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CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

PINTS WEST

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



2010 Bristol Beer Festival

The thirteenth annual Bristol Beer Festival will take place at the Brunel Passenger Shed, Temple Meads, Bristol on Friday 19th and Saturday 20th March 2010.

The approach of selling tickets for the festival through organised sales sessions has proved very successful and we are using this method again for 2010. There will be two sales sessions of tickets as follows.

Members only on Sunday 7th February – tickets will go on sale at the **Old Fish Market, Baldwin Street, Bristol from 11am until 2pm.**

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

On Sunday 21st February tickets will go on sale at the **Commercial Rooms, Corn Street, Bristol from 11am to 2pm.**

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

Simultaneous ticket sales sessions will take place with the same rules at **Off The Rails at Weston-super-Mare train station on both 7th and 21st February.**

Tickets will not be held back, so once they have sold out they really are all gone. If there are any tickets remaining after these sessions they will be put on general sale at the **Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, Bristol from Tuesday 23rd February. Once again all ticket prices include £5 worth of beer festival tokens, which customers will receive on entry enabling them to go straight to the bar. Please bring the correct cash to the above ticket sales sessions as we will not be able to accept cheques or credit cards. Ticket details and prices are as follows.

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

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

If you wish to join CAMRA, details are on the website, or you can fill in the membership form in this copy of Pints West. Please note that JD Wetherspoon has extended their offer for a further year to supply all new and renewing members £20 worth of Wetherspoon real ale vouchers as part of their CAMRA membership package.

Richard Brooks

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Revival of real ale houses in Bristol

Things appear to be looking up for real ale in Bristol, with a number of real ale houses reopening after periods of closure.



Three Sugar Loaves

the beer range. Instead of just one or two beers, there are now three handpumps offering a changing selection of real ales (such as from Otter, Ringwood, Hop Back and Exmoor). In addition there is a fourth real



Quinton House

On 19th October, opposite a small public park in Park Place, Patrick Gomm, previously from the now-demolished Artichoke near the bus

On 28th September, shortly after the last edition of Pints West, the **Three Sugar Loaves** on Christmas Steps was re-opened. Jason Arnall, previously from Wickwar's White Lion across the road, has taken on this historic Enterprise pub and broadened the beer range. Instead of just one or two beers, there are now three handpumps offering a changing selection of real ales (such as from Otter, Ringwood, Hop Back and Exmoor). In addition there is a fourth real ale in the form of 'flat Bass', something Bristol Bass drinkers may be familiar with. The pub opens all day and food will be available once the kitchens have been refurbished.

More recently, three other real ale pubs have been refurbished and re-opened in central Bristol by new landlords – all as free houses!

station, re-opened the **Quinton House** which had been boarded up for over a year. With four pumps and another intended, it opened with Courage Best, Fuller's London Pride and Sharp's Doom Bar each at £2.60 a pint, plus a Thatcher's traditional cider.

On 2nd November, the **Golden Guinea** in Guinea Lane was re-opened by Stephen Wallace, previously from the Flyer. The lounge has been revived and is available for booking free of charge. There are terraces outside. The bar has four pumps with Sharp's and St Austell's beers plus guest ales to be constantly changing. One had Adlestones premier cider on my visit. Coming soon is food.

The **Three Tuns** in St George's Road, half way between College Green and the Bag O'Nails, was re-opened on 5th November by Mark Farrell (pictured with barmaid Eve), who previously ran the Plume of Feathers in Hotwells. An attractive outdoor (though giving the impression of being indoor) smoking area has been added. Up to five of seven handpumps are currently in use, serving ales from the likes of Arbor Ales, Timothy Taylor, Butcombe, Bristol Beer Factory, Cotswold Spring, RCH and Hop Back, with prices ranging from £2.30 to £2.80. Ciders from polypins are intended for the future. As Mark had in his previous pub, Irish music is intended as well as other live music nights.

Economists often look on levels of advertising as a sign of the economy. Maybe real ale sales and opening of pubs should be considered. "Is this a hint of the feel-good factor?" I ask myself.

Tim Belston (Three Tuns photos by Richard Brooks)



Golden Guinea



Three Tuns smoking area



Mark and Eve at the Three Tuns

CAMRA calling – in Thornbury!

Following a request from local CAMRA members in Thornbury to consider forming a sub-branch in the area, a letter was sent to all members to invite them to an informal social evening at the Anchor pub in the town.

The meeting was held on Wednesday, 4th November and was well attended by local members as well as some from the branch committee and others. Tim Nickolls, a leading light in the Weston-super-Mare sub-branch, also kindly attended. By coincidence, the Weston sub-branch had only recently celebrated being established 10 years ago.

The pub kindly put on a special beer for the occasion (a wonderful IPA from Severn Vale brewery) to complement the other ales on offer.

An enjoyable evening followed and, following some brief discussions, it was clear that there was more than adequate support to form a sub-branch in the area.

A follow-up meeting was agreed to be held on Wednesday, 6th January. This will again be held in the Anchor, Gloucester Road, Thornbury. The pub has agreed to let CAMRA have exclusive use of the back room for the meeting which will start at 7.30pm.

At that meeting, a few details will need to be agreed – for example, the exact postal code areas to be covered by the sub-branch, plus a name and the appointment of officers.

If that sounds as dry as dust, be assured that CAMRA meetings are also friendly and informal occasions!

If you live in the Thornbury area and are interested in supporting the new sub-branch, please do come along on the 6th January if you can. Equally, if you would like to get involved but are not yet a member, the Anchor has a supply of CAMRA application forms – or simply complete the form in this newsletter!

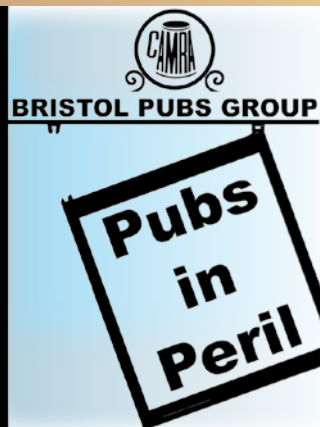
The establishment of a sub-branch in and around Thornbury can only increase our campaigning profile in many ways.

Pete Bridle

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Will someone save these pubs?



Bristol & District CAMRA Pubs Campaigning Group has written to pub operators, including local breweries, pub chains and some of the smaller private operators, to see if they are willing to reopen some of the numerous pubs that are currently boarded up in our area. The pubs include some where

the lease is available and some where there is the opportunity to acquire the freehold.

Currently, there are quite a few boarded up pubs within our patch. They often make a very sorry sight. We believe that, with the right customer offering, there could potentially be tremendous opportunities for someone to acquire one or more of these pubs and turn them into thriving community pubs once again. Even better if they could reopen as genuine free houses.

Many pubs that had been considered unviable in the past by large operators have turned into very successful pubs. Both the current South West Regional Pub of the Year (Old Spot in Dursley) and the national winner (Kelham Island Tavern, Sheffield) are both pubs that had been discarded by national brewers.

It is heartening to see that some pubs that have been closed for a long time such as the Quinton House near the Triangle and the Three Tuns close to the Council House in Bristol recently reopened.

Many pubs that have at one time closed their doors and looked doomed have come back to be very successful businesses serving local communities. Could the following add to the growing list of successes?

Some pubs Bristol CAMRA Pubs Group would like to see reopened:

Phoenix, Wellington Road, Bristol BS2 9DA.

Right next to Cabot Circus, free of tie. Owned by Bristol City Council. Closed since early January. Has been marketed to let by agents James A Baker.

With several pubs closed in the area as a result of Cabot Circus development as well as other local closures such as the Seven Ways and the Sportsman, could this turn into a cracking little free house?

No doubt it will need some capital expenditure on the building. But, being right next to a major regional shopping centre, no tie, and real ale increasing its market share - what a potential opportunity!

Plume of Feathers, Hotwells Road, BS8 4RU

On the market at a reduced price. Believe it could be free of tie (please check) in an area of great real ale pubs. This used to be a very popular pub with regular live music. Could this one be added to the list of great free houses?

Bell, Redcliffe, BS1 6PB

Former Enterprise Inns pub - now sold. In old quarter of the city. Will it reopen as a pub again? Let's hope so!

King Charles, King Square Avenue (off Stokes Croft) BS2 8HU

One of the smallest pubs in Bristol - and one of the friendliest for a while. On the market as a business opportunity - any takers to turn this back into a free house?

Bell, Stapleton, BS16 1BE

A handsome Victorian building with five bedrooms and lots of potential. Beer, bed & breakfast? Freehold for sale. Under-pubbed area.

Printer's Devil, Broad Plain, Bristol BS2 0JP

Historic, Grade 2 listed building close to the Bristol media centre and Temple Meads. Lots of offices in the vicinity - could be a goldmine?

Any takers?...

Pete Bridle, Pubs Campaigning Group chairman



Phoenix



Plume of Feathers



Printers Devil



King Charles

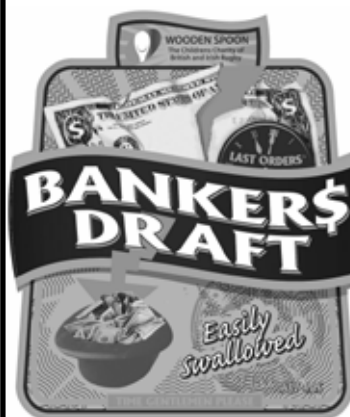


Bell, Stapleton



Bell, Redcliffe

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The demise of another once-great pub

Less than twenty years ago, the Golden Lion in Frampton Cotterell was untouchable in several categories. A free-house, it was a great village local as well as a great destination pub, served top-notch pub food from an imaginative menu, served ales straight from the cask by gravity, and was very well run by a passionate owner. We all know of similar pubs, they are great places to go for a mid-week drink with friends, always a popular choice for a family meal on birthdays and Mother's Day, and a place you can recommend with confidence.

The Golden Lion used to serve Bass and the wonderful Ind Coope Burton Ale on gravity straight from the cask, always in top condition and always available. Sunday lunches were so sought after that I can remember queuing for an hour on a Sunday morning for a table for lunch. There was a skittle alley but I don't recall skittles being played, but I do remember attending a couple of functions in there.

So the Golden Lion was a reliable free-house, one of only two in the village at that time, and everything was rosey. But then it wasn't. In around 1992 this free-house was sold to Marston's. Out went the gravity-fed ales, out went the pub's own menu, and in came Marston's ales on handpump and a Marston's corporate menu full of the same dishes that you could pick up in the next Marston's pub. The owner/landlord had gone and a manager was now looking after your interests. In fairness the rest of the pub and its business stayed the same, but with fewer customers. People switched off the Golden Lion a bit. And with quality pubs nearby, such as the Rising Sun and the Half Moon, the loyalty to the Golden Lion had waned.

I think the Golden Lion at this time was not a bad pub. It suffered because of how good it had been. It continued a reasonable trade for the next five years or so until Marston's sold a number of pubs to Greene King in a national deal (I don't think that would happen today between these two national giants!). Greene King carried on the business and even introduced a guest ale. One November there was even a beer festival weekend where around 14 ales were offered from outside of the usual Greene King portfolio. Changes in managers, though, led to inconsistency. The "guest ale" became something from the GK stable, usually a Ruddles or Morland brand. Ale quality and availability became unreliable, a pool table was introduced and the 'wrong' crowd were be-

ing attracted. Business started booming again, but from a raucous crowd that did nothing to enhance the village of Frampton Cotterell. The ales and the menu dried up but the addition of an Indian restaurant into the redundant skittle alley seemed to work favourably. I dined at the Indian restaurant one evening but a lack of understanding by the waiter as to what ales they had led me to walk into the bar to pick my own. A feeble offering of Ruddles Best Bitter was chosen amid a frenzy of anti-social behaviour. I retreated to the restaurant with my dismal pint and never went in again. Until last



year. The police and South Glos Council limited the Golden Lion's licence to 11 o'clock closing and stopped people from drinking outside after a period of anti-social behaviour, late night brawls and alleged drug dealings. Greene King appointed a new manager who publicly said she was getting rid of the trouble makers and returning the Golden Lion as a proper village community pub. Great, I thought, so in I went to be confronted by a set of handpumps with a pump clip on only one. "Pint of Abbot Ale please," I said. "Haven't got any real ale" snapped the pub-changing new manager. "If you don't come in and drink it then I'm not going to put it on," was her further offering. I walked out and went elsewhere. Three months later the pub had closed and declined into a sorry state. That was in July 2008. In March of this year GK applied for planning permission to demolish the Golden Lion and build seven homes on the site, stating that the pub business was poor, a lack of outdoor-drinking license was making it even more difficult, and the pub needed major investment in order to compete with the other pubs around it. The pubs around it are two free-houses, a recent Bath Ales improved pub and a couple of pubco-owned tenanted houses, and a managed Wadworth house – all doing very well. Greene King say they cannot compete with those? I don't think they can either. But not because of financial reasons.

This tale is so typical of the way pubs and pub businesses are treated and neglected by large operators who really should be better. My message to Greene King is: "Don't demolish the Golden Lion and build houses on the site – sell the pub to someone who knows how to run pubs and watch it flourish." It's as simple as that.

Mike Jackson





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The Orchard Inn . . . CAMRA National Cider Pub of the Year

Following winning CAMRA South West region Cider Pub of the Year – as reported in the last Pints West – the Orchard Inn went on to the national finals of the competition and on 1st October 2009 was named as the CAMRA National Cider Pub of the Year.

After a year of local and regional judging rounds, the Orchard Inn, Bristol, has taken the National award after impressing the judges with its unrivalled commitment to serving quality real cider and perry. Judges also noted the pub's attitude to promoting real cider and perry to the consumer, and the friendliness and knowledgeable nature of the staff.

Situated in the heart of maritime Bristol, the one-bar street-corner local has become a popular destination for the discerning cider and perry drinker. Stuart Marshall, Orchard Inn licensee, only took over the pub a year ago, and with the idea of pushing more traditional products to his customers, went about organising cider events to complement the wide array of choice at the bar. As demand took off for real cider and perry, 'Cyder Sundays', Marshall's one-off cider sessions, became a daily fixture.

Stuart Marshall, Orchard Inn licensee, said: "As I only took over the pub last year, it's great to know I'm doing something right, and that what I'm selling is of interest to people in the local area. I really wasn't aware what I was doing was so special, therefore I am thrilled to have won this award from CAMRA."

Andrea Briers, chair of CAMRA's Cider and Perry Committee, said: "The Orchard Inn is like visiting a mini cider festival, and it's a paradise



Orchard Inn - photo by Richard Brooks

destination for anyone who appreciates real cider and perry. Apart from the quality at the bar, we were also impressed by the knowledgeable staff who appeared determined to find something to suit every drinker's palate. The pub is a worthy winner, and it's very apt that it is called the Orchard!"

Other finalists for the national award were the Arkwright Arms, Sutton cum Duckmanton; the Penrhyn Arms, Penrhynside; and the Stand Up Inn, Lindfield. The Arkwright Arms was praised by the judges for its "wonderful selection of ciders from all over the country, coupled with the friendliness of the staff." The Penrhyn Arms was a "very popular community pub and worthy winner of numerous awards both locally and regionally, with a handy cider menu available for drinkers." And finally the Stand Up Inn was lauded for its "good range of cider and vibrant pub atmosphere."

Briers continued: "What we've seen this year is a really high standard of cider pubs emerging at a time when so many pubs are closing down. It just shows that publicans in the current climate are striving to differentiate themselves from other outlets and making that extra effort to offer something new to the consumer."

A novel beer festival

Would you support a beer festival featuring bespoke local ales on sale at reasonable prices in the knowledge that those involved are giving their services – and the ales – for free, all proceeds going to a worthy charity?

Back last spring Jon Comer, of Arbor Ales, and John Winnerah, of Art Brew, were talking at the SIBA Beer Festival held in Tuckers Maltings, Newton Abbot. An idea for a bespoke local beer festival was hatched out, the original intention being to locate it at the Royal Oak, Oldfield Park, Bath.

The charity aspect came about recently in tragic circumstances.

Jon's brother-in-law, a partner in the business and landlord of the brewery tap, the Old Stillage, Namaya Reynolds, was recently diagnosed with myeloma – a malignant blood disorder. While Namaya is currently very ill, his condition, though incurable, is treatable and ultimately manageable. We all wish Namaya the best of fortune in the future. At the time this news broke Jon happened to meet John Winnerah again at a hop farm in Herefordshire and the festival idea was revived this time with the charity aspect; so Art Brew became the first of many breweries to promise an ale for the festival scheduled for the first weekend in December (4th and 5th) at the Old Stillage, Church Road, Redfield. All proceeds go to Myeloma UK.

At least thirteen breweries will be donating ales, most of them one-off bespoke beers plus one or two Christmas ales and the odd regular offering. The present list is Arbor Ales, Art Brew, Avalon, Bristol Beer Factory, Butcombe, Cotswold Spring, Great Western, Milk Street, Nailsworth, Plain Ales, RCH, Severn Vale and Stroud. All the bespoke ales will be entered into a competition, to be judged at the beginning of the festival. The brewer of the winning ale will be presented with the Brewer's Cup.

Henry Davies

Rucking Mole joins the pack!

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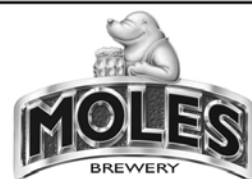
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Christmas Ale from Butcombe

News from Butcombe Brewery

By the time this edition of Pints West is distributed, Butcombe's new seasonal beer, named 'Christmas Steps' with its suitably appropriate 'Santa' pump clip, should be available in their own hostleries and the free trade. Look out for it!



The brewery was invited to brew a special for the recent Wether- spoon's beer festival. This beer, with its local name of 'Old Vic' and of similar style to Christmas Steps, was judged to be a success, with eight hundred nine-gallon casks being distributed nationally.

A very busy and convivial evening was held on October 1st, at Butcombe's Colston Yard, to celebrate the relaunch of their Brunel IPA. This has, until now, been a seasonal beer, relaunched each October, but the good news is that, due to popular demand, Brunel IPA will now join their award-winning Bitter and Gold as an all-year-round beer.

Following on from the appearance in their pubs of 'Patois' from Randall's brewery in Guernsey in October and beers from the Ossett brewery in West Yorkshire in November, Butcombe will continue to focus on a brewery of the month with Fuller's and York breweries featuring in January and February respectively.

Becky and Stuart, who run the Old Crown in Kelston, have been planning a Charity Day for 27th November (just after Pints West was due to go to press) to raise funds for Frenchay's Intensive Care Unit, in memory of one of their staff who died tragically in a road accident earlier this year. Becky, along with other friends intend to do a sponsored walk to the Compass Inn on the Cotswold Way, with an auction and entertainment taking place at the Old Crown in the evening.

Margaret Evett



The first pint of Butcombe Brunel IPA being drawn by John, the manager of Colston Yard, at its relaunch in October

Pub News

- The **New Inn** at Backwell, has been closed for some time and is believed to be re-opening as a restaurant.
- The **Rising Sun** at Backwell (opposite the New Inn) is believed to be threatened with closure.
- The **George Inn** at Backwell had had a bad report from inspectors about cleanliness, but since then new management have taken over and cleaned the pub up.
- The **Sawyers Arms** at Nailsea has an Enterprise Inns "To Let" sign outside. Ron Peters has run the Sawyers, a community local, with his wife Joyce for over twenty-two years, and Joyce has spent forty years in the pub trade. Ron was chairman of Bristol Licensed Victuallers Association for twenty years, was awarded Companion of the British Institute of Innkeepers two years ago and has campaigned on behalf of landlords across the South West. Ron and Joyce have decided it is time to retire and enjoy the company of their twenty grandchildren. Ron did not want to retire, but the lack of help from the pub company during this recession that has seen a reduction in customers has forced his decision. Thank you, Ron and Joyce, for your support for CAMRA over the years.
- The **Campbells Landing**, Clevedon: welcome to local men Ian Williams and Mike Ronayne who took over this pub opposite the pier in September, Mike has twenty years of running pubs in London. Ian and Mike plan to run it as a traditional pub and to re-open the skittle alley. Food and the letting rooms will help to keep the pub going. They don't plan to revive it as a late night live music venue!
- The **Old Barn**, Wraxall: a belated welcome to Debs and Fiona DeWolf who took over the Old Barn from Tony Fey during the year. They have also taken over the adjacent hotel and are working hard to re-open it. Four cask ales are dispensed by gravity behind the bar and one real cider is available.
- The **Battleaxes**, Wraxall: villagers have recently complained at the state of this property that, against all of the odds, remains open as a pub restaurant, although without real ale for a couple of years. Income has apparently been supplemented by car washing, airport parking and prayer meetings.

Laurie Gibney



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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

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01761 452239

WOOLPACK INN

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CROSS KEYS

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PRIDE IN EVERYTHING WE BREW

News from the Bristol Beer Factory

October 2009 saw the return of 'Factoberfest' – a celebration of quality beers from small breweries in the region. On offer this year was a selection of 16 brews including golden ales, traditional malty brews and full bodied Winter ales up to a whopping 9% 'Russian Stoa' from Wessex Brewery.

Bristol Beer Factory added a twist to their familiar brews. Red became 'Red Rum' with a distinctly rum and coffee flavour, No7 dry-hopped in the cask was a popular choice for session ale of the event, and Bristol Stout became 'Rustic Cherry Stout', a flavoursome dark brew enhanced with cherry flavours. Zero Degrees in Bristol provided a German Hefe-weizen style wheat beer, with Butcombe offering up a dry, hoppy, full-bodied ale with 'Brunel IPA'.

The event was well supported, and with a £1 donation from each set of vouchers sold going to support the Windmill Hill City Farm Fund-raising Appeal, £500 was raised on the day from donations, with some brewers giving their beer for free.

Bristol Beer Factory production director, Simon Bartlett, comments: "It proved a really enjoyable and fun beer festival, with lots of musical entertainment alongside some superb beers from our best regional brew-

eries. A big thanks to all who donated to the event, and to the fantastic Beer Factory and Tobacco Factory staff who kept the beer flowing up to the early evening."

Following on from the report in the last issue of Pints West progress is being made on the BBF Visitors' Centre which is due to open before Christmas. In addition to visiting the brewery itself, visitors will be treated to some history about the main Bristol breweries over the past 250 years. The BBF are looking to gather information from the Brewery History Society and also people's local knowledge to then make this info accessible to the public. If you know any interesting historical facts about Bristol Breweries (Georges, Rogers, Smiles, etc.) please give the BBF a call on 0117 902 6317.

After its debut in 2008 'Bristletoe' returns this festive season and will be available on tap from the first week in December – look out for it in pubs including the Barley Mow and the Grain Barge. The team at BBF haven't quite decided on what Christmas flavours they will be using this year – but guaranteed they will be using all 'real' flavours and ingredients. A short straw will be drawn to find out who will be zesting 90 oranges this year!

In the New Year Bristol Beer Factory is hoping to run a competition for local home brewers to enter their best bottled brew. This will be judged by a panel of beer connoisseurs with a view to bringing the winner to the Bristol Beer Factory to brew it on a large scale and release it into pubs. This idea came from the BBF assistant brewer Brett, who is also a very keen 'home brewer' (Brett is actually banned from entering for obvious reasons!). More details will be available in the New Year.

Comments head brewer, Chris Kay: "Home brewing is really gaining popularity and we know from some of our regular visitors to the brewery that there are some very talented brewers out there, brewing small scale but to a very high quality. This also reinforces the CAMRA 'LocAle' initiative – how much more local can you get than brewing in your own kitchen or cellar? It will be fascinating to see what brews people come up with, and I am certainly looking forward to the tastings."

Richard Brooks



The Victoria
Real Ale
Real Food
Real Pub

Chock Lane, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol
www.thevictoriapub.co.uk
0117 9500 441

Pub News

- The **Royal Oak**, Clifton Village's longest-standing Good Beer Guide entry, has gained its reputation for the consistently excellent quality of the real ales it sells. But it's never really been known for a changing range of beers. Well now it does have changing guest ales to complement its core range. Exmoor Ale is one such example that proves popular when it makes an appearance.
- Timothy Taylor Landlord has been on sale at the **Albion** in Clifton Village for £3.60 a pint. Is this a record? The Butcombe Bitter was a mere £3.30. I believe the quality of the beer is good here though (it would have to be). And if you feel so inclined, as a change from crisps you could have an oyster with your pint for £1.60.
- The **Bridge Inn** in Passage Street, Bristol is selling its two house and two guest ales for just £2 a pint to all comers all day Mondays.
- The **Seven Stars** in Thomas Lane, Bristol is selling its ales for £2 a pint at all times to card-carrying CAMRA members.
- The **Surrey Wine Vaults** in Surrey Street, Bristol, between Portland and Brunswick Squares and handy for Cabot Circus, has reopened as the **Bristol Cider House**. You should find a real ale on here but, as the name suggests, the emphasis is definitely on cider.
- The **Vittoria** on Whiteladies Road, near Clifton Down shopping centre, is selling all cask ales (usually six available, with changing guests) for £2.20 a pint on Tuesdays.



Time to 'Graze' in Queen's Square!

The big news from Bath Ales is the acquisition of the former Queen's Square Dining Rooms in Bristol, so that at last Bath Ales have a showcase in the city centre. This new venture, called **Graze**, opened in November. Styled as a café bar, the décor is different from the usual Bath Ales pub look. The doors have been relocated and customers have a choice of a bar area, serving Bath Ales cask beer, or a dining area.

In other pub news, the **Wellington** in Horfield has had its upstairs rooms refurbished and is again taking reservations for B&B. Double en-suite rooms are £69, whilst single rooms are £49 per night. Contact the Wellie direct for bookings.

Meanwhile in Bath, the **Hop Pole** at Upper Bristol Road has been recognised for its fine food by a position in the *Which? Good Food Guide 2010*. The Hop Pole was described as having "excellent ales and seasonal modern European food". Robin Couling, retail operations manager, said: "It is a huge honour for a Bath Ales pub to be included in the guide. We are very proud of our food offering and our chef's put together a great menu that uses local produce, seasonal ingredients and is great value for money".

On the beer front, it's great to see that **Festivity** is back. Look out for this superb 5% rum porter in Bath Ales pubs and in the free trade. Head brewer Gerry has been raving about this year's Festivity, and a first tasting by yours truly confirmed his view! Festivity will be around for longer than last winter, due to high demand!

Visitors to the Wetherspoon's festival may have been lucky enough to sample the new **Hefeweizen Hare**, a refreshing, citrusy wheat beer at 4.7%. It is hoped that this beer will reappear in various guises in the future!

The bottling operation continues to go from strength to strength, and for the second year in a row Sainsbury's beer competition has been won – **Golden Hare** was victorious, whilst in 2008 it had been **Barnstormer**. Competition was intense with 115 entries from 57 brewers. Bath Ales are committed to being innovative in this field, so look out for all sorts of bottled beer treats in the future!

Phil Cummings



Graze

News from Avon Brewing Co.



Further to the article in the last edition of *Pints West*, Avon Brewing Company has recently launched a new beer named "Gurt Port Stout". This is a 4.8% ABV traditional stout, with caramel and chocolate notes from the dark malts used, which is hopped with Fuggles, Rakau and Smaragd.

The finishing touch to the recipe is a bottle of port in each cask. Local outlets which have taken ABC beers recently include the Seven Stars (Redcliffe), the Bag O'Nails (Hotwells), the Novia Scotia (Hotwells) and the Chelsea Inn (Easton). The compact and bijou ABC plant can be seen in the photographs here.

Dave Graham



Bath Ales



Festivity

Seasonal Bitter. 5.0 % abv

**Fantastic Festy
is back!**

**Bland imitations
beware . . .**



Bristol's newest brewery tap

The Old Stillage, Church Road, Redfield is a community local on the main A420 road out of Bristol. The pub has enjoyed mixed fortunes over the years. As the White Lion it was a Courage house until the carve-up in the early 'nineties when it was given its present name by the new owners Innpreneur. Since then it has passed into the Punch Taverns estate.



Listed in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2001 when the regular draught beers were Bass and Ringwood Best, it went downhill when the landlord moved on. After years in the doldrums Punch had the pub on their disposal list when Arbor Ales – looking for a suitable outlet for their ales – managed to acquire a short-term free-of-tie lease on the property. After re-decoration it was opened last March as the Arbor Ales brewery tap.

A range of Arbor's excellent ales are always available on handpump as well as a guest ale from local micros. An early success by landlord Namaya Reynolds was to persuade the largely lager-drinking regular clientele to change to Arbor's Beech Blonde (4.9% ABV), the nearest they had to offer to a lager – but much more tasty! An unintended corollary of this was that a demand arose for lighter ales to be served through 'cool' pumps alongside the usual ones. Jon Comer faced a challenge in countering the unattractive chill haze caused by the super-cooling. This problem was solved, after some trial and error, with two separate additions of an auxiliary fining in addition to the regular finings in the casks – all extra work.

There are regular bands and DJs at the pub including a popular Irish night on the last Thursday of the month. Food will be available shortly, a menu having been devised by Gary Hurst who has taken over running the pub since Namaya's illness [see separate story].

Opening hours are 4pm to 11pm on weekdays, 11am to midnight on Saturday and 2pm to 10.30pm on Sunday.

Henry Davies



Potty about Totty



So the Pot may be black but the colour of the medal at the recent International Beer Challenge was decidedly brighter in hue as Cheddar Ales' Totty Pot porter won a gold medal at the recent awards – the world's largest packaged beer competition.

Porter is a traditional British beer that has a history dating back to 18th-century London and is very dark in colour and typically will demonstrate a flavour of roasted malt combined with hints of dried dark fruit and molasses. It has been suggested that the first porters were a mixture of several of the other beer styles available including brown ales and IPAs to produce a dark and potent brew of around the 6% mark that was famously popular with the workers (porters) in many of the old London markets, such as Billingsgate and Smithfield.

The Cheddar Ales example (4.5%), which was named after a local cave, is crafted utilising the finest Maris Otter, wheat and dark malts to produce a somewhat more contemporary version of this historic ale with notes of coffee and chocolate nestling in with a subtle dry hoppiness.

There is also good news for those of you who, like me, look forward with great anticipation to the seasonal offerings available in the guise of winter beers and special Christmas versions of favourite ales, as Cheddar are to release their Festive Totty, which has been enriched with ruby port which promises to have a slightly sweeter taste with hints of fruit and dark chocolate.

For fans of porter, stout and other lesser found styles of beer be sure to check out CAMRA's "BADRAG", the Bristol and District Rare Ales Group, founded in 2007 with a mission to "campaign for bar and cellar space to be given to rare styles of real ales such as stouts, porters, milds, old ales, barley wines and low-strength bitters."

As for Cheddar Ales, this is a Somerset-based, 20-barrel brewery which has been running since 2006 and is currently producing around 8,000 pints of beer a week. Other Cheddar beers to look out for include Gorge Best, Mild Cheddar, Potholer and Goat's Leap IPA, and can be found in around 300 pubs and outlets in the Somerset area. John Magill of Cheddar Ales was obviously overjoyed with the gold medal award and said: "It's great to be representing Britain internationally with a truly British style of beer," but goes on to say: "Real ale has become caught up in anti-alcohol lobbying and the current taxation level is misguided and is killing the industry. Real ale and pubs have been at the heart of our communities for hundreds of years and are one of our great national products. They are admired around the world, as this award shows, but we need home support if these great British traditions are to survive."

With the days getting shorter and the nights drawing in and a tangible chill permeating the air what better time to go out there and find yourself some gorgeous Totty to warm your heart and quench your thirst?

Ray Hamilton

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

Bucking the trend

By the time you read this, one of our free houses, the **Royal Inn**, Pier Road, Portishead will have just completed a refurbishing programme. Landlord, Jimmy Pelengaris, has overseen the installation of a new and enlarged bar in the front room along with the repainting of all rooms, new carpet and new furniture. The new bar will have room for six real ales at any one time instead of the current four. Jimmy's son, Mike, manages the bar and buys the beer. Mike is keen to gain a reputation for serving a varied range of real ales and when I last visited he had responded to requests from customers to put a mild ale on in the shape of Moles Double MM. The Royal is also a supporter of the LocAle scheme.

As well as the improved interior space, the Royal makes good use of an extensive patio and gardens where you can eat and drink whilst enjoying the view of the Severn Estuary. This view is very much a maritime one taking in the entrances to the Portbury and Avonmouth docks and the boats going in and out of them. Also to be seen are pleasure craft using the local marina and views of the old and new Severn bridges and the Welsh shoreline. Portishead marina lies at the bottom of a set of steps a minute's walk from the pub along with the new fishing village.

Local changes

Mike and Manon Lewis have moved from Brighton to take over as landlords at the **Albion**, Bristol Road, Portishead and are reinstating a guest beer to sit alongside the stable of three Greene King-owned beers. Food is available between 12 and 9pm. There is an interesting seasonal menu with a 'two meals for £9' deal all day Monday to Friday. In addition to the normal menu, organic specials come into play at weekends along with roasts on Sunday. It felt as if Mike and Manon had created a welcoming atmosphere in their short stay so far.



Mike and Manon Lewis at the Albion

Over at the **Plough** on the High Street there has been the welcome development of a changing real ale being made available after a long period of drought from any real ales at all. I visited to check on this and was served a superb pint of a personal favourite, O'Hanlon's Yellowhammer.

Clarence House beer festival

Clarence House Sports and Social Club will be welcoming all to its second beer festival on Friday and Saturday, 26th and 27th February 2010. Both sessions will start at 7pm. There will be live music on the Friday night. The festival will take place in the Club's Gordano Suite which has plenty of seating. Tickets are for sale at £5 each which will include your first pint of beer. Tickets can be obtained at the Club Bar or by sending your cheque, made payable to Clarence House, to Neil Ravenscroft, 27 Denny View, Portishead, BS20 8BT, with a stamped, addressed envelope. Clarence House is handily placed along the High Street and is well served by buses.

Neil Ravenscroft

Wear Pints West



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

Prices are:	T-shirt	£11.50 each
	Polo shirt	£14.50 each
	Sweat shirt	£16.50 each
	Fleece	£19.00 each

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

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

Email enquiries to badrag@camrabristol.org.uk.

Please allow up to 4 weeks for delivery.

(Delivery cannot be guaranteed in time for Christmas.)

PINTS WEST CLOTHING ORDER FORM

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

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

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

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

EMAIL ADDRESS (in case of queries)

BADRAG - Bristol and District Rare Ales Group

Bristol "Top Mild Destination of May 2009"

Martin the "Mildman of Kent" reported on the Cask-UK Yahoo Group that he came to Bristol having heard that there were pub crawls organised in search of mild throughout May, but that he never expected to see so many different milds in one place! He met up with a BADRAG trail in the Bank Tavern, but otherwise did his own trail using BADRAG information.

Martin concluded, "Bristol gets my vote for the top mild destination of May 2009. "Bristol?" I hear you say, "There can't be any mild in Bristol!" Well this is a flavour of what he was able to find:

- **Victoria, Clifton:** **Crouch Vale Blackwater Mild**, 3.7%, "Black mild with good balance and a dryish finish." - **Stroud Organic Redcoat Ruby Mild**, 3.8% - "Grainy malt texture to this sweetish ruby mild."
- **Portcullis, Clifton:** **Brains Dark**, 3.5%, "Low-hopped mild with a slightly smokey taste in this sample."
- **Adam & Eve, Hotwells:** **Cottage Black Prince**, 4.0%, "Ruby/brown colour, low hop rate and some malt and fruit with a dry finish."
- **Bag O'Nails Hotwells:** **Stringers Dark Country Mild**, 3.5%, "End of the cask so perhaps not as good as it could have been but still some roast and malt flavours there."
- **Berkeley (Wetherspoon), Clifton:** **Titanic Velvet Curtain**, 5.0%, "OK, not a mild, but the next best thing, one of the best beers left over from the festival."
- **Hillgrove, Kingsdown:** **Severn Vale Monumentale**, 4.5%, "Rather dry and malty strong ruby mild."
- **White Lion, City Centre:** **Wickwar Penny Black**, 3.9%, "A well-balanced dark drown mild with a slightly bitter finish."
- **The Bank, City Centre:** **Moor Beer Milly's**, 4.0%, "Very malty, low hop rate but a very dry finish to this."
- **Commercial Rooms (Wetherspoon), City Centre:** **Moorhouses Black Cat**, 3.4%, "Excellent very dark mild with liquorice notes and lots of malt." - **B&T Black Dragon**, 4.3%, "Strong black mild with good balance of berry fruit and malt flavours."
- **Seven Stars, Redcliffe:** **Dark Star Mild for May**, 3.6%, "Fairly hoppy mild but balanced by good maltiness."

Rare Ales "Autumn" Season

Our autumn season kicked off on Thursday 10th September with a social gathering at the **Mall** in Clifton where a small group sampled the **M&B Mild**, 3.2%, at £2.65 a pint. This was brewed at Highgate Brewery in Walsall, which went into administration later in the month, but has apparently been "rescued"! Later the group, led by Phil Luxton, moved on to the **Lansdown**, where they had **Severn Vale Session Ale**, **Box Steam COG**, and **Bath Ales Barnstormer**. Next it was a walk down to the **White Lion** on the Centre for a Wickwar Station Porter.

The main event of the season took place at the **Portcullis** in Clifton on Friday 18th September, showcasing a great range of "rare ales", continuing over the weekend until they ran out. The event was declared a great success by the many BADRAG supporters and by licensees Ned and Natz, who also kindly provided platters of complimentary food.

Six of their seven real ale handpumps were devoted to "rare ale styles", including **Rudgate Ruby Mild**, 4.4% (CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain 2009); **Arbor Ales Four Minute Mild**, 2.7%, a custom brew at only £1.50 a pint, the duty being born by the Portcullis and Arbor Ales Brewery – and a very tasty mild it was; **Burton Bridge Porter**, 4.5%; **Cotleigh Nutcracker Mild**, 3.4%; **Arbor Jolly Jack Tar**, 8.0%, a serious full-strength IPA with eight or nine different hops in it; **Saltaire Rye Smile**, 3.8%, an interesting and enjoyable alternative to an old ale that had been planned but was impossible to source that early in the autumn; and the lovely **Severn Vale Seven Sins Stout**, 5.2%, SIBA Gold winner in 2007.

On Thursday 8th October Colin Postlethwaite led a well-supported Bedminster Rare Ales Trail starting in the **Tobacco Factory**, enjoying **Bristol Beer Factory Bristol Stout**, a 4% oatmeal stout that is a regular on the bar, then walking to the **Hen & Chicken** where **Arbor Ales Oyster Stout**, 4.6%, was enjoyed, and then to the **Robert Fitzharding** where we enjoyed **Orkney Dark Island**, 4.6%, **Rudgate Ruby Mild**, 4.4%, and **Theakston's Old Peculier**, 5.6%, a very popular here. **Cairngorm Black Gold**, 4.4%, had been on but ran out before we arrived.

And on Friday 23rd October Dave Jane led a Kingsdown Rare Ales

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 stouts, porters, old ales, strong milds, barley wines, milds, milds, low-alcohol session ales, wheat beers, traditional strength IPAs and real algers.

BADRAG would encourage readers, including licensees, to enjoy rare ales and join the growing number of those who support rare ale styles, making Bristol & District a mecca for such ales.

Trail starting at the **Hillgrove Porter Stores** where **Arbor Ales Oyster Stout**, 4.6%, and **Old Knobbly**, 4.5%, went down very well, delaying departure to the **Green Man** where again **Arbor Ales Oyster Stout** was enjoyed as well as **Level Headed**, 4.7%, traditional old English ale made with chocolate malt. It has a fantastic dark ruby colour making it rich and full of flavour (for more information see www.thenorthcurrybrewery.co.uk). And finally on to the **Highbury Vaults**, a Youngs pub, where Bradd Francis has been licensee for many years but was unable to dispense BADRAG style ales until recently. Bradd said, "Dark ales are now flying out of the casks!" (other licensees and brewers please note). **Bristol Beer Factory Exhibition**, 5.2%, and **Severn Vale Seven Sins**, 5.2%, were sailing out of the casks down the throats of customers that evening. (*So do beers fly or do they sail? Ed.*)

Other BADRAG social gatherings

On the 11th June BADRAG gathered at the **Cornubia** where landlord Luke kindly allowed us to use a meeting room to discuss our recent mild promotion and to consider the 2010 promotion and a possible 'passport scheme'. At the **Grain Barge** again we had use of a private room on 9th July. Ed Lobbett presented some graphical layouts for the passport scheme. We gathered in the bar of the **Old Stillage** in Redfield on 13th August where a minimal business discussion took place before enjoying a good selection of Arbor Ales offerings at this, their "brewery tap". Brewer Jon Comer asked us to test his new **Jolly Jack Tar**, 8.0%, a serious full-strength IPA with eight or nine different hops in it. Needless to say it passed the test!

Future social gatherings include:

- Thursday 14th January from 8pm, the **Annexe**, Seymour Road, Bishopston, BS7 9EQ (www.tha-barn.co.uk) - two rare ales will be available.
- Thursday 11th February from 8pm, the **Three Tuns**, 78 St George's Road, Hotwells, BS1 5UR.
- Thursday 11th March from 8pm, the **Portcullis** in Clifton (BS8 4LE) - one of their famous rare ales evenings, continuing through the weekend.
- Thursday 8th April from 8pm, **RAFA Club**, 38 Eastfield, Westbury-on-Trym (BS9 4BE).

For more information see www.camrabristol.org.uk and www.badrag.co.uk.

And finally ...

BADRAG was modelled on the National CAMRA committee "LADS", the Light and Dark Supporters Group. Whereas in the last three years BADRAG has been growing in support, regrettably getting volunteers to support the National LADS committee has not been so easy and that group has folded. In its place Ruth Tyrrell, who was the mild ale co-ordinator on LADS, has now become CAMRA's "National Beer Styles Co-ordinator" reporting to the Promotions and Marketing Committee, and is currently seeking regional beer styles co-ordinators to support her.

Laurie Gibney

WARNING

From the Management of the
HOPE & ANCHOR
Exceptional Public House

SPILL BEER
DON'T

A tale of two floaters

Having visited and enjoyed the Great British Beer Festival in London for some eight years in succession, I decided that this year I would offer to volunteer there instead. Partly I wanted to 'put something back' into the festival and partly to satisfy my curiosity about what really went on behind the public face of the festival.

Fortunately my good friend Richard Lobb felt the same and we agreed to go up together for three days. Both being on a tight budget we opted for the coach which very conveniently drops you very close to Earls Court. On arrival on Tuesday morning we were directed to the staff area on the floor above the festival where we underwent the enrolment process. Having picked up our staff T-shirts we joined the accommodation queue to find out where we were being billeted. I was destined for Kings College Halls somewhere in South London while Richard was at Imperial College Halls near Kings Cross. The next queue was to get a job. We were offered about five alternatives including stewarding, glasses, games and front of house – bar work would have been our preference but it had already been allocated. Finally we purchased our discounted drink tokens for use at the festival bars at the very reasonable rate of £1.20 a pint. Subsidised food was available in the staff area or most food stalls offered a staff discount.

We both chose to work on glasses and were directed to report downstairs at 11.30. Our badges identified us as 'floaters' who had yet to find their personal niche amongst the various festival jobs. On our way down we observed 'the great and the good' of beer tasters sampling the Champion Beers of Britain to be announced later that day. We also of course checked out the free staff bar – the Volunteers Arms which was already open.

On arrival at the glasses stand we were given a quick briefing and allocated our modest 30-minute meal breaks – it was going to be a long day! Although it was very busy for most of the time there were lulls when you could wander off for a bit and there was always time to go out and bring a beer back. In the evening I moved to the back-room glass washing line, where I met Ross from Canada who spends a holiday every year at the GBBF running the operation – now there's dedication! Glasses proved to be very routine without much opportunity for a chat as drinkers rushed away to get their first drink. I was not sold on the idea that this was my place.

Escaping upstairs for our early evening break we were delighted to find that the Volunteers Arms had 'morphed' into what we dubbed 'the fridge of heaven'. Basically a cask of each of the Champion Beer of Britain contenders had been racked for us in a huge container-sized walk-through fridge. It was a truly heavenly offering and made us feel very appreciated.

About half an hour after the bars shut we all made our way out to the trucking bay to find a line of 20 or so coaches all destined for different halls. At the appointed time they all rolled out together in an impressive piece of visual theatre.

The next morning we each found our own way back to Earls Court and returned to the job desk. This time I chose games and Richard front of house. I was allocated to the 'Every ticket wins a prize' tombola stall. This was a much more relaxed operation – we were generously staffed for most of the day and there was ample opportunity to explore the festival and indulge in working my way thorough all the dry perries – a long held desire finally fulfilled. It was also a lot more sociable with plenty of opportunity for a chat with customers. I definitely felt that this was a job that I'd do again. Richard had the harder job at 'front of house' with less time for breaks but enjoyed being a friendly greeter.

The sense of community and camaraderie amongst the staff was very strong. We made many friends who we hope to see again. One of the particular highlights of each day was the rousing after-closing speech given each night in the Volunteers Arms by Goliath, the festival organiser. It didn't take him long to have the crowd in hysterics as we celebrated setting new records.

Our two-day stint had come to an end and we hadn't really missed having a session off to drink. We're both determined to be back next year for three days and hope to persuade a few of our local CAMRA friends to join us. We hope that this article may tempt a few other members to give it a try.

Alan Sibley



"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 coçktil, "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

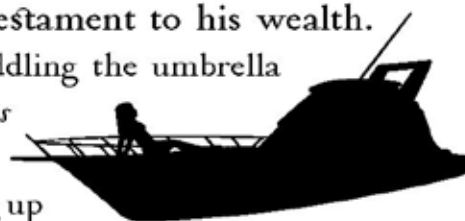
of my very own special rain-spattered corner of Yorkshire. The lady

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.



PECULIERLY
FINE COMPANY

Watering Holes in the Desert

brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

Weston Whispers

In August, the local CAMRA branch had a pleasant evening in Yatton. As usual when we visit Yatton, we started at the **Railway**. However, unlike every other visit, we really enjoyed it and could happily have stayed longer! New people have been running it for some months and it has improved enormously. Good quality beer, with Otter Bitter and Butcombe Bitter served straight from the cask. £2.60 a pint which is, sadly, quite reasonable for rural England these days.

We embarked on the 20-minute walk to the other end of the village for the **Prince Of Orange**. This pub normally has a good choice of beers, with some less-seen guest beers. Disappointingly, the only beers on were Butcombe Bitter and Gold – now very commonly available in the area. Most of us had the latter which was £2.90 a pint and in rather limp condition. Walking back in the direction of the station, we walked past the **Butchers Arms**. It was closed at the time but someone carrying out works told us that it was about to re-open. We ended at the **Market**, close to the station and the Railway pub. Once again the beers were Otter Bitter and Butcombe Bitter. Both were in good condition, but we had to wonder why two pubs about 100 yards apart should offer exactly the same beers. If the Butchers offers Butcombe Bitter (as it did pre-closure) all four pubs in the village will be offering it. What on earth is the point of that? Don't these people talk to each other? How about offering something different to attract people?

Also in August we embarked on our annual(-ish) Summer Saunter. This year the walk was being based around the **Tom Cobley Tavern** in Spreyton, Devon. This pub was CAMRA's National Pub of the Year in 2006 and, considering its attractions include over 20 real ales, we considered it prudent to stop overnight in the pub's very comfortable accommodation. We arrived at the Tom Cobley at around 11 o'clock on Saturday morning, left our cars and headed for the Good Beer Guide-listed **Railway Inn** at North Tawton, approximately three miles' walk from Spreyton. You will not be shocked to hear that this inn is situated next to the site of the North Tawton Railway Station which closed in 1971. The bar décor includes lots of photos of the old station and other fascinating railway memorabilia (including photos of an ex-stationmaster receiving awards for the immaculate condition in which he proudly kept *his* station) and it was hard not to feel a bit sad for the demise of so much of the railway network.

A great family runs the Railway and we had a pleasant couple of hours sitting in the sunshine enjoying good value lunches and superb quality Blackawton 44 Special and Teignworthy Reel Ale. Despite the pub's rather remote location, about one mile to the south of the town of North Tawton, the landlord told us that he had shifted two entire casks of Reel Ale the previous evening. This is a pub well worth visiting if you are ever in the area. Before we left someone who must have overheard our conversations in the bar approached us to advise us that there was a beer festival at the Globe Inn, Chagford, over the weekend – a tip we were to take up.

We enjoyed a different route back to the Tom Cobley. After a couple of hours rest, we reconvened in the bar and began working our way through the huge list of beers – all from South West breweries. My personal favourites were Wipeout and Lighthouse from the Forge brewery, which commenced brewing in 2008 in Hartland, Devon. Keltek Revenge and Isle Of Purbeck IPA were also particularly good. We had an excellent meal – the menu at the Cobley is very varied and good value.

On the Sunday morning we felt that we should make a bit more of a gesture towards the "sauntering" part of the weekend. We drove to the Fingle Bridge and walked around for a while before retiring to the **Fingle Bridge Inn**. Sitting outside looking over the river must be one of the most attractive spots in the country to imbibe. However, somewhat surprisingly, the entire CAMRA collective all went for coffee, declining the appeal of the St Austell IPA, Proper Job and more Reel Ale. It still being only 11 o'clock may have had something to do with this.

We then went to the nearby **Drewe Arms** in Drewteignton. This pub was legendary for many years due to having one of the nation's oldest landladies – Mabel Mudge – who ran the pub until shortly before she died, aged a mighty 99. This old, fascinating pub is another one well worth seeking out. There are four beers from the cask. "Druid Ale" (possibly brewed by Teignworthy), Otter Ale, Hop Back Summer Lightning and St Austell Tribute. Being ready for beer again, several were tried and all were in good condition. There were also local ciders. We

finished our trip at the afore-mentioned **Globe Inn** in Chagford. We had a pleasant hour or so sitting in the garden, with some relaxing Sunday lunchtime jazz drifting out from a duo playing in the main bar. The beer festival was not great in size – eight beers racked in one of the bars – but they were all local and the landlord informed me that the event was the first such venture and it had been very well supported. I got a call from the pub a few days later informing me that I had won a prize in the raffle. I decided not to make the 150-mile round-trip to collect my pot of strawberry and champagne jam and box of tea-bags.

The usual round of "under new management" signs have been springing up around town. The **Nut Tree** in Worle, the **Milton House** on Milton Road and the **Borough Arms** on Locking Road are the latest local pubs with new people trying to make a go of things. Mike and Sue at the Borough Arms seem upbeat. They were previously at the Coopers Arms in Highbridge and have enjoyed a good first few weeks. This has been partly buoyed by the live music nights – happily the Borough will continue as one of Weston's best music venues. On one recent night, hosting ska band the Communicators, four casks of ale were consumed (along with three of Fosters I suppose I should mention). There are now normally three or four real ales available – a considerable increase on the previous regime, which Mike reports has gone down well with customers. Sharp's Doom Bar, Shepherd Neame Spitfire and Greene King Abbot Ale were on when I recently visited.

The signs are bleaker elsewhere. The **Whistling Duck** in Banwell has appeared to be less than thriving for several years and it recently closed, quickly re-opening as Seasons Restaurant & Lounge Bar. The nearby **Bell** was closed at the same time but, happily, re-opened fairly quickly. The **Live and Let Live** in Blagdon has had steel shutters across the windows and a "for sale" sign outside. Just down the road the **Adelaide** also has a "freehold for sale" sign on display. I had always wondered how a village the size of Blagdon managed to keep four pubs going (there is also the **Seymour Arms** and Good Beer Guide-listed **New Inn**) – I guess the answer now is that it can't.

I wish our new owners and managers well. It can't be easy when the Government and the industry sometimes seem hell-bent on killing off the nation's estate of public houses. Add to that the problems of supermarkets selling beer cheaper than soft drinks (Sainsburys in Worle was selling bottles of Stella for 50p on a recent visit), the "attractions" of 157 different TV channels keeping people glued to their armchairs, with their idea of socializing being texting their friends during the adverts and the future looks bleak indeed. I recently passed a village pub with a sign outside saying "X Factor shown here" – a desperate, but understandable, gimmick to try and prise people out of their houses on a Saturday evening.

All is not doom and gloom. Nationally, real ale sales are up. Locally, in September the local CAMRA branch had the pleasure of presenting Colin Hicks at **Off The Rails** with an award for successfully getting into the Good Beer Guide for 10 years in a row. There are other pubs still managing to attract people either for the quality of the beer, the food, the comfort, the entertainment or the company. Some, such as my local, the **Windsor Castle** on Upper Bristol Road, are pretty good at delivering all of these ingredients. Readers are urged to encourage their friends and neighbours to get out and support the great British pub while we still have some left.

And finally a couple of snippets of pub news. Fans of the Hall and Woodhouse (aka Badger) bottled beer range may wish to note that the full range of the bottles is available at the **Night Jar** on Mead Vale, and the **Woodspring** in Worle has added a guest beer to the resident Butcombe Bitter, although this seems to always be Moor Merlins Magic.

Tim Nickolls



Why is it every time we go out to the pub it turns into a crawl?



A Round with Robin

As I mentioned in the last edition of Pints West, I was one of five CAMRA chaps that completed the Somerset pub trail, which involved visiting at least 15 pubs from a list of 45. One pub on the trail that eluded me was the **Brewers Arms** in South Petherton, which is the Somerset CAMRA pub of the year 2009. So it was fortunate that I was able to go by bus to their beer festival on August Bank Holiday weekend. 22 beers and five ciders presented a reasonable choice, so Tony and I set to work on the beers from the West Midlands and South Yorkshire, plus the Cornish and Somerset ales. As well as the friendly hospitality, free sausage rolls, pizza, spring rolls and sarnies appeared from time to time. One beer was most unusual: *Djinn Jar Beer* (4.2%) from *Sheffield Beer Works* – yes, you guessed, a ginger flavoured beer, spicy but not overdone. Also worthy of mention was the *Enville Light Pale Ale* (4.0%), and here I agreed with the tasting notes "...with a mellow hoppy flavour, ideal for year round copious quaffing."

A couple of weeks later, I worked at the Somerset Tenth Beer Festival at Minehead railway station, and it was good to see so many CAMRA people from Bristol there. I have to admit it was hard work most of the time, but the recompense was to see drinkers having a good time, and the occasional slurp of some of the 109 beers on tap. It would be difficult to choose a beer of the festival, but I especially liked the festival specials *Moor Dry Hopped Hoppiness* (6.5%) and the rich porter *Glastonbury Thriller* (7.0%). The most complex flavour, for those who like this sort of thing, came from West Yorkshire, the *Summer Wine* brewery's *Elbow Grease* (3.8%), which surprisingly had a slight smokiness to contrast with the citrus hoppiness.

As a complete contrast, a month later, when I worked the Bath Beer festival for the Saturday lunch-time session, it was hard work on the desk for CAMRA tickets, but fairly laid back serving beer at the long bar. 89 British beers, 18 ciders and perries, and a selection of foreign beers were on offer. I was recommended by the organiser to try the *Innocence* (4.0%) from *Plain Ales*, a new brewery from Chitterne in Wiltshire, and this deceptive beer was my favourite there. Also very good were the *Rye Smile* (3.8%) from *Saltaire* and the *Ebulem* (5.8%) from *Williams* of Alloa in Scotland.

Fortunately I was able to quaff a few pints of the *Plain Innocence* at the **Duke of York**, St Werburghs, when on the Saturday of Pubs Week in early November, a group from Weston visited the **Masons Arms** in Stapleton, having a few beers there with four chaps from the Bristol branch. The Duke of York was the obvious choice of pub on our way back to



Brewers Arms, South Petherton

the centre. We finished at the **Bank** where the *Old Freddy Walker* was on sale for only £2.80 a pint. The **Seven Stars** has not changed much, except for the arrival of Paul to replace Katie and Steve, and he is doing sterling work to continue the high standard of cellar management, the amazing choice of ales, with one being over 6%, and the huge discounted price to CAMRA members (all day, every day!).

The real ale drinkers, of which there are many, at the **Regency** in Weston-super-Mare were disappointed that it did not make the 2010 Good Beer Guide. This is the only pub in Weston that consistently has five real ales on, took part in Mild Month, and promotes CAMRA. It is fair to say that the beers are all "nationals" if you include Butcombe Bitter, but they do offer a different taste, one from another, and all with a capital Q for Quality.

However, it has to be said that the **Raglan Arms** deserves to be in the Good Beer Guide, and Freddy, Miles and the staff there have worked hard to ensure the beers (usually from the south-west) reach the standard required. If *Moor*, *Cotleigh*, and *O'Hanlon's* beers are more prevalent than others, I personally don't mind. The **White Hart** in Weston has been having a few strange beers; the *Dark Star* brewery beers are always welcome, as are the funny named *Church End* beers, but the Caledonian Blueberry Thriller is just too fruity, and I'm afraid to say I couldn't taste beer at all. **Off The Rails** continues having at least one dark beer on at any one time, and a core of CAMRA members in town look forward to the *Quercus* beers. The **Criterion**, opposite the Raglan Arms has been having *Theakston's* beers recently and these having been in tiptop condition. Also *Courage Directors* is available on gravity serve there, Paul and Craig having found out the hard way that it's better served like that than from hand pump. The Tuesday quiz is popular there with CAMRA members and they have a real fire in winter, as has of course the Raglan Arms. The Raglan continues to major in music, especially on Sunday and Friday evenings, with occasionally your correspondent playing his spoons!

Robin E Wild



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Eastern Pleasures

Every year members of the Weston CAMRA branch have a cultural weekend away. These have hitherto been to other parts of Europe (Belgium, Prague and Bamberg in Germany have all been visited in recent years) but, due to the dire state of the pound against the euro, this year we decided to stop short of the North Sea and plumped for Norwich – often described as the real ale capital of Britain.

Armed with various guide books, train tickets (less than £50 for the return journey) and £25 a night accommodation booked at a hotel close to Norwich railway station, we set off from Weston on a late October Thursday morning. After a break in London (taking in one or two pubs) it was a smooth two-hour train journey to Norwich. Dropping our bags at the hotel, we headed for the nearby **Rosary Tavern** on Rosary Road. Apparently this pub was closed for a while earlier this year. Hopefully now back in good health. The beers were fine – four of them, including Woodforde's Wherry, which went down very well at £1.10 for a half.

Our next stop was the Good Beer Guide-listed **Ketts Tavern** on Ketts Hill. Five beers were available. I had three Norfolk brews – Norfolk Squire Scroby, Humpty Dumpty Hop Garden Gold and Wolf Werewolf. The Scroby is either not a very pleasant beer or it wasn't in good condition. The Humpty Dumpty beer was okay, the Werewolf very good. Although the beer was so-so, this visit was memorable as the pub has an arrangement with a nearby Indian restaurant whereby menus are on the tables, you order your meal at the bar, they ring up the restaurant and the meal is brought to the pub. This seems to be a great idea. The restaurant gets an opportunity to increase sales or achieve sales from drinkers without having to tolerate them when well lubricated after the pubs shut, the pub has something different to offer and they may keep customers who want a curry in their pub for the evening as opposed to them popping in for a quick one before going to a restaurant and the ale drinker is able to eat at a civilized time in the evening and be able to enjoy a curry accompanied by a nice drink instead of having to force down Cobra or Kingfisher lagers. Everyone's a winner!

After dining, we headed into the city centre area. First stop was the smart **Wig & Pen**, a seventeenth-century free house on St Martin's Palace Plain. Six ales here. All tried were spot-on. Some went for the two Oakham ales – I plumped for Highgate Davenport's Knee Trembler.

Next stop was the highly-regarded **Ribs Of Beef** on Wensum Street.



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Nine beers were listed on a board. The one that caught our eye was Ribcracker, a beer brewed for the pub by Woodforde's. Unfortunately, this tasted like neat vinegar, which was served to two of us. It was replaced without argument, although I don't know what the excuse is for a Good Beer Guide pub selling appalling quality beer in the middle of a Friday night – nor why I had to ask for a refund of the 30p difference in price between the Ribcracker and its replacement – Oakham JHB. Two minutes' walk along Wensum Street takes you to **Take 5**. This pub had a very different style to it. A modern fit-out with a continental feel and doubling-up as an art gallery. I plumped for another Norfolk beer – Grain Oak, which was very good for its 3.8% strength. Other beers available were Wherry, Spitfire and St Peter's Organic Ale.

We made our way back to our hotel via the bedlam of Prince Of Wales Road – if you are planning a trip to Norwich I suggest you avoid hotels in this area unless you are not worried about getting any sleep.

Friday morning was bright, sunny and warm for late October. After breakfast in the Glasshouse – one of Norwich's Wetherspoons – we had a walk around the castle and market before catching a bus to Salhouse, approximately 25 minutes away. From here we had a half-hour walk to Woodbastwick, the home of Woodforde's brewery. I have long been a fan of Woodforde's beers and they have now been going for 28 years, with a strong base across Norfolk – probably unthinkable when they started-up in the post-Watney's wastelands of East Anglia. The **Fur and Feathers** adjoins the brewery and serves as its tap. I had intended going through the card of the available Woodforde's beers. However, I decided to forego this long-held ambition, as there were no less than eight beers on and there was a long day ahead. We sat outside the front of the pub soaking up the sunshine, sipping Mardler's Mild, Sundew Ale, Brew 255, Norfolk Nog, Wherry, Admiral's Reserve, Nelson's Revenge and Headcracker. There was much debate over whether to have the latter; the reason being that it cost a mind-boggling £4 a pint. This is a very strong beer at 7% ABV, but some felt that £4 was a disgrace, given that it had been brewed about 25 yards from the point of sale and they refused to buy it. I agreed with their views, but felt having come so far to sample the beers at their peak I bit the bullet and had a half – and it was excellent.

We strolled back to Salhouse. Before getting the bus back to Norwich we popped in to the **Bell**. Steve, the landlord, re-opened the Bell in the Spring after an 18 month period of closure. He has quickly built the pub up to a level where it can keep four ales in top-quality condition and his food earned a rave review in the Eastern Daily Press during our stay. I started with a half of Golden Jackal from Wolf brewery. This is only 3.7% ABV but even following the mighty Headcracker it still had a huge impact on my taste buds, which is a great credit to the beer. The Wherry was also nice.

A quick pit-stop at the hotel back in Norwich, then we headed to the Dereham Road area to the North West of the city centre. The first stop was the **Nelson** on Nelson Road. This did not make it into the new Good Beer Guide but my halves of Bradfield Farmers Bitter and Wherry were very good. There were six ales in all (mostly at £2.50 a pint – fairly typical for Norwich) and a great whisky list.

A five-minute walk over to the other side of Dereham road took us to the **Alexandra Tavern** on Stafford Street. Before going in we picked up fish and chips a few doors away. Steve, the landlord at the Nelson, had told us this shop did the best F&C in Norwich and he wasn't wrong. Possibly the best I have ever had – even better than the Star at Watchet. We ate these at a table outside the front of the pub (knives and forks provided by the pub), washed down with Chalk Hill Tap and CHB. The former was a bit listless, the latter very good. This pub was typical of many visited over the weekend – a friendly, back-street neighbourhood local, with a good atmosphere and good beer.

Back to Nelson Road and the near-legendary **Fat Cat** – a twice CAMRA National Pub of the Year. Norfolk CAMRA's magazine, Norfolk Nips, included a submission from someone grumbling, "Is it really necessary to have 10 beers at 5% or higher?" and "frankly disappointing" and "the pork pie was the highlight of the visit." I can only assume that either this person is too young to remember the days when it was hard to find a decent beer anywhere in Norwich and is now spoilt or he/she is extremely hard to please. Perhaps we should have done an exchange weekend, with this person going to Weston – that would have given them something to moan about! The Fat Cat's attractions included 20-odd real ales, plus a selection of foreign beers on draught and in bottles. I started with Fat Cat Bitter and Wild Cat from their own brewery. Both were great. Next was Oakham Red Mule, which was brilliant. More superlatives for Green Jack Mahseer IPA and my final two beers for the night – Adnams Tally Ho (7% and aged in the wood for a year)

and Hercule Double IPA. The latter beer was from one of my favourite Belgian breweries, weighing in at a mighty 10%. This cost £2.70 for a half, so I started the day breaking the £4 a pint barrier and finished it breaking £5. Oh dear.

Saturday was a wet and miserable day. We had another Wetherspoon's breakfast, this time in the Bell Hotel in the very centre of the city. We then all went our separate ways for the day. Other jaunts included trips to Great Yarmouth, Cromer and Sheringham. I spent the early part of the morning having a trip down memory lane exploring the city centre (ignoring pubs for a while!) as I spent quite a lot of my childhood visiting Norwich where some family still live. I went to "Saturday Morning Pictures" at **Cinema City** on St Andrews Street. Guess what? Such is the city's embracing of real ale, that even the cinema had a cask on. This was St Peter's Robert Suckling Ale. Being laid-back Norwich, you are allowed to take your drinks into the screen with you, so I sipped my ale watching a documentary on the re-development of the city during the 1960s. All very civilized. Perhaps I will suggest to the Odeon in Weston that they stick a cask of RCH East Street Cream behind the counter next to the ghostly popcorn.

After the cinema I headed for Carrow Road, intending to watch Norwich City play Swindon. Arriving two hours before kick-off I thought I would be fine getting a ticket, but I was told it was a sell-out! A disappointment, but credit to Norwich fans still turning up in their thousands (25,000 in fact) even though they are now in League One. Bristol City and Rovers couldn't rustle up that attendance between them at the moment. You will not be shocked to hear that I decided to use this new free time by heading for more of Norwich's great pubs. My first stop was the **Kings Arms** on Hall Road. This is a Bateman's house and the beer range featured six of their beers. There were also five guests. I had halves of Bateman's Salem Porter and Beeston Afternoon Delight, accompanied by a good-value sandwich. The pub is quite small and was packed with footie fans having their pre-match drink – some were tucking into food brought in from nearby takeaways which the pub does not mind, even though they do food themselves. The beer was great, the food cheap, the atmosphere lively but friendly. The Kings Arms was possibly my favourite pub of the weekend. From here I walked about ten minutes to the **Trafford Arms** on Grove Road. Another friendly neighbourhood local, with loads of good beers – ten here, including a mild and a porter. I had a half of Moorhouse Broomstick – a Halloween special no doubt. Another ten-minute walk took me to the **Coachmakers** on St Stephens Road, almost back into the city centre. Four beers

straight from the cask here. I had a £1.25 half of Wolf Golden Jackal. Not quite as good as at the Bell, Salhouse – although I may have felt a bit grumpy being soaked through.

Feeling a break from drinking would be wise, I had a look around Norwich's incredible library then went back to the cinema to watch another film (no beer accompaniment this time though). Afterwards I stopped at the **Ribs Of Beef** hoping for a better second visit. The Fox Beer Company Red Kite was okay. The Weston gang reconvened at the **Murderers** on Timberhill. Norfolk Nips had an advert for a beer festival there. This proved to be an excellent lead. There were 20+ ales, all straight from the cask and all from Norfolk breweries. Another feature was that none of the beers were going to be available at the Norwich Beer Festival running the following week. I had halves of Dark Horse Stout, Ole Slewfoot Fox On The Run, Tipples Redhead, The Why Not Brewery Cavalier Red, Winters Mild and, the pick of the bunch being Spectrum Black Buffle. The tasting notes for the latter – "*Named after the brewer's cat, it's a smooth, full-flavoured and easy drinking stout. It's also vegan. Spectrum beers are also certified as 100% organic – the only brewer in East Anglia to produce such brews, from their carbon neutral brewery.*" So there.

Feeling that solids would be a good idea, we went to the **Bell** for some cheap Wetherspoon's food, accompanied by Nethergate's Priory Mild and Umbel. From here we headed north to the **King's Head** on Magdalen Street. This has been CAMRA branch Pub of the Year twice in recent times and this was no surprise to us. A keg-free house with ten ales, all from East Anglian breweries.

I enjoyed my Ole Slewfoot Orange Blossom Special, Brandon Rusty Bucket and Grain Porter. The final stop for the day was the **Duke Of Wellington** on Waterloo Road. Another amazing Norwich pub. In a backstreet, residential area with no obvious reason for it to be a major attraction. However, no less than 22 ales on – 12 on gravity and 10 on handpump. I finished the day with halves of Green Jack Organic Wheat, Icen Fine Soft Day and a sip of great Harviestoun Hoptoberfest that a friend was raving about.

Sunday was bright and sunny. After breakfast we wandered around and after deciding that we didn't want to wait for a midday opening time, we had a couple of Wolf brewery beers – Wolf In Sheep's Clothing and Granny Wouldn't Like It – in a Wetherspoon's (the **Glasshouse**). We then paid a visit to the **Adam and Eve**, Bishopgate, billed as Norwich's oldest pub (1249) and one of the oldest in the country. Needless to say, a fascinating and atmospheric pub. Four ales on – we all plumped for Mauldon's Mole Trap.

Our final pub of the weekend was the **Coach and Horses**, the Chalk Hill brewery tap on Rosary Road, near to the train station. Very full, with many people eating the excellent value food. There were five Chalk Hill ales on (plus real cider). I had Dreadnought and Flintknappers Mild. Both were in superb condition and a fitting end to a great ale-sampling weekend.

Norwich definitely lived up to its billing and I would very much like to go again, not least to visit the five Good Beer Guide pubs in the city that I didn't get round to. If you are planning a trip and would like some tips please feel free to get in touch.

Tim Nickolls



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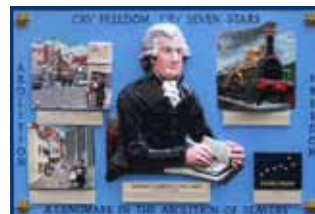
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Branch socials report

Welcome to another action-packed report on Bristol & District branch activities over the past few months.

Returning to the heady days of summer, August 22nd saw a group of us tour the centre of Bristol. After visiting the **Naval Volunteer**, we popped into the upstairs bar at the **Watershed** and were impressed to see some unusual beers including a couple from Arbor Ales. It's a great buzzing place, although don't be surprised by prices at over £3 a pint!

Briefly pausing at the disappointing Lloyds No. 1, we moved next door to **Bordeaux Quay** and were pleasantly surprised to find three ales on, including Butcombe and Bristol Beer Factory Stout, which were in very good condition despite problems with the cooling equipment. Although we weren't in 'eating mode', the food selection looked most interesting too. We finished at **Zero Degrees** and enjoyed a number of their beers as we overlooked Bristol from the balcony. An excellent finish to the evening.

September 8th saw us visit Butcombe's **Queen's Arms** at Bleadon, plus the **Old Inn** at Hutton (as featured in the last Pints West) and the **Raglan** in Weston-super-Mare. All provided an interesting range of beers.

Our first brewery trip of the month was on September 12th, where a large party ventured forth to the **Taunton Brewing Company**. Colin and Jeremy saw us 'well fed and watered' as Colin



A visit to the Taunton Brewing Company

took us through the brewing process and explained about his brewing history, having been head brewer at Exmoor Brewery back in the 90's. Beers included 'Mayor' at just under 5%.

But there was more to follow as our coach then took us to the **Minehead Beer Festival**, held on the platforms of the West Somerset's railway station! A great

outdoor venue, with plenty of different beer styles to choose from, including a special Red Ale from Taunton Brewing Company. All too soon it was time to move on, and en-route home we stopped off briefly to sample Moor's Old Freddy Walker (amongst others) at the Good Beer Guide-listed **Royal Artillery Arms** in West Huntspill.

Towards the end of the month, another explorer trip took us to some excellent pubs in the Iron Acton and Frampton Cotterell areas, including the **Rising Sun** and **New Inn** at Mayhill. Pleased to report that beer quality was as good as ever.

Into October, and our next explorer trip took us towards the Mendips. Highspots included the **New Inn** at Cross and the **Crown** at Churchill, these two being of high standard.

October's brewery trip took us to **Yeovil Ales**, with Rob and

Declan putting on an excellent spread for us, including showcasing four of their most popular award-winning brews. We were taken through their history and given details of the efforts they go to to ensure only the highest quality ingredients are used in the mix. And the quality of their beers really does shine though.

Difficult though it was to drag ourselves away, we had a few more interesting places to visit. These included the **Masons Arms** at Lower Odcombe, which hosts a small (breathe in now...!) brewery, where we had an impromptu tour. A couple of their brews were available at the bar.

From there, it was on to the Good Beer Guide-listed **Camelot** at South Cadbury which featured beers from Yeovil Ales as well as other small brewers, and a stop at the delightful **Queen's Arms** at Corton Denham, also GBG-listed with some great beers and home made food available.

Turning for home, we stopped off at the **Oakhill Inn** at Oakhill, a great stone-built pub serving excellent ales, including one from Glasbury Ales.

Into November, and it was off to another part of the Mendips. We visited the **Waldegrave Arms** at Chewton Mendip, **Ploughboy** at Green Ore, the **Wookey Hole Inn**, and both the **Queen Victoria Inn** as well as the **Hunters Lodge** in Priddy. All served a good range of quality ales.

Our thanks in particular go to the brewers of Taunton Brewing Company and Yeovil Ales for their hospitality, and we recommend their beers should you see them in your local pub.

Our trips are designed to help members reach pubs that are difficult or impossible to get to using public transport, and we often uncover 'gems' in the process. We are a social bunch, so if you would like to join us on a future trip, just check the website for more details or email me at badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk.

And if there's a pub near you which you think we should know about that serves excellent ale, just drop us a line!

Tim Proudman, Social Secretary



A visit to Yeovil Ales



Small-scale brewing at Odcombe

News from Box Steam Brewery

Box Steam Brewery, based in Wiltshire, has changed its logo and beer branding in order that everything should follow their engineering theme. The beer **Rev Awdry's Ale** is now renamed **Golden Bolt**, **Vanilla Porter** is now **Funnel Blower** and **Box Best Bitter** is now **Cog**.

They also hosted their third annual beer festival in Freshford recently, with 20 real ales and 10 ciders. From this they made about £2,000 profit, which will be donated to Dorothy House Hospice and the Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

They were invited to brew and bottle a one-off special ale to commemorate the completion of the Combe Down Mines project. A competition was held to design a bottle label and name the beer – the winning design and name of "Oolite Ale" being chosen by B&NES council who commissioned the beer.

They have achieved further success with **Funnel Blower** at the Ascot beer festival and are launching two new beers for Christmas this year – **Xmas Box Blonde** and **Xmas Box Dark**. Look out for them in a pub somewhere near you.

Their newly rebranded website is due to be launched very soon and should be online by the time Pints West is in print.

Their final piece of news is that their flagship pub, the **Cross Guns** at Avoncliff, has been listed in the 2010 Good Beer Guide – "a testament to the success of our commitment to beer quality and our extensive guest ale program."

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Iain Masson is glad to be at the Hidden Brewery

"News of our death has been greatly exaggerated!"



Tucked away on the Dinton Road, between Wylde and Dinton, is a small business park, the home of a brewery for many years. For the last six years this has been the home of the Hidden Brewery.

That was the history that Iain Masson considered when asked to get back into hands-on brewing early in October.

His background, he says, is in slightly bigger breweries:

- Nine years brewing BX1 and M&B Mild ("and Carling, sorry!", he adds) at Cape Hill Brewery, Birmingham – in its time the largest real ale brewery in the country.

- Nine years at Greenalls in Warrington.

- Two years as head brewer at Greene King. "Sorry again but I am proud of the job we did moving Old Speckled Hen, Morlands Ori-

nal and the Ruddles beers to Bury St Edmunds once the company had decided to close Abingdon."

- Six years at Hardys and Hansons (Kimberley Ales) in Nottingham, the highlight being the launch of Old Trip Premium Bitter, named after Ye Olde Trippe to Jerusalem, the oldest pub/inn/hostelry in the UK.

Iain goes on to say: "So what an exciting opportunity. The Hidden Brewery is a well-set-up 30-barrel brewery. I have an exciting set of recipes, and Hidden Pint and Quest are wonderful beers. Quite a challenge taking this all on but great fun. No plans to change the excellent beers but just to make them as well as I can. I only want to make the good real ales that our customers demand. Please do let me know what you think and do come and see us!"

People can, of course, sample his beers at Hidden Brewery's pub, the **Cornubia** in Temple Street, not far from central Bristol.

Isle of Avalon Brewery

A new brewery venture was launched in Somerset in October 2009. Isle of Avalon Brewery is the brainchild of Arthur and Annette Frampton, formerly of Moor Beer Company at Ashcott, and Gary Lumber from Hidden Brewery near Salisbury. Gary and Arthur are experienced micro-brewers with nearly 40 years' experience in the industry between them: Arthur formed Moor Beer Company in 1996, while Gary started his career with Oakhill Brewery, near Shepton Mallet in 1994 then moved on to form Hidden Brewery in 2003.

Their beers are *Isle Ale* (3.8% ABV) which is described on their website as "a light amber session ale"; *Sunset* (4.3%), "a tawny brown premium bitter"; and *Sunrise* (5%), "a light amber full-bodied IPA." A winter warmer, *Arthur's Ale* at 7% is planned too.

To begin with the beers are being brewed with another brewery's equipment, but Gary and Arthur intend to move production to a new ten-barrel brewery in Ashcott soon.

The new company's launch event took place at the Ring O'Bells, Ashcott on Saturday 17th October. Any pub wanting to try their beers can contact them by phone on 01458 210050, 07809 056855 or 07717 798816.

Norman Spalding

Matthews becomes Dawkins

These are exciting times for Dawkins Taverns. They have just acquired the Matthews brewery of Timsbury, a few miles outside Bath. When Stuart Matthews and partner Sue Appleby built this pristine plant in 2005, Dawkins became one of their first customers and they have worked together closely ever since, commissioning their Dawkins Green Barrel organic beer in 2008.

When Stuart decided he wanted to spend more time with his family and the opportunity came to purchase the company, Glen Dawkins jumped at the chance. Brewer Alex Hill (formerly landlord of the Miner's Arms in St Werburghs) has been working alongside Stuart for some time, with a view to taking over as head brewer, and, rest assured, we are told those great recipes will continue.

The intention is to keep brewing all of the current beers under the Dawkins banner, including Brassknocker, Bob Wall, Green Barrel and the monthly and seasonal specials, with Pit Pony due out early December.

The new venture launches on 1st December. From then, members of the popular Dawkins Club will get discounts on Dawkins beers in their five pubs up to 9pm every day, with 50p off pints on Mondays and 30p off all other days.

Beer lovers will soon be able to enjoy several ales from their range at the Hillgrove, the Victoria, the Portcullis and the Green Man. The Miner's Arms will follow as soon as agreement is reached with the freeholder, Punch.

The Dawkins pubs certainly won't, however, be restricted to just selling Dawkins beers. Glen promises they will always support great small brewers from near and far. In fact, they are in the process of installing extra hand pumps to create still more choice.

Future plans are to steadily spread the word as they hope to supply their Dawkins beers to even more great freehouses across the West.

For more info visit www.dawkins-ales.co.uk or www.dawkins-taverns.co.uk.



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BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

Pub News



Belvedere

Belvedere Wine Vaults, 25 Belvedere, Lansdown, Bath

Landlord Andrew Fitzmaurice has submitted a planning application to convert this Grade II-listed pub into an eight-bedroom B&B. He is looking to carry out an internal revamp of the pub, which already provides some bed and breakfast accommodation. The project would involve converting the existing cellar into two bedrooms. Calne-based architectural consultants Premier Design have submitted a statement to support Mr Fitzmaurice's application to planners at Bath and North East Somerset Council. Premier Design director John Whitton confirmed all materials used in the refit of the Belvedere would match those of the existing building and has stated that the proposed alterations are minor and will not affect the fabric of the listed building to any great extent. His report also argues that the loss of the Belvedere as a pub should not be an issue because there were a number of other pubs in the surrounding area.

Belvoir Castle, 32-33 Victoria Buildings, Lower Bristol Road, Bath

The 11th Duke of Rutland, David Manners, who owns Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire, has expressed his opposition to plans to rename the 19th-century pub the Victoria Works. The Duke's family has been at Belvoir for 500 years and lives in the fourth castle to have been built on the site. The 50-year-old read about the plans to rename the pub on *The Bath Chronicle's* website and has said of the name change proposal: "I would regret this. I hope that the Belvoir Castle public house will continue to bear its name well into the future. My family will have been at Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire for 500 years and once had a house in Bath. I would like the name to continue as it has historical importance." The pub closed on Thursday 11 June and the "To Let" sign that was at the front of the pub has been taken down.

Brains Surgery, 36-37 Dafford Street, Larkhall, Bath

This 110-year-old pub, owned by the Cardiff-based Brains brewery, is up for sale. The three-storey Victorian building is still operating as a pub and agent James A Baker is marketing the property including the trade fixtures and fittings with the exception of branded items. The Larkhall pub, which consists of an open-plan room served by a single bar, is on the market for £225,000. The building has a four-bedroom flat split over two further floors. The pub also includes a beer garden. Originally called the Royal Oak, the pub's name was changed in 1980 by former landlord Dave Derrick, who put the popularity of the pub down to the Brains beer stocked at the venue.



Brains Surgery

Chequers, 50 Rivers Street, Bath

This eighteenth-century inn, which was refurbished as a popular gastro-pub in 2005, has been closed for another extensive refurbishment, which has included the building being swathed in scaffolding, for several weeks. It was due to re-open on 14 November.



Englishcombe Inn

Englishcombe Inn, 157 Englishcombe Lane, Bath

A second application to convert this large roadside pub, which closed towards the end of 2008, into a nursing home has been allowed. The first application was turned down by Bath & North East Somerset Council on technical grounds and it is believed that the new application addressed these.

Filos, 1 Beaufort West, London Road, Bath

The former Filos sports bar has re-opened as One Beaufort, which is described as a café and kitchen bar. Paul and Anne Adams are working along with their son Rupert in running the business. The bar was sold through agent James A Baker in March this year and, following a revamp, which cost over £100,000, was re-launched three months later. One Beaufort caters for around 55 people seven days a week, selling reasonably priced modern British and European food.

Griffin Inn, Beauford Square, off Monmouth Street, Bath

This traditional corner pub reopened in August, following a six-month-long major refurbishment project to restore its Georgian glory. The pub closed in December and work began in February. The bar on the ground floor can now seat up to 60 people and a small courtyard for smoking has been created. Now boasting five hand pumps, with Butcombe and London Pride permanently on show, the three remaining lines



The Griffin

feature continuously changing guest beers sourced from local breweries including Bristol Beer Factory, Cheddar Ales, Wickwar, Kingstone and Great Western Brewery. One line is devoted to 'golden' ales such as Potholer, a second to low ABV beers, for example Wickwar Coopers, whilst the third is used for seasonal brews. The Inn also offers fine wines, provincial malt whiskies, fresh coffee and tea, while the fully equipped kitchen is focused on delivering sandwiches, burgers, salads and other pub classics made using fresh, local, free-range, and organic produce. Furthermore the Griffin comes complete with four-star en-suite accommodation. There are seven rooms and rates are on a B&B basis. This is Bath's newest real ale pub and is definitely worth a visit.



Horseshoe, Combe Down

Horseshoe, 124 North Road, Combe Down, Bath

This pub, which had recently closed, re-opened in August.

Longacre Tavern, Long Acre, London Road, Bath

This unspoilt example of a sixties-design pub, owned by Wadworth, is believed to be up for sale. It had been run by landlord Mervyn Thomas for more than 30 years until his recent retirement. It is currently closed and has been boarded up since at least late September. The venue



The Longacre Tavern

became the centre of attention when Paul Kelly was fatally stabbed outside the pub on New Year's Day 2007. An offer has been accepted for the pub after Wadworth decided that it no longer fitted with its portfolio of properties. The brewery conducted a review of the premises and decided that a sale was the best commercial option. Pub, hotel and restaurant specialist Fleurets is marketing the pub and a spokesman for the agent confirmed the buyer was a small business but had not yet stated whether the intention was to keep the premises as a pub. The property was on the market for around a month and attracted strong interest before the deal was struck. Alex Schlesinger, chairman of the London Road and Snow Hill Partnership, said the pub had become a focal point for the community for many years. He said: "I have got no objection to it being a pub. I certainly object to what has become attached to it in recent years. A lot of the community has been unhappy with the ambience of it and we look forward to some change. You can't blame the pub or the licensee; it is the people who are using or abusing it that are the problem." Meanwhile local councillor David Dixon (Lib Dem, Walcot) has said that he hopes that the building would remain as a pub.

Rummer, 6 Newmarket Row, Bath

The lease on this pub has been sold to the owners of the Real Italian Pizza Company in York Street and the building has been transformed into an Italian-style bar. Re-named The Real Italian, the layout has not been altered much, but the look of the interior has changed utterly. Put quite simply it is distinctively, indeed overwhelmingly, pink. There are

no real ales; two Italian beers and Guinness are on tap. During the refurbishment Real Italian Pizza Company co-owner Tim Coffey stressed the new business would not be a restaurant but rather a bar and drinking area with a 21st century feel. In an article in the Bath Chronicle he said: "There will be an Italian influence there because that is what we do and that is where we are. At the same time it has been around for a long time and we are not going to want to do anything that people may consider drastic. If anything it will be a modern bar with an Italian feel to it." Pub chain Gamebird Inns had held the main lease for the last four years on the building, the freehold of which is owned by Bath and North East Somerset Council. The last people to run the Rummer as a pub had been business partners Nick Morse and John Sparey, key shareholders of The Rummer Limited, a company formed to run the pub in March 2008. Mr Morse has moved to Sweden but The Rummer Limited was in negotiations with Gamebird Inns to buy the head lease. Mr Sparey said: "It is a very sad day. My company wanted to retain The Rummer as a traditional real ale pub. We were in negotiations to buy the head lease from Gamebird Inns, which at the time was the head lease holder. We raised the finance to do this and made an opening offer, which was rejected on the grounds they had signed another buyer."



The Rummer

King's Arms, 1 Monmouth Place, Bath

This popular live music venue has been served with a noise abatement notice by Bath & Northeast Somerset Council following complaints made by local residents over the level of noise of gigs. Landlady Debs Diack is, however, determined to save the pub and keep it as a live music venue. She is planning to stage a gig to raise money for sound-proofing work at her pub. Mrs Diack has been given support from city MP Don Foster and local councillor Andy Furse, both of whom believe the seventeenth century pub is at the heart of its community and that music performances there should continue. Bands have been playing at the pub for over thirty years with gigs taking place only on Friday and Saturday nights between 9pm and 11pm. Ms Diack says that her customers were respectable thirty-somethings who were not rowdy and did not cause trouble and added that "Ninety nine per cent of the time we are a very quiet pub." She has now organised a 1,000-signature petition in protest at the notice, which sets a maximum decibel level for events, and has been supported by Jamie Thyer from the band The Worried Men and Nathan Cox from the band Crossfire. Meanwhile Don Foster has appealed to the council to rethink its decision. He said "The King's Arms has been a valued part of the community for a number of years, and has been a venue for a number of bands early in their careers. It has

(Continued overleaf)



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Westgate Inn

(Continued from previous page)

always had a responsible attitude to noise and ceases all music at 11pm. Responsible local pubs need to be supported, especially with many suffering due to rises in beer duty and cut-price supermarket booze. The live music industry is struggling as well, due to ill-thought-out government legislation. It is vital that we have smaller venues being allowed to provide live music and the King's Arms has played an important role over the years." It may be that the only option for Ms Diack now is to have the pub soundproofed, although she needs to raise money for the work to be carried out. She approached the council to see if she could have one night off from her abatement notice to hold a live gig to raise funds, but it refused. She is now looking into the option of staging the performance at the Pavilion in January instead. The pub is also holding a table top sale to raise money for soundproofing.

Ram, 20 Claverton Buildings, Widcombe, Bath

This pub re-opened on Saturday 31 October under the management of former landlord Simon Wynne, who in the interim has been running the nearby Royal Oak very successfully. We believe that at least four beers are available on handpump.

Northend Inn, 41 Northend, Batheaston

This pub has re-opened. Bath & North East Somerset Council have granted a Premises Licence to the owner Sally Gray. The Committee considered statements from three neighbouring residents concerned about noise particularly from live music inside and outside the pub and also drinking and smoking in the garden late at night. During the discussion Sally withdrew the part of the application for live music outdoors but stressed the need for smoking to be permitted in the garden rather than obliging people to smoke outside in the street. The three "objectors" all stressed their support for the pub re-opening and hoped it would be successful. They accepted there would be some noise but wanted it to be at a reasonable level and not too frequent. On behalf of the many people who had supported the grant of the licence, Rob Mimmack asked the committee to apply "as light a touch" as possible in responding to the concerns expressed. The councillors were keen to strike a balance between the interests of all parties to try to ensure that the pub business



Faulkland Inn a century ago



Beehive, Bradford on Avon

is not overly restricted while respecting the amenities of its neighbours. The licence was granted subject to consumption of alcohol and sale of food in the garden ceasing at 11 (11:30 on Fridays and Saturdays). Alcohol sales in the pub are permitted until 12 (1am on Fridays and Saturdays) with the premises closing half an hour later. Smoking will be permitted in the garden until closing time. This is great news against a background of pubs closing at an alarming rate of seven a day across the country, and it is to be hoped that the village community will take full advantage of the re-opening of their local watering hole.

Westgate Inn, 38 Westgate Street, Bath

This city centre venue, formerly the Rat & Parrott, has re-opened as a traditional pub with four handpumps. The range includes Abbey Ales Bellringer and Sharp's Doom Bar. There a selection of good, reasonably priced food, served by attentive staff.

Beehive, 263 Trowbridge Road, Bradford-on-Avon

This attractively situated canal-side pub remains closed and the freehold remains up for sale. This asking price, however, has been reduced.

Lamb Inn, Westbury Road, Edington

A community coffee morning is continuing to run despite being made homeless by the closure of the last pub in the village of Edington near Westbury. The Lamb, which has been in business for more than four centuries, closed down in July leaving villagers without a pub and a home for their coffee morning. Since the summer more than 60 villagers have joined forces to buy the pub from owners Enterprise Inns and run it as a community business, but there are fears that pub, on the market for £325,000, will be sold to property developers. George Fraser, who is chairman of Edington Parish Council and a regular at the village coffee morning, says, "We've lost the chapel, the school, all the shops and now our final pub. If the pub remains closed we'll have nothing left apart from the parish hall, which we've worked hard to keep to a good standard. At this rate the village will just be lots of houses with no amenities."

Mike Davies, 39, who is leading the effort to buy back the Lamb Inn as a community pub, said: "We've had even more people showing an interest in becoming a shareholder in the last two weeks. I've had a former publican from Stratford-upon-Avon who has just moved to the area offer his support and advice, and the Campaign for Real Ale read the story in the *Wiltshire Times* and got in contact with me to offer their support. There used to be four pubs in the village, but over the past 20 years, one by one, they've closed, so this is the last community amenity." The campaign to save the Lamb featured on Radio Wiltshire on Monday 2 November. To find out more about the village project to save the pub, e-mail thelambatedington@yahoo.co.uk.

Faulkland Inn, Faulkland, near Radstock

Following a long period of closure and major internal refurbishment, this village local re-opened towards the end of September. A white-fronted bar and an emphasis on food. Three beer engines. The branch hoped to visit the pub in mid-November.

Tucker's Grave, near Faulkland

The landlords are finally retiring and the pub, which includes extensive grounds, is on the market for around £500,000.

Farmers Arms, Spring Gardens, Frome

We understand that this pub, on the northern fringes of Frome, has been acquired by Four County Inns. A branch member has visited and the new landlords seem to be trying very hard to build up custom at the pub.



Tuckers Grave

Masons Arms, Marston Gate, Frome

This pub, situated on the western edge of town near Sainsbury's, has re-opened. The new landlord is from the Bladud's Head in Bath. The pub closed earlier this year when its former landlords moved to take over the nearby Cross Keys at Blatchbridge.

Ship, Oldford, near Frome

Still closed but there seems to be occasional activity at the pub with cars parked out front and the people going in and out.

Bell, on A361 at Rode

This pub has been acquired by Flatcappers, owners of the magnificent Castle in Bradford-on-Avon, and a major refurbishment was carried out over September and early October. The screed on the floor has been removed revealing stunning flagstones whilst the external rendered wall has been given a complete new coat of paint. The interior is similar in style to the Castle. There are up to six beers available, which have been found to be in good condition, and excellent food. The newly refurbished pub is already attracting a lot of custom. With its large car park the Bell does have one advantage over the Castle. The branch is planning a visit on Thursday 10 December.

Somerset Arms, High Street, Semington

This pub closed for a while earlier this year, during which time it was internally refurbished. The pub has been taken by a local couple. There is now an interesting range of at least three beers, all in good condition, and excellent food.

Woolpack, High Street, Sutton Veny

Two fire crews were called out to this pub after a fire broke out in an electrical fuse board. The incident happened at 11:45pm on Wednesday 29 July. The fire was out by the time the crews arrived but they used thermal imaging cameras to check for hot spots and did a full inspection of the electrics at the pub.

Albany Palace, Park Road, off Silver Street, Trowbridge

This Lloyds No. 1 bar opened officially on Friday 4 September. A former Chicago Rock café, an extensive internal refurbishment was carried out during August. The beer range consists of Ruddles Best, Pedigree, Abbot and normally at least one guest beer. The interior is spacious and modern and is wi-fi equipped. A pleasant atmosphere pervades with a widely inclusive clientele. Yes, there is background music, but it is quiet and unobtrusive. The staff were found to be very polite and the pub experience as a whole seemed more comfortable and amenable than at the livelier Wetherspoon's round the corner.

Stallards Inn, 15-16 Stallard Street, Trowbridge

Wiltshire Council has granted planning permission for the ongoing

refurbishment of this 200-year-old Grade II-listed building. The pub was bought by Four County Inns in November and will re-open as a real ale house specialising in micro-brewers' beers.

The company plans to change the interior and layout of the ground floor, put in toilets and roof lights and install a kitchen.

Fox & Hounds, 6 Deverill Road, Warminster

A new extension comprising a function room and skittle alley has been completed.

Masons Arms, 34 East Street, Warminster

This pub, just off the town centre, is under new ownership and has undergone a thorough internal refurbishment. Helen Fitter and Richard Findlay took over the Mason Arms earlier this year and feel now that they have turned the pub around by enforcing a zero-tolerance attitude to binge drinking and drugs. The pub was once well known for its Drum 'n' Bass nights and had a reputation for drug-taking. Mr Findlay believes that type of activity is now firmly in the pub's past. The couple took over the business on July 9 and after a major refurbishment re-opened on July 29. Mr Findlay said "We hired seven skips and pulled out everything. We absolutely gutted the place. Some of the woodwork here dates back more than 200 years and was in a bad way. Since opening we've been doing over 40 covers of fresh food a day. We've put our own stamp on the place and now have a high level of clientele." The pub even runs a scheme where customers can bring in their own fresh produce in exchange for a pint at the bar. The food is prepared with local fresh produce from people's allotments. Even the venison and trout are sourced locally.

Organ Inn, 49 High Street, Warminster

There is an error in the stated opening times of this excellent pub in the Good Beer Guide 2010. The pub features on page 504 of the guide. Can readers please note that the correct opening times are: Monday-Friday: 4pm-12am; Saturday: 12pm-12am; Sunday: 4pm-11pm.

Horse & Groom, 18 Alfred Street, Westbury

We understand that this former Good Beer Guide pub, which closed on Friday 21 November 2008, has been acquired by the landlords of the nearby Angel in Edward Street. The branch is hopeful that this pub will re-open soon.

Sun, Whatley, near Frome

The owner, having failed to gain planning consent to convert this relatively isolated pub into a private residence, has tried to offer a lease to see if anyone would be interested in running it as a pub. So far he has had no takers.

Seven Stars, Bradford Road, Winsley, near Bradford-on-Avon

Whilst there is a strong emphasis on food at this pub, the landlord and his business partner are keen on getting the ale in good condition and are open to suggestions about what the pub should sell. They have had beers from Bath Ales and Sharp's for quite some time and on occasion some less common beers; just recently they had Yeovil Star Gazer. It is possible to eat in the bar area but, in a welcome change from previous regimes, the landlord does not put out cutlery on all the tables there.

Steve Hunt (photos by Andrew Swift)



Stallards, Trowbridge

Leading beer writer launches new beer resource

Award-winning beer writer Jeff Evans is the brains behind a new website dedicated to the wonderful world of beer. 'Inside Beer' (www.insidebeer.com) is aimed at beer lovers both in the UK and overseas, with its mix of breaking news, essential facts and topical features.

Regular items recommending the best places to drink, classic beers and new releases are joined by insights into breweries (big and small), book reviews and a retro section, exploring events that have shaped the brewing world in years gone by. Invaluable information, such as listings of excellent beer shops around the world, a calendar of festivals and events, and major awards results, adds another dimension to the innovative site.

Jeff, an eight-times editor of the Good Beer Guide and a former Beer

Writer of the Year, is confident that Inside Beer will prove to be a valuable addition to the online beer community for both consumers and those involved in the trade.

"I'm very excited about Inside Beer," he said. "It allows me to continue the work I've been doing for more than 20 years, which involves highlighting the very best beers and showcasing the people behind the world's most interesting breweries. There are big plans for Inside Beer. It's designed as a one-stop shop for beer news and information and what you currently see online is but the first stage of our development. As the beer world becomes ever more diverse and fascinating, so I hope Inside Beer will reflect this and become increasingly influential."

News from Bath...

The Royal Oak in Twerton, three times local CAMRA Pub of the Year, is fast consolidating its reputation as one of the region's top cider pubs. A cider and punk festival on 5th to 7th November saw a line-up of over 30 farmhouse ciders. Coming soon, one date that definitely needs to go in your diary is the annual **Royal Oak Organic Beer Festival on 7th to 13th December**. No details available at time of going to press, but on previous years' showing this promises to be one of the highlights of the year. The Oak also is also consolidating its reputation not only as one of Bath's top music venues but also a community pub. A recent visit on a Monday night found a book club in the main bar and a heritage group in the back room. Perhaps even more significant is the number of students from nearby halls of residence who use the Oak as their local, and are introduced to the delights of real ale and cider as a result.

Just up the road at the **White Horse in Twerton** a fifth beer pump has been added due to increased demand. The two regular beers – Doom Bar and Otter – are supplemented by a range of guests, which have recently included Cheddar Goat's Leap, Box Steam Cog, Old Hooky and Yeovil Stargazer. The White Horse has joined the select band of Bath pubs with a table football machine and it also hosts an open mic night on Thursdays. Recent community events have included walking on hot coals (ouch) to raise funds for Dorothy House.

Twerton is the venue for another beer festival on 4th to 6th December. The last beer festival at Twerton Park, Bath City football ground, was in 2005, and it was decided that another was long overdue. Around 20 real ales will feature, including many from small breweries or breweries outside the area. Among the beers lined up are two from Dent Brewery – Aviator and Kamikaze. It is also planned to have some beers from Derbyshire. Opening times are: Friday 4 December, 3pm-11pm; Saturday 5 December, 11am-11pm; Sunday 6 December, 11am-3pm. Admission is free, and commemorative glasses cost £2. On the Saturday, Bath City play Newport County at 3pm. Twerton Park, like the Royal Oak, is on the No 5 bus route from town, but if you're coming from Bristol, it's less than 15 minutes walk from Oldfield Park station, and a visit to the festival could usefully be combined with a visit to the Royal Oak and/or White Horse.



The pump clip for the Raven Birthday Brew

The Raven in Queen Street, 2006 pub of the year, celebrated its fifth birthday in grand style with a festival featuring no less than 50 beers – ten on at any one time, and including many rarities. Blindman's Brewery, who already brew two excellent beers for the pub – Raven and Raven Gold – came up with Raven Birthday Brew (5% ABV), which proved so popular that it's going to be a permanent fixture. Whether it will still be called Birthday Brew still hasn't been decided, but plans are well in hand to install two new six-pump beer engines so that three guest ales can continue to be served alongside the three Raven beers.

Wickwar Brewery's decision to axe one of their most popular cask-conditioned beers – Mr Perrett's Traditional Stout – was greeted with dismay by many regulars in the **Old Green Tree** in Bath, where it was consistently one of the top sellers. It also means the end of one of Bath's finest traditions – **Mr Perrett's Day** (the second Thursday in December), when a year-old barrel of Mr Perrett's was ritually tapped before being ritually consumed by the assembled company. A battered certificate on the wall bears witness to the festivities on one such occasion in the dim and distant past. This year's celebrations, however, will be the last. So, in the tradition of going out with a bang, the last ever Mr Perrett's Day looks set to be the best ever, with Keystone Bottle Strength Porter (6.5% ABV) joining the line-up, plus a specially-prepared stout and beef casserole. That's all on 10th December – just after the Old Green Tree marks another milestone on 1st December, when Tim Bet-hune celebrates eight years as landlord.

The **Curfew** on Cleveland Place is now open all day (noon to midnight), except on Mondays, when it opens at 5pm. The outside patio – one of the best in the city centre – isn't going to be much of a draw at this time of year, but that's when the wood-panelling and old-world atmosphere (there's even a snug halfway down the stairs) come into their own. And, of course, they do serve up one of the best pints of

Wadworth's in the city. Latest news from the Curfew is that the pub is sponsoring the Killer Bees, Bath Uni's American Football Team.

Rumours flying around earlier this year that the new owners of the **Pulteney Arms**, one of Bath's top real ale and rugby pubs, planned to take it down the gastropub route have proved to be totally unfounded. Martin Cooper and Lara Plater have certainly smartened the place up, as well as improving the food menu, but they are committed to building on the Pulteney's strengths rather than seeking to do something new. There are now five handpumps serving real ale in tip-top condition. Three house beers – London Pride, Young's Bitter and Timothy Taylor's Landlord – are complemented by two guests. The pub's regulars are well pleased with the new set-up and the Pulteney seems, if anything, even better than before. Well worth a walk down to the end of Great Pulteney Street next time you're in Bath to check it out. Opening times are: Monday-Tuesday, 5-11; Wednesday-Thursday, 12-3 and 5-11; Friday-Saturday, 12-12; Sunday, 12-10.30. (No food Monday or Tuesday.)

The **Rising Sun** on Camden, which has seen changes of licensee and a short period of closure in recent months, has been taken over by Jim and Karen Southgate. A recent visit to this archetypal community pub, high above the city, one wet November evening, found it busy, with the regulars full of praise not only for the new licensees but also for the standard and price of the beer – Courage and Butcombe at £2.50 a pint. The Rising Sun has one of the best-appointed skittle alleys in the city and the karaoke and curry nights on Sundays are proving very popular. Homemade food is available at other times as well. The Rising Sun is the last remaining pub in an area once full of them. Some of the regulars can remember when it had two bars and a jug & bottle; today, it has a smart, open-plan layout, and looks set to resume its place as one of the city's best back-street community pubs.



The Rising Sun on Camden

There's cause for celebration in Northend, near Batheaston, as well.

When the **Northend Inn**, the last pub in the village, closed in May 2008, the owners applied to convert it to a house. A campaign group was set up, public meetings were held, over 90 objections sent to the planning department, and the application was turned down. The pub remained closed, however, until a few weeks ago when the newly refurbished pub opened its doors once again. A recent visit on a Tuesday night found the place packed. The long, open-plan bar, formed from the front rooms of two weavers' cottages, consists mainly of a large drinking area with a contemporary feel – bare floorboards, wooden tables and chairs. At one end is a slightly raised area with sofas, low tables and a roaring fire. At the back is a large pool room, with rubble-stone walls, while steps lead up to a large area of decking at the back. The beers – Courage Best and Bath Ales Gem – were both well-kept, and the overall impression was of a friendly, relaxed and comfortable place to meet up for a drink – a classic example of what a community pub should be. There is no food available at the moment, which seems a pity, given how much the viability of so many rural pubs depends on food sales in the current climate. The main reason for closing the pub last year was its lack of viability, but, given the level of support on the cold midweek winter evening we visited, the local community seem determined that they won't be deprived of their local again. Northend is classic walking country, and the inn is ideally placed for a reinvigorating pint or two after working up a thirst with a brisk Sunday-morning stroll. Even if you don't fancy a walk, the Northend is well worth a visit to see how successfully an old building can be refurbished, while incorporating original features and maintaining the feel of a local pub. The pub's owners are to be congratulated not only on their refurbishment, but also for their decision to reopen the Northend. Opening hours at present are: Monday-Thursday 5pm-11pm; Friday & Saturday noon-1am; Sunday noon-10.30pm.



A CAMRA social at the newly-refurbished – and reopened – Northend Inn

...and beyond

Over in Wiltshire, the villagers of **Edington**, east of Westbury, are fighting to save their local. A century ago, Edington had five pubs: the Old White Horse, the Plough, the George, the Lamb and the Bell. One by one they all closed, until only the **Lamb** was left. Then, in July 2009, after failing to find a new tenant, Enterprise Inns put the shutters up and put the Lamb on the market. A thriving community of almost 800 people, with an annual music festival, a May Ball and countless other events, was suddenly left without the one thing those events depended on – a village pub.

The Lamb has been there for around 400 years and was originally known as the Pownit Arms. Its fireplaces are made from old stones



The Lamb at Edington (© Peter Watkins)

salvaged from who knows where, the beams supporting its upper floor are said to have come from old ships when they were broken up, and its walls were made in the traditional way from wattle and daub. Its name recalls the large flocks of sheep that once roamed the downs. It also served as a drovers' inn, where

sheep and cattle heading for the London markets could be penned in overnight. More important than its history, and the spirit of continuity that represents, however, is its function within the village today. It is – or was until it closed – the village's last community resource, the village's last hope, in other words, of maintaining a true sense of community.

Edington's story is by no means unique. **There are now, for the first time in over a thousand years, more villages without a local pub than with one.** But the people of Edington decided that, if Enterprise didn't want to run the Lamb, they would do it themselves. A mailshot to everyone in the village produced 60 offers of financial support. The skills of those who have come forward also meant that they would be able to refurbish the building and run the business themselves.

However, after carefully costing the project, it became clear that the asking price of £325,000 made it unviable. While the action committee were determined to see the pub reopen, they did not want to be out of pocket. It was clear that the asking price was aimed at property developers rather than potential pub owners, even though, with the Lamb being the last community asset in the village, permission for change of use is unlikely to be granted. They point out that other Enterprise pubs with a similar trading record – but in less desirable locations – have sold for a lot less. At the time of writing, the Lamb's fate would seem to depend on Enterprise's willingness to accept a more realistic offer, based on what it is worth as a pub. We can only hope the people of Edington succeed in their bid to save it.

Two villages which have got their pubs back after a period of closure are the **Somerset Arms at Semington** and the **Woolpack at Sutton Veny**. The Woolpack had been closed for two years and many villagers thought they had lost it for good. Sutton Veny used to have another pub, the Bell, but that went in the 1960s, and the closure of the Woolpack meant that the village, south-west of Warminster, was without a pub. Tim and Abbie Smith, who bought the freehold of the pub from Enterprise, have between them worked in several of Wiltshire's best-known pubs, including the Angel at Heytesbury, the Lamb on the Strand in Seend, and the Boot at Berwick St James. An extensive refurbishment included removal of internal walls to create an open-plan layout. Those who recall the Woolpack from its days as a sports pub, or who drove past it when it was closed, will be astonished at the transformation. A visit in early October left



The Cross Keys at Corsham a century ago – little changed today apart from an increase in traffic

us in little doubt that the Woolpack is well on its way to a place in the pantheon of Wiltshire's top dining pubs – and my pint of Ringwood Best was pretty good as well.

The Somerset Arms at Semington, a hundred yards or so from the Kennet & Avon Canal, was always a popular dining pub, but trade was hit when the main road running past it closed when a new by-pass was built. The Somerset Arms wasn't just a food pub – it was very much part of the community, and when it closed earlier this year, the community was up in arms. Faced with the prospect of losing their pub for ever, a couple from the village decided to take it on. A full-scale refurbishment saw it painted white throughout, with a large restaurant at one end, settees in the middle, and – most important as far as many locals were concerned – a proper bar at the other end and an excellent range of beer. Like the Woolpack it is a genuine local pub that also does food, rather than the sort of place where non-diners are regarded as a nuisance. Foodwise, both pubs offer limited menus – a sure sign that everything is freshly prepared, as well as being locally sourced – and both seem to have pitched it just right in terms of balance and ambience. On the basis of recent visits, both come highly recommended.

If you're planning a trip over to North West Wiltshire's Pub of the Year, the **Two Pigs in Corsham**, try to make time to call in at the **Cross Keys**, a mile or so further along the A4. Dating, like Two Pigs, from the eighteenth century, the Cross Keys was open as an inn by 1757, when there was an act of parliament "for amending, widening, making commodious and keeping in Repair the Road from the Cross Keys, otherwise Brickers Barn, in the Parish of Corsham, in the County of Wilts, to Bath Easton Bridge, in the County of Somerset." This remarkably unspoilt example of a wayside inn has recently been taken over by an enthusiastic young landlord committed to preserving its character, while introducing unusual guest ales, live music at weekends and community events.

Andrew Swift

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London National Inventory Pubs

A tour of Regional Inventory pubs in London can be worthwhile, no matter what beers you like. These pubs have retained some of their interior features, with some even being of National Inventory status.

The **Argyll Arms** in Argyll Street, is only a street away from Oxford Circus underground. The front window is curved. The left-hand entrance leads into a corridor covered with etched mirrors. The saloon bar at the rear, with black and white tiled flooring, is a seated area, with tall mirrors around the walls; the Palladium bar is upstairs. The right-hand door enters the front bar with areas separated by timber-framed screens with engraved glass; these are not of ceiling height.



Argyll Arms

Head east along Oxford Street, right to cross Soho Square to reach the **Dog & Duck** in Bateman Street. This was very dark when I visited, and certainly a busy pub. The walls are covered with tiling; some green background, with brown rectangular areas having a framed effect of patterning. Beneath is a brown and blue dado rail. The tiled dado of one wall seemed to be a mixture of browns, with mirrors above, advertising the commodities connected with pubs.



Tottenham

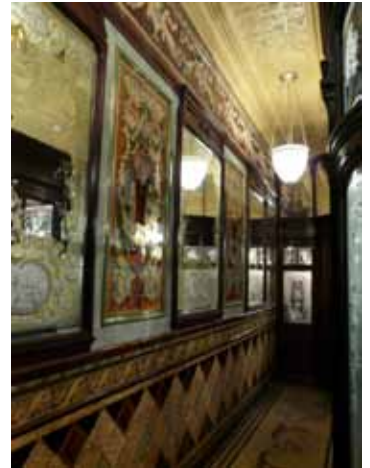
Retrace your steps to Oxford Street, head east to find the **Tottenham** on Tottenham Court Road. This is more open-plan than original – a common loss with our pubs. It has a mixture of tiling patterns with flowers. Some of the mirrors have coloured patterns. The ceiling is decorated with pictures and cornice; and a skylight houses the lighting in one area.

Heading south down Charing Cross Road, left into St Giles High Street, then east takes you into High Holborn. On the south side lies the **Princess Louise** – a ‘must see’! This is a Samuel Smith’s pub. Like so



Princess Louise

many Victorian pubs, this once had partitions which were later removed. About two years ago, partitions were reinstated during a major refurbishment, with guidance by English Heritage. The left-hand entrance leads to the rear end of the bar via a corridor surrounded by mirrors and tiled pictures. An island bar with a distinct clock built on top of the bar-back, rather like a tower, centres this pub. The partitions are very smart, giving snugs for private chats amongst friends. The gents has a nicely tiled flooring; the urinals and their gridiron are a distinct size.



Princess Louise

Continue east along the road, looking out for a cubic clock overhanging the pub-front of the **Cittie of Yorke** on the opposite side. Entirely rebuilt around 1924, this is a sister to the Princess Louise. A long corridor with tiled flooring and well decorated ceiling takes you to either a lounge, a cellar bar on the left-hand side, or the main bar at the rear. This rear bar is a long area, with a number of small snugs on the right-hand side (more at the far end). This used to be a very smokey place. The snugs can make you wonder what business or political agreements were made in them. The bar’s servery is on the left-hand side, with large vats above the bar-back. The bare eaves of the roof remind me of the Long Bar in Old Market, back home in Bristol. Towards the far end is a stove.



Ye Olde Mitre

To visit **Ye Olde Mitre**, continue east along High Holborn to Hatton Garden; the pub is hidden in an alley between here and Ely Court. Well known for its being hidden, this is a small pub, with the servery accessible from two carpeted lounges. A snug adjoins the rear one, which is covered with dark panelling, as is most of the pub. The furniture at the rear shows some history, with its style, and being very sturdy. The pub has been bought by Fuller’s since I last visited. Well worth a visit, but as is common with pubs in the city, closed on weekends.

Head back south across High Holborn down St Andrew’s Street nearly to Blackfriars Bridge. On a triangular island stands the **Black Friar** – a very busy pub, but another not to be missed. Its interior is covered in marble, and has stained glass pictures. I stopped for food as well as beers here. There are sculptures and carvings of friars all over



Black Friar



Tipperary

the walls and even the ceilings. From outside, you are even greeted by one above the entrance. On the walls are phrases that will put your mind to work.

Next, head north back up New Bridge Street. On reaching City Thameslink Station, go west to Fleet Street. The **Tipperary** is a small pub with a red frontage. With an Irish theme, this has shamrocks on a mosaic-tiled floor. Its bar is a narrow one. A few mirrors with names like 'Guinness' plus a few photos from the past break up the wooden paneling which covers the right-hand wall. There is another room upstairs. Maybe not as exciting as some of the others, it is worth a visit.

Not far away is **Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese**, indicated by a lamp with the pub's name hanging over the pavement. Look down an alley. Very old-looking dark panelling and partitions plus old, basic seating and paintings are the main features before closer inspection.



Salisbury

Continue west, taking quite a long walk along the Strand, right up Bedford Street, left into New Row, and the **Salisbury** is on the corner of St Martin's Court, a pedestrianised area. The exterior of its entrance is very unusual. The pub claims to have been once well known for prize-fighting. The windows are engraved with the letters "SS" included to represent "Salisbury's Stores"; stores being a term sometimes used in relation to pubs in earlier times. The bar-back has etched glass, as do the partitions. Not all is felt to be of the best quality, though. The seating and lighting give a very warm feel to the pub.

Walk south down St Martin's Lane to meet Cockspur Square, then west to meet Pall Mall, later north up to St James Street. Duke of York Street, where the **Red Lion** lies, joins this on its northern side. This is one *not* to be missed. A very popular and busy pub; on my visit, customers came in as soon as the doors opened. The pub has an island bar, so you can be served from any side. The doors are marked 'PUBLIC BAR' and 'PRIVATE BAR', although they may have been reorganised. Some screening has survived, indicating the separate rooms once there. The windows appear frosted, and the walls surround you with mirrors etched with flowers and shelves for your glasses. Even the gantry above the counter has patterned glass, although this is a more recent addition. The bar is of very smooth timber, which is curved in the rear bar.

To return to Oxford Circus underground, walk north to meet Piccadilly, turn right, then left up Swallow Street (a backstreet) to meet Regent Street; head north. to reach the station.



Tottenham

For a full guide of the heritage pubs in London, put a copy of *London Heritage Pubs - An inside story* by Geoff Brandwood and Jane Jephcote on your Christmas list. This is an excellent book detailing the history and architecture of pubs all over London. If you visit the Great British Beer Festival, why not spend an extra day touring an area?

Tim Belston



Tottenham

The Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors lists those pub interiors which CAMRA regards as being in the "first division" when it comes to pub preservation priorities.

"I am a firm believer in the people. If given the truth, they can be depended upon to meet any national crisis. The great point is to bring them the real facts, and beer." *Abraham Lincoln*

"A fine beer may be judged with only one sip, but it's better to be thoroughly sure." *Czech proverb*

"From man's sweat and God's love, beer came into the world." *Saint Arnoldus of Metz, sometimes thought to be a patron saint of brewers*

"There is more to life than beer alone, but beer makes those other things even better." *Stephen Morris, author of The Great Beer Trek*

"Philosophy and beer, it's the same thing: when consumed, they change all the perceptions we have of the world." *Dominique-Joël Beaupré*

"Beer makes you feel the way you ought to feel without beer." *Henry Lawson, Australian Poet and Writer*

"Who cares how time advances? I am drinking ale today." *Edgar Allan Poe*

"Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy." *Benjamin Franklin*



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News from Arbor Ales

October was the busiest month ever for Arbor Ales – surpassing last October by a wide margin. Many of the ales were sold out even before being racked into cask! A record number of different brews – twelve in total – were produced during the month. One hundred new casks have just arrived, which should make it easier to fulfil orders although the only long-term solution lies in larger premises. Fortunately a large room, with better drainage and natural light, as well as a roof that doesn't leak, is available and adjacent to the present brewery.

Of the six or seven ales in current production, a recent addition is **Bushcraft** (3.9% ABV), a pale brown best bitter brewed with Maris

Otter pale malt, caramalt, crystal malt, crystal rye, 1% chocolate malt and featuring Bramling Cross hops. The single hop beer **Motueka** (4%) is being retained by popular demand. Recent successes were the **Four Minute Mild** (2.8%), a full-flavoured ale promoting responsible drinking to encourage reforms in excise duty, and the fantastic **Jolly Jack Tar** (8%), an IPA for those who already drink responsibly. The latter was aged for 77 days in oak casks resulting in arguably the most complex beer I have ever tasted. As many as ten varieties of hop are used; the first wort hop is New Zealand Riwaka with Pilot for bittering. Two separate charges of late hop are added, the first consists of Cascade, Lubelski, Beata and

Bramling Cross and the second East Kent Goldings, Motueka, Sovereign and Aurora. A powerful vanilla aroma is followed on the palate by a big body of slightly sweet malt with hints of tropical fruits but hops quickly come through to develop into a long bitter and fruity finish. A further brew is planned to be available for January 2010.

In preparation at the moment is **Breakfast Stout** (8.5%) an oatmeal/coffee imperial Russian stout, the pilot brew having been made ready for BADRAG's rare ales month in November. Having secured a small quantity of pumpkins from a local grower, Jon also produced a Hallowe'en beer for sale in the Old Stillage.

A Christmas beer, **Sabrina Dark**, is being prepared; fifteen pence from every pint will go to Severn Rescue, a life-saving charity whose volunteers rely entirely on public generosity.

A large number of outlets now have accounts with Arbor Ales, indeed many pubs retain a hand-pump dedicated to their beers. With the brewery working to full capacity and deliveries often being made daily, Jon is now starting to think about looking for an assistant. Is there a keen ale drinker out there, preferably with some knowledge of brewing, looking for a job?


Henry Davies

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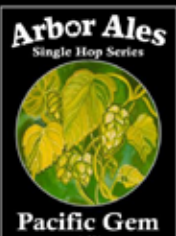
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Hunny Beer
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Six years on

In 2003, I was the co-author of *Bath Pubs*, an historical guide to the city's pubs. Back then, there were 108 pubs in the city. Six years on, it seems a good time to take stock of what has happened to them since the book was published.

Several pubs have closed permanently. The **Castle** in Bathwick and the **Dark Horse** in Northampton Street are to be converted to private houses, while the **Englishcombe Inn** is to become a care home. The **New Burnt House** on Wellsway has been demolished. The future of the **Long Acre Tavern** on the London Road and the **Jubilee** on Southdown, both of which have been offered for sale, is uncertain.

Two pubs that are currently closed but look set to reopen are the **Delfter Krug** on the Sawclose (known latterly as Raw), which closed after the company that owned it went into administration; and the **Belvoir Castle** on the Lower Bristol Road which is being refurbished as the Victoria Works.

The **Porter Butt** on the London Road is still open but currently for sale, following Enterprise Inns' termination of the lease due to lack of trade; it offers, in the agent's words 'potential restaurant, office or residential opportunity subject to permissions.' The loss of the Porter Butt would be especially sad, as it includes one of the finest live music venues in the city, known as the Walcot Palais. The **Brains Surgery** in Larkhall is also for sale with the same agents.

As reported elsewhere in Pints West, the owner of the **Belvedere Wine Vaults** has submitted an application to convert the pub to bed and breakfast accommodation.

The **Roundhouse** on Stall Street has become a Pret a Manger, **Filos** on the London Road is a café/restaurant called One Beaufort. As reported elsewhere, the **Rummer** is now an Italian bar, while the **Hat & Feather** is the Hudson Bar & Grill. The **Crown & Anchor** in Weston and the **Fairfield Arms** on Camden double as Indian restaurants.

Gastropub makeovers have continued apace, with varying impact

on the traditional idea of the pub. On Combe Down, the **Forester's Arms** has become the Flower & Forester, while in the Julian Road area, both the **Chequers** and the **Marlborough Tavern** are now popular dining pubs. Charlie and Amanda Digney's two pubs in Bath, the **King William** on the London Road and the **Garrick's Head**, have both picked up rave reviews for food, but their commitment to real ale has seen both pubs included in the Good Beer Guide, proving that change isn't necessarily a bad thing as far as beer drinkers are concerned.

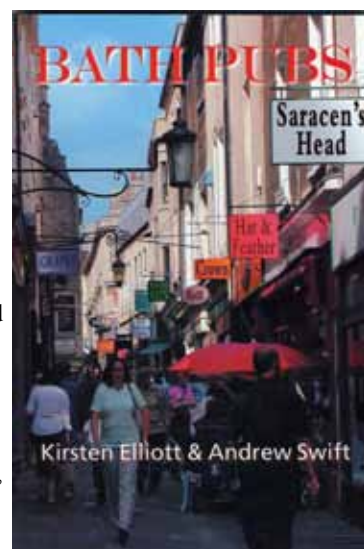
Renamings have included **St Christopher's Inn** (now Belushi's), the **Rat & Parrot** (now the Westgate), and **Smith Bros** (now the Cork after a period as the Cork & Bottle and an equally brief period as DYMK).

The renaming of most interest to real-ale drinkers, however, was Hatchett's, which reopened as the **Raven** five years ago, winning the accolade of local CAMRA Pub of the Year a year later.

There was one pub that didn't feature in *Bath Pubs* in 2003, because it had been closed for several years when the book appeared. The **Royal Oak** in Twerton had narrowly escaped demolition in 2002, but nobody thought this former cider house would ever open as a pub again. But, of course, it did, and it has been local CAMRA Pub of the Year for the last three years. Pubs may be closing at an unprecedented rate, but in Bath at least some of the changes of the last six years have undoubtedly been positive ones.

Andrew Swift

Bath Pubs costs £12.99 from Akeman Press (www.akemanpress.com or 01225 310364)



Good Beer Guide 2010

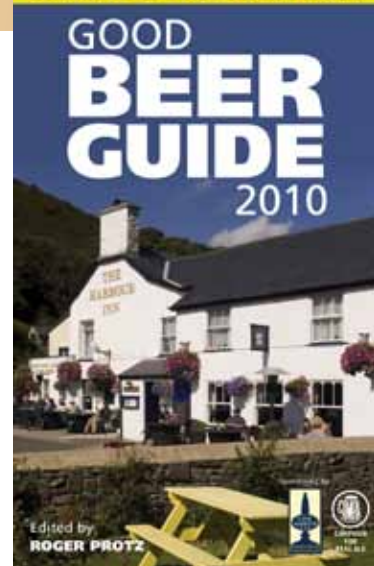
The brand new 2010 Good Beer Guide was launched in September 2009. As in previous years a local launch event was held to coincide with this. We always try to hold the event in a pub that is newly listed in the guide so this year it was the turn of the excellent **Bank** in John Street, just off Broad Street in central Bristol.

The Good Beer Guide is compiled purely by unpaid CAMRA volunteers and seeks to identify and describe the best 4,500 real ale pubs in the UK. Locally we cover an area that roughly corresponds with the former county of Avon, and we are allocated a maximum number of pub entries of 63 – of which 39 must be in Bristol and South Gloucestershire, and 24 in North Somerset. Our area is particularly well served with real ale-friendly pubs so the task of reducing well over 100 nominated pubs down to 63 is a difficult one. Needless to say, much lively debate takes place before the final votes are taken! Therefore pubs that gain places in the GBG can feel very proud of their achievement, and others will feel unlucky to miss out. This year was no different with 13 new entries and no less than 15 pubs achieving the required number of votes but failing to make the top 63. To make room for the new entries it was also necessary for 13 of the 2009 entries to make way. This does not necessarily mean that they have all dropped their standards, but in some cases simply that others have got better.

Down in Somerset there are three changes. In Weston-super-Mare the **Raglan** in Upper Church Road returns after a short absence, as does the **New Inn** at Cross near Axbridge. Finally the **Old Bank** in Keynsham High Street makes its first appearance in many years. All three pubs are known for the quality of their beer and for offering an interesting range of independently brewed ales. I feel that I must also mention the pub that was first reserve and missed out by a single vote, due to not enough voters having paid it a visit in the last year – all who had been there voted in favour. This was the **Poacher** in High Street, Portishead, a 2009 entry. The result was terribly unlucky for them, especially as many of us feel that it has actually improved considerably in recent times. It is to be hoped that more of you will make the effort to get out there before our next vote in March 2010 and give them a fair chance.

In Bristol and South Gloucestershire there have been eight changes. The **Bank** certainly deserved the accolade and landlord Ed Lobbett was well pleased to receive his award (see picture). The press had been

invited to attend the launch event but as we had heard nothing by 2.30pm some of us relaxed a little too much and tucked into some of Ed's tasty guest beers. Then I received calls from both Radio Bristol and Points West TV requesting live interviews later that day. Whilst Ed had sensibly abstained and was perfectly fit for the task, the search was on for a sober CAMRA spokesperson brave enough to face the cameras and microphones! Step forward Pete Bridle who was summoned from his workplace and did a quite magnificent job. There was an element of comedy behind the scenes as the BBC TV camera crew were unable to get their truck with the vital aerial down John Street. We had to literally leg it across the centre and up Christmas Steps to a nearby GBG pub to do the live TV interview outside there. Poor old Ed had to be interviewed outside of someone else's pub, and Pete (who was already charging down Park Street from the BBC radio studios) re-routed by mobile phone. We got ourselves in place with seconds to spare before "going live" on TV. Ed and Pete gave great interviews while a couple of us sat at a table behind them trying not to look as though we'd just run a marathon!



"The definitive rundown of the best places in the UK to get a pint of real ale, from cosy country inns to upmarket style bars."

Time Out Magazine

Now in its 37th year, the Good Beer Guide is fully revised and updated, with details of more than 4,500 pubs across the country serving the best real ale.

From country inns to urban style bars and backstreet boozers, all selected and reviewed by CAMRA's 100,000 members, this is your definitive guide to finding the perfect pint.

- The Guide, sponsored by industry accreditation body Cask Marque, features complete entries for over 4,500 urban and rural pubs, giving details of food, opening hours, beer gardens, accommodation, transport links, pub history, disabled access and facilities for families.

- **Informative features section, with articles on pubs, beer and brewing, as well as beer festival listings from around the country.**

- CAMRA's 100,000-strong membership fully update and revise the Guide every year, thereby guaranteeing to supply the reader with the most up to date publication in helping to locate the best pint of real ale. There are a total of 1297 new entries in this year's Guide.

- **Unique brewery section listing all the breweries in the UK – micro, regional and national – that brew real ale, with tasting notes for hundreds of their beers written by a trained CAMRA tasting panel.**

Roger Protz, Good Beer Guide editor, said: "CAMRA's Good Beer Guide remains the number-one, independent guide to good beer and pubs. It is wonderful to see there are now over 700 breweries in Britain brewing far in excess of 2,500 different varieties of real ale, and so many fantastic pubs in which to drink this beer.

"CAMRA members continue to work relentlessly throughout the year to ensure the reader gets the most up to date guide to the best pubs in Britain. Their tireless work is the reason why the Good Beer Guide remains Britain's best-selling pub guide, and I'd like to thank them personally for their hard work and support."



The other new entries this year include Bristol Beer Factory's excellent **Barley Mow** in the Dings area near Temple Meads station making its first ever entry. Also new, at least in recent memory, are the **Cambridge** in Redland (Fuller's) and the **Chelsea Inn** in Easton which often features interesting guest beers. Two Bath Ales pubs come in – the **Wellington** in Horfield after a year out and the **Live and Let Live** in Frampton Cotterell for the first time. Two more to return after a few years out are the **Post Office Tavern** in Westbury-on-Trym and the **Anchor** at Oldbury on Severn. Finally and by no means least the burgeoning real ale scene is reflected by the inclusion of two pubs for the first time – the **Lansdown** (free house) and the **Portcullis** (Dawkins free house) both of which major on independent quality real ales.

Amongst the 13 pubs to lose out this year were some very well known long-standing entries – such as the Cornubia, Bridge Inn, Hare on the Hill, Zerodegrees, Prince of Wales in Westbury and Inn on the Green in Horfield. Their challenge is now to impress so much that they cannot be left out again next year. It will not be easy as we are already aware of many new nominations which are pushing for inclusion. Despite the recession we are certainly still spoilt for real ale choice in these parts.

The 2010 Good Beer Guide can be purchased in most major book stores with a cover price of £15.99 or direct from CAMRA books as below (members price is only £11 that way). It can also be purchased at CAMRA beer festivals or via active branch members.

The Good Beer Guide 2010 – don't go out without it!

Vince Murray

CAMRA Books – 230 Hatfield Rd, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW (cheques to CAMRA Ltd plus £1.50 P&P). Tel 01727 867201. www.camra.org.uk.

Brew Dog tasting evening at the 2009 branch Pub of the Year

In August I was fortunate to be invited to the New Inn at Mayshill for a beer tasting evening. The date was a little tricky. Just before my summer holiday with stacks of organisation still to do beforehand, and the tasting was on the day of my father's 70th birthday. But with a rapid bit of "sorting" I was free and able to take my place at the New Inn.

Dave at the New Inn has always had a penchant for offering a diverse range of real ale, and never afraid of something a bit strong. But the offerings on this particular evening were to take his reputation to a new level. Dave purchased all of the Brew Dog beer himself and generously shared it with the group. Steve Matthews also generously contributed four bottles of a very special beer that most of us would have been more than happy to keep to ourselves – more of that later.

Four tables were set aside for us. The group was made up of a few BADRAGer's, New Inn regulars plus a few more fortunate CAMRA members plus Dave himself making a very lucky 13.

All of the beers were bottled and the first up was **Brew Dog Black Lager** at 4.9% ABV. This dry dark beer was very much like a classic Irish stout. With a full aroma and a dry hoppy taste, it started the tasting with a familiar style.

Next up was **Brew Dog Atlantic IPA** – ABV unknown. With the ABV not given on the bottle or on the web-site the strength was not known, but be assured that it was strong! A barley wine style beer with a very strong taste, though rounded and mellow in an odd sort of way. There was a strong edge that gave way to reduced bitterness. The beer had been conditioned in its cask for three months on a ship at sea in order to authenticate the IPA style of old.

Steve Matthews' contribution was next. Four bottles of **Fuller's 2004 Vintage** at 8.5% ABV. The only bottle-conditioned ale of the whole evening, the 'best before end' date was 2007, but it had aged very well! This amber ale had stacks of aroma and the smooth full-strength bitter taste was absolutely classic. It would make, among other things, a great winter warmer.

Now for the biggies. **Brew Dog Smokehead** at 10.5% ABV was shocking! Not shockingly bad, just shocking. The TCP aroma was

enough to clear your nasal passages with a single light snort. This black beer, however, had a taste that was completely different to the aroma (thank goodness!). The full-on taste of peat was something quite different and not at all unpleasant to my taste buds, but I think one or two of the group drew the line with the Smokehead.

Last up was the one that everyone was talking about that week. **Brew Dog Tokyo** at 18.2% ABV. Did I say 18.2% ABV? Ah good, because that is exactly what it was. The 'best before end' date on this one was 2019. A black beer that was as smooth as silk and was surprisingly easy drinking. Extremely complex with a mighty richness, Brew Dog have achieved something special with this beer.

I should point out that all of the afore mentioned beers were sampled by each group member in quantities of around 150 to 200ml.

But that wasn't the end of it. With the bottled specialities all consumed, Dave had some 'light refreshment' on the bar. Cottage Norman's Conquest at 7% ABV was available to anyone who needed it after our heavyweight proceedings!

In summary, this was a beer tasting with a difference. Every beer was a full-on assault of the taste buds. An utterly unique experience that will stick in the mind for a long time to come. Dave McKillop put this event on at his own expense and quite rightly deserves high praise. Steve Matthews also generously contributed.

So what of other Brew Dog beers?

Outside of the New Inn event I have tried four other Brew Dogs in the bottle and every one has been different. The **Punk IPA** at 6% ABV has true IPA credentials – pale, hoppy bitterness and strong. **Chaos Theory** at 7.1% ABV sends the taste buds into chaos. A massive aroma and flavour gives this beer a great standing. **Dogma** at 7.8% ABV is made with honey from heather flowers. As is often the case with honey beers the aroma and taste is quite subtle. **Hardcore IPA** at 9% ABV has massive hoppy bitterness that is mellowed by a melon finish.

No doubt many readers will have tried Brew Dog beers but those that haven't will do well to seek out these Scottish beers from Fraserburgh. Available in 330ml bottles they make the perfect nightcap with a difference.

Mike Jackson



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Cryptic Crossword

ACROSS

1. Big beer that's easy to sink (7)
5. Very painful means of clearing beer (7)
9. Start drunken vine tour - violently evicted (6, 3)
10. Indian mystic was upset I was starting Marston's (5)
11. Theakston's slips down easily, but not for customers with these (5)
12. Committee are meeting, planning to drink extensively (2, 7)
14. Ordering a round frees King's bar (6, 3, 5)
17. Shockingly stormy activity on the bed with strong white cider (5, 9)
21. Appearance of Stonehenge's Sign of Spring bitter is always fresh! (9)
23. Force to start imbibing more pints English lager (5)
24. Follow Tarka on model line to discover real ale (5)
25. Mediaeval discoverer of golden brewing method? (9)
26. Small school takes a rest for the spirit (7)
27. No good ropey mixture responsible for fermentation (7)

DOWN

1. Tip a wink to one who's drunk (6)
2. Square tool; Damien's inspiration in depicting drinker's desires (7)
3. Disturbing Inn pest Ed. desperate for a beer (5,4)
4. Head of Cotleigh getting delayed when the pub lights go out (7,4)
5. Noble activity of yeast. Rubbish! (3)
6. Where real ales can make their mark I hear (5)
7. Conceive I'm a gin cocktail. Ecstasy! (7)
8. Bottled stout, almost completely genuine, served on board (8)
13. Restful drink could be the thing in soup company's production (8, 3)
15. A sociable French customer always welcome at the gastro-pub (3, 6)
16. Keeps the cold out, like premier beer operating system (8)
18. A small measure of 'Golden Eye' was hailed as nonsense (7)
19. Pinching short drinks? (7)
20. A large excess of wheat beer constituent back in Newcastle (6)
22. I get into Hill Island brewery's best bitter. It's big and fruity (5)
25. Promotional material found amongst the headstrong (3)

Crossword set by Pete Taberner.

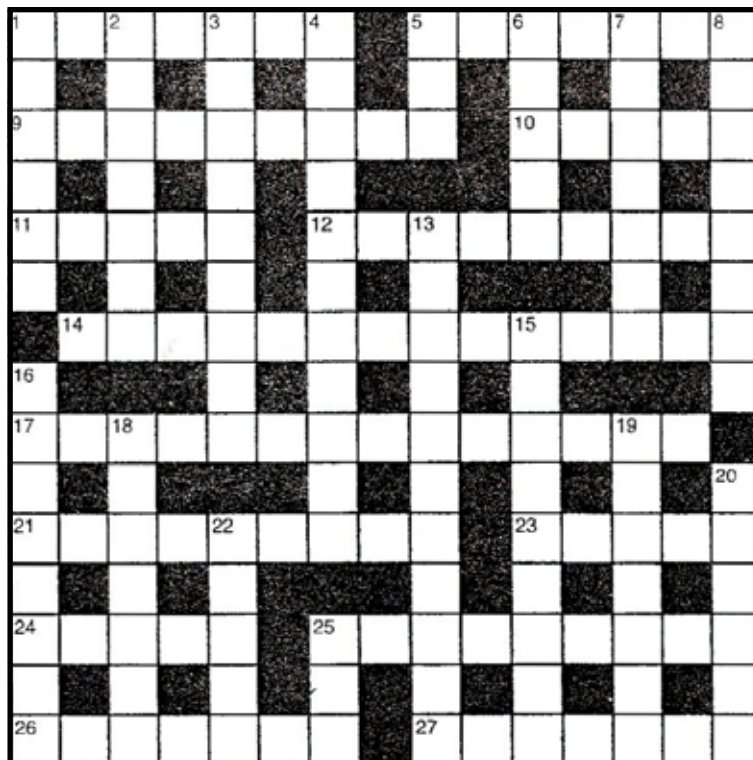
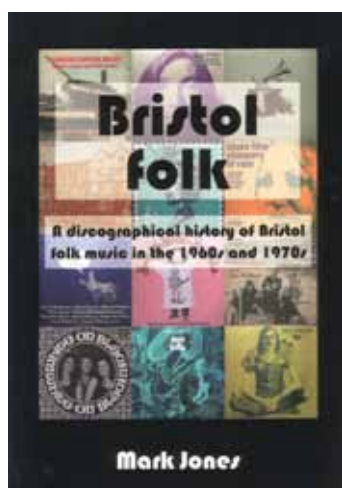
The first correct crossword selected at random after the end of January wins a copy of Bristol Folk by Mark Jones, worth £18.99. Send your entries to the editor, address on page 35, before then.

Bristol Folk

Why is it that pubs and folk music go together so well? Perhaps because pubs are part of the community, places to go to meet friends (and make new ones), whilst enjoying a pint or two of good, real beer. In the relaxed atmosphere of the pub, the artist connects with the audience because (s)he's one of them. That's what folk music is – music about and for folk.

And now there's a book about Bristol's folk music heritage in the 1960s and 70s – Bristol Folk – written by a local music historian (and CAMRA member), Mark Jones, which celebrates the city, the music, the musicians, the records they released, the record labels that recorded them and the pubs and clubs that they played in.

For instance, the Old Duke on King Street, still globally-famous as a jazz pub, also played host to many folk and blues clubs in the 1960s, including, amongst others, the Bristol Ballads and Blues, the Folk Tradition and the Folk Blues Bristol and West clubs. Many of these clubs later moved to the Bathurst Hotel, which, as the Louisiana, is now, as then, still a live music venue of national repute. In 1966, with the opening of the Troubadour club in Waterloo Street, Clifton, Bristol became second only to London in terms of the number and influence of its recording folk artists, though, shock-horror, the Troubadour didn't sell beer! Still, as Fred Wedlock points out, "...the landlords of the Greyhound and the Somerset, round in Princess Victoria Street, thought it was Christmas



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three nights a week." At its zenith, the Troubadour had 32,000 members, so no wonder the local landlords were happy. Out of the Bristol folk scene came such nationally-renowned names as Keith Christmas, Sally Oldfield, Ian Anderson, Bob Stewart, Steve Tilston, Dave Evans, the Pigsty Hill Light Orchestra, Adge Cutler and the Wurzels and Fred Wedlock amongst others.

Bristol Folk includes in-depth profiles of all known recording artists on the 1960s and 70s Bristol folk scene, a comprehensive discography, in-depth coverage of the folk clubs (and the pubs that hosted them) and of the main record labels and folk agencies. Many then local musicians have provided reminiscences, and there are 34 pages of photos, record sleeves and memorabilia. The book is published by Bristol Folk Publications and is available from www.bristol-folk.co.uk and from Bristol's better book shops.

Bristol Folk Publications is keen to hear your memories of live music (from folk to jazz to cabaret to heavy metal to oompah to punk to barbershop – anything really) in Bristol's pubs from the 1930s (or earlier?) through to 2000 for a planned celebration of the city's ongoing pub-based live music scene. If you've got some memories you want to share, contact info@bristol-folk.co.uk and you might find your memories in print in the tastefully-titled Wassfink of 'Ee, Den? A celebration of live music in Bristol's pubs in the words of those who were there.

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

Just a short note to say how much I enjoyed reading the last issue of Pints West. I picked up a copy a few weeks ago when I was in Bristol on business when one of our local hosts suggested a few in the Bag O'Nails. Great pub, great ales and a friendly and entertaining landlady (who also bought us all a drink as it was her birthday!).

We have a similar publication up in my Derby stomping ground, called the Derby Drinker, which is also an entertaining and well received publication.

Keep up the good work!

Ian Bestwick, Derby.

Having read with great interest the Autumn Issue of your publication, I am tempted to respond. I was particularly intrigued with your articles on cider and perry. Might I suggest you view my blog thelastchoirboystanding.blogspot.com which refers to a published book on cider and perry, "Perry Pears", produced in the 60s as a memorial to Professor B.T.P. Barker, head of the Long Ashton Research Station, by the University of Bristol. Many consider it to be the most comprehensive and knowledgeable ever written on the subject.

You might also like to contact and refer to those people who are familiar with the trade, and characters involved back in the heyday of perry production who have vast experience and a knowledge of the licensed trade. I would be only too willing to supply you with such details. I could furnish you with information and a history of the trade. I could also give you some articles written and published by me in the past, should you be interested in extending your readers' knowledge of the industry.

I, as do many others, read with interest Pints West whenever I get the opportunity. Thank you. Keep up the good work.

Harry Tavenor,

Past Chairman Allied Brewery Traders' Association (ABTA) Western Section.

Thanks for the Mountains and Mooses article in Pints West 83. I am a regular visitor to North Wales, and am grateful for your suggestions for watering holes.

I am also an occasional volunteer on the Welsh Highland Railway (Caernarfon). One of our regular events is a real ale festival which usually takes place over a weekend in mid-May in the Goods Shed at Dinas, three miles south of Caernarfon. The event is going from strength to strength with lots of local ales, including of course brews from Purple Moose.

I will let you know if/when the event is on in 2010.

Sean Emmett, Bristol.

I read the articles in Autumn Pints West with regard to Pubs in Peril. I noticed an uncanny theme with my old haunts. When living in Coalpit Heath, my first visit to a pub was the Fire Engine along with the Horseshoe, side by side in Coalpit Heath. Both now long

gone. Friends and I would on occasions drive to Winterbourne for a drink with old school mates in the Wheatshaf, now an Indian reataurant, or the Coach House, Frampton, now flats. For a short walk I visited the Golden Lion, now under the threat of being turned into houses.

About 20 years ago I moved to nearby Yate and was always found either in the Four Season which was pulled down and replaced by a Lidl shop, or in the Swan which for the last seven or so years inexplicably lies empty. I moved then to Chipping Sodbury and quite recently the Tern Inn yards up the road closed for a short while. The first pub I took my wife-to-be was the lovely old Grapes at the top of Chipping Sodbury, now the drinks area of an Indian restaurant. I can report some good news: the Portcullis, which was once a favourite of mine, is due to reopen after a major refurbishment at the bottom end of Chipping Sodbury High Street. Needless to say, if anyone spots me in a pub it is a good bet there is only a short life span for the pub. Maybe I should stop drinking to save the British pub and beer?

Nick Gillett, Chipping Sodbury.

Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! At last a map of a town to go with details of many pubs lying therein as outlined in the attached article (*Pints West* no. 83, page 27 - *map of Bath*).

It will facilitate a visit to the various emporiums from the nether regions of Nailsea (transport courtesy of First Great Western and Senior Rail Card) by several of us.

Often in the past, especially in respect of Western-super-Mare, a similar nugget of information to advise where in the town all these great pubs are would have helped. In this last issue, pubs such as the Waverley, Criterion, Royal Hotel, Castle Green Inn were named but not 'located' for the benefit of potential visitors. A map is not needed for each place in every issue but occasionally, perhaps once a year, or one map of one 'town' in each issue.

Great magazine - much appreciated - thanks.

Neil Mansfield, Nailsea.

I've just finished reading Pints West No.82 and would just like to say what a great read it was. I "collect" CAMRA magazines but not in the usual sense of being a collector. I just keep the most recent from any branch region and once I have picked up a more recent edition I will throw away the previous one except for any articles that I want to keep. The reason for keeping the most recent copy of a magazine is that it comes in handy when visiting that area.

Based on issue 82 Pints West is right up there with the best, ie. Nottingham Drinker. I was interested in the article by Lesly Huxley where you had asked your readers what they thought of PW. I live in Cheddle Hulme, Cheshire, consequently changes in landlord in a Bristol pub or an extra LocAle on a bar in Portishead is not the most interesting part of PW for me. I always enjoy reading outing reports, whether in this country or overseas. This is because it's interesting to read what the writer thinks of a new place. In PW 82 the quirky writing of Duncan Shine added an extra dimension to Tales of the Riverbank and the bird and beer reports by Mike Jackson were enjoyable in a different way.

PW 82 was very good for beer fest coverage, it made me think that I better try some of them for myself, surely a sign that your "reporters" were doing more than just saying "this is what I did at the weekend" but were stimulating an interest and desire in others.

I won't ramble on anymore and will just finish with the less than original "keep up the good work".

Dave Sheldon, Cheddle Hulme, Cheshire.

Thanks for printing my letter in the Autumn issue of Pints West, which I have just eagerly read. As a result of the letter, you may be interested to learn that a local beer importer has contacted me advising that it stocks a range of beers from the Bath Ales brewery (Dark & Wild Hare, Gem, Barnstormer) ... so I will be contacting the company shortly to lay in a few bottles for Christmas, along with a few bottles of Thomas Hardy's Ale from O'Hanlon's (a brilliant great ale all round). The company also stocks a range of beers from the Wychwood brewery in Witney, though I have come across these in other liquor stores.

The bar price listing of real ales in the recent Pints West issue made interesting comparison with New Zealand prices. Weasel piss beers from the big boys sell for around £2 to £3 a pint equivalent in pubs, at current exchange rates. Real ales sell at around £2.50 to £3.50 or more for 330ml bottles or pints, compared with £1 to £3 from a liquor store, depending on bottle size and brand. By comparison, imported real ales in 500 ml bottles sell for between £2.50 and £3.50 per 500 ml bottle when purchased from a liquor store. So prices are comparable, though wages/salaries tend to be lower in New Zealand.

Some of my friends think I am crazy to pay these prices for real ales. But I point out that it is like buying good wine - you have to pay for quality. Judging by the range and popularity of local and imported beers now available in New Zealand, many others seem to agree with my line of thought. Anyway, these days, I am not a heavy drinker, not like many of the local lager drinkers, who buy mainly on price not quality.

By the way, it's wonderful what can be found out on the internet these days. Apparently the old Anchor Inn in Filton is now trading as the Mill (or is it the Air Balloon?), the Plough is trading as the French House Inn, catering for French workers. At the pub next door, the Horseshoe, my school mates and I used to drink pints of rough cider (scrumpy) in the off-license (Bottle & Jug?), which is all we could afford in the mid 1950's whilst under-age. I seem to remember scrumpy was called something like "Wednesday Wallop", as it was all many workers could afford the night before pay day on Thursday. And there seems to be a new pub, the Fox Den along the New Road, probably frequented by dry boring bureaucrats, stiff upper-lipped military staff, and wild boozy university students. What a combination?

By the way, does anybody know which brewery featured as Felspars Brewery in the TV series "New Tricks" (series 5, episode 5)? I assume it is Fuller's Brewery in London, now that Young's has merged with Charles Wells in Bedford.

Ron Wells,

Wainuiomata, Lower Hutt, New Zealand.

Farmhouse is home from home for the beer of Bath

Abbey Ales is taking on a fourth hostelry in its home city of Bath. Based at Camden Row in the city, the brewery is adding the pub right next door to the brewery, Bath's famous jazz pub, Ye Old Farmhouse, to its Abbey Inns pub company, and customers will be able to savour Bellringer - the beer of Bath - right next door to where it's brewed.



The Old Farmhouse circa 1910

Alan Morgan already operates the Star Inn, the Coeur De Lion and the Assembly Inn, all in the World Heritage City of Bath city centre, and boss Alan Morgan confirmed that he was keen to continue with the expansion programme and subsequently acquire more pubs in the city.

Alan said, "Ye Old Farmhouse, or Brads (after former landlord John Bradshaw) as it is affectionately known, has been my local since I moved to the city in 1976. Brad became an instant friend when I used to call at the pub selling beer and it was in the Farmhouse that he first persuaded me to start a brewery in 1997! It is now owned by Devizes brewer Wadworth and we are looking forward to working with them. The place has always had a good reputation for jazz and we intend to bring that and other live music back to the pub in the foreseeable future."

Abbey Ales took over the pub in early November and reopened it after a small refurbishment. Abbey Ales Bellringer is to be a regular, alongside beers from the Wadworth's range, and is joined by Abbey Ales' own cider, Hells Bells.

Alan continued, "We continue to make a significant contribution to the local economy and at a time when many pubs are closing, we are expanding. We are still looking for more pubs but they must fit in with our company image. Ye Old Farmhouse fits the bill perfectly."

Two new Wiltshire breweries

Since the last issue of Pints West, drinkers have been introduced to the delights of two new Wiltshire breweries – **Plain Ales** and **Braydon Ales**.

Plain Ales is a 2.5-barrel plant set up by James Timoney at Chitterne on Salisbury Plain last October. The first two brews from Plain Ales are Innocence (4%), a golden straw-coloured and very refreshing brew, which has already won a bronze at the Devizes Beer Festival and Beer of the Festival at Weymouth, while Inspiration (4%) is a copper-coloured bitter with hints of citrus and flora from the selected hops. November saw Indulgence (4.5%) added to the portfolio. We have been promised a beer redolent of "the pleasures of winter: hot chocolate, toffee and a lingering reminder of autumn past with the last berries and dark warming 'coffees with a shot' around the bonfire." And if that isn't enough to tempt your taste buds, Plain Ales' Christmas brew – Innognito – is tantalisingly previewed as "an ale with extravagant depths, an ale reluctant to give up its secrets, an ale of hidden pleasures."

Braydon Ales was set up this April, at Preston West Farm near Wootton Bassett, by three friends who bring together skills in business, pub and beer management, as well as engineering and production. The five-barrel plant came from the Burford Brewery in Oxfordshire which closed last year. Braydon beers all take their names from Wiltshire dialect words or phrases. The first three brews are Gibbles (pronounced Jibbles, the local name for spring onions), a 3.8% pale copper-coloured full-bodied bitter with a gentle hop aftertaste; Yer Tiz, a 4.1% triple-hopped well-balanced bitter, and Potwalloper, a 4.4% ruby-coloured beer with rich malty undertones. All are well worth seeking out.

Contact details: **Plain Ales**, Bow House Brewery Limited, Bow House, 44 Chitterne, Warminster BA12 0LG (01985 851105) www.plainales.co.uk. **Braydon Ales**, Preston West Farm, Preston, Chippenham SN15 4DX (01249 892900) www.braydonales.co.uk.

Andrew Swift

Don't 'rec' our match days, say Bath publicans

An idea by Abbey Inns' landlady, Michelle Spence, who asked for a special Bellringer pump clip to be made for the company's three Bath city centre pubs, has proved so popular that Abbey Ales are now issuing the clip to its many other customers in Bath.

The clip – in Bath RFC colours with the wording "Keep Bath rugby at the Rec" to the fore – highlights Abbey Inns' and Abbey Ales' support for keeping rugby at its traditional home in the city, the 'Rec.'

"Along with many other local businesses, when Bath play at home we enjoy a tremendous boost to our trade and we would obviously like to keep it!" said Michelle. "Rugby also creates a tremendous atmosphere on match days in the town and supporters of rugby are usually a good natured bunch."

Managing Director of Abbey Ales, Alan Morgan, added, "It was a brilliant idea from Michelle and it's amazing how many other publicans want to show their support. Changing the clip when Bath are at home really focuses people's thoughts and reminds them of what they would miss if we lose Bath RFC from the city."

Founded in 1997, Abbey Ales is the first and only brewery in the historic city of Bath for over fifty years. Along with the historic Star Inn, the brewery has two other pubs in Bath, the Coeur de Lion and the Assembly Inn.

The brewery has also recently introduced a traditional Somerset cider to its range and Hells Bells is already appearing and proving popular in many of Bath's leading pubs.

Produced for Abbey Apples by the Tricky Cider company, situated in the Blackdown Hills in Somerset, the traditional 6.5% ABV cider is pressed from a carefully selected blend of local cider apples to produce a crisp, refreshing drink of the finest quality.

"We will be offering it to our existing Bellringer customers initially," said Alan Morgan, and in our own pubs the Star, the Coeur de Lion and the Assembly Inn, then to one and all, as well as online at www.abbeyales.co.uk.

The Tricky Cider Company was formed in 2004 by Steve Watkins and Alistair Brice. "I know Al and Steve initially started making cider as a hobby for many years and regard it as an art form, and they are as determined to preserve the art of traditional cider making as Abbey Ales is to preserve the art of traditional beer making."



Real ale at the Assembly

Dawn Shanahan and Mark Shingler, the new managers of the Assembly, Bedminster, ran their first beer festival at the pub from Thursday 29th October to Sunday 1st November. This featured 15 real ales and Mark is pictured in front of the selection that was served on gravity.

The usual beer range at the Assembly is now five real ales normally including a guest beer or two and Theakston's Old Peculier, which apparently has a growing fan base amongst their regular customers.

Dawn describes herself as being very much a real ale girl who is keen to promote real ale in the pub.

Richard Brooks



It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

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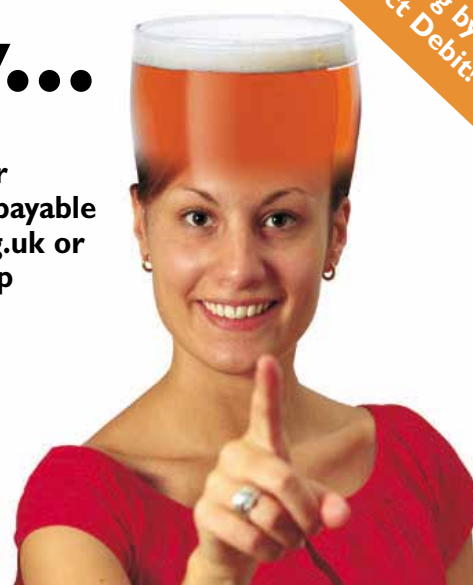
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Branch diary

Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA

- **Wed Dec 2nd** – Surveyor trip to Severnside area. Fare £6. Coach departs 6.45pm from Cornubia.
- **Wed Dec 9th** – Committee meeting, Cornubia 8pm
- **Thurs Dec 10th** – Branch Christmas Social at the Chimp House, 232 Gloucester Road, Bishopston, BS7 8NZ. 7pm start. Please bring valid CAMRA membership card for free entry. Four real ales including two dark beers, plus buffet, quiz, etc. Frequent buses from Centre: numbers 73, 75, 76.
- **Tues Dec 22nd** – Walking tour around Gloucester Road area. Meet 7pm at the Inn on the Green.
- **Sun Jan 3rd** – Westbury Wobble. Meet Post Office Tavern mid-day for crawl of local pubs.
- **Wed Jan 6th** – Thornbury & District first sub-branch meeting. Meet 7.30pm, Anchor in Thornbury.
- **Thurs Jan 7th** – Pubs Group social, perhaps. Details TBC.
- **Tues Jan 12th** – Surveyor Trip. Coach departs from Cornubia 6.45pm. Fare £6. Visiting pubs in Saltford and Kelston areas.
- **Wed Jan 13th** – Branch meeting. Venue TBC.
- **Thursday Jan 14th** – BADRAG gathering at the Annexe, Bishopston 8pm.
- **Wed Jan 20th** – Visit to Avon Brewing Company. Meet at Old Stillage, Redfield at 6.45pm. Plenty of buses go past this location.
- **Thurs Jan 27th** – Surveyor Trip. Coach departs from Cornubia 6.45pm. Fare £6. Details TBC.
- **Thursday Jan 28th** – Pubs Group meeting. Venue TBC.
- **Tues Feb 9th** – Surveyor Trip. Coach departs from Cornubia 6.45pm. Fare £6. Details TBC.
- **Wed Feb 10th** – Committee meeting. Venue TBC.
- **Thursday Feb 11th** – BADRAG gathering at the Three Tuns, Hotwells, BS1 5UR, 8pm.
- **Wed Feb 24th** – Branch meeting. Venue TBC.
- **Sun Feb 28th** – GBG selection meeting. Venue TBC.

The above details are correct at the time of going to press, but updates will be made and changes may occur. Please come to a branch meeting, check our website www.bristolcamra.org.uk or email Tim at badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk for more details.

Coach trips and brewery trips must be booked in advance. Evening trips usually depart from the Cornubia, Temple Street at 6.45pm and return via the Centre by 10.50pm for last buses, etc, unless otherwise stated.

We look forward to seeing you!

Thanks to this issue's contributors

Alan Sibley
Andrew Swift
Dave Graham
Henry Davies
Kirsten Elliott
Laurie Gibney
Lesly Huxley
Margaret Evett
Mike Jackson
Neil Ravenscroft
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Pete Taberner
Phil Cummings
Ray Hamilton
Richard Brooks
Steve Hunt
Tim Belston
Tim Nickolls
Tim Proudman
Vince Murray
Editor:
Steve Plumridge

Weston diary

- **Wednesday 16 December** – 11th Annual Seasonal Ales Crawl. Meet at The Raglan Arms 7.45-8.15, then visiting 5 pubs in town offering a Christmas or Winter beer.
- **Friday 18 December** – Bath Seasonal Ales Crawl. 6.35 train from Weston or meet at the Star at 7.50.
- **Wednesday 20 January** – Two-pub town social. The Corner House, Meadow Street, 8.30. The Red Admiral, 9.30.
- **Wednesday 17 February** – Bristol Crawl. Route to be confirmed.

Non-members welcome at all of the above events.

Weston contact

Tim Nickolls: 01934 644925 (evenings) or email tim.nickolls@postoffice.co.uk



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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

or post it to:

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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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Bath & Borders diary

- **Tuesday 1st December 8:30 pm.** Branch meeting at the Coeur de Lion in Bath. Meet in the upstairs room.
- **Thursday 10th December 8:30 pm.** A social at the Bell in Rode, near Frome. Recently reopened after a major, and very well done, refurbishment by Flatcappers Inns, the Bell now has up to six beers on and excellent food.
- **Tuesday 15th December 8:30 pm.** A social at the Fromeway Inn in Radstock. This fine pub has been in the same family for several generations. Almost as long as Roy has been drinking there!
- **Tuesday 22nd December 8:30 pm.** A social at the Barge in Bradford on Avon. Let's meet up for a Christmas drink in this lovely pub, next to the canal.

Bath & Borders contacts

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

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

A little tour of Bristol pubs



1. Cat & Wheel



5. Stag & Hounds



6. Shakespeare

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For anyone who wants to know what Bristol's pubs looked like in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a series of postcards published by Fred Little are one of the best places to start.

Frederick George Little was a commercial photographer based on Castle Mill Street who produced vast numbers of postcards of the city. He was inspired by the history of Bristol, recording narrow medieval alleys, half-timbered houses and hostleries that had survived for centuries. His interest in the past led him to acquire Victorian photographs and old engravings which he also published on postcards.

A century on, after the Luftwaffe and the developers have done their worst, much of what he recorded has gone. That makes the record he created all the more important. Although his postcards are readily available at specialist fairs, the general public has not had ready access to them. Now a website dedicated to Fred Little – www.fredlittle.co.uk – has been launched, including many of his photographs, together with fascinating background information. To whet your appetite, here are a few of Fred Little's views of inns from the Akeman Press Archive.

1. A superb picture of the **Cat & Wheel** (a corruption of Catherine Wheel) on the corner of Castle Green and Little Peter Street. Dating from before 1606, it was rebuilt in 1900. The new building survived the Blitz, only to be demolished in 1969 to make way for a museum complex that never materialised.

2. The **Rising Sun** stood on the corner of Lower Castle Street (known locally as Castle Ditch) and Ellbroad Street. Dating from the seventeenth century, it was rebuilt in 1906. The new building was demolished for the Broadmead shopping centre

3. An example of Fred Little's interior views, this shows the oak paneling and plasterwork in one of the **Rising Sun**'s grander rooms.

4. The **White Hart** at the bottom of Jacobs Well Road (opposite the Bag O'Nails) was demolished in 1877 and replaced by a St Peter's Church. The church was demolished in 1939 and a block of flats now stands on the site.

5. Some of the old inns featured on Fred Little's postcards still survive. This is the **Stag & Hounds** on Old Market Street, one of only two jettied buildings with upper floors supported on columns to survive in Bristol.

6. Two men with a Bristol Times & Mirror cart stand outside the **Shakespeare** in Temple Street (now Victoria Street), which dates from 1636.

7. Possibly Bristol's most famous old inn, the **Llandoger Trow**, when it was known as the Llandoger Tavern. Dating from 1664, only the three gables on the right still survive, the other two having been destroyed in 1940.

Andrew Swift



2. Rising Sun



3. Rising Sun carving



4. White Hart



7. Llandoger Trow

Not Behaving Badly at the Star

There was an air of excitement in the Star in Bath one evening early in September. As I walked in, several people hissed at me "Neil Morrissey's in the lounge bar." The reason he was in the pub wasn't because Neil Morrissey was starring in Rain Man at the Theatre Royal – which he was – or even that the Star is a must for pub and beer lovers anywhere – which it is – but that the Star was stocking the latest offering from the Morrissey Fox Brewery, called Aussie IPA.

Eventually, after fighting my way through the crowd of people chatting away to him, including those telling him what he already knew – that he was Neil Morrissey – I persuaded him to have his picture taken with John the barman. Far from behaving badly, Neil cheerfully posed for the camera, but was a bit reluctant to talk about brewing. The beer was a rich blonde beer, and at 5%, not perhaps one to sit and spend an afternoon at the cricket with. However, it was a good advertisement for the brewery – we look forward to trying some more.

The Star continues to go from strength to strength, with its ever-popular Cornish beer festival in July. This is held on the same weekend as the Folk at the Oak festival at the Royal Oak, Twerton, and both pubs find this works very well for them, with visitors coming down to make a weekend of it.

Kirsten Elliott

