oak, open from noon to 11.30 on Fridays and Saturdays, serves food all day till 9pm. Very handy for the beer festival, it has a large garden and shows all major sporting fixtures. (<http://home.btconnect.com/theroyaloakbath>)

## 10. Salamander, John Street

Bristol-based Bath Ales' only pub in central Bath serves the brewery's range of ales plus guests. Food served lunchtimes and evenings. ([www.bathales.com/pubs/salamander.html](http://www.bathales.com/pubs/salamander.html))

## 11. Star, Paragon

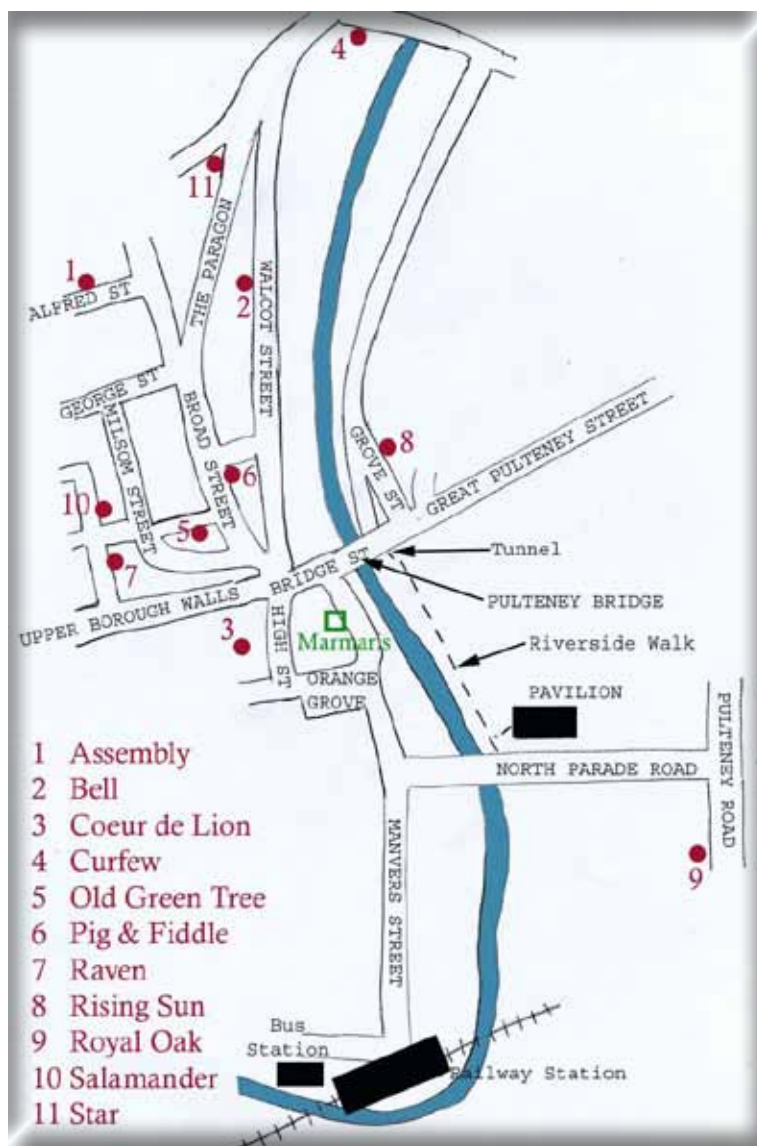
Abbey Ales' first pub in Bath has a National Inventory interior dating from the mid-nineteenth century and is as much part of Bath's heritage as the Royal Crescent and the Roman Baths. If you haven't visited, there's simply no excuse for putting it off any longer. Rolls are generally available, along with Abbey Ales, Bass from the barrel and guest beers. Please note that opening hours in the week are noon to 2.30 and 5.30 to midnight. At weekends, it stays open all afternoon. ([www.star-inn-bath.co.uk](http://www.star-inn-bath.co.uk))

Although visiting that lot should keep you busy, if you want to visit the local pub of the year for the last three years, you'll need to take a bus or a taxi or a 20-minute walk west along the Lower Bristol Road to the **Royal Oak**. No food beyond pork pies, scotch eggs and so on, but there is a lovely garden along with up to 12 real ales – all guests, and generally including some rarities. There's also an impressive range of farmhouse cider. If you're taking a bus, it's the No. 5 from Bay 16 at the bus station, which runs every 12 minutes during the day. Get off at Bath Press and walk a little further along the road. ([www.theroyaloak-bath.co.uk](http://www.theroyaloak-bath.co.uk))

A ten-minute walk past the Royal Oak is another Good Beer Guide-listed pub, the **White Horse** on Shophouse Road, open all day with some interesting guest ales.

Finally, if, after a lunchtime session at the festival, you fancy a restaurant meal but can't find one open, the legendary Turkish restaurant called **Marmaris** on Grand Parade serves food all day. Far more than your average kebab house, and although it has no real ale, it's well worth the sacrifice.

Andrew Swift



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*The Star Inn*



# Three in a row

Bath has some of the best pubs in the country, so to be voted local CAMRA Pub of the Year three years running is an honour indeed. Most people who've visited the Royal Oak on Bath's Lower Bristol Road, however, will agree it's an honour richly deserved.

The Royal Oak was built around 200 years ago and may originally have been a mill. It became a pub around 1839, when Brunel's navvies were building the Great Western Railway through the fields at the back.

By 1869, when Alfred Beard moved from Hungerford to take it over, it was one of the best-appointed pubs in town, with ten hand

pumps, three bars, a club room, a skittle alley and its own brewery. Mr Beard died less than five years later, but his wife, Eliza, kept the pub on. By the time she retired in 1930, she'd entered the record books as the longest-serving landlady in Bath's history.

It eventually became part of the Courage empire, but in 1999 last orders were called for what seemed like the last time. In 2002, it narrowly escaped demolition but, even though the building was saved, nobody imagined it would ever be a pub again. Not until 2005 did word begin to trickle out that it was indeed reopening.

It was John and Becky Whinnerah from Reading who'd taken on the unenviable task of transforming it into a going concern.

"When we arrived," John recalls, "the building was about to become flats. Inside there were no floors or ceiling, no bar, no toilets."

At which stage, most people would have caught the next train back to Reading. The Whinnerah's reaction was somewhat different – "Excellent, we thought, a blank canvas to work with."

Weeks of hard graft lay ahead, but, when the doors reopened on 5th August 2005, the eager crowd that streamed in were greeted by the sight of ten handpumps (in keeping with tradition) on the bar.

Some new traditions were born that evening as well. Unlike most pubs, the Royal Oak has never had regular beers. John and Becky's policy is to serve the widest-possible range of real ales, supporting smaller breweries and introducing Bath's drinkers to new beer styles.

Within weeks, the Wednesday night Irish sessions were attracting top musicians from around the area. Breton music evenings soon followed, along with Saturday night band showcases. A reading group was formed and Becky – an artist herself – staged exhibitions by local artists and photographers.

Outside, the long-neglected garden was transformed into a secluded, tree-shaded, family-friendly area. With several halls of residence nearby, the pub soon became a popular rendezvous for students, many of whom soon acquired a taste for real ale – and the farmhouse ciders and perries that are now a mainstay of the pub.

Then there are the beer festivals. Running a festival in a pub with ten handpumps may seem like gilding the lily, but as Becky says, "We love running beer festivals. It all started with Organic Beer Week in 2005, and has grown to include a Winter Beer Festival in February and the weekend-long Charity Folk Music and Beer Festival in July."

Three years on, John sums up his philosophy succinctly: "We built the pub, with the help of many friends and family, into our



Members of Bath & Borders CAMRA raise their glasses as Chris Powell receives the Pub of the Year award from Denis Rahilly on 2nd June 2009

vision of what a pub should be. We wanted it to be the kind of place we'd feel comfortable drinking away the hours and it seems that other people like it as well."

After being voted local CAMRA Pub of the Year for the third year in a row, that seems something of an understatement.

Not content to rest on their laurels, however, John and Becky have now opened a brewery. This was part of the plan from the start, but, having explored – and dismissed – the possibility of brewing at the Royal Oak, they set about looking for a suitable site.

Eventually, while visiting Becky's parents in Dorset they came upon the perfect spot – an old barn which had been converted to a furniture workshop but now sat empty – on a farm with its own spring.

The name of the brewery – Art Brew – combines John's and Becky's passion for art and brewing as well as underlining their commitment to the brewer's art. The first beers from the five-barrel plant were ready in late September and launch parties were held at the Royal Oak and the Lamb in Axminster. Art Brew beers are now available in a growing number of pubs in the West Country and as far afield as London and Lancashire. There are also plans to sell mini-casks through a variety of local outlets.

The first three beers from Art Brew are: *Art Nouveau*, a golden session beer, using Boadicea hops, and with an ABV of 3.9%; *Art Brut*, a well-rounded bitter with an ABV of 4.4%; and *i beer*, a golden ale with an ABV of 4%, which balances out a strong vanilla flavour with some equally fragrant and punchy hops.

One thing John and Becky won't do at Art Brew is play it safe. Although *Art Brut* will be their flagship bitter, with *i beer* they have started as they mean to go on, experimenting with new flavours and brewing techniques. Vanilla has been used sparingly as a beer flavouring before and then mainly with dark chocolatey brews. John, though, had been itching to add it to a golden beer and, although the result is not likely to appeal to the cautious drinker, there have been rave reviews from the beer festivals and pubs it's been tried out in. There are now plans for a dark winter ale called *Dark Brut* and a spiced dark ale for Christmas called *Born in a Barn*.

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

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



Eliza Beard with her daughter and grandchildren outside the Royal Oak c1900



John and Becky Whinnerah

# Mountains and Mooses

Having a spot of wanderlust I decided to revisit an area of the country I hadn't been too since I was a lad – the beautiful Snowdonia national park in North Wales.

In the days when my family was living in Shrewsbury it had been an easy journey, but from Bristol of course it's not so straightforward, the lack of motorways being an issue. I decided to follow the sat-nav's route, and all was well until the whole of the roads around Leominster were closed due to a large fire.

So running an hour late, I was much pleased to make it to the **Giler Arms** at Rhydlydan, the only Bathams brewery outpost outside the West Midlands/Worcestershire area. But I was not so happy when I discovered that contrary to my information it now closes lunchtimes (note to self – always ring ahead!). So after checking in to a B&B at Betws-y-Coed and enjoying a walk around the picturesque town, I drove back out to the Giler Arms for opening time.

The standard Bathams brews, Bitter and Mild, were both on and in good nick too. I enjoyed a well-priced meal of ginger prawns in the restaurant looking out over the pub's own angling lake, watching the ducks. Accommodation is available here too, and I would be tempted but for the news that the landlady is leaving the trade and the brewery may well sell – sad news indeed.

Returning to Betws-y-Coed I retired to the **Royal Oak**. This rambling, historic ex-coaching inn dominates the main Holyhead Road and is popular with walkers, locals and pretty much everyone really! Food was available, there was a pool table, sport on TV, a large outside area (although attacks by midges were a problem) and on the second night of my visit, live jazz in the bar. Four real ales were on tap, in good condition but all from national or large regional breweries. This was a frustration to me in most of the pubs I visited. In every shop there seemed to be signs advertising local lamb, beef, honey, pretty much any product you could think of, yet many of the pubs seem content to stock bland national brews – very disappointing.

Next morning I set out for Porthmadog and the Rheilffordd Ffestiniog railway. This historic narrow-gauge railway complete with vintage engines and carriages takes you through spectacular countryside for the 13½ miles to the slate-quarrying town of Blaenau Ffestiniog. I was early enough to enjoy a pint in **Spooners Bar**, which is located in the Porthmadog terminus and opens at the civilized time of 10am. Six beers were on, including Glaslyn Ale from the superb local brewery, Purple Moose. Note that as the Welsh language is spoken in the local area, the brewery is also known as Bragdy Mws Piws, and all the beers have Welsh as well as English names. Spooners is the only bar I can recall with a steam engine inside it, prompting the thought, which was there first, the bar or the engine? It was pleasing to note bottled Purple Moose beers were also available on the trains. I completed the full journey to Blaenau Ffestiniog, where I popped into the local hotel, but finding about a dozen people silently and morosely sipping their pints I didn't linger.

When I returned to Porthmadog I headed to the Purple Moose brewery shop, which is handily located only five minutes' walk from the railway terminus (it is possible to park outside the shop). There was a full range of bottled beers available and although these are not RAIB (Real Ale in a Bottle) they are extremely good. I selected a good range and mentioned to the lady serving how much I enjoyed their beers at the previous week's Great Welsh Beer & Cider Festival in Cardiff. I was given the startling news that Purple Moose Snowdonia had actually won the Champion Beer of Wales award at the festival ... I would have to say the judges had excellent taste! For a light beer of 3.6% it is truly outstanding, packed full of juicy citrus hops with a bitter dry finish. I would also add that Purple Moose's Madog's Ale is just as good in its own way, again it's a low-gravity beer at 3.7% with an initial biscu-



The interior of Spooners Bar

ity maltiness which changes in the mouth to a lovely crisp hoppy finish, a superbly balanced beer. And then there's the lovely Dark Side of the Moose, a cracking old ale style beer, lightly hopped and dark, at 4.6% another classic!

Next I headed off to Caernarfon where I was particularly keen to visit the amazing, historic castle. On the way I passed the **Snowdonia Park** at Waunfawr. As this pub and campsite is the home of the Snowdonia brewery and the only place where the beers can be drunk it seemed rude not to stop! Snowdonia Gold and West Highland bitter were both on, so I enjoyed a half of each. The Snowdonia Park is actually a stop on the Welsh Highland railway, the sister line of the Rheilffordd Ffestiniog railway. Work is currently underway to link the two lines together, which will certainly aid the beer traveller – I shall be returning when the line is complete!

After an all too brief visit to the castle I headed back to Betws-y-Coed via Bethesda, as I was keen to visit the **Douglas Arms Hotel**. This Good Beer Guide and CAMRA National Inventory listed pub lies on the London Road and is well worth a visit. The four real ales included Purple Moose Cnicht, a superbly hoppy and bitter seasonal beer named after the highest mountain in Snowdonia, which can apparently be seen from the brewery! I wandered around this perfectly preserved 1930's pub, which includes a games room with a full size snooker table, and chatted to the friendly longstanding landlady.

Next day Harlech Castle was my first port of call, where I was amused by the American visitors who were in despair about the local narrow and winding roads, before I turned south and homewards. But as my journey took me down through Wales I took the opportunity to go to Brecon and visit the **Boar's Head**, brewery tap for Breconshire Brewery. Located in Ship Street adjacent to the picturesque river, four of the brewery's own beers were available; I tried the Welsh Pale Ale and a seasonal beer. Both were in good condition and predominately malty in the brewery's style. The less said about my lunch (chilli) the better! I then went onto Swansea for a night, but that's another story....

I would recommend Snowdonia for a short trip away – spectacular scenery, peaceful villages and towns, and of course plenty of walking. The lack of public transport is a problem, but I have to say that I can't remember enjoying driving so much for years ... great scenery, no traffic lights, roundabouts or queues, and much improved mileage per gallon, all good as long as you're not in a hurry to get anywhere. When I return it will hopefully be with someone to share the driving so I can enjoy more of the fantastic Purple Moose beers, surely, with Otley brewery, one of the best Welsh breweries currently operating.

Phil Cummings



The Snowdonia Park pub

## Pub News

- Tony Fey, who built up the **Old Barn** at Wraxall, has moved on and has now taken over the **Ashcott Inn**, situated on the main A39 that links Bridgwater to Street, Glastonbury and Wells. As he did at the Old Barn, Tony is serving his real ales – and a cider – directly from casks behind the bar.
- Michelle Murray recently celebrated her 22nd year running **Humpers Off Licence** in Soundwell Road, Staple Hill. This is Bristol's only independent specialist real-ale off licence, often appears in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide and is now more popular than ever. Several changing real ales and ciders are featured here. Bring your own containers or buy them here. There is a large range of bottled beers too, including many bottle-conditioned ones.



# Experience the Old Light of Lundy



If you like shopping malls, late night life and copious amounts of San Miguel then don't go to Lundy. One and a half square miles of 400-foot-high granite sticking out of the Bristol Channel, ten miles from Hartland Point, Lundy Island is a real escape. There are no cars, water parks, ice cream vans, take-aways or burger bars. But there is one pub – the **Marisco Tavern**.

We first holidayed on Lundy in 2004, taking a short Easter break with friends. But the birth of our third son the following year meant that a re-visit of Lundy was put on hold for a while, for you have to be able to get about on your own two feet – there are no pavements or roads to assist your travel. So now at four years old we decided we had waited long enough and he would have to be fully mobile like his older brother had been five years before.



Marisco Tavern

"Our house" was next but one to the Marisco Tavern, separated only by the small one-bedroomed house adjoined to ours. The Marisco Tavern opens for breakfast and closes at 11:20pm, in time to clear up before all of the island's electricity goes off at midnight. As an active member of the Bristol Pubs Group, I'm pleased to say that the Marisco Tavern

does not need any input from our sort as it is a total success. If this pub was in your community you would be very satisfied. On the bar are two hand-pulled real ales, a keg lager and keg Thatcher's Gold cider as well as Guinness. There is a real open fire, a dart board, a dining room, afternoon teas and cake (I wager a hit with even the hardest-core real ale drinker!) and a games area. The library boasts log books containing visitors' archaeological, weather and wildlife observations.

The sense of community is immense and after a couple of days

of your week on the island you feel as if you can just buy your beer, turn round and strike up a conversation with anyone about anything – although it's unlikely that Gordon Brown, Victoria Beckham or Eastenders would form any part of your conversation.

The Marisco Tavern takes its name from the de Mariscos, a Norman dynasty that owned and lived on Lundy until 1243 when King Henry III ousted them. Following their departure Henry built a castle to defend the island against future invaders. The castle still stands and contains three holiday lets. The de Mariscos were local to our area. After the Norman invasion of England in 1066 the de Mariscos settled on land between the Rivers Axe and Parrett in Somerset, between the Polden Hills and the Mendips. They took over Lundy in 1100.

In 1982 the Landmark Trust, who lease the island from the National Trust, extended the Marisco Tavern into an adjoining building, thus enlarging it into what it is today. A traditional pub with a nautical feel has been created, and fits just right with the island life. Ships' life belts, bells, trophies and pictures of ship wrecks are poignant reminders of a mariner's life.



Inside the Marisco Tavern

Another significant occurrence in the 1980's was the commencement of brewing on the island. In 1984 John Ogilvie started up the Lundy Company's 'Marisco Tavern Brewery' in the old brewhouse near the Tavern. The brew was a malt-extract ale from water collected from the island's own supply. The water on the island is in short supply and this seriously restricted brewing. I did not discover an answer but my guess is that the nicotine-sepia tint of the water – well more than a tint! – could not have helped the presentation of the beer. The brewery's ale, John O's Puffin Purge, was a real hit with the tourists and visitors. In 1992 John pulled out and brewing started up again in the autumn of 1994 by the chef of the Marisco Tavern. Old Light Bitter was now brewed in a new location, 'the black shed'. Sadly this new venture lasted little more than a year and complications with water supply and continuity of brewers took their toll. Just to illustrate the burden of water, in the (mild) heatwave of 2006 Lundy had to be supplied with water from the Devon mainland via bottles shipped in on the supply ship MS Oldenberg. Anyone who knows anything about brewing will tell you that it takes about a gallon of water to brew a single pint of ale.

Incidentally, the original John Ogilvie brewing equipment was despatched to Country Life Brewery of Bideford and has since found its way to Gargoyle of Dawlish.

So what of the ales available today? They are **Lundy Experience** at 3.9% and **Lundy Old Light Bitter** at 4.2%. But I'll let you into a secret – they are St. Austell's Dartmoor Best Bitter and Tribute respectively. CAMRA has a policy about re-badged beers but let me say this: while in the Marisco Tavern, the amount of people that looked at the pump clips and ordered a pint of the "Lundy" ales was phenomenal. Girls of 18 with their mums and dads, wives in their 50's, trendy lads in their 20's, as well as us 40-something old hands. I have always said that if real ale was marketed as John Smiths or Carlsberg are, then people would flock to it. This is certainly the case on Lundy where Old Light Bitter outsells Carlsberg by four to one! Let's face it, you're on an island, you want a bit of the island life, and there is a beer called Lundy Experience or Lundy Old Light (one of the most prominent landmarks on the island is the old light-house) – you're going to partake in the whole experience and order one over Carlsberg or Guinness. Old Light Bitter outsells Experience by three to one, shifting a nine-gallon cask a day. How many pubs in Bristol can report such sales in favour of real ales? What is

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# Good Beer Guide 2010 - first chance to buy it

We would like to inform you of the official launch of the 2010 CAMRA Good Beer Guide and how you can be amongst the first to buy a copy.

The Good Beer Guide, researched, rewritten and published every year, is CAMRA's flagship publication and one of our main campaigning tools. It is written entirely by unpaid volunteers and all pubs chosen to be in it will have been visited by active members on a number of occasions in the previous year. The 4,500 pubs chosen as serving the best consistently good real ales are then identified and described to the reader. The whole of the UK is covered. Unlike other pub guides all reviews are written by people known to us as being passionate about the subject. You really can rely on its integrity and if travelling anywhere unfamiliar where you might fancy a good pint then you should not be without it!

Our branch area is responsible for reviewing Bristol, most of North Somerset and much of South Gloucestershire. We are allowed currently to include up to 39 pubs in Bristol and South Gloucestershire and 24 in North Somerset. This makes things very difficult as this area is blessed with a large number of pubs and clubs selling a good range of real ales. When we first sought nominations last November for possible inclusion we ended up with a long list of around 130 pubs and clubs for the 63 spaces available. After many visits and discussions we held a meeting in March 2009 to vote and decide which should make it into the book. As usual this was a lively affair and not everybody agreed with the outcomes. We have to finalise our entries in March each year due to editing and publishing deadlines which of course means that when the book comes out it is

more, the ale is superbly kept and is turned over so frequently that it is guaranteed fresh.

On the Tuesday of our holiday, adverse weather conditions meant that the passenger and supply ship, the MS Oldenberg, could not sail to the island from Ilfracombe (not an unusual occurrence). People due to return home that day were not able to do so, but upon visits to the Marisco Tavern that afternoon and evening I observed those stranded people cheerfully supping ale and, it would appear, were somewhat relieved that they did not have to return to their TVs, cars, traffic jams and jobs for another few days! There is absolutely no doubt that the best view from a gents' urinal is that one from the Marisco Tavern. As you stand outdoors facing the five-foot wall, the open view across the Bristol Channel to Devon is quite superb. This outdoor toilet is just exemplary, but I would say that because I've never used it in the rain!

There are no televisions or radios on the island; I did take my i-pod but did not use it because it seemed so inappropriate to disturb the natural atmosphere of the island.

I would like to thank Grant Sherman for his contribution to this article. Grant incidentally, produced a 2009 Good Beer Guide as I introduced myself to him! Among other things, Grant is the Marisco Tavern bar manager. However, I also saw credits to him in various forms during my week on Lundy. Not least as the photographer on the 2006 Lundy puffin survey. Multi-tasking is one of the essential abilities of the staff that work on Lundy.

I am very much looking forward to my next holiday in the Vendee on the French Atlantic coast. I love France, but don't get me wrong, those ice creams and creperies just seem so unnecessary after the Lundy experience.

*Just a few Lundy facts:*

- 23 holiday lets can accommodate a total of 94 people.
- There are 26 multi-tasking staff.
- A camping field can accommodate 40 tents.
- The island is three miles by half a mile.
- The main interests are archaeology, bird watching, wild flowers, and whale and dolphin watching.
- The supply and passenger ship, MS Oldenberg, arrives three times a week.
- There are two real ales available in the Marisco Tavern.
- Lundy is Norse for "Puffin Island".
- Only 10 pairs of puffins now breed.

Mike Jackson

possible that a small number of the pubs may have changed hands. This is sadly unavoidable in the turbulent world that pubs now operate within.

The 2010 edition is being launched nationwide on Thursday September 10<sup>th</sup> 2009. As in previous years we will be holding our own local launch to coincide with this. This year we will be doing it at the Bank in John Street, central Bristol. John Street is a small street that runs between Broad Street and All Saints Lane – it is about one minute's walk from St Augustines Parade and two minutes from Corn Street. The Bank is an excellent small pub that now specialises in offering a good selection of changing real ales and ciders in a very convivial atmosphere. Good food is served lunchtimes. Parking is not easy in this area though. The event will start at 12pm and run through until 7pm.

Not only will this be the first chance to buy the 2010 Good Beer Guide but we have decided to offer a special one-off price for the launch event only as below.

- Normal cover price is £15.99.
- **On Thursday September 10<sup>th</sup> at the Bank only you can buy it for only £11 – and card-carrying CAMRA members will pay only £10. It will be possible to join on the day and obtain the member's rate.**

Obviously I cannot tell you which pubs are in or out this year but I can advise that there are 11 new local entries and to make room 11 others have had to be left out, including several long-standing regular entries. Some of these will feel disappointed but we hope that this will make them redouble their efforts to get back in next year. Those that have made it in can feel rightly proud that they have been voted as amongst the top 63 in what is undeniably one of the strongest areas of the UK for real ale. Well done to them and commiserations to the 17 pubs that were voted in but we were unable to include due to no further slots being available to us.

We look forward to seeing you on the day.

Vince Murray  
Good Beer Guide Co-ordinator  
Bristol and District CAMRA



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## 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](mailto:steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk)

### Hi from New Zealand

Although not a member of CAMRA, I have recently logged in to your web page, after looking at a 1999 newsletter a late departed friend sent to me. I am finding it very interesting and it brings back many memories for me.

I emigrated to the far ends of earth over 40 years ago, but have returned for a visit a few times. I grew up in Filton. It was like going through a Stargate portal to another planet in another universe the first time I left the M4 near Hambrook – such were the changes made locally since I emigrated in 1965.

In my youth, my favourite Filton locals were the George VI, the Bulldog, the Plough, and the pub next door which I think no longer exists. Also a pub called the Anchor I seem to recall, on the corner of Southmead and Gloucester Road. There was a also a pub out at Stoke Gifford, which I visited a few times – opposite the church and green – the Beaufort Arms I seem to recall.

The only local brewery then was Georges & Co, I believe. I drank large quantities of their Bitter Ale, Home Brewed, Bristol Stout, and my favourites Glucose Stout, along with Oakhill Stout from the original Oakhill Brewery in Somerset, which I understand Georges acquired. I have a few of their old labels in my collection of breweriana from all over the world. Quantities of Bass and Worthington were also drunk as well. Whilst a student I worked one summer vacation in Georges Brewery – in conditions which would not be out of place in Dicken's time. I had another vacation job with Schwepes delivering soft

drinks to many pubs around the West Country. At this time I must have visited many of the pubs mentioned in the newsletter, but cannot remember any in particular. In any case, many seemed to have changed names over the years. Except for a pub somewhere in Somerset, up on the Mendips, I think. Again the name escapes me – a curse of old age. But I remember the large fireplace with a huge cauldron of soup slowly bubbling away. Patrons were welcome to have a bowl of soup for free, but had to pay for a bread roll. Does anyone remember this pub at all. No doubt that is a scene well in the distant past.

I believe Fussells at Rode were still brewing in the 1950's but I never sampled their brews. They had a pub on Gloucester Road about 200 hundred yards up from the railway bridge. I believe Ashton Gate and Bristol United breweries had ceased brewing by then.

I spent my early 20's in London and as a student got seduced by the gassy flavourless brews offered by the big breweries such as Red Barrel, Whitbread Tankard, etc. Real ales then were swear words that had the beer barons and their sycophantic marketing/sales staff frothing at the mouth. Thankfully England now has CAMRA to promote real ales. I find it interesting that a number of the larger breweries now seem to offer one or two in their range. If I ever won Lotto in the next couple of years, I would spend six months on a chauffeur-driven tour of all the real ale breweries in the UK, big and small. Chauffeur driven and guided by GPS as I would not want to waste valuable drinking time searching for some of the breweries in out-of-the-way places.

Fortunately I saw the light about 10 years ago, when microbreweries got firmly established in New Zealand, and a far greater range of foreign beers became available here in New Zealand. Apart from an extensive range of Belgian and other continental beers from the smaller traditional breweries, we can purchase a range of English and Scottish real ales, sourced from all over the UK, from the Orkney Islands, Isle of Skye, Wales, Yorkshire, to Cornwall and the south of England. However, so far I have come across any from the Bristol area. Perhaps some enterprising local

microbrewery can rectify the situation. But to compensate, there are a number of prize-winning local microbreweries which offer a range of English- and continental-style real ales as good as most I have sampled from the UK and Europe. You may be able to sample one of them over there in the UK – EPIC Ale. This is an award-winning heavily-hopped American-style IPA. I have just read that Castlemaine XXXX in the UK is being replaced with a watered-down version of the award-winning Stein lager – Steinlager Pure. This is described by local critics as a beer brewed for those who are afraid of real ales with a lot of taste and flavour. Need I say more?

By the way, I have noticed among the letters in Pints West some from a George Ford of Patchway asking for old Thornbury pub photos and labels from closed Bristol breweries. I wondered if it was the same George Ford who was a colleague of mine at Thornbury Grammar school. If it is I would appreciate hearing from him.

Regards, Ron Wells,  
Wainuiomata, Lower Hutt,  
New Zealand. [ronjwells@xtra.co.nz](mailto:ronjwells@xtra.co.nz)

### Name and shame?

Sir,

Although I am not a "local" to the Bristol area (residing instead in the real ale desert that is west Wales!) I do have the good fortune to visit once or twice a year and get to sample some of your excellent pubs.

I read Steve Kavaner's letter in the last Pints West about poor hosts with interest and agree with him that this is one of the reasons to go out for a drink, along with good beer and surroundings.

I think we have all been in the dire ones he refers to (once only!).

I note he mentions the name of the pub and staff at the "good" pub but not the poor one, why not? Name and shame, maybe then things will change?

Nigel Bird,  
Tregaron, Ceredigion.

### Prices

Thanks for informing your readers of decent ales and the pubs that sell them. As I am on a fixed, low income I have found some of the pubs extremely expensive and therefore have to confine my visits to the reasonably priced ones. This also applies to the cider drinkers (the price of Thatchers varies by about £1).

Therefore would you please print the prices, so the less fortunate of ale drinkers will know where to spend their money?

Yours,  
Harry Hawker (by email).

### Flanders

A friend recently passed over his copy of Pints West having picked it up on a West Country jaunt. In it was a super article on Belgium beers, in particular Ghent and Bruges. By coincidence we were off to Belgium three weeks later. We printed the article off from your web site (so useful) and used it whilst in Ghent. We had learned of the Waterhuis Aan De Bierkant in the town centre from Rate Places on the web but the Brouwzaele and Planck were new information. We spent a super evening at both. So thanks guys for the article.

## Rucking Mole joins the pack!

### ALL YEAR ROUND

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**Best Bitter** 4.0%abv  
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**Molennium** 4.5%abv  
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**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

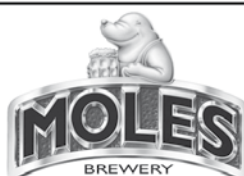
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By the way we headed for Antwerp afterwards where we found a couple of outstanding bars and a home brew all connected by the most intense of tram systems.

Neil H Berry (by email).

## Railway, Sandford

Hi Steve,

You may well have already heard this bit of good news, but just in case – I am delighted to say that the Railway, Sandford, is now owned by Thatcher's (almost next door).

Licensees Paul and Judith are delighted with the new arrangement and will be staying on.

It gets better – alongside the full range of Thatcher's ciders they are completely free of beer tie, and when we visited recently they had four real ales, Butcombe and three from RCH, all in first class condition.

The food remains excellent, and great value.

Best regards,

Bob Hutton (by email).

## Demise of pubs

Dear Sir,

Sorry to read in Pints West 82 (letters page) of the demise of the Forge Inn (*aka the Forgerman's Arms*) on Barrow Road, Barton Hill. I must admit that when I photographed it in 2007 it was looking a bit past its sell-by date and I wondered how long it would last.

A couple more that you may have missed and can now be added to the "RIP list" are, in St Philips, the George in Kingsland Road and the Crown and Anchor in New Kingsley Road. The George was a funny one; when I first photographed it in 1994 it looked as if it had just been repainted and was all set to reopen. However, nothing happened and the place just slowly fell apart until it was in a deplorable condition. Someone finally took pity on it and put it out of its misery around the end of last year.

The Crown was also a bit odd; I could never decide whether it was still trading, although it always looked reasonably tidy and well cared for. I thought that it was being retained by the developers of the flats behind as a watering hole for the inmates, but such was not to be and it was flattened in June 2004.

The whole area seems to be turning into a bit of a beer desert, which is a bit of a change from 60 years ago when the ¾ mile long Midland Road had four pubs. Of the four, the Swan is still standing, although converted to residential, and the Midland Hotel was demolished about 15 years ago so Gardiners could expand their already enormous car park. Of the other two, the Greyhound closed about 1964 and the Apple Tree in the '50s. The latter has been demolished for a gruesome '60s office development, but the Greyhound is still standing: a friend of mine rented it in the late

'60s and apart from the removal of the bars the place hadn't been touched since it closed.

On a different tack, Heather Holden's query re Clifton Wood Wine and Spirit Vaults, these are listed in the 1950 Trades Directory at nos. 10-12 Church Lane, Clifton Wood, proprietor H F Thomas. I took a turn round them to see what's what and the address given belonged to a pair of small houses at the end of a short terrace directly opposite the 'Lion' public house. There was no evidence of their former use as a wine and spirit outlet, and they were not listed in the 1960 Directory.

I can recommend Trades Directories as a source of information on the location and dates of demise of pubs. Bristol Central Library has a pretty comprehensive collection covering the Bristol area and I suspect other libraries will be similar: look under 'Public Houses, Inns and Taverns'. Bristol also has copying facilities, although at 25p a shot you need to be feeling fairly flush to use them!

By the way, just as a matter of passing interest, the 1950 Directory lists 604 public houses, inns and taverns; this had fallen to 425 by 1970. I haven't bothered to look at the figures for the current edition; I become depressed very easily these days!

Keep up the good work,

J. B. Cow,

Clifton, Bristol.

## Castle Inn, Bathwick

Dear Editor of Pints West,

Your summer 2009 edition of Pints West includes an article about the very sad recent closure of the Castle Inn in Bathwick (Bath). In the article, Andrew Swift makes an acerbic comment about how I, as a candidate for Parliament, somehow lacked the necessary influence to prevent its closure.

As Andrew correctly reports, this was a decision taken by the Bath & North East Somerset Council planning committee. There were 12 councillors voting on the committee that night of whom 6 were Conservative. When the main motion (to grant the conversion into flats) was voted on, a full 9 of the 12 councillors voted IN FAVOUR of the motion. That means that at the very least 1 Liberal Democrat (and both Labour councillors - or more Liberal Democrats and fewer or no Labour councillors) was voting in favour of turning The Castle into flats. Andrew could equally have criticised the sitting Liberal Democrat MP for Bath for not putting more influence on his own councillors.

However, the entire argument actually misses the point. Yes, I was disappointed that the Conservative councillors did not take a stand to save the pub, but we live in a country where local matters get decided by locally elected representatives. I would not want to live in a country where the voting behaviour of local councillors (be they Conservative or Liberal Democrat) gets decided by the pressure brought upon them from the local MP (or his main opponent) who has been elected to deal with national, NOT local issues. I supported your campaign on the issue in my leaflet, but for whatever reasons, our councillors decided to vote differently which is their democratic right. If you disagree with their decision, blame them. If you disagree with me on national policy issues, then fair enough, blame me. But please do keep these two things apart.

Yours sincerely,

Fabian Richter,  
Conservative Parliamentary  
candidate for Bath.

Andrew Swift replies:

*I must admit to finding Mr Richter's response puzzling. I appreciate that Mr Richter does not (and will not even should he become MP for Bath) exert any control over local Conservative councillors. It was for this reason that I chose the word 'influence'. Politicians, local or national, will be influenced by a great many factors. Among these will be the views of the people who elected them and the views of other people in their parties. In the case of the Castle, it seems, the Conservative councillors responsible for deciding an issue on which Mr Richter had expressed strongly-held views chose to ignore those views.*

*I fully accept that he was in no way to blame for their actions, any more than they were to blame for choosing to disregard him. What concerns me, along, I suspect, with many others, is the failure to sing from the same hymn sheet. Some may argue that the fate of the Castle is a minor issue, to which the only reply is that to some people it matters a lot. The lack of joined-up policy on this issue may or may not be symptomatic of a wider disunity, but at the very least it should give us pause when Conservative spokesmen talk about saving local pubs.*

*I should also point out that it was Mr Richter who linked himself with the Castle, not me. If Don Foster had posed for a photographer outside the Castle with a CAMRA representative, highlighted his concern over it in his newsletter and six Lib Dem councillors had then voted to turn it into flats, I would have been equally as 'acerbic'. I am not trying to score party political points here; the politics I am concerned about are the politics of keeping pubs open.*

*What most concerns me about Mr Richter's response, however, is his assertion that 'the local MP [is] elected to deal with national, NOT local issues'. It seems that I, along with many others, have been labouring under a delusion, and would find it helpful if he could indicate to whom his prospective constituents should turn if they have a problem with local issues.*

**Andrew Swift**  
**Dave Graham**  
**Helen Featherstone**  
**Kirsten Elliott**  
**Laurie Gibney**  
**Les Cooper**  
**Lesly Huxley**  
**Margaret Evett**  
**Mick Lewis**  
**Mike Jackson**  
**Neil Ravenscroft**  
**Norman Spalding**  
**Pete Bridle**  
**Peter Taberner**  
**Phil Cummings**  
**Rhys Jones**  
**Richard Brooks**  
**Richard Walters**  
**Robin E Wild**  
**Steve Hunt**  
**Steve Matthews**  
**Tim Belsten**  
**Tim Nickolls**  
**Editor: Steve Plumridge**

**Thanks to  
this issue's  
contributors**



# Branch diary

Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA.

- **Tues Sep 8th** – Surveyor trip to Weston-super-Mare and fringes. Coach departs Cornubia 6.45pm. Fare £5.
- **Wed Sep 9th** – Committee meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.
- **Thurs Sep 10th** – BADRAG meeting, the Mall, Clifton, 8pm.
- **Thurs Sep 10th** – Local launch of the 2010 Good Beer Guide at the Bank Tavern, John Street from midday until 7pm. Just visit the CAMRA stand to purchase the latest copy. Special discounted price!
- **Sat Sep 12th** – Trip to Taunton Brewing Company, and then on to Minehead beer festival (free admission). Coach fare TBC, but not expected to exceed £15. Coach departs Cornubia at 10am and is anticipated to return by 8.30pm. Limited places remain.
- **Fri Sep 18th** – BADRAG rare ales event, Portcullis, Clifton, 8pm.
- **Sat Sep 19th** – ‘Taste Training’ event, midday start. Venue and full details TBC.
- **Tues Sep 22nd** – Joint social with Weston-super-Mare sub-branch to celebrate their 10th birthday, at Off the Rails, Weston-super-Mare station from 8pm. Bristol-based members wishing to go are recommended to meet at Bristol Temple Meads station at 7pm for the 7.15pm train to Weston. The usual return fare is £5.50, but ‘Group Save’ is available for groups of 4, offering a good saving. The suggested return train is at 2213 (but there is a later one at 2317).
- **Thurs Sep 24th** – Pubs Group meeting, meet Naval Volunteer, King Street, 7pm.
- **Tues Sep 29th** – Surveyor trip to Frampton Cottrell area. Coach departs 6.45pm from the Cornubia, fare £5.
- **Wed Sep 30th** – Branch meeting, Lansdown in Clifton, 7.45pm for 8pm sharp start.
- **Tues Oct 6th** – Pubs Group social. Meet 7.30pm at Trooper, Nags Head Hill, St. George. Next stop Horse & Jockey. Bus routes 44/45.
- **Wed Oct 7th** – Prescott Brewery trip. Coach departs 6.45pm from Cornubia. Cost £6 plus coach fare.
- **Thurs Oct 8th** – BADRAG Bedminster Rare Ales Trail, starts 7.30pm Tobacco Factory.
- **Tues Oct 13th** – Surveyor trip to West Mendips. Coach departs 6.45pm from Cornubia, fare £5.
- **Wed Oct 14th** – Committee meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.
- **Thurs Oct 22nd** – Surveyor trip to North & East Bristol. Coach departs 6.45pm from Cornubia, fare £5.
- **Fri Oct 23rd** – BADRAG Kingsdown Rare Ales Trail, starts Hill-grove Porter Stores 7.30pm.
- **Sat Oct 24th** – Possible brewery visit. Keep this date free and keep an eye on the website!
- **Wed Oct 28th** – Quarterly branch meeting in Weston-super-Mare at 49 Club. A coach will run from the Cornubia, anticipated departure time 7pm. Final timings and coach fare TBC. The meeting will start at 8pm sharp, and members in WSM are obviously also invited to attend.
- **Sun 1st-Sat 7th** – Pubs Group are planning a number of events during the week, full details to be announced on the website soon.
- **Wed Nov 4th** – Meet & Greet event. Likely to be in the Thornbury area, final details TBC.
- **Wed Nov 11th** – Committee meeting, 8pm. Venue TBC.
- **Thurs Nov 12th** – BADRAG Central Area Rare Ales Trail, starts Bank Tavern 7.30pm.
- **Fri Nov 27th** – BADRAG East Bristol Rare Ales Trail, starts Staple Hill Oak 7.30pm.

Additionally in November, there will be explorer and surveying trips to the East Mendips and Swineford areas, and dates will be advised nearer the time. The date and venue for the **November branch meeting** will be advised on the website and by email to those who request details.

Please note that all coach trips must be pre-booked. Explorer and surveyor trips are scheduled to depart from the Cornubia pub in Temple Street at 6.45pm, and return via the Centre for last buses by 10.50pm, unless otherwise stated. For more details, come to a branch meeting, visit our website [www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk) or email Tim at [badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk). Changes and new events happen from time to time, so please treat the above information in good faith at the time of going to press as changes are bound to occur over the next three months.

## Bath & Borders branch

See page 25 for forthcoming events and contact details of the Bath & Borders branch.



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**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](mailto:steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk)

or post it to:

**Pints West Editor, Steve Plumridge,  
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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Glos:	01452	426201
N. Somerset:	01934	632026
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Inclusion of an advertisement does not imply endorsement by CAMRA.

## Weston diary

- **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.
- **Wednesday 21 October** – Raglan Arms, 8.30 onwards.
- **Wednesday 28 October** – Bristol & District Branch Meeting, 49 Club, Baker Street, 7.45.
- **Wednesday 18 November** – Old Inn, Hutton, 8.00 onwards.
- **Wednesday 16 December** – 11th Annual Seasonal Ales Crawl. Meet at The Raglan 7.30. Depart 8.00. Approx 6 pubs to be visited.

**Non-members welcome at the above events.**

## Weston contact

Tim Nickolls: 01934 644925 (evenings)  
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# CAMRA reaches 100,000th member milestone!

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, was thrilled to announce a landmark moment as membership numbers swelled to over 100,000 members recently. Despite many campaigning successes over its 38-year history, CAMRA is pledging to push middle-age to one side as it steps up its campaigns to save Britain's pubs and get a fair deal for beer drinkers. As the UK heads for a general election next spring, CAMRA is pushing for reform of the beer tie, fair taxes on beer, minimum pricing regulations to stamp out loss-leaders in supermarkets, zero duty rate on low strength beers, planning law reforms to protect pubs and for a central Government policy framework to protect and promote well-run community pubs.

CAMRA was formed in 1971 by Michael Hardman, Jim Makin, Graham Lees and Bill Mellor, when an idea of a campaign arose whilst they were bemoaning the state of British beer and pubs during a holiday in Ireland. Popularity for the then-named Campaign for the Revitalisation of Ale quickly grew, and membership levels rose sharply, with CAMRA boasting over 5,000 members by the end of 1973.

In the early years of the organisation, CAMRA quickly formed three key campaigning tools, which remain integral to this day. The year 1974 saw CAMRA publish the Good Beer Guide for the first time, selling 30,000 copies in the first 7 months of its release. In the same year, the Corn Exchange, Cambridge, played host to the first CAMRA beer festival, with half of the beer supply in the venue selling out in the first day. And lastly, CAMRA's first national celebration of real ale in September 1975, the Covent Garden Beer Festival, which was a predecessor to today's Great British Beer Festival.

On hearing the landmark figure of 100,000 members, co-founder Michael Hardman, said: "We would never have believed in 1971 that one day we would have 100,000 members. We would have hailed it as a roaring success if we had managed to attract 1,000

like-minded souls, but we didn't bank on the huge support that was lying in wait for just such a campaign to come along. The secret of CAMRA's success from its early days right up to now, is the contribution made by these members: an eclectic bunch of young and old, rich and poor, men and women, bosses and workers, fat and thin, northern and southern.

"These are the remarkable and highly knowledgeable people who have made CAMRA Europe's most successful single-issue consumer organisation and fostered the emergence of thousands of new breweries around the world dedicated to providing an alternative to the bland offerings of multi-national companies for whom profit is all and quality an obstacle to its achievement."

In recent years, CAMRA's rising membership figures have been attributed to an increasing number of consumers trying real ale for the first time. In the last year alone, membership numbers have increased by 9.7%, and since the beginning of the twenty-first century, numbers have almost doubled!

In a poll to UK consumers, CAMRA asked the public what they thought the organisation's biggest campaigning success has been over 38 years. Results showed that 41% believed it be the continued existence of real ale in the majority of pubs, with 11% thinking it to be the greater flexibility in pub opening hours.

Keith Spencer, CAMRA National Membership Director, spoke with great pride of the milestone. He said: "It's a real honour to be one of 100,000 devoted real ale fans who devote so much of their free time to campaign for good beer and good pubs. Such a landmark deserves a grand celebration on a local and national level. CAMRA has had a rich campaigning history and we can look back fondly on some of the achievements that have lead up to this milestone. Let's all raise a glass to the 100,000 and hope we can continue to increase our numbers in years to come."

## A Life on the Hop

Memoirs from a Career in Beer, by Roger Protz

It's the longest pub crawl in history. Leading beer writer Roger Protz has been trawling the world for more than 30 years in search of perfect pints and pubs and has now written of his adventures in a book that will appeal to all who enjoy a glass of good beer.

Roger's journey started outside a pub in east London, nursing a ginger beer while his father and uncle enjoyed pints inside. The young Mr Protz observed: "As customers arrived and left, I would glimpse through the briefly open doors the secret, all-male world of the pub. These were utilitarian times. There were few creature comforts. The customers stood and drank. The floor was composed of bare boards and the air was wreathed in cigarette smoke. But I could hear laughter and conversation. It was a world I wanted to join."

Roger was first able to enter "licensed premises" when he worked in the astonishingly boozy world of national newspapers in Fleet Street where so much alcohol was consumed by "scribes" and "inkies" that it was a miracle the papers ever appeared.

In the mid-1970s, Roger turned his beer-drinking hobby into a career when he went to work for the Campaign for Real Ale. Roger recalls the job interview with his ex-Evening Standard colleague and later CAMRA co-founder, Michael Hardman: "I applied for the post of assistant editor of publications with the campaign and went to its head office in St Albans for an interview with Hardman. It was a brief meeting. 'I was on the Standard, you were on the Standard, so you'll do,' he said.

'So you'll do' – three fateful words that launched me on a new career as a full-time beer writer."

Roger's beer-related travels have taken him to the United States, where craft brewers have brought back choice and diversity to a country ravaged by Prohibition. He recalls his first visit to Czechoslovakia in the 1980s, where getting information from the communist authorities was difficult: at one brewery in Prague he was chased away by a guard with a machine gun and a snarling dog. To Germany, and on one of many visits to the world-famous Oktoberfest, Roger was horrified to find himself sitting on Hitler's favourite bench in the Hofbrauhaus beer hall.

Belgium is also high on his radar and he details such amazing styles as sour red beer, lambic beer made by spontaneous fermentation, using wild yeasts in the atmosphere, the struggle to save the great ales brewed by Trappist monks, and the successful campaign to rescue Hoegaarden from the tender mercies of the world's biggest brewer, InBev, whose name means something extremely rude in Brussels slang.

A Life on the Hop is an amusing romp around the beer world and is devoid of beery jargon. It will be enjoyed not only by beer lovers but also by those who enjoy travel writing.

'A Life on the Hop, Memoirs from a Career in Beer' is available from all good retailers, and from the CAMRA website- [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk). The book is priced at £10.99 for CAMRA members and £12.99 for non-members.

