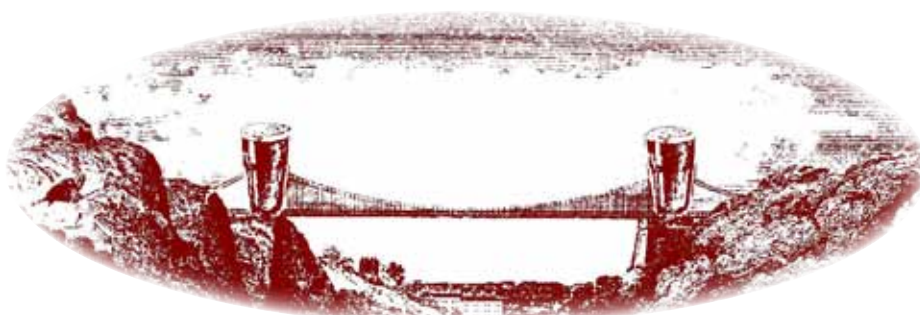




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# PINTS WEST

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





# Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2010

## Elland 1872 Porter is timeless classic!

**1872 Porter** from the Elland Brewery in West Yorkshire has been crowned the Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2010 by a panel of judges at the National Winter Ales Festival held in Manchester in January.

The 6.5% ABV porter is described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide as a "creamy, full-flavoured porter, with rich liquorice flavours with a hint of chocolate from roast malt, and a soft but satisfying aftertaste of bittersweet roast and malt."

Graham Donning, National Winter Ales Festival organiser, praised the beer for its quality. He said: "It's a timeless classic well worthy of this accolade. It has won many awards at CAMRA beer festivals in the past, and it's great to see this small brewer achieving such success. A perfect winter-warming remedy to the snowy weather of recent weeks!"

Winning is especially sweet for the brewer after finishing in Silver place overall in the 2009 competition.

Dave Sanders, head brewer at Elland, was elated to hear of the brewery's success. He said: "It's absolutely brilliant; we came second last year and I am thrilled to finish on top in 2010. We originally started brewing this beer at the West Yorkshire brewery, so there's quite a history behind this Victorian recipe."

Also in the overall awards, Silver went to Breconshire's Ramblers Ruin, whilst the Bronze medal went to Acorn's Gorlovka Imperial Stout.

On a more local level, it's great to see RCH brewery from Weston-super-Mare get the Bronze in the porters category for their Old Slug Porter.

## The results in full

### Old Ales and Strong Milds category

**Gold:** Breconshire, Ramblers Ruin (Brecon, Powys)

**Silver:** Leeds, Midnight Bell (Leeds, West Yorkshire)

**Bronze:** Beartown, Black Bear (Congleton, Cheshire)

### Porters category

**Gold:** Elland, 1872 Porter (Elland, West Yorkshire)

**Silver:** Sulwath, Black Galloway (Castle Douglas, Dumfries & Galloway)

**Bronze:** RCH, Old Slug Porter (Weston-super-Mare, Somerset)

### Stouts category

**Gold:** Acorn, Gorlovka Imperial Stout (Barnsley, South Yorkshire)

**Silver:** Beowulf, Dragon Smoke Stout (Brownhills, Staffordshire)

**Bronze:** Wapping, Stout (Liverpool, Merseyside)

### Barley Wines category

**Gold:** Robinsons, Old Tom (Stockport, Cheshire)

**Silver:** Kinver, Over the Edge (Kinver, Staffordshire)

**Bronze:** Otley, O8 (Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan)

### Overall result

**Gold:** Elland, 1872 Porter (Elland, West Yorkshire)

**Silver:** Breconshire, Ramblers Ruin (Brecon, Powys)

**Bronze:** Acorn, Gorlovka Imperial Stout (Barnsley, South Yorkshire)

## Winter beer styles, as taken from CAMRA's 'Dictionary of Beer'

**Porter:** A dark, slightly sweetish but hoppy ale made with roasted barley; the successor of 'entire' and predecessor of stout. Porter originated in London around 1730, and by the end of the 18th century was probably the most popular beer in England.

**Stout:** One of the classic types of ale, a successor in fashion to 'porter'. Usually a very dark, heavy, well-hopped bitter ale, with a dry palate, thick creamy, and a good grainy taste.

**Old Ale:** Now virtually synonymous with 'winter ale'. Most 'old ales' are produced and sold for a limited time in the year, usually between November and the end of February. Usually a rich, dark, high-gravity draught ale of considerable body.

**Barley Wine:** A strong, rich and sweetish ale, usually over 1060 OG, dark in colour, with high condition and a high hop rate.



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- Old Slug Porter
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- East Street Cream
- Firebox

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## Pub News

Ollie Bainbridge, the landlord of the **Inn on the Green** in Horefield, is back at the pub after a year out. He admits there have been certain problems with the pub, but says he has been putting a lot of work into getting the pub back the way it used to be. He is now selling 13 ales and five ciders and has a new supplier of beers. We've seen a list of forthcoming ones and it certainly looks impressive. And recent visits also confirm Ollie's claims of improvements in the beer range and quality.

The **Spring Gardens** in Hotwells is back on the map as a proper pub again after spending the last few years as a 'gastro' venue known as La Demi Lune.

The **Adam & Eve** in Hotwells is possibly the best place in Bristol to go if you are a fan of RCH beers. Not only is the award-winning Pitchfork a regular on the bar, but one of the guest ales will often be an RCH offering too. (We don't see enough RCH beers in Bristol!)

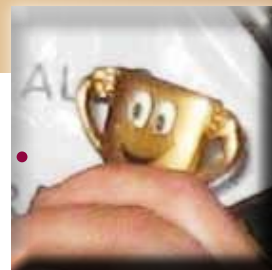
The next **Bag O'Nails** beer festival will run from 15th to 18th April. Always worth a visit or two to experience the large range of unusual beers they put on over the four days.

The **Richmond Spring** in Clifton has been renamed as the **Clifton Cow**.

The **Rose & Crown** in Rangeworthy will be hosting a beer festival on Saturday 15 May with 12 local ales and four ciders. Advance tickets can be obtained from the pub or just turn up on the day.



# And the mighty Brewer's Cup winner is . . . Cotswold Spring with Coddington Best



Nik Milo holds aloft the mighty Brewer's Cup

This was the first year that this "Locally Brewed" real ale festival was held, and it attracted entries from no less than thirteen breweries! The aim of the festival was to showcase our local breweries and raise money for charity whilst giving real ale drinkers a fun night out.

The festival was held at the Old Stillage, Church Road in Redfield on 4<sup>th</sup> December and raised over £1300 for the charity Myeloma UK (myeloma is a malignant blood disorder that landlord Namaya Reynolds was recently diagnosed with). Jon Comer of Arbor Ales was the driving force behind this year's festival, with most brewers producing one-off specials for the occasion. The stillage was borrowed from Bristol Beer Factory and all the beers on it were donated completely free of charge

by the brewers, ranging from golden bitters to dark old ales and with flavours of elderflower, chocolate and strawberry thrown in as well.

The judging was organised by the Bristol CAMRA tasting panel who had a difficult task in selecting the best beer of the festival and winner of the prestigious "Brewer's Cup". The winner was finally announced, between jazz songs from *Henry's Hot Four*, as Cotswold Spring's Coddington Best at 4.4%, brewed by Nik Milo.

Thanks to the Old Stillage for hosting a great night out, and for the excellent beers donated by the following breweries: Arbor Ales, Art Brew, Isle of Avalon, Bristol Beer Factory, Butcombe, Cotswold Spring, Great Western, Milk Street, Nailsworth, Plain Ales, RCH, Severn Vale and Stroud.

Colin Postlethwaite



Namaya Reynolds of the Old Stillage and his sister Megan of Arbor Ales

## Other news from Cotswold Spring

2010 has started well for Cotswold Spring brewery, with news that *Honey Bear* (5.2%) reached the national finals of the SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers) competition, due to be held in Nottingham in early February.

In addition to the regularly brewed beers – *Codger* (4.2%), *Royal* (4.5%) and *Olde English Rose* (4.0%) – the brewery has lined up a series of old favourites and specials for the coming months.

- February: *Old Sodbury Porter* (4.8%).
- March: *Mad March Hare* (4.6%) – planned to appear at Bristol Beer Festival.
- April: A new brew. Could this be the wheat beer that brewer, Nik Milo has talked about?
- May: *Old Sodbury Mild* (3.9%) – in time for Mild May.
- June: *It's Coming Home* (4.3%) – for the World Cup. Made with lager malts.
- July: *Apricot Harvest* (4.7%).

The new separate off-sales shop is settling in well on the brewery site at Codrington. It may look like a conservatory from the front, but just go around the right-hand corner (not into the brewery itself) to locate the entrance. It has provided space for four to six permanent draught ales, plus bottles of their regular brews. A locally produced 'Four Seasons' cider is also generally available in bottles.

Cotswold Spring is located in Codrington, just off junction 18 of the M4. It can be contacted by phone on 01454 323088 or by emailing [info@cotswoldbrewery.com](mailto:info@cotswoldbrewery.com). Their website is [www.cotswoldbrewery.com](http://www.cotswoldbrewery.com).

Steve Matthews

## The Bridge Inn

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# Save the Lamb!

The Lamb pub in Cadbury Heath is under serious threat of closure. The Punch Taverns-owned local on Banjo Island has been put on the market through a selling agent. Locals are very concerned that the place could be sold and converted to other use or even demolished.

A campaign to save the Lamb has been running for several weeks led by prospective MP Chris Skidmore and supported by locals. A petition to save the pub has attracted several hundred signatures.

The Lamb is very much a locals' pub. When I visited it with some other members of the Bristol CAMRA Pubs Group, there was a vibrant and cheerful community feel about the place. It appears that the pub has not always realised its potential in recent times but, under the current holding manager Dave Smith, the trade has increased and Dave, along with the regulars, strongly believes that the pub is viable.

Trade has increased including new customers and some people who had been staying away from the pub have started paying regular visits again.

The pub appears to be profitable and, given time, could be more so; unfortunately this improvement is being hampered by the pub's inability to take bookings for potentially lucrative events because of the uncertainty over its future. It deserves to be saved.

It is also the only pub in the local community that is within easy walking distance.

Bristol CAMRA Pubs Group has now written to Punch Taverns. In the letter Punch Taverns were strongly urged to withdraw the pub from sale. We believe that this pub is an integral part of the local community and, with the right licensee and customer offering, can be a profitable business into the future.

Dave Skidmore said: "It's fantastic that CAMRA have lent their support and backing to the campaign to save the Lamb. They have an excellent record of campaigning to help save local pubs, and it's great to have them on board. We now have well over 400 letters of objection



which I will be taking to Punch Taverns, arguing the case that the Lamb is once again a viable and profitable pub with a great atmosphere that must be kept open for the sake of the local community".

We again urge Punch Taverns to do the right thing for the local area. Withdraw the pub from sale and secure the future of the Lamb for the local community who are very concerned at its potential loss.

*Pete Bridle (photo by Duncan Shine)*

## Pub News

The **Golden Lion** at Frampton Cotterell has been demolished after Greene King decided they no longer wanted to run it. The site has been sold to a property developer who will build seven homes. Greene King never appeared to market it as a pub, taking the decision upon themselves to deprive the villagers of one of their pubs. One local resident was heard to say, "One good thing to come out of this is that we don't have a Greene King pub in the village any more."

The **Cross Hands** at Pilning looks likely to close on March 1st following the departure of its tenant who is getting out of the pub trade. Punch say they would welcome anyone that is interested, but regulars say it is likely that they would prefer to sell the pub.

The **Mason's Arms** at Winterbourne, the **Bridge** at Shortwood and the **Nova Scotia** in Hotwells have all been noted for their historic interiors by one of CAMRA's Pub Heritage Group representatives. Though they do not qualify for inclusion with the 300 or so pubs on the elite "National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors", they all have little-changed interiors of merit. What's more, they all serve real ale and real cider.

The **Portcullis** at Chipping Sodbury has re-opened following a revamp. It is selling Bass and Courage Best, and Black Rat cider is also available.

*Mike Jackson*

## The Hop Pole, Redfield

The Hop Pole is situated in Avonvale Road at its junction with Gladstone Street in Redfield close to the A431 Church Road. This former Ushers pub closed recently and is now boarded up and for sale as a freehold property.

The pub appears to be a late Victorian building and is of red brick construction on two floors with freestone facing and a three-floor gable on the elevation on Gladstone Street. A freestone frieze above the entrance doorway depicting a hop pole is of some interest and there are two ornate chimney stacks, one at each end of the building. There are decorated ridge tiles on both the main roof and the gable end, which may indicate a possible influence from the arts and crafts movement of the 1890s.

This could be considered very much as a local community pub a little way off of Church Road and is a building worthy of retention.

If anyone is interested in reviving its fortunes, the property is on the market with estate agents Lambert Smith Hampton (0117 92666666).

*Ian Beckey*





# Ashley Arms reopens ... as the Lazy Dog!

The Ashley Arms on Ashley Down Road, a couple of minutes' walk from Gloucester Road, Horfield, is due to reopen after extensive refurbishment on Friday, March 19th. Joby Andrews and Mike Cranney, the guys behind the Windmill in Bedminster and the Pipe & Slippers on Cheltenham Road, had their sights set on the Ashley for years but Enterprise Inns were never interested in selling it.

It seems though that eventually it became rather run down to such an extent that it was proving difficult to lease out and they put it on the market. Joby and Mike were the first people to look round it when it went on the market about a year ago. They soon discovered that Enterprise was selling it with an anti-competitive restrictive covenant, meaning that it could not reopen as a pub. Joby and Mike however wanted to keep the place as a community pub. Not deterred, Joby spent months trying to persuade them to sell it to them.

At this time CAMRA was lobbying hard for the large pub companies to discontinue the practice of applying restrictive covenants when pubs were being sold. Eventually, both Enterprise Inns and Punch Taverns, the two largest pub companies, succumbed to the pressure and agreed not to apply these covenants on future pub sales.

The covenant was eventually removed but they still refused to sell it to Joby and Mike – possibly because they knew their intention for it? They finally managed to buy the pub in December from the people that Enterprise eventually sold it to. What made Enterprise think they could shut down a pub that has been selling beer to the local community since 1881? Who knows!

Since the purchase, the extensive works required to make the building safe and turn it into a working pub again, at the centre of the local community, have been underway. The new pub is going to be in a similar vein to their other two pubs but with an updated theme. Joby tells us they are still going for the cosy, welcoming, local pub feel, but it's going to be a bit grander and a bit quirkier this time. They are spend-



Extensive works

ing a great deal of money on the works and refit and I'm sure the result is going to be pretty stunning to say the least! They are sticking with their ethos of creating a friendly, relaxed, unpretentious drinking environment where good quality drinks will be served by happy, well-trained staff at reasonable prices. We are told that the food is going to be good quality, straightforward pub grub, again at reasonable prices. They will be supporting local brewers and suppliers as usual.

So, why the name change? As Joby and Mike are completely redoing the whole place they believe that a new image warrants a new name. It's going to be called the Lazy Dog.

The name is derived from the pub's history. It was founded by Job Giliam in 1881 who was the owner of the sawmill which was directly behind the pub until the mid seventies. The pub was passed on through the Giliam family for many years. In the old sawmills the sawyers sawed the logs in pairs, the sawyer atop the log was known as the 'top dog' and the one beneath the 'under dog'. The pub sign is going to show the under dog kicking back and supping a pint, hence the Lazy Dog!

Joby gave CAMRA praise in this venture saying, "Thanks for all your help. I doubt the covenant would have been lifted without all the work put in by people like yourselves." It will be great to see the pub reopening and serving its local community once again.

Pete Bridle

The Lazy Dog opening hours will be 11am to 11pm (10.30pm Sunday).

## Two pubs in the parish of Bitton

There are two old pubs on the A431 outside of south-east Bristol that contrast. The White Hart at Bitton and the Queen's Head at Willsbridge have some things in common in that both are in the parish of Bitton, they are the only pubs in their respective villages and they are important buildings listed by English Heritage at Grade II. Where they differ is that one is continually evolving, while the other retains olde world charm in abundance.

The **White Hart** closed in December 2008 when its owner, Peninsula Inns, went into receivership. The small pub company from Torquay owned a dozen or so pubs and these were progressively sold off. The new owner has made a planning application to South Gloucestershire Council to make some interior alterations that include removing part of one wall and fitting a new bar counter and bar-back into another position, whilst scrapping the existing one. The partial removal of the wall would open up the former rear games room into the main room of the pub – the main room itself used to be two rooms in the distant past. The removal of the bar would facilitate free unobstructed access through the wall aperture. The new bar is proposed to be constructed from good quality materials to a good standard of craftsmanship and this bar would be sited



The Queen's Head

in such a position to maximise the floor space. The 18th century White Hart is at the centre of Bitton village and has the potential to be the hub of the community. Its re-opening has to welcomed.

Just up the road, the **Queen's Head** at Willsbridge is a quaint old English pub. Perhaps not hugely inviting from the outside, its plain exterior belies an interior that still boasts three public rooms arranged around a central corridor. While the vast majority of pubs have been 'knocked about' over the last 40 years, this one has retained its floor plan and many long-standing fittings (I am tempted to say "original" fittings but in a 350-year-old building that is a bold claim!). Some of the dado panelling and settles are very old, and the bar



The White Hart

hatch with two doors, leading off of the corridor to behind the bar, is a very unusual historic feature. Old fireplaces in each room, one with a rather neat bread oven, the underside of a part-spiral staircase and the 1960's bar counter all add to the charm. The building dates from around 1660 and as a private house ale was brewed with water from Siston Brook. Later, part of the house was opened up to drinkers and by 1719 it was a licensed alehouse. Additions to the building in the 18th century formed the basis of what we see today, though the rear room was probably brought into public use in the 20th century. All of this is complemented by a spacious rear garden and a car park that is 50 meters away. The Avon Wildlife Trust has a nature reserve opposite at Willsbridge Mill with pleasant streamside woodland walks, and a short distance along the road is the Avon Valley Railway at Bitton, where a beer festival is held in early summer. There are also some lovely country walks at the rear of the pub where deer, wild flowers and buzzards can be seen.

Mike Jackson



## BRISTOL PUBS GROUP



BRISTOL PUBS GROUP

**Pubs  
in  
Peril**

Bristol Pubs Group was formed in response to the growing number of pubs in the Bristol area closing or being drastically altered. The Group was launched formally in 2008 with the support of local councillors, members of the trade and the media.

*Our aims are simple.*

*The Pubs Group will:*

**Promote the use of community pubs.**

**Campaign against closure of pubs that could be viable.**

**Campaign against insensitive alterations.**

**Some recent cases: before and after pictures of the Golden Lion in Frampton Cotterell, Wedlocks in Ashton and the Pit Pony in Easton.**





# Fifteen years at the Highbury Vaults

The 28th February sees Bradd Francis celebrating 15 years in charge of the Highbury Vaults on St Michael's Hill in Kingsdown. Anyone who visits it for the first time in years will immediately feel at home as very little has changed physically to the pub over the years. The front snug lost its plaster, a model railway runs (occasionally) along the length of the pub, the garden was part covered over well before the smoking ban made it necessary to provide smokers some shelter and the last external repaint saw a large piece of public art unveiled.

The clientele hasn't changed much either, with a good mix of students, academics, regulars and locals enjoying the music-free (and now smoke-free) atmosphere to engage in conversation or sit quietly to read a paper or book.

They will obviously notice that Smiles beers, like the Bristol-based brewery, are no more but should be impressed with range of beers which has noticeably increased in the last nine months or so. Young's Bitter and their seasonal beers are always available (it is a Young's pub after all), together with long-standing Brains SA, Bath Gem and Bradd's favourite,



Bradd and partner Sara

St Austell Tribute. Bristol Beer Factory Exhibition (based on the old Smiles Exhibition I believe) is another regular but the other two hand pumps have seen a variety of usually local beers passing through them. Arbour Ales Beech Blonde, Old Knobbly, Oyster Stout and Snuffy Jacks have proved very popular (*why no Motueka I ask?*), as have a selection from Severn Vale Brewery, Hop Back and their near neighbours Downton, and Teignworthy, to name but a few.

Good-value home cooked food from a small menu is available lunchtime and early evenings – just don't expect anything with chips though.

Pete Tanner

## Other Kingsdown pub news

Darren at **Bar@155** has introduced Sharp's Doom Bar to go with the Fuller's London Pride, both of which make excellent accompaniment to the tapas or main-meal food on offer.

Further up the hill, the **White Bear** has reopened after a short closure for refurbishment and is now offering up to three real ales. On my last visit they were Butcombe Gold, Otter Ale and Sharp's Doom Bar.

Pete Tanner

# The Robin Hood reopens

The Robin Hood on St Michael's Hill, Kingsdown reopened in the middle of February after closure and a lengthy refurbishment. Close to the maternity hospital, the pub had been put on the market by Wadworth following the tragic death of the tenant, and run by a few temporary managers before closing last year. It has now been bought by the same group who also run the Bristol Ram and the Clifton Cow (formerly the Richmond Spring) and re-opened as a free house.

The ales on offer on my visit were St Austell Tribute, Deuchar's IPA, Skinner's Betty Stogs and Timothy Taylor Landlord. There also appeared to be a barrel of Abbey Bellringer and another unidentified barrel on the doorstep earlier in the month.

A subsequent visit and chat with the landlord Alex Mercer indicated that they plan to offer a rolling selection of local real ales together with a couple of traditional ciders and a range of more unusual continental beers on tap. "There will not be any mass-produced lagers here!" said Alex.

By the time you read this Wickwar Station Porter and Arbor Ales Oyster Stout will have been and gone but they are also open to any (sensible) suggestions from regulars.

Pete Tanner





# The mystery of the Bath dartboard

The game of darts is so integral to our idea of the traditional pub, it may come as a surprise to learn that a century ago very few people played it. Skittles, billiards and bagatelle – at least in this part of the world – seem to have been the most popular games. Even those pub-goers who did favour ‘dart and target’, as darts was then known, played it differently – using different types of dartboard – depending on where they lived. Patrick Chaplin, who has studied and written on



Henry Ollis holding the Bath dartboard outside the Walcot Wine Vaults

Country until the 1930s.

Then, one day, Dr Karen Francis of Cardiff, who was researching her family tree, came across Patrick Chaplin’s website and decided to contact him. The picture she sent him showed that, far from not arriving till the 1930s, darts was being played in Bath around 1907-8. Moreover, the type of dartboard used in the city was unique.

The photograph, reproduced here, shows a group outside the Walcot Wine Vaults on Walcot Street. This was the building with the large concave bow window opposite the Bell, that now houses a lighting shop. It closed as a pub in 1914. The landlord in 1907-8, when the photograph was taken, was Robert Stratton.

However, the man holding the dartboard is not Mr Stratton but Henry Ollis, who was landlord of the Chatham House Tavern, two doors away, from 1875 to 1898. He also owned several

other houses in the area. After he retired he moved into one of them just down the road at 4 Chatham Row. His son-in-law, William Beaton, who was a blacksmith at 109 Walcot Street, is the man on the right with a large moustache. His three children stand in front of him.

But, of course, it was the dartboard that really got Patrick excited. ‘At first,’ he explains, ‘I thought it was a Tonbridge dartboard, but then I quickly realised that, though there were similar elements, the Bath board was not the same. In fact it appears to be unique.’

It wasn’t just the dartboard’s unusual design that made the discovery so significant. Apart from a famous photograph of a strange-looking dartboard taken at Grimsby around 1890, no other photographs of local or regional dartboards from before about 1920 were known to exist.

Although the historic importance of Dr Francis’s photograph is obvious, for the moment at least it seems to exist in a vacuum. Although Patrick Chaplin has tried to find out more about it, he confesses that ‘I don’t like to admit to have been beaten by this enquiry but, so far, all my research has drawn a blank.’

So was the Bath dartboard, which Henry Ollis is holding so proudly, a one-off, made by one of the regulars who’d seen something similar on his travels and knocked up a home-made version for his local pub? Or was it something that pub-goers in Bath – and beyond – would have been familiar with? Do any pub inventories from the time include details of dartboards? And do any of these strange-looking dartboards survive?

If anyone reading this has the answers to any of these questions or can shed any light on the mysterious Bath dartboard, Patrick Chaplin would very much like to hear from you. He can be contacted on 01621 856040, by email at [patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com](mailto:patrick.chaplin@btinternet.com) or by writing to 50 Norfolk Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 6AT.

Also happening on Friday (Good Friday) is another Butcombe sponsored Arthritis & Rheumatism Campaign (ARC) charity walk from the Queen’s Head at Bleadon to the Swan at Rowberrow. Walkers will leave any cars at the latter with a coach transporting them to Bleadon where a glass of mulled wine will fortify them at the start, and to replenish at the end of the walk, a curry or lasagne back at the Swan. Two previous Mendip walks have been very successful so let’s hope this one will follow suit. What a delightful feel-good factor, taking part in a well worthwhile charity fundraiser with the prospect of a beer festival at the end of the day! (ARC contact details for those wishing to take part in the walk: Suzie Ladbroke, 01934 713906, email [s.ladbroke@arc.org.uk](mailto:s.ladbroke@arc.org.uk).)

Butcombe are offering food-and-a-pint combos on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of Cask Ale Week, a quiz on Wednesday and a brewery opening on Saturday 3rd from 10am to 1pm.

Anyone visiting any four of their pubs and obtaining receipts for any of their products can obtain a free T-shirt by sending them to the brewery along with their details. Details can be found in the participating pubs.

To complete Cask Ale Week offers, anyone spending a night at a Butcombe pub will receive a free pint. Pubs with accommodation are the Old Crown at Kelston, the Rose and Crown at Hinton Charterhouse, the Cross Keys at Rode and the Malt Shovel at Cannington.

Margaret Evett



A close up of the dartboard



A computer-generated image of the Bath Dartboard



The Walcot Wine Vaults after closure. The Chatham House Tavern, which closed in 1908, is the building with the Venetian window on the far corner.

## A busy programme for Butcombe

Butcombe brewery ended last year on a high note with the successful launch, in December, of their new seasonal beer, aptly named ‘Christmas Steps’. This was, as promised, a spicy light reddish coloured ale brewed using Bramling Cross and Phoenix hops, with an ABV of 4.2%. The positive reception of this beer secures its re-appearance next December! Butcombe’s Colston Street pub, the Colston Yard, is of course a close neighbour of the famous Christmas Steps.

The brewery’s rolling guest ‘Brewer of the Month’ featured York in February, with Bateman’s appearing in March (beers available for each Butcombe pub manager’s choice include XB, Hooker, GHA Pale Ale, Salem Porter and XXXB). April will have a Celtic theme with beer from three great Scottish breweries, Caledonian, Harviestoun and the sometimes controversial Brewdog. May will see beers from Oakham, another good brewery.

As Cask Ale Week takes place from March 29th to April 5th, and with Butcombe being well advanced in their plans for the week to promote this event, beers such as Caley’s Deuchars IPA, Harviestoun’s Bitter and Twisted, Haggis Hunter and Schiehallion (a real lager), and Brewdog’s Skull Kandy, Trashy Blonde, 5am Saint and Punk IPA might well be available at a mini-beer festival being held at the Swan, Rowberrow on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd April from 7 to 10pm. A few other beers, two traditional ciders and evening entertainment will also be on the menu.



# Played at the Pub

## The pub games of Britain

Written as one of a ground-breaking series of books on our sporting heritage and entitled 'Played in Britain', 'Played at the Pub' is a delight. Its purpose is to help ensure that rare and significant treasures are not lost or left unrecorded in the inevitable march of progress. Other books in the services can be found at [www.playedinbritain.co.uk](http://www.playedinbritain.co.uk).

'Played at the Pub' is rich in detailed content and superbly illustrated throughout. It is a wonderful piece of social history and is full of enlightening snippets of information about how and where the nation spent its leisure time.

Arthur Taylor chronicles the various games with a true passion and is particularly good on skittles, with chapters on every imaginable game played from darts to dwile flonking.

I was particularly interested in the history of dart making and the anecdotes about Britain's first card sharp, Sir John Suckling, who when not womanising was either at the bowling green or card table, winning or losing huge sums on a regular basis! There has been a marked change in the games that are played in pubs and it is refreshing to know that our area still manages to support games which have been played for centuries. A candid quote from Izaak Walton sums it up as follows: "I have had not an unpleasant day, for indeed we went to a good honest ale house, and there we played at the shovel-board half the day."

This book would make an ideal present for anyone who loves the differences between regions in Britain. Beer and skittles anyone?

Jon Line

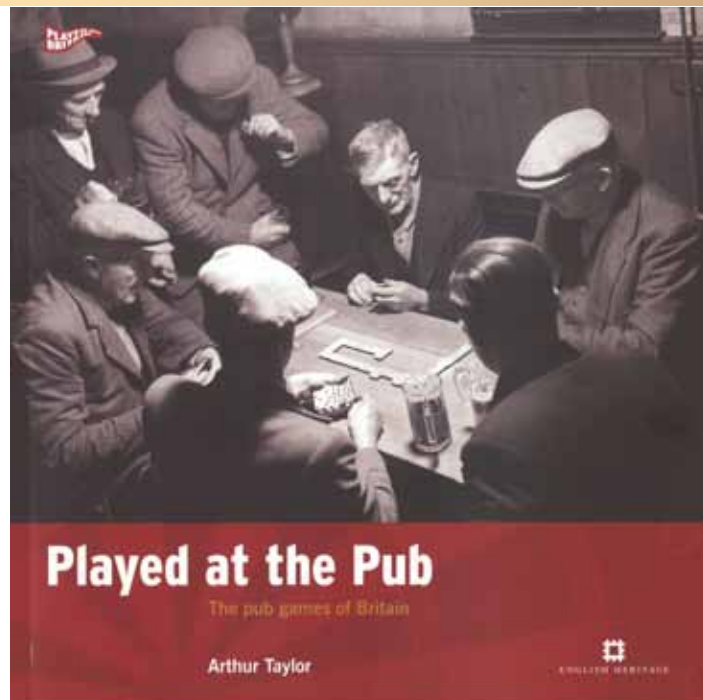
## A Round with Robin

There are times when I think I live in the wrong part of Weston-super-Mare, as currently the **Criterion**, the **Raglan Arms**, and the **Regency** are so good that I wish I lived in the town centre again. As mentioned in the last issue of Pints West "the **Cri**" has become a very popular snug pub; as well as the good choice of well kept beers, there is a bar billiards table and table skittles. If you are on your own, some of the daily papers are there and Leah, the pub cat, will happily occupy your lap for a while. The **Regency** now deals with Bath Ales, which means that they have on one of their five handpumps the current beer of the month from Bath Ales. As I write this is *Barnstormer* (4.5%), but previously it was *Festivity* (5%) which was very well received. By the time you read this they should have *Rare Hare*, which Bath Ales is again brewing. As well as the interesting Friday night "come-all-ye" acoustic music evenings at the **Raglan Arms**, and O'Hanlon's ales, there have been some excellent musicians playing on Sunday evenings there. They range from local trio Uncle John, from Somerset, Lucy Stroud (sometimes with a band and sometimes solo or with her son) to famous national players like Keith Christmas. More details on future and past gigs, the beers and the pub can be found on the web at [www.myspace.com/theraglanarms](http://www.myspace.com/theraglanarms).

I was reading an article in the CAMRA magazine for the Hertford area about the fact that Charles Wells are now brewing *Courage Directors* at Bedford. This was particularly interesting as I and some friends have detected a an almost mushroomy flavour and nose to it in recent weeks, and the article said that whilst Wells had no trouble getting the water, hops and barley correct to the specification of the original recipe, that they had eventually to procure the yeast from a Tadcaster brewery! I drink my "Courage" Directors at the **Criterion** and at the Young's **Dunstan House** pub at Burnham on Sea.

In January I again enjoyed wassailing at Westcroft Cider Farm in Brent Knoll with the Chalice Morris Men, and (to my taste) the cider is the best it has ever been. Look out then for the *Janet's Jungle Juice* at the Bristol Beer Festival! The Weston-super-Mare band the Fallen Apples as usual played at this wassail and at the Thatcher's cider wassail the previous evening.

The snow and ice did not prevent three regulars from Weston going to the **21<sup>st</sup> Exeter Winter Ales Festival** on 9<sup>th</sup> of January. This year the venue was at St James Park, Exeter City football club, which meant you could get all the way by train, except for the last slippery 250 yards. Sixty beers plus ten ciders and perries provided the basis of an enjoyable day in the comfortable and warm club. The excellent *Weapons Grade Ginger Beer* (5.5%) from Wheal Maiden in Cornwall was actually



*Played at the Pub – The pub games of Britain*  
Arthur Taylor – English Heritage  
ISBN 978 1 905624 973 – 183 pages – £14.99



sold out on Friday, but a kind Exe Valley CAMRA member had saved a four-pint jug to let some of us sample it on the Saturday. The twelve beers I drank in half or third pints amounted to no more than in a normal lunchtime session, spread out over five hours, although I tasted some of my companion's beers as well. It is too difficult to choose my beer of the festival, but *Beer Engine Whistlemas* (6.9%), *Exminster Darkness* (5.1%), *O'Hanlon's Goodwill* (5.2%) and *Driftwood Resolution* (6.5%) were all well crafted.

The **Royal Oak**, a Good Beer Guide-listed pub at Stoke St Gregory, which can be reached by the number 51 bus from Taunton, has a very interesting collection of old village photographs hanging in the pub, and the *Butcombe Bitter* and *St Austell's Tribute* are well kept. If you are in Taunton the best real ale pubs are undoubtedly the Racehorse in East Reach (try the *St Austell's Proper Job*), and the **Castle Green Inn**, convenient for the bus station and open from 9am (usually with four beers from the west country).

Robin E Wild

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# Branch socials report

**Welcome to this edition's report on the recent activities of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.**

Although most people join CAMRA because of their interest in real ale, quite a few of us also like a drop of apple juice from time to time – so what better than a visit to **Wilkins Cider Farm** in deepest Somerset for a drop or three of real cider. We were warmly welcomed by owner Roger who swiftly ensured we had glasses and then took us through the varieties on offer. We were able to sup dry or sweet or easily mix a medium. Roger also laid on plenty of local bread and cheese too.

In addition, there is also a farm shop, selling all sorts of local produce, and before we departed, we were given the chance to buy cider at very good value prices to take away with us. A most enjoyable visit as ever!

On our return, we dropped in to the Good Beer Guide-listed **New Inn** in Wedmore, and the **Trotter** at Crickham (once we had woken up the landlord who had closed early as no one else was there!). Our final pub was the ever-excellent **Orchard** in Bristol, with a dazzling array of cider (and a few good beers) as ever.

Following a successful trip to pubs in the Mid-Mendips, our next surveying trip was towards Severnside at the beginning of December. This included the consistent **Fox** at Easter Compton as well as the up-and-coming **Anchor** in Thornbury, both serving top-quality beer.

With the Christmas season fast approaching, it was time for our annual Christmas social and quiz night, which was held at the **Chimp House** in Horfield. And what an event! A turnout of over 70 members ensured the pub was 'crammed to the rafters', and the quiz part of the evening had to be postponed for another day. (*Pete Bridle has more to say on the event in a separate article.*)

And then there was 2010. As is customary, our calendar always starts off on the first Sunday of the new year with the 'Westbury

Wobble' – a light-hearted walk around the pubs of Westbury-on-Trym.

Despite snow and ice still on the streets of Bristol, a good turn-out of nearly 20 members braved the elements to get to our starting point, the **Post Office Tavern**. After a nice drop of Otter to get me going, we slid and slipped towards the **Mouse** and then through the churchyard to the **Victoria**, which serves a good range of tasty Wadworth beers. We then started to split up into smaller groups to visit some of the other pubs around, not everyone being able to negotiate the treacherous ice to the ones further afield.

Our first surveyor trip of the year on January 12th was a close-run thing, with heavy snow being forecast in the days prior. I took the decision that some of us CAMRA members are a hardy lot, and a few snow flakes would not prevent us having a good night out.

And so it proved, with a good turn-out. We visited three pubs in Keynsham, the **Lock Keeper**, the Good Beer Guide-listed **Old Bank**, and the **Ship**, and as the snow started to fall, paid a visit to the **Bird in Hand** at Saltford, who were delighted to see us on such a cold evening. A good range of ales including a strong one from Otter brewery I recall. On next to the very traditional **Crown** at Kelston, which seemed reasonably busy, and with several inches of the white stuff now down and still falling, we decided to head for home ... via the **Staple Hill Oak** naturally, which had a good range of beers including some from Box Steam.

Our first brewery visit of the year was to the tiny **Avon Brewing Company** (as featured also in the last edition of Pints West), just north of Lawrence Hill station. Keith and Jon were our hosts for the evening, and we all just managed to squeeze inside the brewery for a discussion of the finer merits of beers, pubs and brewing. Keith explained that they have a policy of only using the finest local ingredients, and currently brew up to three different brews per month. On offer tonight were Gurt Lush, a golden organic ale of 4.5%, and Gurt Port Stout, a traditional dark beer with more of a kick, and now brewed at 5.3%.

They also provided us with some hot and cold nibbles which went well with the beer, and it was quite a challenge to tear ourselves away at

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Keith and Jon (front) at the Avon Brewing Company

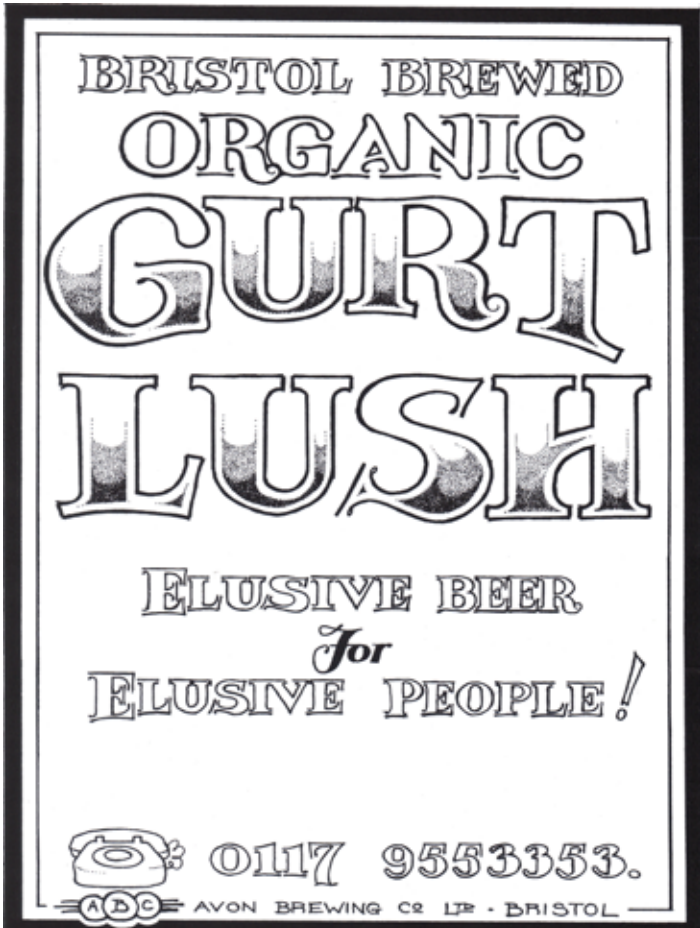
the end of the evening. Our thanks to Jon and Keith for their superb hospitality, and don't forget they also sell nine-pint mini-casks for parties.

Our final trip of the month was to North Somerset, and all pubs visited are listed in the 2010 Good Beer Guide. Included were the **Golden Lion** in Wrington, the **Old Inn** in Clevedon, my personal favourite the **Plough** plus the **Old Inn** both in Congresbury, and finishing at the historical **Blue Flame** in Nailsea.

We regularly run trips to breweries and pubs in and around the area, and all you need to do in order to participate is consult the diary page, choose the events you like the look of (or visit our website for the latest news) and email me at [badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk). Don't leave it too late, as trips are often full! We look forward to seeing you on a trip soon. And if you know of a pub selling a good range of ales that you think we should visit, just drop us a line.

Once again, our thanks to Roger Wilkins of Wilkins Cider and Jon and Keith at Avon Brewing Company for their hospitality – producers of tasty quality products. Cheers!

*Tim Proudman, Branch Social Secretary*



Some of the crowd at the Chimp House

## A big “thank you!”

Alan and Kyle of the **Chimp House** on Gloucester Road in Bishop-Aston did us proud. Although it is a while ago now, it is only right that, through the pages of the Bristol & District CAMRA newsletter, we thank these guys for the superb job they did in hosting our branch Christmas social.

Held on the 10th December, not only did we have exclusive use of the venue, but we were also supplied with a totally free and very good buffet! To predict the numbers that may turn up for these events is always a little difficult. The branch estimated that around 40 CAMRA members were likely to attend. In fact over 70 members turned up – and there was still plenty of excellent grub to go around. Just as well all the 1,900+ members of the branch did not all turn up though!

As for the beers, well, let's just say that they exceeded all expectations. As well as Cheddar Ales Potholer and Festive Totty, there was also Arbor Ales Beech Blond, Motueka and Oyster Stout, Butcombe Christmas Steps, and two other beers.

The place was buzzing and busy – so busy that we decided not to hold the quiz as quite honestly, it would not have been practical!

A great night was enjoyed by everyone who turned up and our thanks again to Alan & Kyle. If you are on the Gloucester Road in Bishopston, why not pop in and say hello. A warm welcome is guaranteed.

*Pete Bridle*

### CHIMP HOUSE

232 Gloucester Rd, BS7 8NZ

Tel: 0117 944 3092, web: [www.thechimphouse.co.uk](http://www.thechimphouse.co.uk)

## Avon Brewing Company news

**Key messages from Avon Brewing Company are:**

○ **Gurt Lush** (4.5%) and **Re-Session Ale** (3.7%) are the regular beers, with the former being the best-seller.

○ **Gurt Port Stout** (4.8%) is being strengthened to 5.3%, where it started, in response to customer feedback. Brewer Keith Smith said the 4.8% version has gone down very well, but that people think it was even better at the prototype strength.

○ Current regular outlets are reported as being the *Bag O'Nails*, the *Sugarloaf*, the *Oxford*, the *Nova Scotia*, the *Robin Hood's Retreat*, the *Seven Stars*, the *Inn on the Green*, the *New Inn* (Frampton) and, further afield, the *White Horse* and the *Bell* in Bath.



# Let's talk Mild

## DEFINITION

The term 'mild' means 'not bitter'. Mild ale is low-hopped (when compared to other ale types, particularly bitters) and the taste will be noticeably less bitter on the palate. In Scotland it is called '60 shilling ale'.

Although the majority of milds are dark brown in colour, it should be remembered that colour is not an indicator for mild – it is low bitterness that defines the style. Mild **does not** mean bland or lacking flavour!

## FLAVOUR

The flavours (and aromas) will be primarily of malts – Horlicks and biscuits for the light-coloured milds rising through nutty, chocolate, fruity and burnt tastes as the darker or roasted malts are used in the beer. The darker malts and grains are used for flavour, to compensate for the lack of hop character (and it is these that colour the mild). Milds are often sweeter than bitters and the strong milds will display complex flavours and aromas.

## TECHNICAL BIT

The bitterness in beer comes primarily from the alpha acid leached from hops and is measured in 'European Bittering Units' (EBUs). The following guide demonstrates the typical bitterness of various beers in EBUs.

Mild:	20	Light ale:	20
IPA:	40	Lager:	30
Yorkshire bitter:	35	English bitter:	50
Sweet stout:	30	Irish stout:	55

## HISTORICAL ORIGINS

I guess by definition the original "milds" would be the ales that were brewed before the introduction, by the Dutch, of the hop plant in the fifteenth century (before this time brewers used hedgerow plants for bitterness/flavour).

The origin of the name 'mild' is slightly vague as it is thought to have been used to describe one of the earliest beer styles, for instance three hundred years ago drinkers liked the taste of old ale – a smoky brown beer matured in bulk vats for at least a year until the flavour mellowed and developed an acetic sourness or 'tang'. To balance this 'tang', fresh brown ale (not aged) was mixed with the old stale ale by the drinker, and it is thought that this fresh ale was often termed 'mild'. However, the 'mild' in this case refers to the sourness, or age, of the beer and not its bitterness, so it would not fit our current day definition of mild.

The term mild (as we currently use it) stems from the early nine-

teenth century when strong pale ales were being made for export to the colonies. Two hundred years ago when pale malt (made using coke instead of wood) became commercially economical, it allowed brewers to produce a pale-coloured ale that didn't taste smoky. It was from these ales that the export quality pale ales were developed – high alcohol and bittering to survive the long voyages around the globe (India Pale Ale had a bitterness of 100 to 150 EBUs and an alcohol content of 7 to 10%). The home market, however, wanted a 'less bitter' ale of a similar quality – hence the 'mild' term as we define it today.

These milds became abundant in the 1850's when they were pale in colour and only differed from pale ales in the hop amounts used (high alcohol content was the preservative that allowed them to be kept – spoilage was always a problem in casks during the summer). The preservative properties of hops were well known at this time and it was not uncommon for a brewery to cut costs by making an IPA one day and then re-use the large amount of hops to flavour a mild on the next.

The alcoholic strength of mild used to be about 7 to 9% but due to cost cutting it had reduced to 6 or 7% by 1870 when the darker milds were being produced, although a weaker, light-coloured mild called AK ale at 5% was also produced for families at a shilling a gallon. By 1913 the alcohol was down to 5% and then the shortage of malted barley during the Great War (and campaigning from temperance societies) caused a reduction in strength again to 2 or 3% until the current time when it is typically about 3.5%.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century breweries were producing three or four milds, with the strength designated by X's; the weakest was X and the strongest XXXX. It was Britain's most popular drink until well past the 1950's but fell out of vogue in the late 60's due to poor quality and a working-class 'cloth cap' image. The style held on in the industrial midlands, North West England and parts of Wales, and is now starting to enjoy a comeback, with many micro-breweries introducing new milds that are stronger in both alcohol and flavour.

Colin Postlethwaite

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

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

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





# BADRAG - Bristol and District Rare Ales Group

## The Mild Trail Passport Scheme

Though I currently write at my desk in fingerless gloves and salopettes, spring is apparently just around the corner, and with it, the mild month of May! Last year's CAMRA Mild Trail events were better than ever, with more pubs participating, more mild ales available and more people taking advantage of the excellent beers and venues on offer. This year we have added a Mild Passport Scheme and are extending the trails through from mid April to mid June.

As with last year there will be a number of trails; the pubs listed may change so look on the BADRAG website ([www.badrag.co.uk](http://www.badrag.co.uk)) for details. The dates are as follows:

- **Thursday April 22nd Harbourside Mild Passport Trail:** Starting 6pm – Orchard, Nova Scotia, Adam & Eve, Bag O'Nails and Three Tuns. Leader: Phil Luxton. (NB Ferry to SS Great Britain stops at 6.15pm and last number 500 bus from Centre is at 6.32pm).
- **Saturday May 1st Temple Meads & City Centre Mild Passport Trail:** starting 12 noon in the Knights Templar, Cornubia, Seven Stars, Commercial Rooms, White Lion, Three Sugar Loaves and the Bank Tavern. Leader: Ed Lobbett.
- **Saturday May 8th East Bristol Mild Passport Trail:** 12 noon Staple Hill Oak, Van Dyke Forum, Masons Arms, Miners Arms, Duke of York, Sugar Loaf, Chelsea Inn, St Georges Hall and Old Stillage. Leader: Henry Davies.
- **Thursday May 13<sup>th</sup> Bedminster Mild Passport Trail:** 7pm Tobacco Factory, Hen & Chicken, Robert Fitzharding and Assembly. Leader: Colin Postlethwaite.
- **Saturday May 15th Clifton Mild Passport Trail:** 12 noon the Vittoria, then Victoria, Portcullis, Lansdown, Quinton House, Berkeley, Eldon House, and Hope & Anchor. Leader: Pete Bridle.
- **Wednesday May 19th, Weston-super-Mare Mild Passport Trail:** 7pm Criterion, White Hart, Dragon, Red Admiral and Off the Rails. Leader: Tim Nickolls.
- **Friday May 28<sup>th</sup> Kingsdown Mild Passport Trail:** 7pm Hillgrove



Porter Stores, Green Man and Highbury Vaults. Leader: Dave Jane.

- **Saturday June 19th South Glos Mild Passport Trail:** and Explorer/GBG trip to include the Cross Hands at Winterbourne Down, Lamb at Iron Acton, New Inn at Mayhill, Beaufort Arms at Hawkesbury Upton, Salutation at Ham and Inn on the Green. Leader Laurie Gibney with the assistance of Tim Proudman.

The leader of each trail will have passports available for those who wish to take part, but each venue will also keep a small number of passports for anyone wishing to take part in the scheme but unable to make it to one of the trail events.

### The "How it Works" bit...

Each venue has a unique stamp; if you order a pint or a half of mild in one of the participating venues, that venue will stamp the section of your passport next to their name. There are prizes for the total number of stamps collected as well as trail prizes for anyone collecting all the stamps for a given trail, so most people will be rewarded not only with some great beers but a memento of their Mild Trail efforts!

There are gold, silver and bronze awards for the total number of stamps, so you could receive a certificate, a commemorative T-shirt or a tankard. If you also complete a trail you will be put into a draw for a guaranteed prize from one of the participating pubs in that trail; this could be a meal for two, some vouchers or even a bar tab!

Jon Comer from Arbor Ales will be co-ordinating much of the ale-ordering so there should be plenty of variety, and with the success of last year the whole event should have some great beers and some great days out.

Remember to look at the BADRAG website for updates – we'll see you in the bar!

Ed Lobbett

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# BADRAG - Bristol and District Rare Ales Group

## Socials review

**B**ADRAG holds social gatherings at various hostelrys on the second Thursday of each month.

In November a mini tour was led by Ed Lobbett in search of Autumn rare ales close to Bristol city centre, visiting the *Cornubia*, *Seven Stars* and *Bank Tavern*. At the latter Otley 08 barley wine went down well. In December BADRAG and the rest of the Bristol CAMRA branch combined for a Christmas party at the *Chimp House*, mentioned elsewhere in this issue. In January around thirty people supported our social arranged by Pete Bridle at the *Annexe* in Bishopston. Not usually noted for dark ales, they excelled by getting in Sarah Hughes Ruby and Moor Old Freddy Walker especially for us. These came on at 7.30pm and only a few pints of the Sarah Hughes were left at the end of the evening, with Old Freddy Walker lasting less than 48 hours. In February Mark Farrell at the *Three Tuns*, close to the city centre, fielded Arbor Ales Snuffly Jacks (beer of the evening) and Oyster Stout, with Young's Winter Warmer and Keelman Brown from Big Lamp brewers of Newcastle completing the rare ale style line-up, supported by Butcombe Bitter, Timothy Taylor Landlord and Teignworthy Gundog.

Forthcoming socials include visiting the *Portcullis* in Clifton on

**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, low-alcohol session ales, wheat beers, traditional strength IPAs and real lagers.**

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

Thursday 11th March from 7 or 8pm for one of their famous rare ales evenings (continuing through the weekend), and visiting the RAFA Club at Carlton Lodge, Eastfield, Westbury-on-Trym on Thursday 8th April from 8pm where a mild ale may be available. And then there are the Mild Passport Trails reported elsewhere.

Laurie Gibney

*P.S. Unfortunately the BADRAG email circulation list was lost in a recent computer crash. If you were being circulated by email but appear to have received nothing for a while, or if you would like to be on the BADRAG circulation list, please send an email to [BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk](mailto:BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk).*

## News from Arbor Ales

**J**on Comer is working all out to fulfil orders having been away for three weeks over the holiday period. Upon returning to the brewery it was to discover that pipes and drains were frozen entailing the loss of a further three days production.

Brewing at present is **Snuffly Jack's Old Ale** (5.9%) – last brewed in October 2008! The recipe has been improved by the addition of low-colour chocolate malt together with the substitution of EKG for Fuller's Gold hops. Similar improvements have been applied to **Oyster Stout** (4.5%). The current single hop ale is **Green Bullet** (4%), another New Zealand variety with high alpha content.

With regard to outlets, one of the latest in Bristol to take the beers is the **Eldon House**; the **Three Tuns** is also proving a regular customer as are the **Chelsea** and the **Sugar Loaf**, both in Easton. Perhaps the biggest growth area seems to be Cheltenham; the **Jolly Brewmaster**, for example, usually takes five casks of any ale at a time, individual casks seldom lasting longer than a few hours.

Future projects include the experimental brewing of a lager which will be "dry-hopped" with Dorset Naga chillies – the most powerful in the world. Needless to say it will be called **Arbor Naga Lager**. The popular **Four Minute Mild** (2.8%) is to be revived, and featuring at the Bristol Beer Festival this year will be **Old Knobbly** (4.3%) and the new version of **Motueka** (4%).

Henry Davies

## News from Zero Degrees

**A**fter a busy Christmas and the success of their two Christmas specials – a 5.5% **Jul** (Christmas) **Bock** and a 4.6% **Apple and Cinnamon Ale** – it has been decided that there will be a special available on the bar at Bristol's Zero Degrees constantly.

Chris Thurgeson, the brewer there, said this will be in addition to their usual range of five beers – the 4.8% Czech style **Pilsner**, the 4.6% US style **Pale Ale**, the 4.6% **Black Lager**, the 4.2% **Wheat Beer** (either Hefe-Weizen or Witbier style) and the 4.1% **Mango**.

The programme will commence with an **Apple Wheat** at 4.6%, followed by a 5.0% Viennese **Red Lager**, followed by a **Ginger Beer** (strength yet to be decided). The Apple Wheat was planned to be on the bar from about mid-February and the dates of the rest will be dependent on how fast they sell out of the previous one.

Chris says that any suggestions or requests are always welcome and that anybody who would like to can contact him by email ([christhurge@googlemail.com](mailto:christhurge@googlemail.com)).

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<b>Arbor Ales</b> BREWED BY KINGSWOOD, BRISTOL  <b>Hornbeam IPA</b> 5.7%	<b>Arbor Ales</b> BREWED BY KINGSWOOD, BRISTOL  <b>Old Knobbly</b> 4.5%



# Beyond the Pale

I have written previously in *Pints West* about my passion for extreme beers and, in particular, traditional strength IPAs. Well, the winter months have provided numerous opportunities for me to indulge this passion.

First up in December was a friend's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party at the **Royal Artillery** in West Huntspill (Somerset). *Double Header* (5.3% ABV), *Firebox* (6%) and *Santa Fe* (7.3%) from RCH were all available; thus enabling the blends of these beers that were so popular several years ago down the road at the **Coopers Arms** in Highbridge to be re-created. In addition, there was a dry-hopped cask of *Hoppiness* (6.5%) from Moor, their American-style IPA, which made this even more of a hop monster than it usually is.

The following weekend saw the Christmas beer festival at the **Portcullis** in Clifton village, where there were over 20 ales available; all chosen by the landlady, Natz. My favourite was *Snowflake* (8%) from Sarah Hughes, a rich and warming barley wine. Around the same time, the **Bank Tavern** in the centre held a "Hootenanny" to usher in the festive season. As you would expect from the quirky management team of Ed and Sam at the Bank, this was no ordinary Christmas bash. They had reindeer, elves, snow, fire juggling, giant mince pies and a visit from a rotund man with a white beard. Of course there were Christmassy beers available over the weekend such as *Elf and Hoppiness* (3.9%) from Hop Back and *Hoppy Christmas* (5%) from Newmans; plus caramelised apple mulled cider based on a secret recipe. However, the beer that caught my attention was *Grockle Grog* (8%) from Moor. This is their *Old Freddy Walker* (7.3%), a rich, dark, full-bodied old ale, with the addition of Somerset apple brandy. According to the dictionary, a "grockle" is a tourist and "grog" is a diluted spirit. The strap-line on the pump clip is "All that is great about Somerset. Not just for tourists!"

Following on from their Christmas beer festival, Ned at the **Portcullis** provided more festive cheer over the holiday season by laying on a range of excellent guest beers from craft brewers such as BrewDog, Dark Star, Elland, Moor and Otley. Personal favourites were *BlackDog* (5.5%) from BrewDog, a fantastic dark ale with loads of hops which was the result of a collaboration with the highly acclaimed Stone brewery from the USA, *Grockle Grog* (again) and *JJJ IPA* (9%) from Moor, their immensely malty and hoppy cult IPA. *Grockle Grog* was also to be found in January at the excellent **Seven Stars** in the centre.

Just prior to Christmas, a work-related trip to Kent provided me with an opportunity to stay the night with relatives at Lewes in Sussex, with the main objective being to visit the **Evening Star** in Brighton. This is the brewery tap for Dark Star and I was on the trail of their Christmas offering, *Critical Mass* (7.8%), another dark and warming winter ale. Having accomplished my objective, I also enjoyed their *Winter Solstice* (4.2%), a bronze and zesty ale subtly flavoured with freshly ground coriander, and *American Pale Ale* (4.7%), their award-winning pale ale. A short walk to the **Lord Nelson Inn**, a Harvey's pub which provides the full range of their regular and seasonal offerings, enabled me to finish off the evening with *Christmas Ale* (8.1%). This is a dark, heavily-hopped, strong ale.

Over the Christmas holiday, I managed a flying visit to the **Royal Artillery** as news had spread of a special cask of ale from Moor being available. This was *Sloe Walker* (8%), which is their *Old Freddy Walker* matured for several months on a bed of hand-picked Somerset sloes. According to the brewer, Justin Hawke, the tart acidity of the sloes provides the perfect counterpoint to the rich beer and the additional fermentation helps dry out the beer a bit and adds extra condition. Only three casks were released and one of these went to the Royal Artillery, a regular outlet for Moor beers. Justin recommends that the *Sloe Walker* is best served on gravity behind the bar at room temperature so as not to mask the flavours of the sloes, and this is how it was dispensed at the Artillery. Rather fine it was too.

The annual trip up north over the Christmas holiday to visit family and friends enabled me to sample some of my favourite Thornbridge beers. A visit to the **Coach & Horses** in Dronfield, their brewery tap situated between Chesterfield and Sheffield, is always a must. It has five of their excellent beers available, with helpful tasting notes provided by one of the brewers who lives above the pub. This enabled me to sample the splendid *Saint Petersburg* (7.7%), which is their take on a Russian imperial stout.

A session in Sheffield meeting up with old school friends started

off at the new **Sheffield Tap** situated on Platform 1B of the train station. This is a fantastic refurbishment of the old first class refreshment rooms, a Grade 2 listed building opened in the 1900s and closed in the 1970s. On our visit, all eight handpumps were dispensing Thornbridge beers; beer heaven! These included the excellent *Kipling* (5.2% abv), a pale bitter with intense fruit flavours, and my current favourite.

The multi-award-winning *Jaipur IPA* (5.9%), which makes great use of American hops, was also available alongside *Seaforth* (5.9%), which is essentially the *Jaipur IPA* but with English hops. Being able to make a direct comparison of these two beers prompted much discussion amongst us. It seemed a shame to have to leave the Sheffield Tap, but the **Devonshire Cat**, the **Fat Cat** and the **Kelham Island Tavern** (CAMRA's National Pub of the Year in 2008) beckoned. Needless to say we returned to the Sheffield Tap prior to catching our trains home.

At the start of the New Year, there are two beer festivals in January which I always look forward to. The first is the Exeter Festival of Winter Ales, which had over 60 (mainly winter-only) beers available this year. Personal favourites were the *Juniper IPA* (5% abv) from Roosters, *Norman's Conquest* (7% abv) from Cottage and, as always, the *JJJ IPA* from Moor.

Later in January, the National Winter Ales Festival (NWAf) took place in Manchester. Having studied in the rainy city, I enjoy any opportunity to return and visit some of my old haunts; several of which run their own festivals alongside the NWAf. My favourite pub is the **Marble Arch**, home of the Marble brewery, which is on CAMRA's National Inventory of heritage pubs. It features a tiled, barrel-vaulted ceiling below which is an ornate frieze with the names of various drinks; and "drinking the frieze" is a formidable challenge. The walls are also tiled and there is a sloping mosaic floor, which can prove somewhat disconcerting should you over-indulge. There are 11 handpumps featuring an extensive selection from the Marble range plus guest beers from far and wide. On this occasion, their well-established *Lagonda IPA* (5%) was available together with my current favourite, *Dobber* (5.9%), which was introduced to the range last year. This is an intensely hoppy American-style IPA which was recently voted Greater Manchester Beer of the Year (note that a "dobber" is a big marble). Over at the NWAf, there were more than 200 beers available. Personal favourites were the *Raj IPA* (5.5%) from Tryst, *Khyber* (5.8%) from Kinver, *Punk IPA* (6.2%) from BrewDog, *Motley Brew* (7.5%) from Otley, *Over the Edge* (7.6%) from Kinver, *Drew Peacock's Double IPA* (8.2%) from WC and, yet again, *JJJ IPA* from Moor.

So, there you have it; a whirlwind tour of just some of the extreme beers out there. However, if you think my tastes are over the top, check out the following beers from BrewDog: firstly they brewed *Tokyo* (18.2%) last year, an intergalactic fantastic oak-aged stout and, at the time, the UK's strongest beer; then they also brewed *Tactical Nuclear Penguin* (32%) last year, a double cask matured uber-imperial stout and claimed to be the world's strongest beer. Just ask Ned and Joe at the Portcullis what they taste like. Incidentally, they have also brewed *Nanny State* (1.1%), which contains more hops per barrel than any other UK brew, as a riposte to the criticism they faced from certain quarters for launching Tokyo. Now that is really extreme!

Subsequent to this article being written, it was announced that BrewDog have launched *Sink the Bismarck* (41%) to re-claim the title of the world's strongest beer from Schorschbrau in Germany who had claimed it with their *Schorschbock* (40%).

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# Eco-friendly brewery celebrates a sustainable Devon!

One of the few remaining family-owned breweries in the West Country has won top honours at the Devon Environmental Business Awards

The Otter Brewery at Luppitt near Honiton beat off tough competition from an outdoor adventure centre, a guest house and a manufacturer of industrial piping to win the hotly contested 'Sustainable Devon' category at the Devon Environmental Awards.

From nearly 90 overall entries, Otter were short-listed into the final four of their category and during a glittering ceremony held at the Met Office, Patrick McCaig was presented with the award by Paul Gompertz, Director of Devon Wildlife Trust.

Well known for its environmentally friendly approach to producing beer, the Otter Brewery was established in 1990 by David and Mary Ann McCaig and is now one of the South West's leading suppliers of cask-conditioned beer. The range of five completely natural beers are produced with an unwavering respect for the brewery's rural location and the McCaig's mantra has always been to brew a 'social' pint – not something that exacerbates the problems already linked with cheap alcohol.

As part of their entry, Otter Brewery had to prove a long-term commitment to protecting and enhancing their immediate surroundings (the Blackdown Hills are both an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' and a 'Site of Special Scientific Interest') as well as ensuring that their long-term future was wholly sustainable. Judges were impressed at the tremendous lengths the McCaigs have already gone to (including the series of well established willow beds that help to purify waste water and the strong ethos to recycle ingredients locally) as well as the recent completion of their new underground eco-cellar – the first of its kind in the country.

This alone will save the business over 6½ tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year – the equivalent of removing eight chillers and compressors (which would otherwise be running 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year). In a very short time this will zero-rate the new cellar and save the business more than £27,000 worth of electricity a year. The whole cathedral-like structure has been crowned with a massive living sedum



roof. As well as absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, the roof also captures rainwater that is then used for domestic maintenance and washing vehicles.

Sustainability plays a key role at every stage of the process, from the locally sourced malt from Tuckers Maltings in Newton Abbot to the water for the beer that is sourced from the head springs of the River Otter. Spent malt is then used to feed a beef herd in the Luppitt Valley, waste yeast goes directly to a pig farm in nearby Stockland and the used hops make excellent mulch for organic gardeners. All remaining brewery effluent is treated naturally using ponds and willow beds and the site is a haven for frogs, toads, newts, birds, deer, badgers and foxes.

As Patrick McCaig proudly comments: "This award means the world to us. For nineteen years we have strived to become an exemplar for the brewing industry as a whole whilst providing everyone that drinks Otter with an honest, distinctive and long-lasting memory of Devon. This award is a brilliant testament to what Mum and Dad have achieved since 1990 and we plan on making the business even greener in the future."

*Taken from the website of SIBA, the Society of Independent Brewers (siba.co.uk)*

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Theakston, Mansfield, Robinsons, Batemans, Hydes, Thwaites, Sharp's.

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# News from Bath Ales

**News of the Bath Ales brews:** After a few years' absence, too long in some people's opinion, Rare Hare is back! Traditionally brewed around Easter time, Rare Hare will be available for a limited period only in cask and in bottle. Rare Hare in bottle is also a first but head brewer Gerry Condell is convinced that it will go down a treat. "I always get asked when we are brewing Rare Hare again. Brewed at 5.2%, it's our strongest ale in the range. It's got a terrific full flavour yet is perfectly dry and clean on the palate, Rare Hare will be made available to try at the annual Bristol Beer Festival." It won't be around for long, and when it's gone it's gone!

**News from the pubs:** As the Bath Ales food vision has changed, the menus have gradually been altered to offer value-for-money food that has been prepared to order with fresh, local ingredients. Four of Bath Ales' pubs in Bristol and Bath are now serving full English breakfast – the Hop Pole and the Salamander in Bath and the Wellington and Graze in Bristol – from 9am Saturdays and Sundays. Sample menus for all food-serving pubs are available from [www.bathales.com](http://www.bathales.com).

**Dates for the diary:** Bath Ales are proud to be sponsoring the Bath Comedy Festival again this year. And once again they will be producing a special festival ale called Fools. It will be available in all participating outlets throughout Bath. The festival will be held from 1st April – April Fools day, what else? – and will run until 11th April. For more information about the festival check [www.bathcomedyfestival.co.uk](http://www.bathcomedyfestival.co.uk).

The annual Bath Ales beer festival at Bath Racecourse will this year be held on Friday 4th June. Anyone who's been before knows that this is a fun evening out at Bath Racecourse; the beer festival offers a great choice of real ales and ciders, then there will be racing followed by live music.

Bath Ales was delighted to be able to hand over a cheque for £4,000 to Frenchay After Burns Children's Club. The money was raised following an initiative by their head brewer Gerry Condell during the annual Bath Ales Biking Bonanza. Whilst he walked the 58 or so miles



From left to right: Karin Ashwell (Bath Ales), Irene Evans (FAB Club), Gerry Condell (head brewer Bath Ales), Cathy Evans (FAB Club)

past all the pubs in the Bath Ales estate, everyone else joined in a fun, family-friendly cycle from either Bristol or Bath to the brewery in Warmley, raising funds in the process. Bath Ales are doing it again this year and everyone is invited to join them for the bike ride on Saturday 19th June.

If you're interested in finding out how Gem or Barnstormer is brewed, Bath Ales are running brewery tours during the week where you can learn all about the process and see a short film about the history of Bath Ales, and at the end there will be plenty of time for sampling generous amounts of their award-winning ales. Check with the brewery for details.



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## Spotted a Rare Hare?

RARE HARE, our strong, full-flavoured premium ale, is not an easy beer to spot. It only makes brief appearances in our brewing calendar – and we only brew it in limited quantities.

The 2010 brew of Rare Hare is available now, but you'd better hop to it if you want to savour this elusive wonder – it's 'hare today, gone tomorrow'.



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



## 2009 : Terrible year . .

**Vince Murray looks back at how the local beer scene changed during the year just gone and notes that despite a torrid time for pubs the local drinker has never had so much choice, albeit at a considerable price.**

Not many folk will look back on 2009 with much fondness for obvious reasons. The recession certainly gave most of us an unpleasant and worrying time. Our local brewers and pubs were certainly not exempt from this and probably suffered more than most. That said, as I mentioned this time last year, the big silver lining is that we seem as consumers to benefit from an ever-increasing availability of quality independently brewed real ales locally. There is a very definite trend for more and more pubs, clubs and even dining venues to sell the real stuff, and to move away from the blander national brands that used to have such a stranglehold on the area's pump clips. The one big downside is that the average price of a pint seems to continually increase at an alarming rate. The £3 plus pint is becoming an increasingly common sight, and more and more hard-pressed people are being priced out of visiting pubs.

It would seem, in no small measure, that much of the increased choice is down to the massive pub-owning companies (Enterprise, Punch Taverns, Greene King, etc) getting cold feet in the recession and either selling off pubs or easing the terms of leases. Licensees certainly seem much more able to offer beers of their own choice. Entrepreneurial individuals have snapped up such pubs and begun to release their true potential.

I will list a few examples below; this is not intended as an exhaustive list so apologies if I miss any out!

To the north of our area, Thornbury has a real ale pub to be proud of with the **Anchor** which became free of tie a couple of years back and has kicked on superbly. So keen are the locals here that they are in the process of forming a local sub-branch of CAMRA! The **New Inn** at Mayhill, near Frampton Cotterell, with its deserved reputation for quality food, has also impressed with its choice and quality of beer in recent years – so much so that it is the current holder of the Bristol & District Pub of the Year title. That area is particularly well off for ale fans as it also has the **Rising Sun**, **Globe** plus the **Lamb** at nearby Iron Acton (all free houses) plus the **Live and Let Live** (Bath Ales). A little nearer

town the Horfield area has now got four significant real ale pubs – the ever popular **Wellington** (Bath Ales) and **Inn on the Green** (up to 14 changing beers), the much improved **Annexe** and the “back from the dead” **Kellaway Arms** (up to six changing beers).

To the South of our area new outlets for independent beers keep popping up too. Amongst those that we came across this year were the **Railway Inn**, Sandford (owned by Thatcher's but free of beer tie) which sells four beers, the **Royal Hotel** Portishead (4 beers with changing guests), the **Criterion** in Weston-super-Mare directly opposite the **Raglan** (both offering several changing beers) and the **Waverley** also in Weston. The **Poacher** in Portishead High Street also seems to improve with every visit. The best news of all though came when John Hayes, the almost legendary former landlord of the Coopers Arms at Highbridge, returned unexpectedly to the trade by buying the **Old Inn** at Hutton, near Weston, from Greene King. A pub that had been going nowhere now has several RCH beers, plus guests and plans for more pumps. It also has a thriving trade and food to die for as John reveals his previously well hidden cooking talents!

One worrying note though – on our regular minibus survey trips to North Somerset it was very noticeable how quiet many of the pubs were, particularly the more rural ones. Our trips are usually midweek but we were sometimes the only people in the pub – which was never the case before. It does seem that country pubs have it particularly tough at the moment with people just eating and drinking out far less. It is these pubs that I fear the most for as they cannot continue like that indefinitely. Country pubs lost will almost certainly never return and a huge part of our culture and heritage would die with them. We must try and support them through the recession. We recently heard that the licensees of the wonderful **Old Inn** in Clevedon (a Good Beer Guide regular) are “likely to leave very soon as they cannot make the place viable” – quite shocking as it always seems busy on our visits, more so than similar pubs.

Turning to Bristol itself, this is where the boom in real ale availability is most evident, and where pubs offering true choice and quality are surviving strongly. So much so that we ended up with 54 pubs voted in to the Good Beer Guide (after whittling down from about 85 nominated) and only 39 spaces available. Fifteen had to miss out and they included some very notable old favourites such as the **Cornubia**, the **Bridge** in Passage Street, the **Hare on the Hill** and **Zero Degrees**. Those that they made way for included the **Portcullis** and the **Lansdown** both in Clifton, the **Bank** in John Street, and the **Barley Mow** near Temple Meads. We will have an even harder time soon deciding the entries for the 2011 Guide with all of last year's omitted pubs striving to get

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# ... except for the beer!

back in alongside other new nominations such as the **Green Man** in Kingsdown (excellent Dawkins all-organic pub), the **Vittoria** on White-ladies Road (now run by Les formerly of the White Lion on the Centre), the aforementioned **Kellaway Arms** and the **Anchor** at Thornbury, to name but four. Another vying for an entry is the **Orchard** near the SS Great Britain which won the National CAMRA Cider pub of the Year recently, but also sells great beer. Something will have to give!

A few other changes that happened in 2009 included the loss of two outstanding Beer Guide licensees. Steve Binns left the **Commercial Rooms** after an unusually long stint by Wetherspoon's standards and the pub went through a spell when it seemed a little rudderless. It now has a new permanent manageress and we wait to see if it will regain its very high standards. Many of us were shocked when Steve and Katie announced that they were leaving the **Seven Stars** to take on a pub in Worcestershire in September 2009. They had really taken the pub to great things in the few years that they had it. We need not have feared though as along came new landlord Paul who has increased the beer range, ensured a constant supply of rare ale styles, and offered the best prices in town outside of Wetherspoon. The pub is a runaway success where it is not unusual for a beer to come and go in the same day. Currently all except the strongest beers are offered at £2.20 to card-carrying CAMRA member at all times and to anybody in happy hour or all day Wednesday. Indeed you have to ask why Paul can do this yet certain pubs (especially in and around Clifton) charge over £3 for standard strength beer – with one of the worst examples being £3.35 charged by an otherwise excellent beer guide pub for a 3.4% ABV regular beer! It has not gone unnoticed that other nearby pubs are now offering low price deals to members to compete with Paul.

Three of our local brewers opened new outlets in 2009 – firstly the massively improved Arbor Ales took on the **Old Stillage** in Church

Road, Redfield and use it to showcase their range of regular beers as well as many one-off brews. Arbor Ales' beers are also popping up on bars all around Bristol too. Later in the year Butcombe took over the **Cottage** on the harbourside near Hotwells and beer reports have been good so far. Right at the end of 2009 Bath Ales opened the impressive looking **Graze** in the former post office building at the edge of Queen's Square – apparently half is aimed at diners and the other half at drinkers (I have not yet visited). **Zero Degrees** had a change of brewer during 2009 and most of us now agree that the beers are better than ever. Cotswold Spring and Cheddar Ales are also appearing on bars more frequently these days.

The other great success story of 2009 was the significant number of closed pubs that reopened. Just a couple that come to mind are the **Golden Guinea** and the **Quinton House** both of which now offer a selection of real ales. The **Eldon House** near the Triangle also closed and reopened after a planned major refit. Right at the end of 2009 the **Three Tuns** near the Cathedral was reopened by Mark Farrell, the ex-licensee of the Plume of Feathers in Hotwells (sadly still closed) and is already offering six interesting beers. Around the same time the **Three Sugar Loaves** at the bottom of Christmas Steps reopened with three changing beers from the extended Enterprise list and seems popular.

Clearly the boom in real ale availability and quality pubs looks like continuing in 2010 – at least in and around Bristol. Already in 2010 we have had the news that the Dawkins pub chain have taken over the excellent Matthews brewery in Timsbury and are relaunching the beer range.

Exciting times on the beer scene – I just wish we could do something about the alarming price of a pint in most places (not helped at all by taxes) and do more to help our country pubs survive the recession.

Vince Murray

## Fancy being a beer judge? (or a chance to win festival tickets?)

The Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) is holding its annual beer festival this year as a part of the Ludlow Food Spring Festival in the grounds of the historic Ludlow Castle. It will be featuring 150 different ales, from independent brewers throughout Wales, the West and the Marches, plus ciders, perries and fruit wines.

The Ludlow Food Spring Festival itself is now in its second year. As the venue for the beer festival it will also be playing host to the SIBA Wales & West Beer Competition 2010 with a variety of classes being judged, followed by an opportunity for the public to taste award-winning beers in a relaxed atmosphere. With an ever growing number of brewery members in this region, the competitions are usually split in order to accommodate the large volume of beer entries. This year, however, all will be available at the Ludlow Festival. The winning beers will then go on to the SIBA national final in February 2011.

And the organisation that represents independent local brewers is launching a search for beer lovers to help judge the Wales & West of England's most important beer competition. SIBA are inviting five members of the public to join industry professionals and beer experts to decide the region's best beers on Friday 7th May, as well as giving away ten pairs of tickets for the weekend festival. The judges will all be given advice about what sort of things they need to look for and the 'public judges' will be placed on tables alongside seasoned beer industry experts.

If you are over 18 and think you have what it takes to help judge the region's best ales, or you would like to win two tickets for the festival, you simply need to send your contact details, including postal address, with your answer to the competition question below. Applications should be sent by email to [BeerCompetitions@SIBA.co.uk](mailto:BeerCompetitions@SIBA.co.uk) and the judges/ticket winners will be selected at random. The closing date is 6th April.

For the chance to win, send your answer to the following question:  
**Which anniversary will SIBA celebrate this year?**

- A) 20 years
- B) 30 years
- C) 50 years

For full terms and conditions see [www.siba.co.uk/events/?page\\_id=599](http://www.siba.co.uk/events/?page_id=599).



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# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

## BATH and SURROUNDING VILLAGES

### Belvoir Castle, re-named Victoria Works, 32-33 Victoria Buildings, Lower Bristol Road, Bath

This pub, which had been closed for several months for refurbishment, re-opened on Friday 27th November. The interior of the pub has been transformed. The new look is similar to the Velo Lounge on Moorland Road but more individual and stylish. There are four handpumps. Dominic and Rowan, the new licensees, are serving Timothy Taylor Landlord, Adnams Broadside, St Austell Tribute and similar well-known quality real ales which, although they are national brands, are not seen in Bath very often. They are limited by tie but keen to make well-informed decisions on which beers to serve despite the limitations of the approved list of cask beers. Although there has been a little controversy over the name change, the majority of pubs in existence today have had several name changes, and in this case the new name does reflect the local history of this area of Bath. Dominic and Rowan are taking the pub in an exciting new direction and believe that a new name will help.

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

The freehold of this pub is on the market for £225,000. James A Baker is the agent. We believe that it may very recently have been sold.

### Crown, Bathford, near Bath

This pub closed recently but, we believe, has just re-opened. The Crown has good potential to be a successful business. Its interior is spacious, the rear garden extensive, the car park out front a reasonable size, whilst it is situated in an excellent location for both roadside and local trade.

### Hobgoblin, 47 St James's Parade, Bath

This pub was recently visited by a local CAMRA member in mid-November. Five beers were available including Wychwood's Hobgoblin and The Dogs Bollocks, Ringwood Old Thumper and Bath Ales Gem.

### Jubilee, 91 Whiteway Road, Southdown, Bath

The freehold on this large edge-of-city pub is up for sale by James A

Baker for £500,000. It is being advertised as a "potential development" and there is a rumour that the pub has already been sold and is going to be demolished and "cottages" built on the site. No planning application has yet been submitted however.

### King's Arms, 1 Monmouth Place, Bath

The landlady of this pub, which has long been a venue for live music in Bath, has been invited to meet environmental health officials to discuss the future of her pub. Debs Diack, who runs the King's Arms in Monmouth Place, has been served with an abatement notice by Bath and North East Somerset Council because of the noise coming from her concerts. But the seventeenth century pub has been holding gigs for around thirty years and its supporters say it would not be the same without the music. Following a story in the Bath Chronicle, which prompted dozens of comments on its website, Ms Diack has been contacted by the environmental health team and has been invited to attend a meeting with them. She doesn't know what the meeting will be about but is hoping there will be a positive outcome.

### Beau Nash, formerly Litten Tree, 23 Milsom Street, Bath

This city-centre pub is emerging from a £175,000 face lift with a new name. The company that owns it is to re-name the pub the Beau Nash after the gambler and socialite who transformed Bath's reputation in the eighteenth century. The pub, which is situated in a former bank building, re-opened on Thursday 3rd December. It is owned and operated by the Town and City Pub Company which also runs the Yates and Hogshead chains as well as other Litten Tree pubs. The pub manager is Paul Priestley. It will run student nights (on Mondays) along with curry nights and live music sessions.

### Olde Farmhouse, Lansdown, Bath

This famous jazz pub has been acquired by Abbey Ales. Abbey's pub business already operates the Star Inn, Coeur de Lion and Assembly Inn, and boss Alan Morgan confirmed that he was keen to continue with the expansion programme and subsequently acquire more pubs in the city.

Mr Morgan 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 on Tuesday 10th November and,



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after a small refurbishment, it re-opened on Thursday 12th November at 7pm. Award-winning cask ale Bellringer from Abbey Ales is a regular, alongside beers from the Wadworth's range, and Abbey Ales' very own cider Hells Bells.

The pub had had a chequered history since the retirement of landlord John Bradshaw, who had run it for thirty years as a jazz venue until he retired in 2006. Brothers Matthew and Mark Warburton, who run a number of pubs in the Bath area, managed it for eight months. It was then taken on by landlord Barry Thomas, who died just three months after re-launching it as a live-music venue.

## Porter Butt, York Place, London Road, Bath

This pub is up for sale and is being described as a "potential restaurant, office or residential opportunity subject to permission". According to an article on the Bath Chronicle website, dated Wednesday 11th November, the pub is up for sale after a drop in trade. The lease has been terminated by owners Enterprise due to a lack of business. The Porter Butt, which has a strong emphasis on live music through its Walcot Palais function room, is being sold through Bath agent James A Baker for £350,000. Landlord Andy Tanner, who has managed the pub for almost twenty years, said, "It was not unexpected that the lease was terminated, as trade has been indifferent for a while. It could have happened at any time really. We were doing our best but trade was just not that great." Mr Tanner said he would like the venue to remain as a pub but he did not think it would. He said, "The pub is being sold with its licence, so new owners could still keep it as a pub. However, a few people have been to look round and the general consensus is that it will probably not remain as a pub."

The double-fronted Grade II-listed pub has hosted music from punk through to traditional Irish folk sessions. Upstairs there are five bedrooms and outside there is parking for eighteen cars. This announcement comes after two other pubs in London Road were sold. Filo's sports bar was sold in March and re-opened as cafe and kitchen bar One Beaufort. New owners Paul and Anne Adams gave the venue a £100,000 refit, which took three months. The Longacre Tavern is in the process of being sold after owner Wadworth's brewery decided it no longer fitted with its portfolio.

## Rising Sun, 3-4 Grove Street, Bath

One of our members has learned that landlords Nick and Jamie and their team, who turned this pub around, left the premises on Friday 20th November and the former landlady, who has held the licence all along, has taken over again.

## EAST SOMERSET

## Hungerford Arms, Farleigh Hungerford

This roadside pub with commanding views of the river Frome valley closed in around early January and was for a time boarded up. This is the second closure in recent times. In late January it was reported that some sort of activity was taking place in the building.

## Duke of Cumberland, Edford Hill, Holcombe, near Radstock

The freehold on this pub is up for sale by James A Baker for £195,000.

## Fir Tree, 140 Frome Road, Radstock

The freehold on this large edge-of-town pub is up for sale by James A Baker for £200,000.

## Ship Inn, Oldford, near Frome

This attractively situated roadside pub remains closed. Its freehold is up for sale by James A Baker for £325,000.

## Bell Inn, 13 Frome Road, 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 Bell re-opened in October. The refurbishment is stunning although structurally not as extreme as it was at the Castle. The bar is still in the same place, as is the dividing wall that bisects

the building, but the public area has been opened up into an extra space behind the bar on your left if you enter by the front door. Meanwhile there's a revealed flagstone floor in the right-hand bar. A has been made of Victorian lampshades whilst large Victorian portraits adorn the attractively wall-papered walls. Meanwhile the walls of the gents are adorned with photographs of debutants taken from Country Life magazine. A large kitchen occupies the centre of the ground floor and, as well as providing a wide range of mouth-watering food, also doubles as the pub's central heating when in operation. There are, as at the Castle, six beers, including the same three Three Castles beers (with two badged as Flatcappers) and three local guests. Meanwhile there is plenty of parking space out back.

## Matthews Brewery, now Dawkins Brewery, Unit 7, Workshop Estate, Hayeswood Road, Timsbury

This brewery has been handed over to a new owner, Glen Dawkins, who owns the Dawkins Taverns group in Bristol. Meanwhile Alex Hill, a former manager of the Miners Arms in Saint Werburgh's, has taken over as head brewer. Alex has been in training with the brewery for some months and worked alongside Stuart Matthews during early November to ensure a smooth hand-over. Ned Clarke of the Portcullis in Bristol is supporting Alex on a part-time basis. The intention, we understand, is to continue to produce all of the current Matthews regular beers, including Brassknocker, Bob Wall, and monthly and seasonal specials. In the meantime a new beer has been added to the range: named TTT this should make an appearance at the Bristol Beer Festival. Former owner and head brewer Stuart Matthews has agreed to return to the brewery once a year to brew a "memory lane" beer. Stuart will have twelve months to work on a brand new recipe. Each beer will only be brewed once.

## WEST WILTSHIRE

## Hidden Brewery, near Dinton

Hidden is technically just outside the Bath & Borders branch area but its beer was often found across the whole area. Following financial difficulties the brewery has recently gone into liquidation.

## Lamb Inn, Westbury Road, Edington

Following a major campaign to save their one remaining local pub villagers are celebrating after they learned that their wishes had been granted. Over sixty people in Edington joined forces to buy the four-centuries-old Lamb Inn, in Westbury Road, and run it as a community business after it had closed in July. Although their bid was not successful, it emerged in December 2009 that the pub had been sold to someone who wished to re-open it as a pub cum restaurant.

Mike Davies, who led the villagers' campaign, said in a recent Wiltshire Times article: "Everyone is delighted because the objective was to maintain our village pub and it sounds like the buyers have got some

(Continued overleaf)

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# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

(Continued from previous page)

money to invest as well. Some people were looking forward to running it as a community pub, but as long as it remains open we're very happy. It's the hub of a lot of the activities in the village, so to get it back is a great success."

It is believed that the sale will have been secured by the old year end and that it should re-open around two months into the new year. Edington Parish Council Chairman George Fraser has confirmed the council has given its full support to the new prospective owners of the Lamb Inn. The Lamb, formerly owned by Enterprise Inns, was on the market for £325,000.

## Royal Oak, Hawkeridge, near Westbury

This cosy tucked-away pub in the tiny hamlet of Hawkeridge was visited by a branch member shortly before Christmas. The range consisted of Wadworth 6X and what appeared to be two guest beers: Palmer's Dorset Coast and Fuller's Jack Frost. Both were tried and found to be in very good condition. Food is served in what used to be the pub's skittle alley and there is an outdoor drinking area with commanding views across the adjacent fields. Should be worth a visit.

## Malt House, 33 Roundstone Street, Trowbridge

This pub was closed in December for three months and its landlord forced out of the trade following a series of violent disturbances and reports that children had witnessed drunken behaviour on the premises. Wiltshire Council's western area licensing committee ordered that the pub should be closed down until March 2010. It also attached conditions to its premises licence, insisting, if it re-opens, that it must install an updated CCTV system, become an active member of Trowbridge PubWatch and keep an incident book.

## King's Arms, Castle Street, Trowbridge

This pub has been closed for some time and the freehold is for sale.

## Plans for a new chain pub on Paxcroft Mead, Hilpert, Trowbridge

A pub company has launched an appeal with the Planning Inspectorate against Wiltshire Council's decision to refuse it permission to open a pub in Hilpert. Marston's Plc wants to discharge a legal agreement

which says the land at Hackett Place should only be used for healthcare provision. The company has tried to argue a number of times that it has tried unsuccessfully to market the land for healthcare provision and should now be allowed to use the site for a pub. The appeal will be dealt with by way of a public inquiry at a date to be decided. Any comments should be sent to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol.

## Rose & Crown, 36 Stallard Street, Trowbridge

We learned on Wednesday 11th November that, despite owner Thomas Rothschild's vow, hot on the heels of the recommendation by Trowbridge Town council to refuse his planning application on the rear buildings, to keep the pub derelict, the pub was in fact to be auctioned on Thursday 26th November at the Corn Exchange in Devizes with a guide price is £200,000. We gather that the pub did not sell.

## Stallards Inn, 15-16 Stallard Street, Trowbridge

This Grade II-listed pub, which has been acquired by Edward Toomer's Four County Inns, is in the middle of a major refurbishment. A local micro-brewery has expressed an interest in taking on the pub when it opens, probably in or around the spring of 2010, with the intention of running it as a predominantly real ale pub.

## White Swan, 6 Church Street, Trowbridge

The freehold on this pub is up for sale by James A Baker for £165,000.

## Weymouth Arms, 12 Emwell Street, Warminster

This cosy locals' pub, which had closed for refurbishment, re-opened quietly on Wednesday 8th December as a dry-run for a later grand re-opening. New landlord Ashley bought the pub, which is tucked away down a side street just off the town centre, from former owners Enterprise Inns in the summer of 2009 and has completely re-vamped it ready for the re-opening.

## Angel Inn, Church Street, Westbury

Former landlords Shirley King and Nick Reed have moved on to take over at the Horse & Groom (see below). Meanwhile the Angel has itself been taken over by the previous landlords of the Castle, situated just up the road.

## Castle, Bratton Road, Westbury

The Castle closed on or around Thursday 17th December when its former landlords took over the Angel Inn on Church Street (see above).

## Horse & Groom, Alfred Street, Westbury

This popular Westbury pub, which has been closed for more than a year, re-opened on Monday 28th December. The new owners Shirley King and Nick Reed, who previously had the nearby Angel Inn in Church Street, are determined to restore it to its former glory. The couple's plans for the pub include a restaurant, which was due to open at the end of January and will offer OAP specials, real ales, live music, karaoke, a children's play area, a sports bar in the separate function room building and the possibility of running a youth group for 12 to 16-year-olds in the function room in conjunction with the police. They also plan to run beer festivals and fun days.

## Poplars, Wingfield, near Trowbridge

A hand-painted sign hanging outside this village pub near Trowbridge has been recognised by a national society. The Poplars at Wingfield, which is famous for having one of the smallest cricket pitches in the country, was presented with the National Inn Sign of the Year Award recently. The sign, which features a scene of the cricket pitch surrounded by poplar trees, was created by Wadworth Brewery's own sign-writer Dave Young. Mr Young, from Devizes, said, "I think we are the only in-house pub sign-writing team in the country now. It's all done by hand. I chalk out a design and then paint it with sign-writer's enamels and coat it in varnish. People do seem to appreciate the old traditional values of it." Anthony Collis, vice chairman of the Inn Sign Society, said that the society was set up fewer than 20 years ago to preserve, promote and perpetuate inn signs. More than 100 entries were submitted for the competition and the Poplars is the regional winner for the south of the country.

Steve Hunt



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# Old Green Tree generosity

The grand total of £735 has been raised by drinkers at the Old Green Tree in Bath for the Help for Heroes Appeal. A raffle, with prizes donated by local individuals and businesses, was held at the pub on 8th February, with the draw made by Alan Morgan, MD of Abbey Ales.

Snacks laid on for the occasion included a trout caught by one of the Green Tree's regulars. The cause was one close to the heart of Anna Luke, joint licensee of the Green Tree, as her nephew, a major in the Coldstream Guards, is currently in Afghanistan. Landlord Tim Bethune was bowled over at how much was raised in just a few weeks, indicating the level of support for the appeal.

Help for Heroes was launched in 2007 to provide help for wounded service men and women, and has so far raised £40 million.

Andrew Swift



The Help for Heroes draw at the Old Green Tree with Anna Luke, Tim Bethune and Alan Morgan



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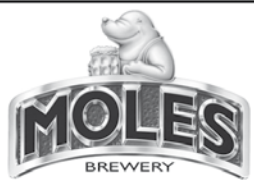
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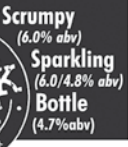
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[www.molesbrewery.com](http://www.molesbrewery.com)

## Solution to the crossword on page 29

Across: 1. Rocket, 4. Scottish, 10. Doublet, 11. Last lap, 12. Adam's apple, 13. Acid, 15. Rheum, 17. Grouched, 19. Legends, 21. Renting, 23. Pull, 24. Debasement, 27. Ruinous, 28. Down: 1. Red barrel, 2. Courage, 3. Enlistment, 5. Cold lager, 6. Task, 7. Illicit, 8. Hoped, 9. Atop, 14. Lounge bars, 16. Dispensed, 18. Digitalis, 20. Golding, 22. Iceberg, 23. Peril, 25. Apse, 26. Cola.



# Tales of the Riverbank (part 2)

Last summer we took a leisurely punt around the waterways of Bristol to try and find some Waterside Watering-Holes where we could sup a decent pint of beer while watching ducks, moorhen and the occasional discarded Lucozade™ bottle float past. But thanks to the rich diversity of riverside pubs in the area, we were unable to get around all of them.

So, in a promise showing all the honesty and sincerity of “Saddam can launch weapons of mass destruction in 45 minutes”, or “I, John George Terry, take thee, Toni...”, I said I would finish my aquatic amblings for the next issue.

Well, as the US Army General said in 1942, “better late than never”. The days are getting longer, the weather warmer, well marginally less cold anyway, and so let’s see what pubs we missed last time around.

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



The Nova Scotia

Was it Thomas Gray in his *Ode On The Spring* who wrote “Spring in the air, there’s magic everywhere, when you’re young and in love”? There’s no doubt this is a time of hope and renewal, as I write families of swallows are going through dozens of holiday brochures before eventually saying, “Oh sod it, let’s just go to the same place as last year”; and English football fans are convincing themselves that this time, we could actually do it.

Where better to bask in this new-found but thoroughly misplaced optimism than down the pub? Last summer we covered most of the pubs in Bristol, but there were a couple we missed. So, let’s head back to the **Nova Scotia** in Nova Scotia Place at the western end of Spike Island. This is a lovely old pub, which was built in the same year as the *Luddite* uprisings (roughly). If you haven’t visited, I heartily recommend it, if only to look at the marvellous ‘Captain’s Cabin’ which houses the snug behind an original Victorian screen. Actually, if you just went in to look at that and then left, I’d probably get in trouble with the landlord, so best stop for a pint of *Bass* or one of two guest ales (*Brain’s Dark* and *Shepherd Neame Bishop’s Finger*). For the apple-oriented among us, there is also Thatcher’s Traditional and Thatcher’s Dry to wet the whistle. I went for Brain’s Dark and it was delicious.

The other pub in Bristol I didn’t get a chance to visit last time was the **Ostrich Inn**, an historic three-storey pub facing west over the wharf by Lower Guinea Street, with a large number of trestle tables outside for those summer’s evenings. The skeleton in the indoor cave is either wonderfully quaint and evocative of days gone by, or irredeemably cheesy, depending on your viewpoint. This is a one-bar pub these days, albeit with multiple



The Ostrich Inn

semi-separated drinking areas. Talking of drink, on my visit I had the choice between a second Brain’s beer (*SA* in this case) and a Marston’s Six Nations rugby brew called *Sweet Chariot*. I personally tend to avoid the ‘special event’ brews on the basis that if they’re not good enough to sell for more than a four weeks in the year, then I’ll give them a miss. (Seasonal beers such as golden summer ales or dark winter beers are different, of course). So, I went for the *SA* and again found it to be in tippety tip-top condition.

Right, with Bristol now done and dusted, I headed east towards Bath. We popped into the Jolly Sailor in Saltford last time, so this time let’s have a wander into the **Riverside** at Saltford Marina. This is in a beautiful location that puts me in mind of the lyrics from the Marvelettes’ 1964 Motown classic: “Beside some water’s rushy brink, with me the Muse shall sit, and think”. This is one of the best waterside locations in the area, with the marina, the weir and the lock all positively glorious in the sunshine. For me, the Riverside has had a mixed history in terms of real ales, so on my visit I was delighted to find that both the *Wadworth 6X* and the *Henry’s IPA* were in fine form – there



The Riverside

was also *Old Timer* on handpump. The downstairs bar is plushly furnished, although there is a hint about the place that everything is geared towards Summer-weekend mass catering. Slightly bizarrely, I had a aroma-related flashback here. I closed my eyes to breathe in the ‘nose’ of the *6X* (I do this in the same way that some people swirl wine in the glass even though they don’t know their Blue Nun from a low-quality wine) and was instantly transported to the Pride of the Forest behind Old Market – which was





The Boathouse

also a Wadworth pub – circa 1988. Quite bizarre.

From the Riverside, take your life in your hands trying to get back on to the A4 towards Bath, and then a while later fork left into Newbridge Road, over the bridge and turn left for the **Boathouse** pub. Well, this is also the turning for the park and



The Dolphin

ride, but since I have already submitted my article for 'Park & Ride Digest' let's just stick to the pub, shall we? The garden of the Boathouse is right by a particularly delightful stretch of the Avon. In fact, this spot is as beautiful to me as a Picasso to a cubist, or the entire female population to Tiger Woods. Food



The George



The Bathampton Mill

is very much a feature here, but there are also beers from the Brain's stable on offer. On my visit, these were *SA Gold* and *Reverend James*. Both thoroughly drinkable while I sat shivering and watching a Great Crested Grebe on the water.

Heading into Bath, I found a pub which was new to me, as I am sure it will be to many a Bristolian reading these pages (assuming they didn't nod off back at the Nova Scotia). Turn right off the main road and head down into Locksbrook Road, and you'll come across the **Dolphin**. This is not a pub you will discover by accident, but is well worth seeking out. It's in a lovely old building backing on to the river, with a single bar but separate dining and carvery areas, a pool table and a lovely rear garden overlooking the river. The single bar has hooks all along it for hanging your coat. The four real ales on tap when I visited were Sharp's ubiquitous *Doom Bar*, *Marston's Pedigree*, *Butcombe Bitter* and *Wadworth 6X*. I had the Butcombe and it was at



View from the Bathampton Mill

its slightly bitter best. The staff were really friendly, and didn't even mind when a particularly refined lady forcefully made the point that she simply could not drink vodka and tonic unless it had a lime wedge in it, not just a squirt of cordial.

To complete my waterside odyssey, I popped the other side of Bath to Bathampton, where there are two further pubs worth a visit. The **George** in Mill Lane is a Chef & Brewer in a rambling old building with low beams and a three-mile hike to the loo. But ducks wait by the canal to be fed, and the *Wells Bombardier* and *Morland Old Speckled Hen* were both well-kept (though I have gone off Speckled Hen since Greene King nabbed it). Further along Mill Lane towards the toll bridge is the **Bathampton Mill**. This is an upmarket pub and restaurant with the most gorgeous weir, worth visiting all year round for the cosy welcome and fantastic scenery. A charming place to round off a very pleasant weekend's research with a scrumptious pint of *Bath Gem*.

Duncan Shine



# Ticket Story

**T**icket sales for the Bristol Beer Festival took place at two organised sessions this year. The first was for CAMRA members at the *Old Fish Market* in Bristol and once the initial rush had been dealt with things flowed very smoothly with minimal waiting times.

The second was open to everyone and took place at the *Commercial Rooms* in Bristol. There was a queue of epic proportions lined up before the start of this session and once again the process worked well, although sheer numbers meant that those who were there early to try and secure tickets for specific sessions did have to wait. Simultaneous ticket sales sessions took place at *Off the Rails* in Weston-super-Mare.

Some tickets still remained for the Friday lunchtime and Saturday evening sessions and these were put on sales in the *Seven Stars*, Thomas Lane, Bristol. Our thanks go to all these venues for their co-operation.

The Beer Festival itself takes place at the Brunel Passenger Shed, Temple Meads, Bristol on 19th and 20th March and entry is by advance ticket only. Please note that this year the entrance to the beer festival will now be at the bottom of the station approach.

Richard Brooks

## 2010 CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival



## News from Dawkins

**I**n the last issue of Pints West we reported how Matthews Brewery in Timsbury near Bath was being taken over by Dawkins Taverns and was to be renamed the Dawkins Brewery. Well so far Glen Dawkins reports that early reaction has been very encouraging. Ned Clarke from the Portcullis in Clifton is getting heavily involved in helping the new head brewer Alex Hill (formerly landlord of the Miners Arms in St Werburghs) with brewing and in sales, as Glen reports that they've doubled production from previous levels.

He said, "Stuart Matthews handed over a tremendous legacy of detailed recipes and top-notch brewing kit and has been a great help in our early days. Those keen on technicalities of brewing may be interested in knowing that the base malt of most of our ales is the great Marris Otter from Warminster Maltings and we use a wide range of fresh hops, from the traditional English like Fuggles to racy new-fangled varieties like Cascade. Like most micro-brewers it is natural stuff, no funnies."

Now they've had time to get into the swing of it, they've scheduled their first few new special brews.

For February they had planned three beers towards the end of the month. These were:

- **Strata Smith** (4.8%) described as "a recreation of a traditional brown ale style of beer." 'Strata' (William) Smith is sometimes referred to as the 'father of modern geology'. His inspiration came from descending the mine shaft at the nearby Mearns pit at High Littleton near the brewery.
- **35 Organic** (3.5%): "a pale amber, light fresh session bitter."
- **TTT** (4.2%): "amber, juicy and soft bitter, inspired by one of Alex's favourite beers, but he's not saying what!"

For March:

- **Pit Pony** (5.5%): a dry stout with plenty of robust character. This always went well under Matthews and Dawkins intend to brew it several times a year.

For April:

- An as-yet-unnamed brew to celebrate Ned's marriage to Natz, landlady of the Portcullis.

For April and May:

- For CAMRA's Mild Month of May Dawkins will brew **Miners Morris Mild**, a 3.8% dark mild named according to Glen "after the aristocrat of our pubs, Morris the lurcher who lived with Alex when he ran the Miners Arms."
- **Double Dawkins** – Glen says: "We are also devising a permanent addition to the range: a new 4% classic best bitter which will go under the name Double Dawkins, aiming for Easter. Yes I know, an awful pun on the old Ind Coope beer!"

Once they're fully settled in, their plan is to do their four permanents Brassknocker, Bob Wall, Green Barrel Organic and the new DD plus a couple of specials a month.

Of the Dawkins pubs, Glen says: "Whilst our own Bob Wall best bitter in particular has been a smashing success at the Victoria and Hillgrove, our pubs continue to support scores of guest beers; at least half the pumps are reserved for guests. The managers choose whatever tickles their fancy! We've just fitted extra handpulls in the Hillgrove and the Green Man in order to keep up. In these difficult times it is heartening to see that interest in (especially locally brewed) real ales remains healthy. After double whammies of duty and VAT, let's hope the Chancellor decides not to hammer us again in the next Budget. Now I'll buy that Lotto ticket!"

SP



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### THE HILLGROVE

CAMRA BRISTOL PUB OF THE YEAR 2007  
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Dove Street, Kingsdown, Bristol BS2 8LT  
0117 9249818 Good Beer Guide Listed

### THE VICTORIA

ST GEORGES BEER FESTIVAL  
22-26 APRIL 2010  
Southleigh Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2BH  
0117 9745675 Good Beer Guide Listed

### THE PORTCULLIS

MAY DAY BEER FESTIVAL  
29 APRIL - 3 MAY 2010  
Wellington Terrace, Clifton Village, BS8 4LE  
0117 9085536 Good Beer Guide Listed

### THE GREEN MAN

'LOCALE' BEER FESTIVAL  
25-29 MARCH 2010  
Alfred Place, Kingsdown, Bristol BS2 8HD  
0117 9304824 Organic & Local Produce

.....  
DAWKINS ALES COMING LATER THIS YEAR TO

### THE MINER'S ARMS

SUMMER BEER FEST: date tbc  
Mina Rd, St Werburghs, Bristol BS2 9YQ  
0117 9079874 Good Beer Guide Listed



# All change at the Oxford Inn

After treading a downward spiral for many years, it's recently been 'all change' at this local pub, the Oxford Inn in the heart of Totterdown. Taken over by local man Jon Evans, the pub's fortunes have dramatically improved, not least with the addition of three hand pumps for real ales (although only two are currently in use, as Jon is sensibly waiting until demand is right).

I caught up with Jon recently to chat about the pub and its future, and he said: "I want this pub to be at the heart of the local community – a proper locals' pub which will be popular with families and all-comers. The pub had declined badly over the last decade with poor management, and I want to bring it back to its former glory, as it should be. A friendly pub, with real ale naturally!"

Jon has already introduced pool and darts teams, and evening entertainment includes comedy nights, live music and even poetry, all of which are proving popular and helping to restore the pub to its former glory.

With a refurbishment too, people are returning to the Oxford ... and these included Bristol's Lord Mayor and Mayoress who visited the pub soon after it reopened!

Jon says that further improvements are planned, including hot food. And on my visit the Sharp's Doom Bar and St. Austell Tribute were on fine form. Jon told me he can order a range of beers from the 'SIBA list'



Distinguished visitors at the Oxford Inn

and may also feature local guest ales too, so expect the range to vary. There is also a community notice board outside, which includes a copy of Pints West, naturally!

The pub is open all day every day, so the next time you are passing through Totterdown, why not pop into the Oxford and enjoy a pint of ale in a cosy community pub. It's easy to find – just off the Wells Road, behind Tesco's.

[The Oxford Inn, 120 Oxford Street, Totterdown, Bristol, BS3 4RL.]

Tim Proudman

# News from GWB

The Great Western Brewing Company (GWB) has been busy over the last 12 months. Their popular Bees Knees was entered into the Tuckers Maltings Beer Festival in 2009 and it won a commendable Bronze award from SIBA which they are all very proud of.

They recently installed and a five-barrel fermenting vessel for experimental brews. It was commissioned in late November by brewing a five-barrel brew of Edwin's Ruby Porter for bottling. Everything went to plan and the beer was bottled in early December and, they say, ran out on 31<sup>st</sup> December! They bottled this again in January and their shop has been restocked.

The brewery shop itself has been very busy with take-away beer, especially over the festive season, and now includes bottled Maiden Voyage and Classic Gold, Thatcher's ciders and bottled beers from Vale Brewery. After some very popular open days, they have noticed that there are a large number of home-brewers out there, and so they are looking to stock some home-brew equipment and supplies.

The extreme weather conditions experienced not so long ago can potentially affect the condition of real ale immensely; to counteract this they are just completing a temperature-controlled store to help maintain as high a quality product as possible.

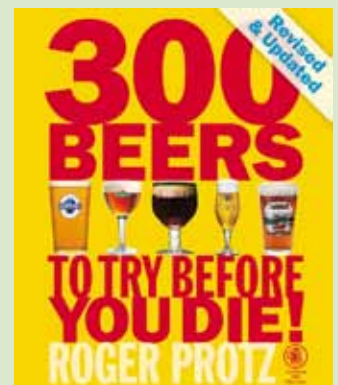
At the beginning of the rugby season they had talks with Bristol



Rugby Club. This resulted in the decision to sponsor two players, James Merriman and Dan Montagu. Both have played well and scored tries this season which has resulted in some very enjoyable afternoons at the memorial ground and a few pints of GWB beers back at the Rising Sun in Frampton (the brewery tap) while discussing the game with fellow supporters.

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# A wedding with a beery difference in Lakeland

Several of us were delighted to be invited to the wedding of Garry Parsons (ex-Bristol branch member) and his fiancée Sarah back in November. We were even more delighted that it was to take place in the beautiful location of Boot in the Eskdale region of Cumbria. Not only that, but the ceremony was taking place in a brewpub – the **Woolpack**, home of the Hardknott brewery! How many of you have endured wedding receptions where the only “beer” available was Foster’s, John Smith’s keg or if you were ‘lucky’ Guinness? So to attend a wedding in a brewpub was a dream come true!

The village of Boot is somewhat remote with a small population yet it has three pubs, all selling an excellent range of real ale. Four of us booked accommodation at one of these (the **Brook House Inn** for two nights at £40 each per night) and off we set. We thought that leaving at 12.30 on the Friday would help us escape the worst of the traffic, but after taking five hours to get from Birmingham to Lancaster on the M6 we now know differently! No less than 12 sets of road works and six accidents had to be negotiated in that time. We had thought long and hard about taking Sonic “the Brewdog” along but decided against it as we were not sure which pubs would let him in.

Once we finally exited the road to hell we made our way to the **Prince Of Wales** in Foxfield, near Barrow in Furness. We were aware that this was one of several local pubs co-hosting a beer festival that weekend, but were still surprised to find it serving no less than 35 beers simultaneously! The perfect antidote after the M6 – except for Marilyn who was designated to take over the driving for the last 15 miles to Boot. Amongst the beers we tried two stood out for me – **Great Gable Yewbarrow** which is a 5.5% strong mild in the Sarah Hughes style, and **Highland St Magnus Ale** which was an astonishingly flavoursome premium bitter at 4.5%. Expect to see both at Bristol beer festival if we can get them! What a cracking pub this was (our only grumble was that they had stopped serving hot food 10 minutes before we arrived and ignored our pleas that seven hours on the motorway had left us in dire need – we had to make do with filled rolls). Anyway we had to drag ourselves away and complete the journey to Boot. We noticed that dogs were allowed (‘You should have taken me!’ – Sonic). This was the last point that anybody’s mobile phone worked all weekend – Eskdale is a total dead spot for all networks.

We finally got to the Brook House Inn at around 9.20pm and were pleased to find the rooms to be very good indeed. After admiring them for two minutes or so it was straight to the bar. Four beers were on – **Hawkshead Bitter**, **Taylor’s Landlord**, **Stringers Lakeland Gold** and **Jennings Cumberland bitter**. All were tried and enjoyed in the next couple of hours before bedtime. Having arrived in the dark we all enjoyed waking up to the wonderfully scenic views from our bedroom windows next day, and breakfast was very good too. They even allow dogs by arrangement (‘Then why didn’t you arrange it?’ – Sonic).

With the wedding not scheduled until 4pm we had agreed to join with some other guests and the groom and head out to the **Wasdale Head Inn** – an extraordinary brew pub set at the end of a winding, twisting road at the foot of Scafell Pike, the highest mountain in England. Getting there involves driving the length of Wastwater (a lake voted as having the most loved view in England in a national poll a while ago). Even in drizzly grey weather this is a wonderful drive. The pub is the home of the aforementioned Great Gable brewery – or I should say it was as we were advised that the lease has expired and that the new licensee has asked the brewery to move out. Given that **Yewbarrow** won a silver medal in the bottled beer class at the Great British Beer Festival this year, this seems like an act of certifiable madness – and makes me fear for the future of this famous pub. Happily the brewer has found somewhere to relocate and will continue brewing. The pub was still serving two Great Gable beers and three interesting guest beers and was enjoyed by all, including the groom who had to be persuaded not to imbibe too much **Yewbarrow**! Dogs were in evidence also (‘Don’t tell me anymore’ – Sonic).

We then drove back along Wastwater to Nether Wasdale to **Strands** – yet another brew pub in this wonderful drinking area. Tim immediately requested a quick brewery tour and the landlord obliged

happily. Around four house brews were on including **Snow Ho Ho** a wonderfully complex black winter brew that started off tasting vaguely of banana and changed to coriander on the way down the glass. The groom (getting very nervous) had to be restrained again as we stroked the nice dog in the bar – but don’t tell Sonic (‘I heard that!’). It was now high time to head back to Boot and try and smarten ourselves up. As it is a known fact that women take 10 times as long to get ready as men, we left Marilyn at the Brook House and took a short stroll to the **Boot Inn** – a Robinsons pub that was selling seven of their beers but sadly not the wonderful **Old Tom** – maybe a blessing though as it is 8.4%! After a slow, quiet pint it was back to get ready.

Next stop was the Woolpack for the main event. On the bar were pumps selling **Yewbarrow**, a wedding special strong stout from the tiny Abraham Thompson brewery called “**Parson’s Choice**” which was very good, a session beer **Woolpacker** brewed at the Woolpack, one other beer and four ciders. Three of the ciders are made by Garry and Sarah themselves under the guise of “Solway ciders”. Interestingly two of them were “Raspberry cider” and “Strawberry cider”. I am certainly not a cider drinker but I was impressed by the raspberry one which seemed to work well. The wedding itself took place in the rear function room – the rows of bottles of beers from around the world all around the walls making a unique backdrop for a wedding! Halfway through I became aware of a small dog in the congregation who turned out to be Garry and Sarah’s own pet (‘So I could even have attended the wedding eh?’ – Sonic). This was followed by some mystery nibbles in the bar passed around by staff who shrugged and said “no idea” when asked what they were, then by an excellent hot buffet. Several pints later we retired back to the Brook House for a nightcap.

Sunday morning and time to head home. We had made a plan B to divert off the M6 at the first sign of trouble, but all the road works had mysteriously disappeared and we made great progress. Our mobiles started working again when we got to the Barrow in Furness area, and we got to see all the scenery that we had missed in the dark on Friday. We decided to make a stop after a few hours and picked out the **Swan With Two Nicks** in Little Bollington in Cheshire. This was a huge pub very busy with Sunday diners but with room for drinkers too. It specialises in beers from the Dunham Massey micro-brewery plus other guest ales. Richard is still raving about his pint of **Dunham Massey Winter Warmer** at 6.6%. Having stroked one of several nice dogs in the bar (‘No comment’ – Sonic) we ploughed on to our final stop. This time we targeted the **Nag’s Head** in Malvern Link, Worcestershire which boasts 17 handpumps. Only 16 beers were on but who’s quibbling? Marilyn kindly offered to complete the driving so we settled down for an hour here. The pub also owns the nearby St Georges brewery and quite a few of their beers were on along with a great variety of light and dark beers that would delight BADRAG. The pub has a strict no-swearing rule and dogs are welcome (‘I’m going to bite your ankles now!’ – Sonic). Then back home after a most pleasant weekend.

Vince (and Sonic) Murray



*An appeal from Sonic: I have found plenty of country pubs that will allow me to take my humans for a beer, but am struggling to find many in the city of Bristol that I can take them to. So far we have been in the Bank Tavern and been invited to the Portcullis in Clifton who have their own little pub dog called Daisy. Please check with those pubs if you are thinking of taking your dog. Does anybody know any other city or town pubs that serve a good pint of real and accept dogs and humans? Please write in if you do or email to [vincent.murray@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:vincent.murray@blueyonder.co.uk).*



# Cryptic Crossword

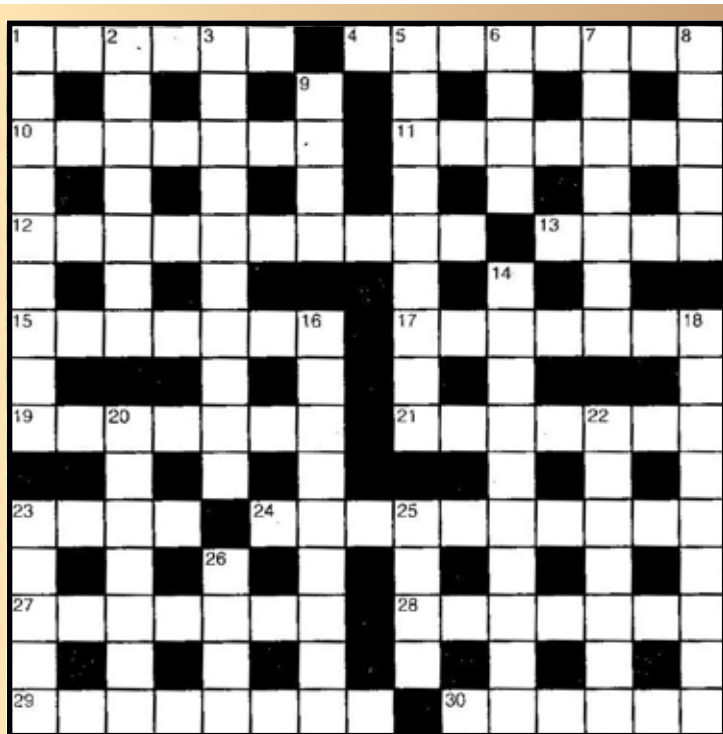
## ACROSS

1. Wylam brewery's steam ale - Stephenson's favourite (6)
4. Mendelssohn's symphony to Caledonian beer (8)
10. Large spirit measure spilt on Hamlet's last stage costume (7)
11. Final sip in a drinking race? (4, 3)
12. The first man's downfall. Get it down your throat! (5, 5)
13. Small sample from a cider can taste bitter (4)
15. Heed rum mixture for Inspector Clouseau's bad French cold (7)
17. Mayhem - got rude - finished off the tiles on the toilet wall (7)
19. Famous tall stories told of the *Mermaid* or the *Robin Hood* (7)
21. Tenant landlord's situation when tearing up (7)
23. Pour a pint and get the girl (4)
24. Where you'll find 'de beer cellar'. Shame (10)
27. Sour Uni cocktail causes a disaster (7)
28. Beer to be found at the highest peak in England (7)
29. Dawdlers drag back confused slag (8)
30. Applications for sage in America (6)

## DOWN

1. Revolutionary container once despised by beer drinkers (3, 6)
2. Old Bristol brewery that had bottle (7)
3. Signing up to get service as a regular (10)
5. Clear gold brew - not always favoured by CAMRA (4, 5)
6. Replacing top of cask with a T- piece is a real job (4)
7. Still not allowed (7)
8. Bitter component editor wished for (5)
9. Where you can find the head on 28 across (4)
14. Pub rooms where the lizards bask (6, 4)
16. How the pharmacist might have served spirits (9)
18. There's deadly poison in the garden at 'The Fox', gee, love (9)
20. Famous author's singular hops? (7)
22. Something cold to help the Titanic slip down (7)
23. Spilt Pilsner, lacking directions, leads to danger (5)
25. Part of the church in which to find a nightcap secreted (4)
26. Local doesn't start to provide soft drink (4)

Crossword set by Pete Taberner  
(solution on page 23)



## Solution to the crossword in the last issue

### Across:

1. Titanic, 5. Racking, 9. Driven out, 10. Swami, 11. Lisps, 12. In session, 14. Asking for beers, 17. Sheet lightning, 21. Evergreen, 23. Impel, 24. Trail, 25. Alchemist, 26. Schnaps, 27. Pyrogen.

### Down:

1. Tiddly, 2. Thirsts, 3. Needs pint, 4. Closing time, 6. Casks, 7. Imagine, 8. Guinness, 13. Soothing cup, 15. Bon viveur, 16. Asbestos, 18. Eyewash, 19. Nipping, 20. Gluten, 22. Galia, 25. Ads.

Congratulations to Mr M Harris from Holmes Chapel in Crewe who won a copy of the book 'Bristol Folk' by Mark Jones.



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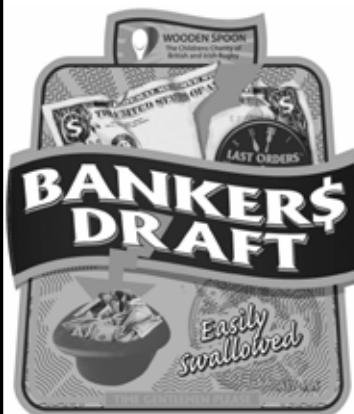
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Sun 12 noon - 10.30pm



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# Migrant Tactical Nuclear Penguin at the New Inn

In the last Pints West I reported a unique experience. A Brew Dog tasting evening culminating in Brew Dog's new Tokyo at 18.2%. At the time I said, "An utterly unique experience that will stick in the mind for a long time to come."

But low and behold, it happened again on Burns Night in January. Dave McKillop at the 2009 Branch Pub of the Year, the New Inn at Mayshill, couldn't resist ordering a couple of bottles of the controversial Tactical Nuclear Penguin from Brew Dog. At 32% ABV this venture was always going to be into unknown territory. How could a beer be brewed so strong? What strain of yeast would be used? Would it be enjoyable? We had to wait for the answers to these questions until we got through some other Brew Dog offerings. But it was worth the wait, and the training of the taste buds. Poor Dave had a stinking cold and was in danger of missing out on the subtleties of the beers, but he seemed to manage somehow. Ten people assembled around a large table and talked and drank beer for a couple of hours attracting plenty of looks from surrounding diners and imbibers.

Stuart Robinson had ventured out to Mayshill on the bus on the chance that he may encounter some Scottish beer as it was Burns Night. He didn't reckon on getting wound up in a Brew Dog tasting session!

All of the beers were bottled and some additional contributions had a very mature vintage.

First up was **Brew Dog 5AM Saint** at 5%. A dark amber beer verging on being a red, it had a sweet heather-honey-floral aroma that included citrus fruit. A bit gassy at first, it soon settled to give a zingy freshness to the pallet and a full up-front taste but with little aftertaste. Next up was **Brew Dog Punk IPA** at 6%. Possibly the best-known of the Brew Dog beers, what this beer lacked in aroma it made up for in bitterness. A dry spice with peach taste was stripped away by the intense hoppy bitterness. This beer more than qualified for its title of IPA.

**Chaos Theory** at 7.1% was amber in colour and gave off plenty of heavy aroma of sweet clover. The taste was also sweet with biscuity malted milk, and was not far short of a barley wine. The forth Brew Dog beer was **Bashah** at 8.6%. Described as a black Belgium double IPA, there were roast and chocolate malts and oats in the taste and beetroot in the aftertaste. This black beer had a malty aroma. **Riptide** at 8% had chocolate throughout. A chocolate aroma with a mildly hopped double



chocolate taste with a hint of coffee. This beer was almost black with a red hue and was every bit a classic chocolate stout.

"No penguins were harmed in the making of this beer; some human's did get very very cold though" was the claim on the label of the next beer. **Tactical Nuclear Penguin** is the latest Brew Dog beer to cause a fuss amongst the anti-alcohol lobby. At 32% it isn't hard to see why at first. But a hefty price tag of £30 for a 330ml bottle keeps the binge-drinkers away. And when you can buy a half bottle of vodka at 40% strength from your local supermarket for less than £8 then the argument against this beer soon goes away. Needless to say, the sample sizes of all of the beers were around 150ml but for this one 60ml per person was enough. So what was it like? As black as pitch, the aroma was of smokey peat and quite earthy. It tasted as it smelt and could be compared to a peaty whisky but with more viscosity and, of course, the black colour. The lips were left tingling while the whole experience was very satisfying. Nobody would have wanted to, but it was impossible to drink this one quickly so we sat savouring it for quite some time until alas, the two bottles were well and truly dry. The bottle came wrapped in brown paper, tied with string, bearing a sketch of our little penguin friend. The 'best before' date was November 2019. Though very much whisky-like, it was difficult for anyone to compare it to any expectation they may have had so we just had to accept that that is how 32% beer tastes.

That was the end of the Brew Dog beers – another remarkable selection of ambitious beers from what must surely be one of Britain's most imaginative breweries.

We needed a break following those proceedings and New Inn regular Phil Leigh's contribution of a couple of bottles of **RCH Fire-box** were a great leveller. At 6% this red-brown strong bitter balanced a velvety toffee beginning with citrus hops.

Nik Milo, the brewer from Cotswold Spring, was in the group and he had brought some interesting bottles from his past. **Flag & Firkin Mistletale** at 8.5% had been brewed in 1997 and then bottled in 1999 by Pitfield. Almost black with a red hint, the spicy taste with cherries and raisins was helped by the addition of raisins into the barrel! Cinnamon was also present in this strong bitter which was every bit a classic Christmas ale. Eleven years after it was bottled it was superbly smooth and I wonder how it would have compared to a younger version? Nik's next offering was **Dogbottler** at 5%, again from his Firkin brewing days. This beer also dated from 1997 and was 'best before' the end of 1998. A sweet aroma came from this sweet tasting brown ale with a slightly sour aftertaste.

The point of this tasting evening was not to consume a quantity of high-strength beers, but to appreciate what can be done with barley malt, hops, water and yeast, plus a few special fruit ingredients, to offer the consumer a different experience from the mainstream. All of the beers were crafted with a high regard for exceptional quality and in no way represented producing high-alcoholic beers for the sake of it.

Thanks again to Dave for putting on such a generous spread of interesting beers. My guess is that we all went home with a very warm feeling on that cold January night.

Mike Jackson

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# News from the Bristol Beer Factory

The Bristol Beer Factory are running a competition for home brewers to submit two bottles of their own produce, with the prize being a day at the Bristol Beer Factory brewing 10 barrels of it for real! As well as getting to keep a cask of the finished brew, the winner will also get dinner for two at the Barley Mow and the knowledge that their beer has been commercially produced and put out into the trade.

Bottles of home-brewed beer for the competition must be submitted to the brewery with an entry form by 1st April and meet the full criteria of the competition. For any queries please call the brewery on 0117 902 6317 or email [sales@bristolbeerfactory.co.uk](mailto:sales@bristolbeerfactory.co.uk). More information is available online at <http://bristolbeerfactory.blogspot.com/2010/02/home-brew-competition.html>.

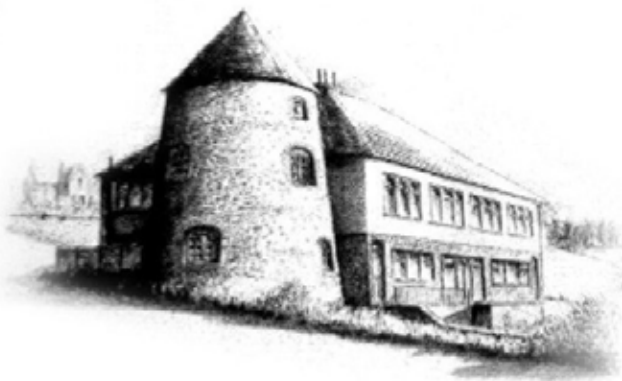
The Bristol Beer Factory have started employing a Cooper, although unfortunately for fans of beer from the wood this isn't anything to do with barrels. Andrew Cooper has joined Bristol Beer Factory as their business development manager, with a remit to grow the brand locally and nationally. Andrew joins the Bristol Beer Factory as it embarks on another exciting chapter in its history, with the official launch of the new visitor centre due to take place on 22nd April.

The Bristol Beer Factory is hoping for good news from the National Beer Competition organised by the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA). Although the judging for this has already taken place, the results won't be announced until the SIBA conference in March.

Richard Brooks

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TO ENTER

- Entry forms & rules available from behind the bar or from the Bristol Beer Factory - 0117 902 6317 or [sales@bristolbeerfactory.co.uk](mailto:sales@bristolbeerfactory.co.uk)
- 2 bottles of your finest to be entered by April 1st
- Judging to take place early April & winner announced 20th April.



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[www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk](http://www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk) 0117 902 6317





## Readers' Letters

Readers are welcome to send letters to Pints West Editor, Steve Plumridge, Garden Flat, 6 Royal York Villas, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR  
[steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk)

### Keg beer fonts galore

I recently posted the attached photo (right) of a bar full of 70's keg beer fonts on my 'flickr' photostream on the web. It was taken in the Bridge Inn at Tower Hill, Bristol sometime around 1974, not long after CAMRA was founded, a time when keg beer was seen as the bright future of brewing.

One of my fellow local 'flickr' users suggested that you might be interested in running the photo in Pints West, possibly as a reminder of what CAMRA has achieved in the intervening years. I also attach an exterior shot of the pub taken at the same time (below). Please feel free to use the photos if you wish, they are my own work and there would be no copyright issues. I've more background info as I worked for the landlord Tom Nicholls for a while.

I always look forward to reading Pints West when it appears in my local. Keep up the good work!

Steve Lewis

(I can be found on 'flickr' as

Steve Lewis2009).

*Things have come a long way and the Bridge Inn is a great place for real ales nowadays, of course - Ed.*



### Social Trip to Bristol – 28 November 2009

"One of the World's Top 10 Cities to Visit" proclaims the Visit Bristol website – whilst this could be the subject of some debate, what cannot be argued is that it is indeed an excellent city for real ale and cider, together with a good selection of locations of historical interest. This certainly made an ideal destination for my first coach trip since taking over as Social Secretary.

Departing at 9am, the 36 of us made it to Bristol in good time, stopping right outside the White Lion just before noon. People dispersed in all directions, armed with the map I had compiled showing some 26 possible pubs to visit. A few of us stayed on board to travel down to the SS Great Britain coach park, setting down some others close to various watering establishments en-route.

Having made sure Dennis could park up the coach okay, the first stop for Diane and me was the **Orchard Inn**, which was recently crowned CAMRA cider pub of the year. We were joined there by several of the Leicester crowd, particularly the keen apple drinkers, who were not disappointed with some dozen or more ciders and perries available. The ales were Butcombe Brunel IPA, Bath Ales Gem, Otter Ale and Wickwar Station Porter, all on fine form.

Our next port of call (quite literally as we had to get there by ferry boat) was the **Grain Barge**, which as the name suggests is a converted Dutch barge now owned by the Bristol Beer Factory. Plenty of windows made this its lovely vantage point across the Floating Harbour, from where we watched the little ferry boats and sailing dinghies pass by the backdrop of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's SS Great Britain. I tried the Sunrise and No. 7, with Exhibition, Red, and Bristol Stout also available.

Next it was a short walk up the road to the **Bag O'Nails**. It was quiet when we got there, although the helpful barman advised it had just been busy with Leicester folk from our trip. We got chatting to a couple of lads from Sheffield who were off to see Sheffield Utd beat Bristol City, and also a lady who was an early member of CAMRA, with her membership no. being 25! I had the Teignworthy Old Moggie and Acorn Kashmir and the barman also provided tasters of the other ales available, which were

Teignworthy Yuletide, Boggart Brew, Dorset Portland Porter and Cotleigh Harrier.

Bit of exercise then as we took a walk to the **Apple** cider barge. Another converted boat, this one specialising in cider and "apple related products". Ale choice here was limited to bottled Bath Gem, so I decided to venture onto the cider. As it was getting colder they were doing a roaring trade in hot mulled cider, but Diane and I went for the "Old Bristolian". At 8.5% and only sold in halves, this was dangerously swiggable, and although tempted, with time getting on and several other pubs still to visit, we decided it better not to risk another half.

Fortunately the next pubs were all close by, the first of which was the **Seven Stars**. CAMRA members get a discount here, although it was also happy hour so the saving applied to everyone. A lovely little pub with a fine solo guitarist/singer keeping everyone entertained. I tried the Cheddar Totty Pot and the Stroud Tom Long, with the other ales available being Plain Ales Innocence, Abbeydale Chocolate Stout, Cotleigh Long Eared Owl and Cottage Norman's Conquest.

A short walk then took us to the **King's Head**. This is a CAMRA National Inventory pub, with a cosy panelled sung area in the style of a tramcar. Sharp's Doom Bar, Cornish Coaster plus Butcombe Gold and Wadworth's 6X were available. Quite a few of the Leicester lot were in here chatting away to the locals. An even shorter walk then and we were in the Cornubia. I quickly found the Hidden Brewery beers which were Quest, Pint, Depths and Old Sarum, with Newmans Red Stag and Winter Nog also on offer.

A helpful local took us the way back to the **White Lion**, which made an ideal point for everyone to congregate for the coach. There was time for me to try Wickwar Bankers Draft, with the other choices being Rite Flanker, Station Porter and Coopers. When you have had a few beers, trying the spiral staircase down to the gents here is an experience!

Dennis had again found a good spot to pull up the coach right outside. After waiting for a few late-comers, we were off back towards the Midlands, with a break in Tewkesbury. A lovely old town, with plenty of black and white timbered



### Leicester visits Bristol

Members of the Leicester branch of CAMRA had a very enjoyable day in Bristol on Saturday 28th November – many thanks for the info we were given by your social secretary, Tim Proudman. We were able to set down and pick up right outside the White Lion, so that was ideal. I have done a write-up of the trip which is on our branch website at [www.leicestercamra.org.uk](http://www.leicestercamra.org.uk) (click on the "Other Articles" tab). This will also appear in our Leicester Drinker magazine, our equivalent of your Pints West. I also reproduce some of it below. I hope you will find this interesting.

Thanks again,  
Gary Akiens.



buildings – they also have Black and White Bears here as well, these being the pubs most of us headed for, although some went off to try out the Hope Pole Wetherspoons.

I needn't have been nervous about the trip. Things went to plan and everyone seemed to have had a good day - I certainly did. All of the pubs visited offered a good choice of beers at great quality, and we enjoyed fine hospitality.

## Entrepreneurs wanted

Is it possible to ask in Pints West about the lack of people wanting to run pubs?

We have the former 1840s chemist's shop in Calne High Street. We have had a cask in the window with an appeal for a real-ale-loving tenant for about eight months. This is a town with a lot of new houses and not many pubs. We have tried a direct approach to a number of micro-breweries. None have shown any interest.

In Weston-super-Mare, the Rock Gardens in Orchard Street went out of business because of a noise complaint. The same person complained about karaoke when it was the Royal British Legion Club! We are submitting plans to create a beer garden in what was the main dance floor. It will be the only town-centre pub with a garden. Again not a single enquiry.

With our track record with reopenings such as the Royal Oak, Bath and the Organ Inn, Warminster, we expected some interest. Fortunately we have Milk Street Brewery for the Stallards, Trowbridge, and an exciting new venture coming up in Bristol for another micro-brewery.

Regards,  
Edward Toomer,  
Director, Four County Inns Ltd.  
(etoomer.fci@googlemail.com)

## Cider pub

I have recently discovered a new cider pub, the Bristol Cider House in Surrey street, and wanted to let you know how good it is.

Apparently it has been open since September but I only found out about it completely by chance recently when I decided to do a search on the internet for cider pubs in Bristol, being keen on real cider and looking for any pubs I didn't already know about! It is a very old building and it has been furnished in keeping with this and has a very cosy atmosphere.

The eight ciders on draught are excellent and not just the usual ones normally found, with an excellent price from £2 per pint! I think the pub deserves some advertising and needs this to survive, being in a slightly out of the way area off the usual beaten track, although actually not far from Cabot Circus. Perhaps you already know all this but I thought I would write in case you didn't.

Lin Smith (by email).

*We mentioned this pub under "pub news" in the last Pints West and they do actually advertise here in this issue - Ed.*

## Expensive round

£3.60 for a pint of Landlord at the Albion in Clifton is not a record (last issue) – we were recently charged £4 for two halves of Abbot Ale in the Ship at Congresbury.

Fletcher Robert (by email).

# Reasons to be cheerful?...

## Beer may strengthen bones

The journal Nutrition (the International Journal of Applied and Basic Nutritional Sciences) recently reported that beer could stop bones from going brittle.

A study by the University of Extremadura in Caceres, Spain, found that the bones of women who drink beer regularly are stronger, meaning the women are less likely to suffer from osteoporosis. It is thought that the high level of silicon in beer slows down the thinning that leads to fractures and boosts the formation of new bone. Beer is also rich in phytoestrogens, plant versions of oestrogen, which keep bones healthy. Bones are made up of a mesh of fibres, minerals, blood vessels and marrow, and healthy ones are denser with smaller spaces between the different parts.

The researchers asked almost 1,700 healthy women with an average age of 48 about their drinking habits. The women then underwent ultrasound scans, which showed the bones in the hands of beer drinkers to be denser. The women's hands were chosen because the bones in the fingers are among the first to show signs of osteoporosis. The light beer drinkers (whose consumption was up to 280 grams of alcohol a week) fared just as well as those in the moderate bracket, suggesting that even small amounts can boost bone health.

The Spanish researchers said: 'Silicon plays a major role in bone formation. Beer has been claimed to be one of the most important sources of silicon in the Western diet.'

Source: Belgian Shop newsletter

## Alcohol-free beer proven to reduce cholesterol

Alcohol-free beer can cut high levels of cholesterol, scientists found out in a research which tested the drink's effects on nuns.

As well as reducing the potentially dangerous build up of fat in the arteries of those with high levels of cholesterol, the beer also increased the amount of antioxidants in drinkers' blood, which could help to protect the heart. The effect could be down to vitamins contained in the beer, including vitamin B6 which helps to dampen the effect of a chemical linked to an increase in the risk of heart disease.

The study tested the effects of drinking moderate levels of alcohol-free beer on 29 nuns, aged between 58 and 73, who all lived together in the same convent. Over 45 days the women were all asked to drink 500 ml of the beer a day, on top of their normal eating and drinking habits. The scientists collected blood samples on the morning before the study started and again on the morning after it finished, to test the effects of the drink.

The findings, published in the journal Nutrition, show that drinking the beer increased the levels of antioxidants in the women's blood. Those assessed to have high cholesterol at the start of the study also found that it had lowered significantly by the end.



The researchers, from the University of Valencia in Spain, believe that the study proves that alcohol-free beer can cut the risk of heart disease. They also point out that it does not carry other risks associated with alcoholic drinks, including liver problems, an increased chance of developing some forms of cancer and of course, painful hangovers.

Supplied by Norman Spalding

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Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive three months membership free and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

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FOR  
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Please state which CAMRA newsletter you found this form in. *PINTS WEST (Bristol & District) - edition 85*

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# Branch diary

## Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA

- **Tues 9 March:** Possible coach trip from the Cornubia at 6.45pm to visit our Pub of the Year finalists. Watch our website for latest news.
  - **Wed 10 March:** Committee meeting, 8pm, Cornubia.
  - **Thurs 11 March:** BADRAG gathering, Portcullis, Clifton, 8pm. (Rare ales weekend.)
  - **Sat 13 March:** Moor Brewery visit. Coach departs at 10.15am from Cornubia. This trip is now full.
  - **Fri 19 & Sat 20 March:** Bristol Beer Festival.
  - **Wed 24 March:** Branch meeting. 7.45pm for 8pm start. Please check website nearer the time for confirmation of venue.
  - **Thurs 25 March:** Pubs Group meeting. Please check website nearer the time for confirmation of venue.
  - **Monday 29 March:** Pub crawl in support of National Cask Ale Week. Meet at Eldon House 7.30pm then visit Hope and Anchor, Bag O'Nails and Three Tuns.
  - **Wed 31 March:** Pub crawl in support of National Cask Ale Week. Meet at Bridge Inn, Passage Street 7.30pm then Cornubia, Seven Stars and Bank Tavern.
  - **Thurs 1 April:** Pubs Group quarterly social. Meet Windmill, Windmill Hill 7pm for local crawl.
  - **Thurs 8 April:** BADRAG gathering, 8pm, RAFA club, Westbury-on-Trym, BS9 4BE.
  - **Wed 14 April:** Committee meeting, 8pm, Cornubia.
  - **Wed 21 April:** Thornbury sub-branch meeting, Anchor, Thornbury, 7.30pm. Please note date to be confirmed.
  - **Thurs 22 April:** BADRAG Harbourside Mild Trail, 6pm, Orchard plus others.
  - **Wed 28 April:** Branch meeting upstairs at Horts, central Bristol, 7.45pm for 8pm sharp.
- Note: I'm looking at running a brewery trip towards the end of April, possibly April 20th. Keep an eye on the website for more details.*
- **Sat 1 May:** BADRAG Temple Meads & City Centre Mild Trail. Knights Templar midday start.
  - **Tues 4 May:** Coach trip, departing Cornubia at 6.45pm to Hunters Lodge and one other. Details & price TBC
  - **Sat 8 May:** BADRAG East Bristol Mild Trail. Staple Hill Oak midday start.
  - **Wed 12 May:** Committee meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.
  - **Thurs 13 May:** BADRAG Bedminster Mild trail. Tobacco Factory 7pm start.
  - **Sat 15 May:** BADRAG Clifton Mild Trail. Vittoria midday start.
  - **Wed 19 May:** BADRAG Weston-super-Mare Mild Trail & Explorer Trip. Meet Criterion, 7pm.
  - **Wed 26 May:** Branch meeting, 7.45pm for 8pm sharp. Please check our website nearer the time for confirmation of venue.
  - **Thurs 27 May:** Pubs Group meeting, Cornubia.
  - **Fri 28 May:** BADRAG Kingsdown Mild Trail. Hillgrove Porter Stores 7pm start.

The above details are correct at the time of going to press, but are subject to change, so please visit our website [www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk) or email [badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk) for the latest details. Please note that all brewery trips and coach trips must be booked in advance. All trips are initially advertised at our monthly branch meetings, and priority is given to those members that attend. Evening coach trips usually depart from the Cornubia, Temple Street at 6.45pm and return via the Centre by 10.50pm in time for last buses, etc, unless otherwise stated.

## Weston diary

- **11 March** - Rare Ales Evening, Portcullis, Clifton.
  - **19-20 March** - Bristol Beer Festival
  - **24 March** - Beer & Skittles, White Hart, Palmer Row, 8.30 sharp.
  - **21 April** - Three-pub Worle Social. The Summerhouse 8.00, The Woodspring 9.00, The Lamb 10.00.
  - **19 May** - Mild Month Social. Visiting 4/5 pubs in Weston offering a mild. Start at Criterion, Upper Church Road, departing at 8.30.
  - **29 May** - Rural Ramble. Will include visits to Uffculme and a beer festival at the Culm Valley Inn, Culmstock.
- Non-members welcome at all of the above events.**

## Weston contact

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



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**LETTERS:** please email correspondence to:

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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 2nd March, 8:30pm.** A social at the Oakhill Inn in Oakhill, near Radstock.
- **Thursday 11th March, 8:30pm.** A social at the Seven Stars in Winsley, near Bradford on Avon.
- **Tuesday 16th March, 8:00pm.** The Branch Bath Pub of the Year judging crawl. More details after shortlist meeting!
- **Thursday 25th March, 8:30pm.** A social at the Lamb in Clandown, near Radstock.
- **Saturday 27th March.** The Branch Rural Pub of the Year judging crawl. More details after shortlist meeting!
- **Tuesday 30th March, 8:30pm.** The Branch Meeting at the Prince of Wales in Dilton Marsh, near Westbury.

## Bath & Borders contacts

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

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





# NATIONAL Cask Ale WEEK

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Tues 30 March	Bangers & Mash and a Pint	£6.50
Wed 31 March	Quiz Night	FREE
	Teams of 4 – loads of prizes on the night	
Thur 1 April	Beer Battered Fish & Chips and a Pint	£7.50
Fri 2 April	Arc Charity Walk from The Queen's Arms, Bleadon to The Swan, Rowberrow	£12.00
	Includes mulled wine, food and transport	
	Celtic Beer Festival & Entertainment	£10.00
	at The Swan, Rowberrow, 7pm–11pm	
	Price includes curry and 2 complimentary pints	
Sat 3 April	Open Day at The Brewery 10am–1pm	FREE
	Free beer and the Mendip Morris Men!	
	Celtic Beer Festival & Entertainment	£10.00
	at The Swan, Rowberrow, 6pm–11pm	



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