



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

AWARD-WINNING



www.camrabristol.org.uk



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

PINTS WEST

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

Our disappearing pubs



See centre pages

Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2011

Wiltshire beer beats the 'Entire' lot!

Entire Stout from the Hop Back Brewery, Wiltshire, was recently crowned the Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2011 by a panel of judges at the National Winter Ales Festival in Manchester.

The 4.5% ABV stout is described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide as 'A rich, dark stout with a strong roasted malt flavour and a long, sweet and malty aftertaste.'

Nik Antona, CAMRA Director, praised the beer and added: "I would personally like to congratulate Hop Back brewery on winning CAMRA's national award. This is not only great news for the brewery but for the beer style that is stout! We hope this will revitalise 'real' stout and encourage more breweries to brew this style of beer in the future."

Steve Wright, Hop Back's head brewer, was elated to hear of the brewery's success. He said: "This is obviously fantastic news! Entire Stout has been a very successful beer for the brewery in both draught and bottle-conditioned form and to win this national CAMRA award will only encourage more real ale lovers to give it a try. We now look forward to the Champion Beer of Britain competition in August."

Thirty-five beers (nine porters, nine stouts, nine old ales/milds and eight barley wines) were entered into the final stage of the competition, chosen by CAMRA branches and tasting panels.

The overall Silver medal went to Chocolate brewed by Marble in Manchester, whilst the Bronze medal went to Praetorian Porter brewed in Leicestershire by Dow Bridge brewery. A panel of beer writers, members of the licensed trade and CAMRA members judged the competition at the Sheridan Suite, Manchester.

Victorious at the Winter Ales Festival, Entire Stout and the category Gold winners listed on

this page will now enter into the final of the Champion Beer of Britain competition at the Great British Beer Festival, Earls Court, London, in August.



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**



**THE
CORONATION**

18 Dean Lane, Southville, Bristol

Tel: 0117 940 9044

Lorna and her team warmly welcome you to come along and enjoy the great range of Hop Back beers, monthly specials and guest ales and to drink in the great atmosphere!

Polypins and minipins available for all beers

Opening hours:

Mon-Fri 3pm - 11pm

Sat 12 noon - 11pm

Sun 12 noon - 10.30pm



REFRESHINGLY HOPPY BEERS

The results in full

Old Ales and Strong Milds category

Gold: Chocolate, Marble (Manchester)

Silver: Old Ale, King (West Sussex)

Bronze: Dark Raven, Beowulf (Staffordshire)

Porters category

Gold: Praetorian Porter, Dow Bridge (Leicestershire)

Silver: Finns Hall Porter, Beowulf (Staffordshire)

Bronze: London Porter, Red Squirrel (Hertfordshire)

Other category finalists: Old Moor Porter (Acorn, South Yorkshire), Smoked Porter (Wapping, Merseyside), Black Galloway (Sulwath, Dumfries & Galloway, Scotland), Bottle Wreck Porter (Hammerpot, West Sussex), Station Porter (Wickwar, Gloucestershire), Telford Porter (Conwy, Conwy, Wales)

Stouts category

Gold: Entire Stout, Hop Back (Wiltshire)

Silver: Smokey Joes Black Beer, Hop Star (Lancashire)

Bronze: Nero, Milton (Cambridgeshire)

Other category finalists: Saint Petersburg (Thornbridge, Derbyshire), Sauce of the Niall (Bull Lane, Tyne & Wear), Black Gold (Cairngorm, Highlands, Scotland), Zig Zag Stout (Milk Street, Somerset), Welsh Black (Heart of Wales, Powys, Wales), Titanic Stout (Titanic, Staffordshire)

Barley Wines category

Gold: Old Ale, Holden's (West Midlands)

Silver: Old Tom, Robinsons (Stockport, Cheshire)

Bronze: Hibernator, Black Isle (Ross-shire, Scotland)

Other category finalists: Tally Ho! (Adnams, Suffolk), Extinction Ale (Darwin, Tyne & Wear), Old 1066 Ale (Goacher's, Kent), Beast (Exmoor, Somerset), High as a Kite (Heart of Wales, Powys, Wales)

Overall result

Gold: Entire Stout, Hop Back (Wiltshire)

Silver: Chocolate, Marble (Manchester)

Bronze: Praetorian Porter, Dow Bridge (Leicestershire)

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.

CAMRA celebrating 40 years of campaigning – 1971 to 2011

CAMRA is celebrating its 40th birthday in 2011 and we hope you will join us in raising a glass of real ale to celebrate this landmark.

CAMRA was formed on 16th March 1971 by four founding members – Michael Hardman, Graham Lees, Jim Makin and Bill Mellor – whilst visiting a pub on holiday in Ireland. The quartet had become deeply disillusioned with the domination of the market by a handful of national brewing companies that were determined to push lower-quality keg beer brands into the market, displacing smaller, local breweries and ales from the bars of pubs across the land.

It turned out they weren't alone in their anger at the rapidly reducing choice and quality available to drinkers across the UK – hundreds and then thousands joined the cause.

Forty years later and CAMRA now has more than 120,000 members who, like you, love a good pint of beer in a great pub.

CAMRA has achieved many successes over this period. Saving pubs and breweries under threat from closure, the introduction of Small Brewers Relief, LocAle and Licensing Hours Reform and the promotion of endangered beer styles are just a few of the successes CAMRA is proud of over the last 40 years. These and many other achievements have played a major role in there now being more than 3,000 different real ales being brewed in the UK by over 750 real ale breweries.



The four founding members of CAMRA

40 YEARS OF
CAMPAIGNING



CAMRA's Top 40 Campaigners of all time

To help celebrate CAMRA's 40th birthday, we are asking CAMRA members to help compile a list of the 'Top 40 CAMRA Campaigners of All Time'.

Whether alive or sadly passed away, CAMRA would like you to vote for those CAMRA members you feel went that little bit further to help promote CAMRA, real ale and pubs in the last 40 years.

Did they save a pub destined to close? Perhaps they launched a local campaign that became a national CAMRA promotion. Or did they push all the boundaries to help a brewery get established in the local area? Maybe you would just like to put someone forward who you think should be recognised for their work as a CAMRA branch official.

We know there are thousands of campaigners that deserve to be considered for the Top 40. We would love to hear about them all!

Please submit your nominations by visiting www.camra.org.uk/40thbirthday. The deadline for entries is 1st April 2011.

If we receive more than 40 entries, we will encourage members to vote for their favourites based on the reasons you state you have nominated them.

The Top 40 will be announced in August at the Great British Beer Festival.

If you are not yet a CAMRA member and want to join the organisation then please sign up using the form near the back of Pint West or visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus.

There is no better time to join the organisation than today!

As well as a number of very important campaigns you can support, CAMRA offers new members a fantastic membership package.

For just £20 a year* you can join CAMRA today by direct debit, get 15 months' membership for the price of 12, and receive some fantastic benefits which include:

- A quarterly copy of **BEER** magazine, packed with superb features on pubs, beers and breweries
- A monthly newspaper, **What's Brewing**, featuring beer and pub news and full event and beer festival listings.
- Free or reduced entry to over 160 national, regional and local beer festivals (www.camra.org.uk/festivals)
- £20 worth of JD Wetherspoon vouchers (www.camra.org.uk/jdwvouchers)
- 20% off hotel bookings with Ramada Jarvis (www.camra.org.uk/ramadajarvis)
- 10% discount with 'cottages4you' (www.camra.org.uk/cottages4you)
- 5% off holidays with 'Hire a Canalboat' (www.camra.org.uk/hireacanalboat)
- Discounts on CAMRA Beer Club cases (www.camrabeerclub.co.uk)
- Discounts on all CAMRA books including our best seller, the **Good Beer Guide**

*For concessionary and non-Direct Debit rates please visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus.



News from Bath Ales

Re-investment at the Bath Ales brewery continues apace. The brewhouse has even had a brand new floor. Brewing schedules are reported to be relentless with brewing taking place seven days a week for the foreseeable future. Gem remains the leading brand, most sought out by their loyal customers. The bottling plant is also operating to full capacity. The demand from small brewers both near and far continues and Bath Ales now bottles for over 25 breweries. The largest national retailers are now stocking their diverse range of ales, and of course they've also got a growing export market which already includes some of Europe but also Jersey, Scandinavia and Australasia!

Seasonal brews

Golden Hare – this is the spring offering, brewed to a strength of 4.4% ABV and described as a full flavoured light ale.

Summer's Hare – this will be the summer offering, a 3.9% ABV light and hoppy beer.

Rare Hare – very exclusive and as rare as the name suggests, it is brewed to 5.2% ABV and is the strongest ale in the range.

Ginger Hare – brewed to 3.9% ABV and made with a careful measure of root ginger. Bath Ales say: "This is back in bottle following a social media campaign by die-hard customers who would not let it lie. It really is an outstanding ale which manages the subtle balance of ginger flavour whilst remaining to be a stunning real ale. It takes brewing expertise to get the balance right, but in bottle, Bath Ales have managed to do it."

The Bath Ales pubs

Bath Ales are reporting record figures across the pub estate. As with the brewery itself, investment continues in tough trading conditions. So they would like to pass on their thanks to customers for their continued and valued support. The freshly prepared menus remain exciting innovative and outstanding value. Bath Ales has a very strong management team and talented chefs. Look out for breakfast offerings at the weekends and "Pie & Pint" Tuesdays.

It is a good time to be drinking (and eating) in Bath Ales pubs as Bath Ales is pleased to announce the imminent launch of the "Loyal

Hare Force". The scheme offers loyal customers even better value on every visit. Customers can apply for a loyalty card online and accrue points on food and drink and redeem them in all participating Bath Ales pubs. Details of the scheme will be available at www.bathales.com/loyalhareforce from April.

Dates for the diary

May Bank Holiday weekend: The annual Wellington Beer Festival; expect the usual eclectic range of ales, food and entertainment.

15/16/17 July: The Live and Let Live beer festival in Frampton Cotterell.

For other events and happenings in the pubs, check their website www.bathales.com and subscribe to their newsletter for great offers, news and much more.

This year the 2011 Bath Ales Biking Bonanza fundraising day in aid of the Frenchay After Burns Children's Club will take place on Saturday 18 June. For full details of the event and to subscribe visit www.bathales.com/bonanza.

The Eldon House

There is now more great real ale to be had at the Eldon House in Clifton. Rab Clarke, who owns the Eldon, recently invested in a beer cabinet containing five beer engines. For those that don't know, that means there are now up to five hand pumps on the bar dispensing real ale. Whether that can sensibly remain at five, or drop to four, naturally depends on demand.

With this in mind, Rab has decided to offer the following promotions to keep a good turnover of the ales.

- **Firstly, to have one ale on at £2.50, with the rest starting at £2.80.**
- **Secondly, on Sunday evenings between 6 and 11, to have at least one ale at just £2, with the rest between £2.40 and £2.80.**
- **Thirdly, to have one ale at £2 from midday until 6pm on Saturdays.**

Add to that a good range of beers. Recent breweries to be featured have included Plain Ales, Glastonbury, Otter, Vale, RCH, Springhead, Bristol Beer Factory and Bath Ales. Rab said he was going to review this at the end of February or beginning of March, but hopefully if it gets a bit of support, he'll be able to continue with five different ales for the foreseeable future.

So, you know what to do. Get in there and drink those lovely beers!

For those who are not familiar with the Eldon House, it is on Lower Clifton Hill, just off Jacobs Wells Road, opposite the QEH school.

SP



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 2011 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

THE ELDON HOUSE

'Seldom do you find such a treasure as the Eldon. It's the village pub in the middle of the bustling city'.

- ★ 5 Real ales usually locally sourced and competitively priced.
- ★ Silly prices with ales from £2.00 a pint. Saturday 12 - 6pm Sunday 6 - 11.30pm
- ★ Good quality food served all day with a fine selection of wines available.
- ★ Monday night quiz, Tuesday's film night and live music on Thursday.

6 Lower Clifton Hill just off the triangle opposite QEH school, Bristol BS8 1BT
Tel: 0117 922 2271 email: enquiries@theeldonhouse.com Website: www.theeldonhouse.com

Butcombe's Spring update

Butcombe have been taking advantage of this quieter time of the year to implement a few alterations and additions to some of their pubs.

The **Fox and Hounds** in Charlton Adam, the latest pub to join the Butcombe estate, has undergone work to re-locate the bar, bringing it much closer to the cellar, thus shortening the beer lines and improving the beer quality.

The **Ring O'Bells** in Hinton Blewitt now has the addition of a new attractive dining room adjoined to the original bar and snug. This has the advantage of a separate patio and garden which makes it also suitable as a pleasant venue for small functions. A completion date of Valentine's weekend was thankfully met and the special menu certainly looked inviting!

Simon and Sophie, who now manage here, are accustomed to the country life, having previously worked in a large country pub in Devon. They may, however, have been a little surprised at how hidden away this location is. A map is certainly a necessity for the many walkers and cyclists who visit this hilltop hostelry and for whom this is a welcome pit-stop. Beers served are Butcombe Bitter and Fuller's London Pride, plus a guest or seasonal Butcombe beer.

Another new couple to re-locate to one of Butcombe's country pubs is Tony and Kirsty, who have moved from the Coach & Horses in Clifton to the **Queen Victoria** in Priddy – quite a change in environment. This small village remains unspoilt, a rare achievement these days, and the annual traditions of the July Folk Fair and the August Sheep Fair bring in many people from far and wide with the village almost bursting at the seams. The latter has been held in Priddy since 1348, after supposedly moving from Wells due to the Black Plague. Beers here are Butcombe Bitter, Butcombe Gold and a guest. Tony and Kirsty are enjoying the freedom and consideration enjoyed from working for an independent brewery like Butcombe, advantages missing from big chains and pubcos.



Tony and Kirsty with extended family outside the Queen Victoria

The brewery's new Bristol porter, Old Vic, which was launched in January, has been favourably received and we are now looking forward to its next new offering, Mendip Spring (3.8% ABV) which will make its debut at the Bristol Beer Festival in March. This is described as a crisp thirst-quenching bitter dominated by hops that give characteristic citrus notes while balanced with a floral aroma and a clean dry finish.

Margaret Evett

Try both brands at the Bristol Beer Festival, March 18th and 19th



Old Vic currently available in the Free Trade / JD Wetherspoon / Mitchells and Butlers Vintage Inns, Ember Inns, Nicholson's, and Castle managed houses



Mendip Spring available from March in the Free Trade / JD Wetherspoon Spring Beer Festival

Cheddar Ales brewery beer festival

Make sure you don't book your summer holiday for the week-end of 17th to 19th June or you'll miss out on Cheddar Ales' third annual Brewery Beer Festival. The two brewers, Jem and John, are hand-picking a range of over 40 award-winning real ales from across Britain to create what they say will be "one of the finest selections of beers ever seen in one venue". The range will include the majority of champion beers from the Great British Beer Festival and SIBA festivals over the past three years, as well as the brewery's own range of superb ales.

Even better, entry is free for all CAMRA members, and beers below 5% ABV are only £2.50 a pint, so this is a great opportunity to try some of the nation's best ales at a bargain price.

And there's more to the festival than just beer. By day there will be family-friendly fun, with various activities to keep the kids entertained, live music from local acts and, fingers crossed, a chance to soak up some summer sun. The festival will be based in and around the brewery itself, so you'll also get the chance to see where they make the beers and to get a close look at all of the brewing kit.

If it's a bit of a trip for you to go to Cheddar, you can always make a weekend of it by camping on site overnight. Camping is £5 per tent per night and you'll be able to fall out of the festival and straight into bed, then wake up and have beer and bacon sarnies for breakfast. Plus the brewery is surrounded by gorgeous countryside and there's plenty to do in the local area, so it could make for a great weekend break.

This year's festival will be raising money for two local good causes. The team are hoping to raise enough money to both refurbish communal areas at St Michael's Cheshire Home in Axbridge – a care home for the mentally and physically disabled – and to provide new equipment for Weare Community Pre-school.

So with great ales, value for money, a unique festival environment and all for a good cause, this is one festival not to be missed this summer.

Alan Sibley

The Vittoria

The "real" pub on Whiteladies

Camra
Good Beer Guide
2011

57 Whiteladies Rd
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2LY
Tel: 0117 330 9414
thevittoria@yahoo.com



SEVEN CASK ALES AVAILABLE

Monday is Live Traditional Jazz Night

++ Courage Best @ £2.50 pt from 8.30pm++
Come along and tap your toes to the best jazz in Clifton

"Cask Ale" Tuesday

Collect five loyalty points and redeem them for a pint of cask of your choice {one point per pint}.

Thursday Quiz & Curry Night.

£1 a person, winning team takes all, plus other prizes

Free food at half time

{grey matter preferred, not i phones}.

New menu available including the

"House Special"

**8oz British Sirloin Steak with chips or salad
for £7.50, a bargain!**

~~~~~ Food served from noon ~~~~~

We would like to thank every one who voted  
and supported us in our quest to gain entry in  
to the Camra Good Beer Guide. Cheers!

# The Gryphon, Arbor Ales and Dio

**B**ristol's 'Real Ale and Metal' pub, the Gryphon, close to the Colston Hall in the city centre, is forging links with local brewery, Arbor Ales. The Kingswood-based brewery will be creating a speciality ale for the Gryphon to commemorate the life and works of Ronnie James Dio, a legendary lead vocalist in the rock and metal world. He sadly passed away on 16th May 2010 after months of battling stomach cancer.

The ale will be heavy and jet black but with a juicy hop twang. It will have an ABV of 6.66%. An extra cost to the price of a pint of this ale will be donated to the *Stand Up & Shout Cancer Fund* set up in Dio's passing to raise money for cancer support.

The ale will be a great collaboration between the Gryphon and Arbor Ales to produce a unique, memorable and thought-provoking ale. It will be available from the 14th May, the same day as the Gryphon's memorial day to Ronnie James Dio.

In the meantime, John Ashby, landlord of the Gryphon, has been planning the pub's first biannual ale festival, due to take place on Friday 4th, Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th March (Sunday only if there are any ales left!).

SP

## Pub News

THE **Red Lion** in Worrall Road in Clifton (up near the Downs) is being advertised with potential to change into a restaurant or similar. This wonderful pub of huge character deserves better – *are there any potential pub operators out there to take this one on?*

To the west the **Mason's Arms** in Lawrence Weston has been demolished to make way for the usual housing development, while the **Lamplighters** in Shirehampton still has its freehold for sale – bags of potential here as a local and destination pub right by the river.

In the east of the city the landlady of the **Air Balloon Tavern** has acquired the **Horse & Jockey**, both in St. George, and has plans to open in April.

Worrying news is coming from Fishponds where the attractive **Farriers** would appear to have been purchased by supermarket chain Morrison's who want to demolish it and extend their bland store onto the site. There is no planning application yet but be ready to voice your concerns when one does appear. In nearby Stapleton the **Old Tavern** has closed. Better news on Gloucester Road where the **Hobgoblin** has re-opened following months of closure, and in Kingswood where the **Chequers** has re-opened.

In Totterdown the **Star & Dove** has closed and we are not sure what may happen next there. Staying in the south of the city the **Coronation** in Dean Lane, Southville has its lease up for sale. This pub has been much loved by many over the past decade under the stewardship of Hop Back Brewery.

Outside of the city the Grand Old Duke of York could cry in his beer in Kingswood. On his march to the top of the hill he would find the **King's Arms** closed and will have been auctioned by the time you read this; and as he marches back down again he would find that the **Tennis Court** has its freehold for sale, though it is still trading. And when he was only half way up he would find the **Highwayman** is closed and is rumoured to be heading for a flats conversion – keep your ear open for any news on that one.

In Hanham, Wetherspoon's have acquired the **Jolly Sailor** and should have re-opened it by the time you read this. The **Swan** in Winterbourne remains closed and is seeking a leaseholder. Out in the sticks, the **White Hart** at Cold Ashton is closed and so is the **Crown** at Marshfield. Both are seeking leaseholders.

Good news coming from Portishead is that the **Poacher's** and the **Plough** have both re-opened. But the **Clocktower** in Clevedon faces conversion into flats and possibly retail units. The **Darlington Arms** in Redhill is closed and is for sale.

Mike Jackson



# Phoenix rises from the ashes

In the 1980s and 90s, when Bristol pubs, apart from the odd Wadworth's, Marston's, Usher's or Bass establishments, were largely dominated by Courage beers, the Phoenix, in what was then Wellington Road, St Jude's, was one of the very few "beacons" promoting different real ales. The ales were either served straight from the cask off the stillage behind the bar or from a range of handpumps. It finally closed its doors at the end of 2009 and we all wondered whether it would ever re-open again.

Its plight was highlighted on a number of occasions by the Bristol Pubs Group. In the interim period the pub has gone through a torrid time with reports of vandalism and a general deterioration of the building. Fortunately, the pub was acquired by local man Simon Perry and, at long last, the Phoenix re-opened in January this year.

Now nestled between the back of Cabot Circus car park and the Future Inn, on the corner of its original Victorian terrace which somehow miraculously survived the development of the new shopping mall, its new address is 1 Wellington Buildings, Champion Square.

The outside has been spruced up by its new owner, but it's the inside that has undergone a quite spectacular refurbishment. Now boasting a contemporary 21<sup>st</sup>-century look with a reclaimed parquet floor, grey/

red decor, shuttered windows, and lights from Bali, Stokes Croft artwork adorns the walls, along with a fantastic sculptured mirror. Only the bar is recognisable from its previous incarnation. High seating and other comfy seating is provided, along with a couple of seats from a Jaguar car!

There are additions, too – what used to be the cellar has now been converted to a dining cum TV room which has patio doors leading to a split-level, decked outside drinking area. The kitchen was not yet open at the time of writing, but when it is, meals will be a modern take on traditional pub food. They also plan to do breakfasts and Sunday lunches.

Beer-wise, they are currently experimenting with different real ales; Butcombe and Doom Bar have been on offer since opening; beers from Arbor Ales were going to be tried next. Staff tell us that they have been very pleased with the real ale sales to date and may even look to increase the number of handpumps on the bar in the near future. As the pub is a genuine freehouse, let's hope it can develop into one of Bristol's leading real ale houses as trade increases.

Opening hours are currently 12.30 to 11pm, Mondays to Fridays, extending to 2am on Saturdays. It should open on Sundays once the kitchen is up and running.

The Phoenix is hoping to attract trade from Cabot Circus shopping centre as well as the nearby offices and hotels. We wish Simon and his team the best of luck with their new venture and if you fancy a beer whilst out shopping, why not call in and see for yourself. From the shopping centre, exit onto Bond Street, cross the road and walk down the left-hand side of the Future Inn hotel – the Phoenix will be on your left.

Ali Bridle

*The Phoenix, 1 Wellington Buildings, Champion Square, Bristol BS2 9DB - 0117 3290076 - [www.phoenixbristol.com](http://www.phoenixbristol.com)*



# Real ale taking off at the Oxford

Real ale has finally taken off at the Oxford, just off the Wells Road in Totterdown. After a slow start with just two real ales on, Jon the landlord reports sales are on the up.

I bumped into Jon recently and he said, "When I first took over, lager sales eclipsed everything. And trying to get drinkers to try real ale took time, with many a half empty but 'tired' cask of ale having to be poured away."

"However, many regular customers, as well as new, have now taken to real ale. Demand is up, and after 18 months real ale sales have now overtaken lager. Quite an achievement!"

Jon has recently increased the number of handpumps, and typically sells Doom Bar and Cornish Coaster from Sharp's, Tribute from St. Austell, and a beer from Bath Ales. He adds, "Real ales are also proving popular at our live events – punters simply prefer the taste of a good quality ale to fizzy lager."

In addition, to further support ale drinkers, all real ales are £2 a pint from 4 to 7pm, Mondays to Friday. An excellent way to sample the range!

Jon has a positive outlook on ale, and is considering more developments during 2011.

Tim Proudman



## BRISTOL CIDER HOUSE

CAMRA CIDER & PERRY PUB OF THE YEAR 2010 SOUTH WEST 3<sup>rd</sup>

### EVERY SATURDAY CIDER FESTIVAL

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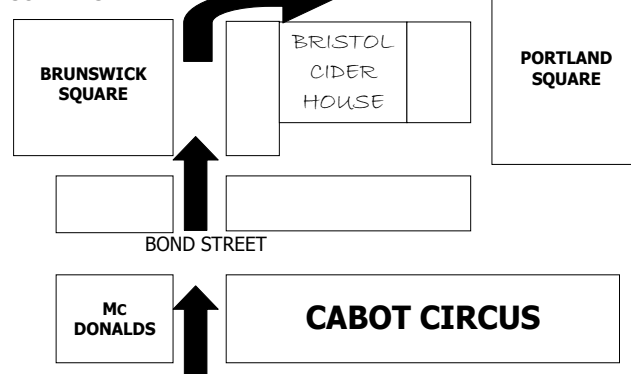
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### CIDER TASTING EVENTS-MIN 10 PEOPLE

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CIDER PARTIES-MIN 40 PEOPLE  
BOOK EXCLUSIVE USE OF OUR UPSTAIRS AREA  
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### SURREY STREET



## Mild Bristol

Since the formation four years ago of BADRAG, the Bristol & District Rare Ales Group of CAMRA, Bristol drinkers, licensees and brewers have given strong support to the National CAMRA Mild Month of May, and 2011 promises to be no exception.

At one time the dominant ale in the area, mild is usually of low gravity and hop rate, hence distinctly less bitter on the palate than more highly hopped bitters. Mild is usually (but not always) darker in colour than bitter, through the use of a higher roast malt or caramel. Malty and possibly sweet tones dominate the flavour profile but there may be a light hop flavour or aroma. Slight diacetyl (toffee/butterscotch) flavours are not inappropriate. Alcohol levels are typically low but beware, some such as Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby, Sadlers Magic Miles and Dark Star Victorian Ruby Mild are 6% ABV!

Members of BADRAG are organising a number of mild trails and mild evening events this year. "Mild Month" will be launched a little early on **Thursday 21st April** at a community pub, the Miners Arms in St. Werburghs, meeting at 7pm for 8pm. The piano lounge has been booked and it is hoped that band leader Henry Davies will "tickle the ivories" for us. Three mild ales and a passport scheme from Dawkins Ales will be launched at the same time.

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, brown ales and traditional strength IPAs.

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

[BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk](mailto:BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk)

On **Saturday 30th April** there will be an **East Bristol Trail** starting at the Staple Hill Oak leaving there at about 12.45, visiting the Van Dyke Forum, Sugar Loaf, Chelsea Inn, St Georges Hall and Old Stillage.

On **Saturday 7th May** will be the **Clifton & Kingsdown Trail** starting at the Portcullis, leaving there at about 12.45, then visiting the Lansdown, Quinton House, Victoria, Vittoria, Highbury Vaults, Green Man, Robin Hood, and Hillgrove Porter Stores.

On the **Saturday 14th May** the **Harbourside & Bedminster Trail** will take place starting at noon on the Grain Barge, calling at the Merchant's Arms, Nova Scotia, Orchard, Tobacco Factory, Hen & Chicken, Robert Fitzharding and Assembly.

Just for a change, on **Thursday 19th May** BADRAG will hold its monthly gathering at a community pub, the Masons Arms at Frenchay where mild ale will be available.

On **Saturday 21st May** BADRAG will repeat last year's successful **South Gloucestershire Mild Trail** (note that booking a seat on the coach is essential, which you can do at a branch meeting or another Bristol CAMRA event or by emailing [badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk)). The coach will leave from the Cornubia at 11.45 prompt! The first stop will be at the Cross Hands in Winterbourne Down, followed by the New Inn, Mayshill, then on to the Beaufort Arms at Hawkesbury Upton. This will be followed by a lovely countryside drive to the Salutation Inn at Ham, then on to the Anchor at Thornbury, followed by the Annexe, Bishopston and returning to the city centre and Cornubia early in the evening.

Our final trail will be on **Saturday 28th May** when we shall enjoy mild ales on the **City & Temple Meads Trail** starting at the Eldon House at about noon, followed by the Hope & Anchor, Bag O'Nails (if open by then), Three Tuns (four milds expected), Commercial Rooms, Bank, Seven Stars, Bridge Inn and Cornubia.

Full details, together with any changes to the above, will be available at branch meetings and on our web site at [www.badrag.co.uk](http://www.badrag.co.uk). Food should be available at least in the first or second pub of each trail. Due to the absence of a volunteer, CAMRA are not organising a passport scheme in 2011.

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

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

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



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## WARNING

From the Management of the  
**HOPE & ANCHOR**  
Exceptional Public House

**SPILL BEER  
DON'T**





*The Salutation at Ham, featuring Mild throughout the month of May*

## Pubs with mild ales throughout May

The following pubs have advised us that they plan to stock mild throughout the month of May: in Bristol the **Cornubia**, **Seven Stars**, **Highbury Vaults**, **Hope & Anchor**, **Lansdown**, **Green Man** and **Chelsea Inn**; outside of Bristol the **New Inn** at Mayshill and the **Salutation Inn** at Ham.

No doubt this list will grow, so keep an eye on our web site.

## Other BADRAG events

In January BADRAG's monthly gathering was at the **Annexe** in Bishopston where a couple of dozen 'badragers' enjoyed Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby and Elland 1872 Porter. The February gathering was held at the **Commercial Rooms** which our founder, Laurie Gibney, booked in a senior moment for his sixty-fifth birthday, and a good evening was had by all.

The next gathering will be on **Thursday 10th March**. A mini trail near Bristol Bridge will visit the **Seven Stars** from 7pm (cellar visits from 6.30pm) the **Bridge Inn** from 8:15pm and the **Cornubia** from 9:30pm.

Future gatherings will be on the third Thursday of each month from

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PUB OF THE YEAR 2009**

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**E: dallyinns@aol.com**



Since 2002

7.30pm, and have been booked on 16th June in the upstairs room of the Cornubia for our only round-table meeting of the year, a Mild Trails Wake. On 21st July BADRAG will be at the Portcullis and on the 18th August at the Staple Hill Oak.

*Colin Postlethwaite and Laurie Gibney*

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# 2010 – another tough year but more choice than ever

In his regular annual review Vince Murray notes that the range and quality of real ale available in our area has continued to boom, albeit at an ever increasing price.

Without doubt 2010 was another horribly difficult year for all types of businesses, and for all of us fighting to hang on to our jobs. The pub industry was certainly no exception to that and we saw many pubs closing down, with not all of them opening up again. To my eyes it would now seem that the worst affected pubs are those around the suburbs of towns and cities. Travel into the outskirts of Bristol in any direction and it seems that every second or third pub is “tinned up”. Those in the centre and to a lesser extent out in the country seem to be faring better or at least staying open. That said and somewhat conversely we have definitely never had such a wide choice of high quality real ale (and cider) and such a choice of high quality pubs to drink it in.

It would seem that a combination of factors has led to this improvement. Certainly the most successful licensees and owners have realised that the way to our wallets is to really sharpen up the product offering. Just putting a couple of “bog standard” or widely available beers on (Bass, Courage Best, Bombardier, Doom Bar, etc) will simply not cut the mustard. With beer now often well over £3 a pint (and heading nearer £4 in some places) people want more for their hard-earned cash. Thanks to the giant greedy pubcos being forced to at least partly release their iron grip on almost every pub (to free up their capital), that is now very possible. More and more pubs are either genuine free houses or operating free of tie. That, together with an influx of genuinely talented and switched-on licensees, is what is really behind this boom. Suddenly, small craft brewers can find outlets in our towns and cities and in many country pubs too. It is no longer unusual to see the best British beers, including many from our splendid local brewers, adorning bars around the city. More often than not they are accompanied by nicer pub interiors and quality food offerings widening the overall appeal.

With regard to local breweries, several notched up significant achievements in 2010. **RCH** from Hewish near Weston-super-Mare led the way by winning the prestigious gold medal for “Best Bitter of Britain” with its PG Steam beer, at the Great British Beer Festival. Sadly their beers remain very elusive locally, especially in and around Bristol. **Arbor Ales** doubled their pub estate to two by acquiring the **Three Tuns** in Hotwells. Ned and Natz Clark (ex Portcullis) were also acquired from **Dawkins** to run it and it has quickly become one of Bristol’s top beer venues. Happily Joe Goldsworthy has been promoted to manager at the **Portcullis** and has maintained the high standard there. Arbor have continued to amaze and delight us with their huge range of regular and one-off brews. Also impressing greatly are **Bristol Beer Factory** whose beers are an ever-increasing sight on bars around Bristol, as well as in their own few pubs. The **Zerodegrees** pub and brewery has also been on top form and has stayed very busy for food and drink throughout the recession. I would say that the house brews are the best that they have ever been. Other local breweries, such as **Cheddar Ales** and **Cotswold Spring** have continued to produce very high quality beers too. Very pleasingly, **Butcombe** have ventured into brewing a variety of seasonal brews including the current Old Vic dark ale which is excellent. There was a fairly major game of “managerial merry-go-round” in the Butcombe pub estate late in 2010 but all seems to have settled down again now. The **Dawkins** pub estate has continued to excel and the pubs now also offer beers from the Dawkins brewery (formerly Matthews).

On the pub front, whilst there was mostly good news in 2010 (at least for central pubs) there was one major loss when the **Bag O’Nails** in Hotwells closed its doors. Despite many rumours of a reopening, it remains closed as I write this. There have been too many pub closures and re-openings to list here (some are covered in Pubs Group articles) but I will mention one, the **Lamplighters**

in Shirehampton, which I believe is still closed after many months. This large and previously successful real ale-friendly pub is in an area not blessed with many rivals and there is no way that it could be properly deemed “unviable” in any sensible world. I understand that applications to build housing on the site have been made – this simply should not be allowed to happen.

Now for all the good news stories! Early in 2010, but just too late for the 2011 Good Beer Guide, Phil and Jackie took over the **Cornubia** in central Bristol. They have already restored it to its former glory and it is arguably better than ever. Not so surprising, perhaps, as they are previous winners of the CAMRA national Pub of the Year award. Paul at the **Seven Stars** nearby was a richly deserving winner of the Bristol & District Pub of the Year 2010 and continues to take it to new heights. With the **Bridge Inn** in Passage Street also back on top form, including interesting guest beers, you now have three pubs within about 150 yards that make a wonderful (if short distance) pub crawl. Elsewhere in the centre of Bristol, Jauma left the **Old Fish Market** after many great years and was replaced by a happily returning Ben Reid. The **Eldon House** near the top of Jacobs Wells Road now offers two or three guest beers as well as its regular Bath Ales beers. Even Greene King have got in on the act by allowing the **Shakespeare** in Prince Street to sell two interesting guest beers. Another great pub crawl now exists around the St Michael’s Hill and Colston Hall area. In addition to the **Colston Yard** and **Zerodegrees** pubs, the former Griffin pub (closed for some time) reopened as the **Gryphon** with a complete change of image and emphasis – it now offers heavy rock music and up to four beers always including at least one dark one. An even shorter pub crawl there! Just a short but uphill stroll away, the **Robin Hood** on St Michael’s Hill has really become a top real ale venue – it now has five ever-changing guest beers plus real ciders and a very superior UK and foreign keg range, all at fair prices. It also offers food and Sky Sports. In addition to the Gryphon, several other pubs have come back from the dead – these include the **Plume of Feathers** in Hotwells (now specialising in local real ales) and, best of all, the **Phoenix** by the Cabot Circus car park has lived up to its name by re-opening in January 2011 after quite a few years lying desolate. It is now a completely free house starting sensibly with two beers. The internal makeover is a truly astonishing transformation. The young owner really needs and deserves our support – please try and call in.

Away from Bristol there are more positive developments. Down in Weston-super-Mare the **Criterion** in Upper Church Road has gone from strength to strength. The licensee here was also behind the reopening of the historic **Queen’s Head** in Willsbridge near Keynsham. Good reports have also been received on the **Summerhouse** at Worle (Marston’s) and the Ship at Uphill (two changing beers). Elsewhere in North Somerset we have enjoyed visits to the **Waldegrave Arms** in East Harptree, the **Plume of Feathers** in Rickford and the **Royal Oak** in Clevedon. The latter also won a major award from Punch Taverns during 2010. The **Poacher** in Portishead closed suddenly about six months ago but has recently reopened. We did enjoy a couple of visits to the **Kings Arms** in nearby Easton in Gordano though (all beers served via gravity).

In South Gloucestershire our new Thornbury sub-branch has been impressed with both the **Wheatshaf** in the town and the **Bowl** at nearby Almondsbury, as well as the existing Good Beer Guide pubs.

As you can see there is plenty to be cheerful about on the local pub and real ale scene – apologies to the many others that I have not mentioned here – I just wish we could get our suburban pubs in shape and do something about the shocking price of a pint!

Vince Murray



# A new brewery for Bristol - Ashley Down

Another local Bristol brewery has sprung up – in a back lane in St Andrew's. The Ashley Down Brewery has been evolving slowly and is poised to begin producing commercially.

Inspiration for the venture came during a visit to the Factoberfest at the Tobacco Factory when Vince Crocker and some like-minded friends decided to have a go at brewing their own. Since those early days, Vince has experimented in his garage with a small collection of home-made and bought brewery equipment. He has tried, tested and perfected many of his own recipes before coming up with brews he's happy with.

Now, after much encouragement and positive feedback from family, friends and passers-by – the garage backs on to a well used lane – he has finally bitten the bullet and expanded the operation.

This has taken a while: the garden has been dug up to install water, electricity and drainage. New equipment has been installed in the garage and is almost ready to produce the inaugural brew using quality ingredients from Warminster Maltings and Charles Farram. Meanwhile, the house, which was used initially for fermentation, has now been reclaimed by the family.

Vince is a self-taught brewer who knows what he likes. Two favourite recipes include **Vanguard**, a 3.9 per cent dark ale, brewed with stacks of roast malt, complimented with loads of residual sweetness and **Ashley Down Best**, a well-balanced 4.2 per cent hazelnut-coloured best bitter, hopped with plenty of Goldings, Fuggles and Bodicea. They could be making an appearance at the Bristol Beer Festival and should hopefully be arriving at a pub near you soon, so do look out for them.

*Julia Tuckey*

## Molson Coors takes over Doom Bar brewer Sharp's

Molson Coors (UK) announced in early February 2011 that they had acquired Sharp's Brewery Ltd. Sharp's brew the widely available Doom Bar and other real ales such as Cornish Coaster, Sharp's Own and Sharp's Special, all of which appear on bars in the Bristol area from time to time. They also produce seasonal beers including a Christmas ale and a stout.

Molson Coors Brewing Company is a leading global brewer which has over 2,000 employees in the UK and breweries in Burton on Trent, Alton and Tadcaster. It has a share of over 20% of the UK beer market. Its portfolio includes Draught Bass and Worthington's beers.

Sharp's Brewery was founded in 1994 at Rock in Cornwall and has grown rapidly to become the largest brewer of cask beer in the South West. Doom Bar is the best selling cask brand in the South West and Wales and is now reputedly also the fastest growing cask brand in Greater London.

Mark Hunter, Chief Executive, Molson Coors (UK & Ireland) said: "We respect and want to preserve the unique culture of Sharp's Brewery and the special appeal of their brands to beer drinkers. The team at Sharp's have a passion for brewing beer of the highest quality with the finest natural ingredients available."

Molson Coors' press release stated that there are over 8.6 million cask beer drinkers in the UK and cask beer now represents 15.2% of on-trade beer volume, which is its highest share of on-trade beer for over a decade.

Nick Baker, Managing Director, Sharp's Brewery commented: "It was, and is, important to us to know how Molson Coors will manage Sharp's and their plan to invest in developing the brewery at Rock and the Doom Bar brand is spot on."

Stuart Howe, Head Brewer at Sharp's Brewery said: "We are delighted to be joining the Molson Coors team, all of whom are passionate about Sharp's Brewery and committed to the Doom Bar brand."

I would extend a cautious welcome to this acquisition. It must be good news for real ale drinkers that a multinational company is investing in real ale production. However we hope that the strong emphasis on one product does not mean that the other beers in Sharp's portfolio will be neglected and allowed to die. Variety, as the old saying has it, is the spice of life.

*Norman Spalding*



Vince Crocker in the new Ashley Down Brewery

## Seven Stars

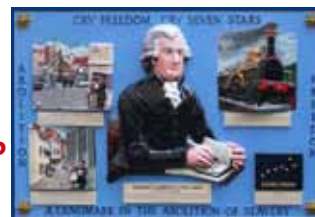
Thomas Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol BS1 6JG

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# Bristol Beer Festival



The guy who bought the last tickets at the Commercial Rooms

Having around 130 different real ales and a range of ciders and perries in one place is obviously a great draw for those that like to sample a selection of tastes and styles. This, combined with the enthusiasm of the volunteers that make the event happen, leads to a great atmosphere at the festival and both its reputation and the demand for tickets for the Bristol Beer Festival (March 18-19) just keeps growing.

CAMRA membership has been increasing at an impressive rate with the Bristol & District branch more than doubling in size in recent years. At the Bristol Beer Festival ticket sale for CAMRA members on 6th February at the **Old Fish Market**, we sold more tickets than in any previous year and also signed up over 30 new CAMRA members. Clearly many people are taking advantage of this membership benefit to secure their tickets at the first ticket sales session.

All remaining tickets in Bristol were sold to the public at the **Commercial Rooms** on 20th February, with tickets for three of the four festival sessions selling out well within the first hour. It was unfortunate for some people that they turned up to find that the tickets they wanted had already gone, however efforts were made to keep everyone informed so no one was left queuing for tickets that were no longer available.

A few tickets were left from the Weston-super-Mare sales at **Off The Rails** and these were put into the Seven Stars, Thomas Lane, Bristol. We would like to thank all these pubs for their co-operation.

*Richard Brooks*

## CHIPPENHAM BEER FESTIVAL

May 13th & 14th, 2011  
Olympiad, Chippenham

Friday: 6pm-11pm (£6)

Saturday: 11am-3.30pm (£4) & 7pm-11pm (£5)

- Admission to evening sessions by advance ticket only
- 90 real ales, ciders & perries
- £2 of free beer tokens to CAMRA members (join at festival and benefit!)
- Walking distance from both train and bus station

Tickets available from beginning of April from the Olympiad, or immediately from

CAMRA NWW, PO Box 2882, Chippenham SN14 6WT.

Cheques to CAMRA North West Wiltshire – please enclose SAE.

Organised by the North West Wiltshire Branch of CAMRA  
[www.nwwiltscamra.org.uk](http://www.nwwiltscamra.org.uk)

# Brewing interest rockets

Since the last issue of Pints West, two new craft brewing groups have started up in Bristol and are attracting a lot of interest. Many of our commercial brewers in the area started life as home-brewers and the odd one turns up at the meetings to share their knowledge. The groups welcome anyone who brews (extract or all-grain) or those non-brewers with an interest in craft brewing.

The **Bristol Craft Brewers** meet at 8pm on the first Thursday of the month at the **Cornubia**. Contact Matt Leaver, email address [matt@bristolcraftbrewers.co.uk](mailto:matt@bristolcraftbrewers.co.uk), or visit [www.bristolcraftbrewers.co.uk](http://www.bristolcraftbrewers.co.uk) for more information.

The **Bristol Brewing Circle** meet at 7.30pm on the second Thursday of the month at the **Miners Arms**, St. Werburghs. Contact Ali Kocho, [alikocho@googlemail.com](mailto:alikocho@googlemail.com), or visit [www.bristolbrewers.wordpress.com](http://www.bristolbrewers.wordpress.com).

*Colin Postlethwaite*

# Peering through the Vail

Once again taking Pints West to the limits, Ron and I took the paper's title seriously and tried out several bars in the town of Vail. Vail is a purpose-built ski village about two hours outside Denver in Colorado, USA and has been manufactured into a Tyrolean style village losing much of the rough-and-ready style of the original



American quick-build. However with a bit of local knowledge you can move away from the slope-side Austrian bars and find some real gems.

Firstly in our hotel we had the **Altitude Billiards and Sports Bar**, definitely an unexpected plus to our holiday. With ten beers on tap there was an ample choice of beers for the apres ski or to wile away an evening. With the usual choice of Coors, Molson and Samuel Adams, accompanied by Guinness, Fat Tire and Newcastle Brown, there were also the stars of the show, 90 Shilling and Arrogant B\*stard. The former was a lovely amber (light brown) ale that slipped down easily with a refreshing taste that you could drink all evening long. The latter, boasting an alcohol by volume (ABV) of 7.2%, lived up to its label and its boast: "It is quite doubtful that you will have the taste or sophistication to be able to appreciate an ale of this quality and depth." This beer just marches into your mouth and assaults your taste buds with flavour, and just seems to tell your senses, "I'm here, just put up with it." So with an ABV of 7.2% and an altitude of 2,475m, this is definitely not one for the faint hearted but a definite treat for your evening.

Apart from the great choice of beers, this was a great bar on all levels. As always, staff in the US are friendly and efficient and in Zack we had a very knowledgeable barman, or is it bartender? It's a great place to be as its name suggests when sporting events are on as you get swept along with the locals and whoop with every one-metre drive watching the football.

Along the road to Vail Village by the picturesque covered bridge you find the **George** pub. This has been a great meeting place in Vail for many years and is a must for the Brit drinkers. The walls decorated in memorabilia from the 1966 football (soccer) World Cup, it's no surprise that this bar is owned by ex-pat Jim, whose career with West Ham United is the stuff of legend. The bar has a really friendly atmosphere with a great pub food menu that will appeal to most after a long day. On tap again you find Fat Tire, Guinness and the usual American fare, all beers are kept really well. Any bar in Vail which is full of locals is a good recommendation and this bar attracts locals and discerning drinkers from everywhere. Jim and his staff make the whole experience a really pleasant evening and both earn and deserve the patronage of their customers.

Last but not least, in the heart of Lionshead is **Bart and Yeti's** which we have mentioned before in Pints West. A great little bar and, with owner Dennis still at the helm, this bar has not only survived the modernisation of the local area but has grown with it. Again essentially a locals' bar which attracts the more discerning drinkers, this is a gem amongst a manufactured Tyrolean pub culture. Fat Tire again is the staple diet for those who prefer darker beer, but the staple lighter US beers are also on tap. Again a good pub menu to attract most palates, a pub that has survived by serving good beer and good food and relied on good customer service to retain its patronage rather than run with the crowd.

Thanks to all three bars, and should you manage to find your way there, try them and you will not be disappointed.

*Jon Parr*



# News from the Bristol Beer factory (and Arbor Ales and Zero Degrees)

## Home brew competition

The annual Bristol Beer Factory competition for home brewers is back for its second year, giving someone the opportunity to win a day's brewing of their beer with the BBF brewers. The beer will be sent out into trade and some will be bottled. The winning brewer will get a cask of their beer and the BBF will host a launch event at a BBF pub for the winner and their beer.

To enter, please collect an entry form by emailing [sales@bristolbeerfactory.co.uk](mailto:sales@bristolbeerfactory.co.uk) or from the brewery, the Grain Barge or the Barley Mow. Entries of two bottles must be with the brewery by March 18th. Five finalists will be announced and all entrants are invited to the finals on April 4th.

## The brewery

The brewery floor was in a bad way and was due to be tiled in January and so should now be shiny and new. Sufficient stocks of beer had been built up to cover this period of production down time.

## Grain Barge

The Grain Barge (the Bristol Beer Factory pub/boat!) has returned to its usual mooring at Mardyke Wharf next to Hotwell Road after being away in dry dock since Christmas Eve for a five-yearly hull inspection.

## Collaboration

Three Bristol craft breweries have come together to brew a very special beer for this year's Bristol Beer Festival. The "Bristol Craft Brewers" are Jon Comer from Arbor Ales, Chris Kay and Brett Ellis from the Bristol Beer Factory, and Chris Thurgeson from Zero Degrees. The beer will simply be known as "Collaboration", and is the amalgamation of several styles of beer. Jon Comer says, "We are calling it a 'New World Triple' a combination of Belgian and American styles."

"Collaboration" is based on a classic Belgian style, a strong golden ale but given a twist. It is being brewed with ingredients gathered from all over the world, a homage to a time when Bristol was one of the trading capitals of the world. The beer brings together styles of beer

from England, Belgium and the US, and ingredients from all over the world, English malted barley, Belgian yeast and hops from America and New Zealand, toasted oats (toasted in Zero Degrees' pizza oven), and coriander. Bristol Beer Factory head brewer Chris Kay commented, "We wanted to brew an unusual beer, using the skills and experiences of the four brewers to showcase how different styles of beer can be combined together to produce a stunning new beer."

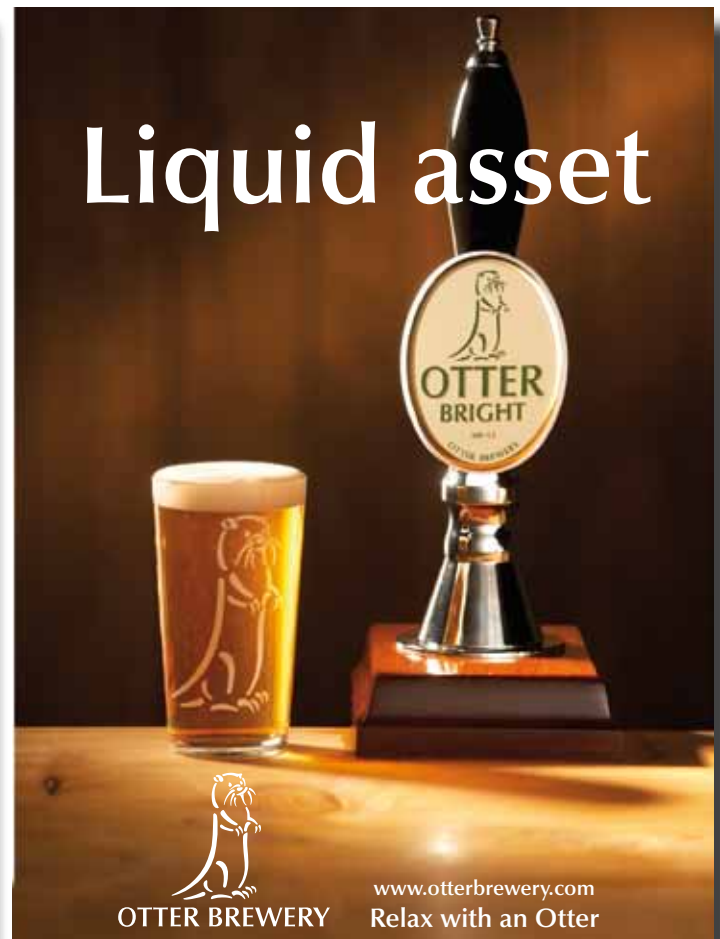
"Collaboration" is being brewed at both Zero Degrees and the Bristol Beer Factory and, unusually, will be available in kegs, cask-conditioned and bottle-conditioned, a great way to show what the different dispense methods can do for a beer. To produce enough of this unique strong beer to fulfil demand, Arbor Ales took their mash tun over to the Bristol Beer Factory on February 11th for the brew day. It shows the commitment of the breweries, as moving half of Arbor Ales' brew kit for a day's brewing is a huge feat, bringing a different and exciting aspect to brewing this beer and one that required a lot of skill from the brewers. Zero Degrees head brewer Chris Thurgeson said, "I believe this level of collaboration shows how forward-thinking modern micro-breweries are and the lengths we will go to in order to produce an exciting and unique beer."

Bristol Beer Factory managing director Simon Bartlett said, "The CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival is the most important event in Bristol for breweries and we wanted to unite to brew a beer that celebrated the fabulous talents of local brewers."

The three breweries will be launching "Collaboration" simultaneously at their outlets (Grain Barge, Three Tuns and Zero Degrees) and at the Bristol Beer Festival on Friday 18th March. You will have the opportunity to join the brewers for a pint of the new brew during the evening.

To celebrate the most important week for beer in Bristol, the Bristol Beer Factory will be holding a number of events including a brewery tour and tasting at the on Tuesday 15th March and a beer and food matching meal.

RB



# Great pub crawls – St Michael's Hill

Bristol is blessed with some brilliant pubs which can easily be visited on the same night in a traditional walking pub crawl. This one took place mostly along one road, St Michael's Hill, and started at the top so that we could enjoy the night view of Bristol centre as we descended.

The pub at the top of the hill is the iconic **Highbury Vaults**. The "Vaults" is an established real ale pub and a long-standing regular in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide. It has a good mix of customers from trendy students to more grizzled characters like ourselves so we fitted in well. Crawls are often undertaken to celebrate an event and this time we joined friends Maurice and Gill to honour the birth of Maurice's first grandchild, Daisy. The Highbury Vaults is owned by Young's, having previously been part of the now defunct Smiles Brewery estate. As such, Young's Bitter and their Winter Warmer were available along with other beers which on our visit included Wells Bombardier, St Austell's Tribute, Courage Directors and Bath Ales Gem. The Winter Warmer and Gem were our weapons of choice and both were superb. For anyone who has not tried this place, the Highbury Vaults is a long, narrow pub starting with a tiny snug bar at



The Highbury Vaults

the front, working back to the main bar area which has lots of alcoves and wood panelling and ending with a large semi-covered garden area at the back bound by stone walls. This pub has an interesting feel and is a great place to meet.

As we exited the Vaults and headed down the hill, I should mention that we tried the bar opposite, **Chin! Chin!** We found this to be a comfortable place but sadly with no real ale that night (I believe they usually have Doom Bar) so we carried on.

The next pub down the hill is on the right, the **White Bear**. I think it is fair to say this is mainly a hang-out for students and younger people judging by the rest of the clientele but we were made very welcome. This is where we chose to eat as all-day food was on offer from a list on the blackboard, which included a good number of veggie options and the burgers and fish finger sandwiches stood us in good stead for the rest of the night. We were all impressed by the décor, which included wooden flooring and tables. This place has another interesting layout. You enter via a courtyard with seating. The bar is then in front of you with rooms to the front and back, then opening up to a large area at the back with a pool table and more funky furniture. Sharp's Doom Bar and Otter Ale satisfied us on the beer front and we had no complaints with these (although the Doom Bar was a bit on the cold side for my taste).



The White Bear



The Robin Hood

Halfway down the hill on the left is the **Robin Hood**. This, I understand, was previously owned by Wadworth Brewery but is now free to feature beers from local micro breweries. The five real ales offered to us were

Moor Brewery's Merlin's Magic and Union Pale, Cotleigh's Barn Owl, Golden Bolt from Box Steam Brewery, and Yeovil Brewery's Sommerset. Sarah, the barmaid, was extremely friendly and helpful and this place was a big hit with us oldies. I don't want this to read like something from a daytime television show on pub improvements but we were all impressed again on this front. The pub has a long, narrow layout and makes good use of lighting with the bar located in the middle. Lovely pub, great beers.

Next, we hit the **Colston Arms**, down the hill again on the left.

This place appeared to us to be the one with the biggest feel of being a neighbourhood pub. There are drinking areas in the front with an area with a pool table to the side of it which on the night was packed. At the rear is a quieter, largish wood-panelled room. All areas are served by a central bar. There is a big sporting influence here with football and rugby on the television. The back area looks to be the landlord's place for showing off his Welsh roots with a parade of rugby shirts and we were invited to return for the Rugby Internationals. We enjoyed our time here and had no complaints about the drinks either. We sampled the Bath Ales Gem and the Hobgoblin from Wychwood but we could also have tried Butcombe Bitter.

Almost next door to the Colston Arms is the **Scotchman and his Pack**. Butcombe's Bitter and Gold were available here. Both were tried and both were in good order. This is a corner pub with a more traditional décor. It didn't have "the wow factor" or "tick all the boxes" (I really must stop watching those programmes) but it is a perfectly decent pub.

As we had a few minutes to use before the last bus arrived, we carried on down towards Colston Avenue and stopped along the way at the **Gryphon**, located close to the Colston Hall and reopened recently. We expected Bath Ales Barnstormer and Festivity to be on tap and all plumped for the Festivity, which was a real treat. This we enjoyed whilst listening to the latest beats from the likes of Megadeath, for this is a real ale and heavy metal music establishment. I'm pleased to say the landlord has no intention of selling his soul to Brotherhood of Man or Girls Aloud and, if you like a bit of a change, this place could suit. In the meantime, we can rejoice in a new real ale outlet, serving four ales and favouring dark beers. No slippers were spotted here but there were a few beards – mostly long goatee types – and I can record that black still seems to be the colour of choice for the heavy metal set (we felt positively colourful in comparison). As they say, "it's different" and it was a good way of rounding off the night.

Congratulations, by the way, to Gill who started the night able to pronounce some unusual Peruvian place names like Machu Picchu and Lake Titicaca and was able to repeat the same at the end of the night.

Neil Ravenscroft  
(Photos Maurice Bye)



The Colston Arms



The Scotchman and his Pack



The Gryphon



# Brewery trip to Plain Ales

I'd become aware of the quality of the beers brewed by Plain Ales over the last year or so, as their beers often popped up in some of my regular haunts such as the Three Tuns and Seven Stars in Bristol. It was therefore time for a visit to find out a little more about the history of the brewery and taste the product first hand!

So it came to pass that a fairly full coach of CAMRA branch members headed out one cold Saturday morning and soon found the brewery on a small business park just past Warminster.

Brewery owner James Timoney was on hand to greet us, along with Holly, who obviously has brewing in her blood as she was previously at Moor Brewery.

James had kindly put on no less than five different brews for us to try, and at only £1 a pint (with all proceeds going to the Help the Heroes charity), so we quickly started imbibing before James took us through the brewing process and his recent history.

Briefly, after being made redundant, James decided that brewing was the way forward, and once all the usual problems of finding a suitable site, planning permission, etc, had been sorted, he commenced brewing around three years ago.

He currently uses a ten-barrel plant, and buys in quality malt from the nearby Warminster Maltings as well as various hops to ensure the different recipes really stand out.

And they really do!

The beers include the best-selling Innspiration (4%), the award-winning Innocence also at 4%, as well as other beers such as Inntrigue (4.2%) and Indulgence, a delicious dark ruby porter coming in at 5.2%. We all enjoyed that one! Sheep Dip, a tasty 3.8% lighter beer was also on sale – this is brewed exclusively for the Blue Raddle in Dorchester and is a bit of a rarity. Innognito at 4.8% had only just been brewed for the first time, and was a superb ebony-coloured Port Stout – my personal favourite of the trip!

All too soon it was time for us to go, but not before thanking James and Holly for giving up their time and for their generosity.

With Matt from Aztec safely at the wheel of our coach, we next visited the the Goddard Arms at Clyffe Pypard, before the last main attraction of the day, the Carters Rest in Wroughton. This superb two-roomed pub stocks a wide variety of ales (I think there were 12 hand-



James Timoney amongst the Plain Ales brewing equipment

pumps), mainly from small brewers, and we were pleased to see Plain Ales Innocence featured on the bar. The pub itself has won the Swindon CAMRA's Pub of the Year award for the last two years, and it's not hard to see why – a really friendly pub, with a great choice of well-kept ales from (mainly) independent breweries.

We then headed back to Bristol and home.

We'd like to thank all at Plain Ales for their hospitality, and fully recommend their beers – this is a small brewery that takes pride in producing quality, tasty ales from the best ingredients around – so look out for them in your travels. For publicans reading this, just go to [www.plainales.co.uk](http://www.plainales.co.uk) to contact James and place an order.

With a bit of luck you'll also be able to find a beer from Plain Ales on the bar at the forthcoming Bristol Beer Festival too.

Cheers!

*Tim Proudman (Bristol CAMRA Social Secretary)*

## Inn and around Portishead

### Closed pubs reopen

Having both closed a few days apart last October, the **White Lion** and the **Poacher** on Portishead High Street reopened within a few days of each other in mid-December and things are looking up.

The new licencees at the **Poacher** are local couple, Ian and Zoe Clarke, who have taken on the lease of this Enterprise Inns pub, which is the oldest one in Portishead. It is expected that a refurbishment will be underway this year and food will then be available, including a new carvery. In the meantime, concentration will be on drink sales. I popped along one recent Friday night to see how things were going. I found a busy, vibrant atmosphere, probably with a younger crowd than before. Luckily, my visit coincided with real ale being made available for the first time since reopening in the shape of Butcombe Gold and Sharp's Doom Bar. I am pleased to say both tasted good.

Moving on to the **White Lion** later that night, this was under a temporary landlord and no real ale was on tap (my pal tried the keg Bass but was not too keen). I have to say this place was quiet – which may partly be explained by the liveliness down the road at the Poacher. The White Lion is also of historic interest, in previous lives being a water mill and then a hotel. It is known that a lot of work needs to be done to parts of this building and its future will hang on planning developments.

We wish both establishments well for the future.

*Neil Ravenscroft*

## The Windmill Inn

PORTISHEAD



6 Real Ales in excellent condition including:

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

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

To contact us please ring 01275 843677.

# Cryptic Crossword

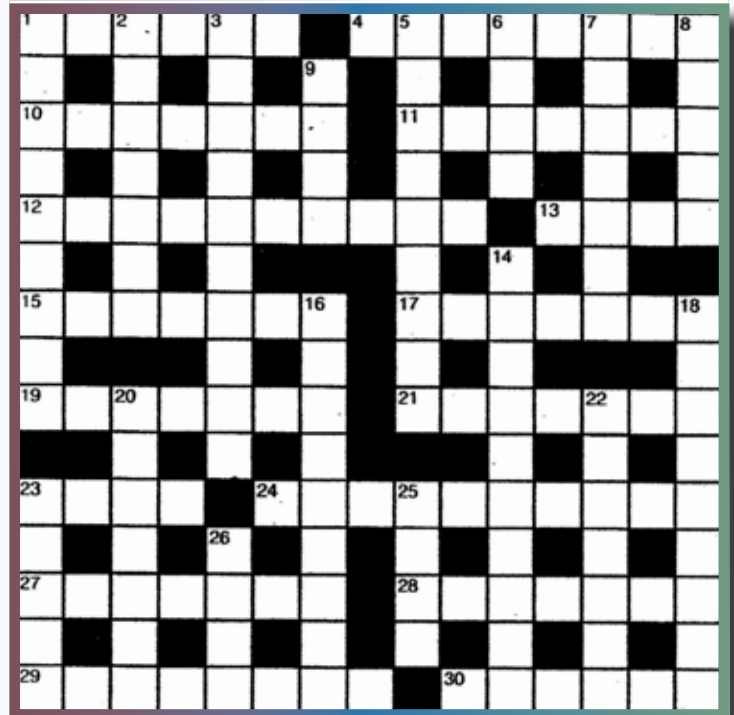
Compiled by Pete and Eddie Taberner

## CLUES ACROSS

1. Store-room for the salt (6)
4. Somerset beer savoured by underground visitors (8)
10. Stupidly lay around inn swallowing an 'E' (8)
11. The ancient Greeks and Romans had a couple of Marston's old ales (7)
12. Pins down value of Mayor's bitter from here in Gloucestershire (10)
13. No fizzy beer seen in this apartment (4)
15. Grain company mash is definitely green (7)
17. Some will scrub Bishop's Tipple when it's no good (7)
19. Softie takes old biddy stout with soaked bread (7)
21. Schoolboys bag last orders with Che hanging in there (7)
23. Discover drinking establishment at new farm building (4)
24. Trip the light fantastic with this strong bitter (10)
27. Have entered pub – possibly the 'Port of Call' (2, 5)
28. Neil's best bitter drunk with crisps and nuts (7)
29. Local brew preferred by Darth Vader and his ilk? (8)
30. This clue baffles those seen at 'The Cricketers' at the end of the day (6)

## CLUES DOWN

1. Mr Organic working at the highland brewery (9)
2. Type of light beer from Litton's (7)
3. Dislike can be swallowed in a verse – *Nessun Dorma* (10)
5. Seen to be making advances, so regular RN characters thrown out of the Rover's Return (9)
6. Spring's beer flavour (4)
7. Local female rock singers at the German Beersfest! (7)
8. Drunk tires of having yet another examination (5)
9. Find fault in Totty Pot porter (4)
14. Preferable odds on a punter meeting old barmaid at the Rover's Return (1,6,3)
16. Headed the Titanic brewery? (9)
18. Totally smashed sots I hail with beery breath (9)
20. Dog appears to be staggeringly drunk (7)
22. Short gangster takes the top off Lumberjack bitter (7)
23. Drunk and completely in the dark (5)
25. Could sing tipsily after two large ones (4)
26. Some of Steve's but not Adam's ale. (4)



## Solution to the prize crossword in the last issue

Across: 1 Sparkly, 5 Be aloof, 9 Rose or red, 10 Bella, 11 Unita, 12 Otter Head, 13 Salt and pepper, 17 The Seven Stars, 21 No Bacardi, 24 Rouse, 25 Penge, 26 Gold brick, 27 (see 15 down), 28 Retrain. Down: 1 Sirius, 2 Abscissae, 3 Know-all, 4 Yard of ale, 5 Bidet, 6 Auberge, 7 Ollie, 8 Flanders, 14 Distiller, 15 (& 27 across) Piss up in a brewery, 16 Stone pub, 18 Excrete, 19 Acrobat, 20 Weaken, 22 Binge, 23 Rugby.

The lucky winner was Ray Wright from Loughton in Essex who won a copy of *The Inns of Wiltshire* by Andrew Swift & Kirsten Elliott and *Cry Freedom Cry Seven Stars* by Mark Steeds.

The solution to this issue's crossword is on page 23.



Gloucestershire's largest regional brewer has been brewing 20 years! Come and celebrate BOB's birthday, or try some of our other award-winning ales...

### BOB (4.0%)

Our brand leader, a great session bitter

### BANKERS DRAFT (4.0%)

Pale and malty with a citrus kick

### COOPERS WPA (3.5%)

A golden, refreshing brew with a dry finish

### COTSWOLD WAY (4.2%)

Rich and well-balanced with a hoppy finish

### IKB (4.5%)

A complex, ruby red ale with strong hints of cherries and plums.

### STATION PORTER (6.1%)

The CAMRA supreme winter beer 2008, a rounded stout with hints of chocolate

Available from:

**Our flagship pub–The White Lion,**

Quay Head, Colston Avenue, Bristol, BS1 1BE

**The newly reopened Downend Tavern,**

125 Downend Road, Fishponds, Bristol, BS16 5BE

**The Brewery Shop,**

Arnold's Cooperage, Station rd, Wickar, GL12 8NB

tel: 01454 299592

Web: [www.thebreweryshop.com](http://www.thebreweryshop.com)

Wickwar Brewing Co, The Old Brewery, Station rd, Wickwar, GL12 8NB tel: 01454 292000



# The Richmond

The public house on Gordon Road in Clifton formerly known as the Richmond Spring and having short-lived spells in recent years as the Clifton Sports Bar, Three Magpies and Clifton Cow, is under new management and is now known as the **Richmond**, almost back to its original name. And it now looks like it's finally about to enter a period of stability.

The pub is owned by Nick Armitage (who also has a number of other pubs including the King's Arms on Blackboy Hill and the Kingsdown Vaults in Kingsdown) and managed by Andy Bridges and Chris Bailey. They are currently offering up to four real ales. These have included the popular Deuchars IPA, Hobgoblin and beers from Jennings. They say they like to have a couple of lighter ones plus something a bit meatier. There are two more hand pumps available which they would like to bring on-line eventually as the demand for real ale goes up.

The pub has plenty of separate bar areas, lots of wood panelling, and real fires. It is open evenings Monday and Tuesday, and all day the rest of the week. Food is available most of the time they are open, but only evenings on Wednesdays.

SP

# The Three Tuns

Since being acquired by Arbor Ales some months ago, the Three Tuns near College Green has been thriving, offering beers from Arbor Ales plus other choice breweries. In addition to seven cask ales, Ned and Natz will also now stocking six real ciders, which can be found to the right of the bar. These will be mainly from the award-winning Gwynt y Ddraig, and sometimes others small producers.

The pub's 2011 Craft Beer Festival is kicking off at noon on Friday 4th March, going right through to the Monday, open all day every and featuring DJ's on the Friday, Morris Dancers on the Saturday, and a full live band on the Sunday. Brewers Jon Comer (Arbor), Justin Hawke (Moor) and Tom Cadden (Brewdog) will be around for a bit of a chat on the Friday.

The pub is also holding a rare ales night on the 28th May to coincide with the CAMRA Mild Crawl.

SP

# The Greyhound

The Greyhound in Clifton Village started trading again recently after some periods of closure. It has been refurbished and opened up, with more space given over to customers by the removal of internal walls and the repositioning of the toilets.

People who know the Cornubia in town may recognise the couple now running the Greyhound, as Julia and Jason were the licensees there about five years ago.

The pub does no hot food, having no kitchen, but is very much a wet-led establishment. The beers usually on offer at the moment are Tribute and Doom Bar. They would also like to put on a real stout, and extra real ales as demand grows.

SP

# News snippets

- The **Cat and Wheel** near the Arches on Cheltenham Road is doing Black Rat (real) Cider and Perry for £2.10 a pint.

- After the huge success of their mini beer and cider festival last year, **Portbury Village Hall** will be running the event again this year on Saturday April 16 from 3pm till late. Tickets will be on sale from mid March from the social club bar or available on the day. Contact Andrea Ireland on 07970 273062 for more information or see [www.portburyvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.portburyvillagehall.co.uk).

- Still early in the planning stages, the 2011 **Nailsea Beer and Cider Festival** will be held at Nailsea and Backwell Rugby Club from Friday 15th to Sunday 17th July. See [www.applefest.co.uk](http://www.applefest.co.uk) for more details.

- The **Bank Tavern** in central Bristol is now offering a free pint to CAMRA members when buying a Sunday Roast – well worthwhile as their excellent roasts come down to about £4 when you allow for the free pint!

- It has come to our attention that the entry in the 2011 Good Beer Guide for the **Blue Flame** near Nailsea is inaccurate. The pub does not open on Saturday lunchtimes as stated and it is unclear as to what lunch-time hours are operated on other days. Please check before setting off by ringing the pub on 01275 856910.

# News from Arbor Ales

Currently available in local free houses is the incredible **Yakima Valley** (7.0% ABV), an American style IPA whose polite demeanour and balanced restraint is in sharp contrast to the domineering arrogance of some West Coast American examples of the genre with their ludicrously high hop rates. This complex ale begins with an aroma of hops featuring both lemon and lime. There follows a taste of malt and hops with hints of spice (cinnamon and saffron) and fruit (grapefruit and peach); a full-bodied malty sweetness gives way to an astringent dry, well-hopped finish. The whole impression is of power exercised with gentility. A moreish beer that belies its alcoholic strength.

On my last visit to the brewery, **Breakfast Stout** was in preparation. This is a twice-fermented oatmeal stout with a huge taste of roast, coffee, chocolate and oatmeal and a long roast aftertaste. The final strength is intended to be 7.4% ABV.

Proprietor/brewer Jon Comer is no longer a one-man-band. He has taken on an assistant in the form of Paul Worsley, late of RCH Brewery, who now makes the deliveries and will eventually assist with the brewing as well as other aspects of the business. At present brewing takes place four times a week and this will soon have to become five times a week in order to cope with demand.

Food is now served at their Old Stillage pub, chef Sam Blankly having been installed. The next venture is to be Arbor Pies – a range

designed to complement the flavours of the various beers in the Arbor portfolio. The prototypes have shown great promise. Also available will be beef and oyster stout sausages. Finally, look out for the Old Stillage pie and mash night.

Henry Davies

## Arbor Ales

KINGSWOOD - BRISTOL

Ring us on 0117 9570899  
or visit [www.arborales.co.uk](http://www.arborales.co.uk)

Our ales can always be found at the brewery tap

### The Old Stillage

145-147 Church Road, Redfield, Bristol 0117 9394079

**"Kitchen Now Open"**

and our new pub

### The Three Tuns

78 St George's Road, Hotwells, Bristol 0117 9070689

Open for food every day from noon.  
Seven ale pumps, serving our beers  
and selected guests

# Our disappearing pubs



## The demise of the pubs in the north Bristol and south Gloucestershire estates

Following on from the story of the plight of pubs in south east Bristol in the summer 2010 edition, I reflect on closures and the state of the pub industry in north Bristol and south Gloucestershire estates. These estates are sandwiched between Filton in the east and Shirehampton in the west. They sprung up between the wars but their greatest expansion was after the Second World War.

The majority of the pubs were purpose built and typical of estate pubs of the 40's and 50's era. They were of bland construction and possessed little of architectural interest.

Patchway and Patchway Estate has suffered the worst. The only surviving pub is the **Travellers Rest**, part of the Hungry Horse group, which was formerly known as the **New Inn**. This is on the west side of the Gloucester Road (A38) north of the railway bridge.

The **Railway Inn** on the A38 south of the railway bridge was altered in 1938 and finished up a very large establishment. It closed a considerable time ago and is now a car showroom. The **Britannia Inn** in Rodway Road survived for more than fifty years but shut down in 2009 and has now been demolished. The site being used for a major community development. For a short time on the outskirts of Patchway, just off the Aztec West roundabout, was a Thawaite's pub called the **Black Sheep**, converted from an old farmhouse existed. It didn't last long and is now a Starbucks coffee house.

Patchway now has to rely on its three clubs and the nearby pubs in Bradley Stoke. A start has been made building over two thousand houses south of Highwood Lane on the northern part of Filton airfield. Time will tell if any community pubs are built to service this estate.

Southmead has fared slightly better than Patchway. The only casualty at the moment is the **Standard Of England** which is boarded up and has suffered some fire damage. The freehold lease has been sold and potential alternative use is anticipated.

The **Pegasus** nearly opposite is still trading as is the **Treble Chance** on the same side of the road about half mile along Greystoke Avenue towards Westbury.

The **Wayfarer** on the north eastern edge of Southmead has a recent chequered history but is still open although the freehold is up for sale.

The **Bear and Rugged Staff** on Southmead Road and the corner of Doncaster Road is an older pub with more character and this seems to reflect in it's popularity.

Moving on to Henbury which has fared best of all, the **Bourne End** can easily be overlooked. It is situated in Okebourne Road which runs parallel and north of Knole Lane. It is a true community pub but unfortunately the present landlady is leaving after eighteen years in the premises.

Heading back to and turning right into Knole Lane for a total distance of about half a mile the roundabout with Passage Road is reached. Opposite stands the **Old Crow**, dating back to at least the 1830's, it was rebuilt in 1959. It is still trading and seems to be quite popular.

Along Crow Lane and just past the shops, Ellsworth Road goes off to the left. At the junction with Richeson Walk stood the **Henbury Inn**, closed in 2006 and now replaced by flats.

Retracing the route back to Crow Lane it is only a short distance left to the **Salutation**. This is part of the Toby Carvery group and is extremely popular. The pub has existed since at least 1840 but has been extensively modernised.

Continuing along Henbury Road in the direction of Lawrence Weston, onto the one way system the **Blaise Inn** is reached (formerly the Henbury Ale and Porter Stores). Records show it was there in the 1890's, a traditional pub specialising in cider.

Carrying along Henbury Road and left into Long Cross the public house with the same name as the road, the **Long Cross** is reached after about three quarters of a mile. Standing forlorn and isolated, the Long Cross is now over a mile away from the only other pub, the **Giant Goram** still open in Lawrence Weston.

Going back up Long Cross a short distance, Lawrence Road bears off right leading to the remains of the recently demolished **Masons Arms** (December 2010). This was an old pub dating from the 1850's extended around the original cottage building. Houses are proposed for the site. Continuing westwards along Broadlands Drive after about a third of a mile the site of the **English Rose** is reached. Demolished in 2008 it is now covered in a large flats complex. Moving along Broadlands Drive into Kings Weston Lane, up the road on the right is the boarded up **Penpole Inn**. Another site for housing development.

More depressing news is that up and over Kings Weston Lane, the other side of Blaise Woods, the **Iron Bridge** formerly called the **Progress Inn** is closed and also looks to have a bleak future. In nearby Shirehampton the **Rising Sun** is now flats and the **Lamplighters** closed, up for sale.

Finally turning down Kings Weston Lane and first left into Barrowmead Drive the last pub is reached. The **Giant Goram** is a typical estate pub looking just as forlorn and isolated as its counterpart the **Long**





# BRISTOL PUBS GROUP

The Bristol & District CAMRA Pubs Campaigning Group – or Bristol Pubs Group for short – 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 Bristol Pubs Group will:*

**Promote the use of community pubs.**

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

**Campaign against insensitive alterations.**



## Fighting for the Farrier's Arms

The Farrier's Arms at 690 Fishponds Road last closed its doors at the end of October 2010 after serving the local community as a pub since 1872. It had been put on the market as a freehold property by the selling agent James A Baker earlier in the year at £225,000 plus VAT but remained open during this time. It was described as having a prominent roadside location in the centre of Fishponds, with a large rear garden and outbuildings, and potential for alternative uses subject to planning permission.

Local rumours started circulating that Morrison's supermarket had bought the pub with the intention of demolishing it to expand their store, and shortly after posters were displayed to advertise an exhibition and feedback event at the Morrison's store on 6<sup>th</sup> December regarding a potential store expansion.

I visited the exhibition on the day to view the display boards and pick up copies of the feedback forms in order to pass them on to local community groups who would have an interest in the proposals. However when I attempted to pick up extra feedback forms I was prevented doing so by exhibition staff. They then asked their manager if I could have extra forms and his response was a refusal. I complained that this was an abuse of the democratic process and I believe it was done to stifle potential opposition to their plans.

On examination of the proposals in the Morrison's literature it was suggested that the store expansion would improve the shopping experience for customers and that removing the pub would be a visual improvement to the Fishponds Road. This is despite the fact that the pub is a mid-Georgian building in a prominent location and is a local landmark. It should also be noted that there is intention to build an Aldi store next to Morrison's which is already adjacent to a Lidl store, so it could be argued that there could be an over-provision of supermarket type stores if the proposals were approved.

Information offered by former customers of the pub indicated that it had a limited choice of beers, food was limited to bar snacks, was quiet during the week, was not always well ran, but was always busy when bands played on a Saturday evening.

The fight to save the Farrier's has been taken up by CAMRA's Bristol Pubs Group, the Civic Society, Living Easton, Kerry McCarthy MP for Bristol East, as well as other local interested individuals. So if you want to tell Morrison's what you think then write to; *Morrison's Fishponds Project, c/o Sharpe Communications Ltd, 47 Salisbury Avenue, St. Albans, Herts AL1 4TZ.* Or email [sharpecomms.co.uk](mailto:sharpecomms.co.uk). You can also contact Kerry McCarthy MP on 0117 9399901 or by email, the local ward councillors for Frome Vale and the Eastville, Hillfields and Frome Vale community partnership at Bristol City Council.

The emerging 'Core Strategy Policy' BCS12 might be of some interest on this issue because it relates to the importance of pubs as community facilities and how they improve social cohesion and interaction. This could provide grounds to object to any planning application that is submitted by Morrison's to knock down the pub. Recently surveyors have been observed outside the Farrier's taking measurements so it might only be a matter of time before this happens.

*Ian Beckey*

Cross the other end of Lawrence Weston.

Excluding the specialist food pubs, very few true community pubs remain across this northern area of Bristol. Whatever the complex reasons for the decline in these pubs it will interesting to see how many survive this current recession and what the skeleton map of the future will look like.

*Rod Lees*

## Summary

### Henbury

**Blaise Inn** - still trading, cider specialist  
**Bourne End** - still trading, current licensee leaving  
**Henbury Inn** - closed, converted to flats (*right*)  
**Old Crow** - still trading  
**Salutation** - still trading, Toby Carvery

### Lawrence Weston

**English Rose** - closed, converted to flats  
**Giant Gorum** - still trading  
**Long Cross** - still trading  
**Masons Arms** - closed, demolished 2010 (*main picture*)  
**Penpole Inn** - closed, boarded up

### Patchway

**Britannia** - closed, demolished 2010  
**Railway Inn** - closed, car showroom  
**Travellers Rest** - still trading, Hungry Horse  
**Black Sheep** - closed-now Starbuck's coffee house (Aztec West)

### Southmead

**Bear and Rugged Staff** - still trading  
**Pegasus** - still trading  
**Standard of England** - closed, board up, some fire damage, lease for sale  
**Treble Chance** - still trading  
**Wayfarer** - still trading, lease for sale

### Nearby

**Rising Sun** - closed, converted to flats (Shirehampton)  
**Lamplighters** - closed, up for sale (Shirehampton)  
**Iron Bridge** - closed, up for sale (Coombe Dingle)



## Friendship Inn, RIP

Regular readers will have read of the Friendship Inn on Axbridge Road, Knowle, being battled over for a number of editions since 2009. Tesco wanted this as a supermarket. Bristol Pubs Group objected to their plans.

Well, the final story is Tesco have won all their battles in this and are trading there. Prior to buying it from Enterprise Inns, they applied for a car park in the beer garden. They said this was for the pub. After three planning committee meetings, they won, so bought the property.

Next, they wanted to make changes. No planning application for use as a pub was required, nor was the building listed. To put a condenser unit in, have new signage, an ATM and a new shop front did. They succeeded in all but the shop front – it was rejected.

Tesco took this rejection to appeal and the Planning Inspectorate on 9th February 2011 submitted to this. This was partly due to the work having commenced already in so far as to remove the main porch entrance and some windows having been changed to a degree.

Have you heard any rumours of changes to your local? If so, and you want to keep it, make enquiries before you lose it!

*Tim Belston*

# Bath's disappearing pubs



Bath's pubs are closing at a faster rate than at any time since the First World War. Since 1918, the city has lost, on average, one pub a year. That rate has not been constant, however. Between 1918 and 1977, an average of 1.4 pubs closed a year. From 1977 to 2003 – a period which may come to be seen as a golden age – the rate dropped sharply, to 0.2 pubs a year. Since 2004, it has leapt to 1.8 a year, and since 2009 to 3.5 a year. There has been nothing like it since the dark days before the First World War, when the government instituted a drive to reduce the number of pubs and control binge drinking (not that they called it that back then). Back then, though, there were over twice as many pubs as there are today, so the loss in percentage terms was far smaller.

Between 1918 and 1939 the number of pubs in the city fell from 186 to 156. Seven more disappeared during the Second World War due to bombing. Between 1945 and 1976 a further 44 closed, of which 25 were lost to redevelopment. The list includes names many readers will still remember:

Angel Tavern, Holloway  
 Atlas Brewery, Fielding Terrace, Twerton  
 Beehive, Walcot Street  
 Bell, Gloucester Street  
 Berkeley Arms, Berkeley Street  
 Claremont Arms, George's Road, Fairfield  
 Claverton Brewery, Claverton Street  
 Coachmaker's Arms, Snow Hill  
 Crown Brewery, New Orchard Street  
 East Twerton Hotel, Lower Bristol Road  
 Edinburgh Castle, Newark Street  
 Gay's Hill Tavern, Gay's Hill  
 Globe, High Street, Weston  
 Great Western Hotel, Dorchester Street  
 Grove Tavern, Padley Bottom  
 Horse & Jockey, Beau Street  
 Jupiter, Prospect Place, Combe Down  
 King's Arms, Bailbrook  
 Kingsmead Wine Vaults, Kingsmead Street  
 Lamb, Stall Street  
 Lansdown Brewery, Lansdown Road  
 Masons' Arms, Claremont Row, Tynning Lane  
 New Inn, Southgate Street  
 New Moon, Upper Borough Walls  
 Newbridge Tavern, Lower Bristol Road  
 Old Ship, St James's Street South  
 Olivers, Southgate Street  
 Portland Arms, Portland Place  
 Queen Victoria, Hampton Row  
 Railway Inn, Charles Street  
 Retreat, Primrose Hill  
 Ring o' Bells, High Street, Twerton  
 Rising Sun, Upper Swainswick  
 River's Arms, Camden Road  
 Rose, Morford Street  
 Royal Oak, Monmouth Place  
 Royal Sailor, Wells Road  
 Seven Stars, Upper Borough Walls  
 South Pole, Dorchester Street  
 Three Blackbirds, Little Stanhope Street  
 Three Crowns, North Road, Combe Down  
 Three Cups, Walcot Street  
 White Lion, Lambridge Buildings, Larkhall  
 Young Fox, Holloway

By 1976, when Fred Pearce wrote his *Critical Guide to Bath Pubs*, the number of pubs on the city had fallen to 115 (a figure which included several new pubs opened in the interim).

Between 1977 and 2003, when I co-wrote *Bath Pubs*, a further 16 pubs closed – three of them, Broadleys (Gascoyne Place), the King William and the Royal Oak, subsequently reopened. The ones that did not reopen were:

Beaufort, Princes Street  
 Beehive, Lansdown Road  
 Beehive, Mount Road, Southdown  
 Bladud Arms, Gloucester Road



**Empire Bars, Grand Parade  
Fortts, Milsom Street  
Fullers, Broad Street  
Golden Fleece, Widcombe  
Heath Robinson, St James's Parade  
Masons Arms, North Road, Combe Down  
Railway, Wells Road  
Seven Stars, Lower Bristol Road, Twerton  
Windsor Castle, Upper Bristol Road**

During the same period, however, seven new pubs opened – the King of Wessex, the Litten Tree, the Ha Ha Bar, Lambrettas, O'Neills, the Pig & Fiddle, and the Slug & Lettuce. This represents a net loss of only six pubs. Furthermore, while most of those that closed were small, traditional pubs, those that opened were much larger – so that, while the number of pubs may have fallen, the amount of floor space available for the city's drinkers almost certainly increased.

Eight years on, however, twelve more pubs have closed in Bath, while two have become Indian restaurants. One new pub has opened – Hall & Woodhouse in Old King Street. This represents a net loss of eleven pubs – or, if you include the Indian restaurants, 13. A further 13 pubs have had their names changed, and in most cases this has been accompanied by a distinct change in style. That means that no less than 27 of Bath's pubs – over 25% – have either closed or been renamed in the last eight years. That is without including several pubs which have become gastropubs without changing their name.

At the time of writing, at least two more pubs in the city are currently closed, with the leases of several others on the market. Although nobody can know for sure what the future holds, a quick survey of what has happened to Bath's pubs over the last eight years gives an indication as to what we can expect.

## PUBS CLOSED 2003-2010

### 2006

**NEW BURNT HOUSE**, Wellsway

Originally an eighteenth-century farmhouse; opened as a beerhouse around 1870. Demolished after closure to build flats.

**ROUNDHOUSE**, Stall Street

Opened as a wine merchants in 1809 but operating as a pub by the mid-nineteenth century. Rebuilt in 1897. Now a Pret a Manger.

### 2007

**DARK HORSE**, Northampton Street

Opened in the 1830s, occupying the ground floor of a very desirable Georgian townhouse, which it has now reverted to.

### 2008

**ENGLISHCOMBE INN**, Englishcombe Lane

Massive estate pub, opened in 1934 to serve new suburbs. Converted to a care home.

**JUBILEE**, Whiteway Hill, Twerton

Opened in 1888, incorporating a small beerhouse called the Whiteway House, and renamed in honour of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. A large pub with a large car park on the edge of the city, with views over open countryside, the site looks set to be covered by housing.

## Captions

Four Bath pubs that disappeared in the 1960s:

1. The Newbridge Inn on the Lower Bristol Road, demolished for road widening.
2. The Queen Victoria on Hampton Row, closed to make way for a road that never got built and now a private house.
3. The Royal Sailor on the Wells Road, demolished for road improvements.
4. The South Pole in Dorchester Street, knocked down to make way for Southgate.

Two later casualties:

5. The Railway on Wells Road, converted to flats
6. The Beehive at Mount Road, now a surgery.
7. The New Burnt House, closed in 2006 and demolished.
8. The Roundhouse, closed in 2006 and now Pret a Manger.
9. The Dark Horse in Northampton Street, closed in 2007 and now a private house.
10. The Englishcombe Inn, closed in 2008 for conversion to a care home.
11. The Jubilee on Whiteway Hill, closed in 2008 and still boarded up.
12. The Castle in Bathwick, closed in 2009 for conversion to housing.
13. Filos, closed in 2009 and now a restaurant.
14. The Porter Butt, closed in 2009 and now Richer Sounds.

## 2009

**BRAINS SURGERY**, Dafford Street, Larkhall.

Opened as a beerhouse called the Royal Oak c1841; rebuilt c1898; renamed the Brains Surgery after being acquired by Brains Brewery. Popular suburban local. Now being converted to student accommodation.

**CASTLE**, Forester Road, Bathwick

Opened before 1841, rebuilt in 1898. The cause of some embarrassment when the local Conservative parliamentary candidate supported a campaign to stop it being turned into housing. He had his photograph taken outside it with a CAMRA representative, which duly appeared in a leaflet distributed throughout Bath by the local Conservative party. Shortly afterwards, Conservative councillors gave the go ahead for change of use.

**FILOS**, Beaufort West, London Road

Opened as the First Inn Last Out c1900, having previously been a beerhouse. Converted to a restaurant called 1 Beaufort.

**PORTER BUTT**, London Road

One of Bath's oldest pubs, the Porter Butt was first recorded in 1787 but was almost certainly much older. It was a coaching inn, with large stables at the back which were later used as a depot for Bath's horse trams. In the 1830s, it was listed among the city's principal inns, with a daily service to Bristol. Latterly, it was well known for gigs and other events, held in the large 'Walcot Palais' at the back. After closure it was taken over by squatters who revived gigs for a time, but now, after total refurbishment, it is home to recorded music as a Richer Sounds store.

## 2010

**HORSESHOE**, North Road, Combe Down

Opened as a beerhouse, probably in the 1840s. Originally had a smithy at the back, hence its name. Despite an offer being made from a company wanting to run it as a pub, this was rejected and it was acquired by a businessman who has applied – so far unsuccessfully – to convert it to residential accommodation.

**LONG ACRE TAVERN**, London Road

Opened in the 1840s and rebuilt in the 1960s, the Long Acre Tavern made it to the appendix of the CAMRA National Inventory because its 1960s fittings had not been altered. Now a Domino's Pizza outlet.

**ROSE & LAUREL**, Rush Hill

Opened in 1884 – or possibly earlier – in a row of old cottages.

The two pubs that are now Indian restaurants are the Crown & Anchor at Weston (c1833) and the Fairfield Arms (1888) on Fairfield Park Road – now the Shaad and the Haldi Tandoori respectively. Part of the Fairfield Arms still operates as a pub, however, and is used by locals.

## PUB RENAMINGS 2003-2010

Of the 13 name changes, some have been good news for Bath's drinkers. The Barley on Bathwick Street is now the Barley Mow – a reversion to its original name, and an affirmation of its new landlords' commitment to running it as a traditional pub.

When Jill Forsey and Tim Perry took over Hatchett's in Quiet Street in 2004, they renamed it the Raven, after an old inn that once stood nearby, and to underline their determination to making it one of the best traditional real ale pubs in town. A year later it was voted local CAMRA Pub of the Year, and in 2010 received the award of City Pub of the Year.

Two renamings proved controversial. The Hat & Feather on London Street, one of the city's most iconic pubs, with a name that has probably been in use for over 350 years – was renamed the Hudson Bar & Grill in 2004 after conversion to a gastropub.

More recently, local residents were up in arms about the Belvoir Castle on the Lower Bristol Road becoming the Victoria Works, a name which recalls the Stothert & Pitt works which stood nearby. The revamped pub has a themed Bath Rugby room with a 3D TV, and aims to establish itself as a popular meeting place for sports fans.

Another traditional pub which has become a gastropub is the Forester's Arms at Combe Down, now renamed the Forester & Flower. Down in the city, the Rummer on Newmarket Row has become the Real Italian Bar & Kitchen (with a colour scheme dominated by pink), while the Bath Tap at 19 St James's Parade, once one of Bath's top gay pubs, has become the 19th House, 'a contemporary bar and restaurant that offers a variety of freshly prepared British cuisine'. Smith Bros in Westgate Buildings has seen several changes of name. After becoming a gay bar called DYMK, it was renamed the Cork & Bottle and is now the Cork – 'one of Bath finest drinking establishments with a wide range of wines'.

Other changes of name have not been accompanied by a major change in direction. These include the Delfter Krug on the Sawclose (now the Market Bar); the Litten Tree in Milsom Street (now the Beau Nash); the

(Continued overleaf)

# Bath's disappearing pubs

(Continued from previous page)



Midland Hotel on James Street West (now the Metropolitan); the Rat & Parrot on Westgate Street (now the Westgate); and St Christopher's Inn in Green Street (now Belushi's).

Some pubs that have had a change of name have nevertheless seen major changes. The Chequers on Rivers Street and the Marlborough Tavern on Marlborough Buildings are now gastropubs; the Garrick's Head in the Sawclose and the King William have also become gastropubs, but here a genuine commitment to real ale by Charlie and Amanda Digney have seen both pubs included in the Good Beer Guide. Two other pubs that have flourished as real-ale pubs since being taken over by new landlords are the excellent White Horse in Twerton and the Griffin on Monmouth Street.

The increase in the number of really first-rate real-ale pubs in Bath is indeed something to celebrate at a time when there is little other good news on the pub front. If the number of closures continues at the same rate as that of the past two years, there will be no pubs left in 30 years time. While trade in the city centre remains relatively buoyant, out of town the speed of change is alarming. On the London Road, three out of five pubs have closed. Of the four pubs in the Julian Road area – all traditional boozers eight years ago – two have become gastropubs and one has closed. Of four pubs in the village of Combe Down, one has shut and one is a gastropub. Rush Hill has lost its only pub – a busy, popular local eight years ago – while three pubs on the southern edge of the city have also gone.

Bath, of course, is not alone. A similar litany could almost certainly be compiled for every town and city in the country. It is not just the future of our pubs that is at stake, serious though that threat is; it is the future of our communities, of community values, of tradition, of heritage – and of an institution unique to this country, an institution foreigners are rightly envious of, but one that is now in real danger of disappearing forever – the local pub.

Andrew Swift

## CAPTIONS

15. The Long Acre Tavern, closed in 2010 and now Dominos Pizzas.

16. The Rose & Laurel, closed in 2010.

17. The Crown & Anchor in Weston, now the Shaad restaurant.

18. The Fairfield Arms, now the Haldi Tandoori.

19. The Barley on Bathwick Street has now reverted to its original name – the Barley Mow.

20. The Raven – formerly Hatchett's and before that the Quiet Street Wine Vaults.

21. The Hat & Feather – now the Hudson Bar.

22. The Foresters' Arms has been rebranded the Forester & Flower.

23. The King William – a gastropub with a commitment to real ale.

24. The Griffin on Monmouth Street, seen here in the 1960s – now a popular real-ale pub with a range of local beers.

## Cotswold Spring news

Firstly, Cotswold Spring has announced the beers they are looking to send to the Bristol Beer Festival this year.

○ **Mad March Hare** – a hoppy, light amber seasonal which has not been brewed for a number of years.

○ **Blonde** – a brew which is not normally available, as it is brewed for an individual client (one for the tickers).

Next other news. Cotswold Spring are to change their bottle sizes from 330ml to 500ml soon – currently there are the following in stock at the brewery shop in 330ml bottles: Apricot Harvest, Codger, Gloucestershire Glory, Old English Rose and Royal. During the winter/spring period successful beer swaps were arranged with the Tring brewery and Oxfordshire Ales, and both Honey Bear and Old Sodbury Mild reached the SIBA national/regional finals.

Future plans include a possible expansion to the brewery, an addition of two fermenting vessels and adding new and improved lagging to the existing equipment.

Finally, Nic Milo, the brewer, tells me there is a brewing slot in the April calendar where he hopes to brew a wheat beer, possibly using buck wheat from Britney, New Zealand hops, a Munich wheat beer yeast (already purchased), and adding extra orange, lemon and coriander for flavouring. Sound interesting!

Steve Matthews



# Bristol Cider Shop

Bristol now has a new shop dedicated to cider. Opened in December on Christmas Steps by business partners Pete Snowman and Nick Davis, the Bristol Cider Shop stocks over 50 varieties of draught and bottled cider and perry, plus a wide range of cider-related products including cider brandy, chutneys, vinegars, hampers, books, t-shirts and cider-making kits.

The draught cider is dispensed from polypins lined up at the back of the shop. There is a rolling selection about six of these at any one time. Any amount can be purchased from a pint upwards (bring your own containers or purchase them in the shop), even the whole polypin.

The ciders stocked come from farms in Somerset, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and South Wales, and are all made from 100% juice (so no White Lightning here!). They say the range will be constantly evolving depending on what's in season and what customers want. They are always on the lookout for new ciders and would be very happy to hear from customers with any suggestions.

SP

# Which way now for the Seven Ways?

In 2010 the Seven Ways in New Street, St Judes was acquired by Dickson Properties Ltd from Greene & Co selling agents after it closed sometime around 2006. An information board on the building asked local residents and other interested parties for their initial views about converting the pub into one-, two- and three-bedroom flats, by retaining the building frontage and building modern extensions behind the façade. They describe the design as contemporary which complements the existing building and would help in regenerating the area, however it should be noted that the original building was on two stories and the flats development is on three stories, so the pub façade would be overshadowed in terms of scale.

The Seven Ways was an Usher's pub serving as an established community facility for the St Judes area but closed for reasons that are unknown. Recent correspondence with the developer by CAMRA's Bristol Pubs Group regarding a possible future re-opening of the pub was met by a less than enthusiastic response where they did not want to consider the idea. This is despite the fact that the nearby Phoenix pub has recently successfully re-opened, that there are many student flats and social housing properties, a new Futures Inn hotel, Cabot Circus, and the Old Market gay village all close by.

The recent re-opening of the Phoenix should not affect the viability of the Seven Ways too much as it is only a small pub but the most important factors here are beer tax, high lease charges by pub companies, subsidised beer in supermarkets and whether a pub is well run or not. If a pub has a good range of beers and can provide good food and music or community events then it stands a much better chance. In many ways pubs complement each other as they link communities together as with Old Market due to choice. Additionally if pubs could be promoted in student guides, Rail-Ale and cycling leaflets this might generate additional custom from outside of the local community.

If you would like to give Dickson Properties your own view on what they should do with their property then you could contact them via the Pegasus Planning Group on 0117 9464710 or by email at danweaver@pegasuspug.co.uk. You may want to point out the importance of community pubs for social interaction and community cohesion, a fact that has been recognised by the government, and suggest that there might be an over provision of flats in the area already as well as a lack of community facilities. You could also contact the local councillors for the area, the local MP and the Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill community partnership at Bristol City Council.

Ian Beckey

## Solution to the crossword on page 16

Across: 1 Cellar, 4 Pottholer, 10 Inanely, 11 Empires, 12 Nailsworth, 13 Fiat, 15 Organic, 17 Rubbish, 19 Milkshope, 21 Sachet, 23 Burn, 24 Tanglefoot, 27 In haven, 28 Nibbles, 29 Darkside, 30 Stumps. Down: 1 Catnigorm, 2 Leading, 3 Averseness, 5 Overtures, 6 Hops, 7 Lorelei, 8 Rest, 9 Typo, 14 A butter bar, 16 Captained, 18 Halloists, 20 Lurcher, 22 Hoodlum, 23 Blind, 25 Gins, 26 Eves.

# News from Dawkins

There will be a 'LocAle Fest' at one of the Dawkins pubs, the **Green Man** in Kingsdown, from 24th to 28th March, which will include a street party on Saturday 26th. There will be 25 locally-made real ales and ciders and a day of activities on Alfred Place, with music, food, tastings, stalls from our brewery, local residents and Kingsdown traders.

Another Dawkins pub, the **Miner's Arms** in St Werburghs, will be the venue for the Mild Trail launch on 21st April, featuring milds across their pubs including three brewed by Dawkins (drinkers collect stamps in a passport to exchange for prizes).

The **Victoria** in Clifton is the venue for another St George's Beer Festival, from 21st to 25th April. This will be Dawkins' fifth Patron Saint's festival with over twenty English ales and ciders.

I suppose it had to happen – the royal wedding will be the excuse for a Will & Kate Beer Festival from 28th April to 2nd May at the **Portcullis** in Clifton. Glen Dawkins commented: "Possibly cheesy! Over twenty regal beers."

## Dawkins beer news

The brewery will be doing at least one special a month. Coming up are *Somerstout*, a 4.1% creamy oatmeal stout (March); *B'Eire*, a 4.2% Irish red style beer for St Patrick's (March); *Dragonslayer* for St George's Day in April, a 5% rich, strong copper coloured ESB.

There will be three milds produced for May: *Milkmaid Mild*, a soft, creamy dark mild at the new lower-taxed 2.8% strength; *Ingot*, a rare 3.5% golden mild; and *Miners Morris Mild*, 3.8%, lightly spiced with coriander.

In addition to the specials, they will be doing very small batches of one-off beers under the 'Dawkins Bespoke' banner, just for special events at their pubs, starting with *Welsh Malt Whisky* and *Irish Whiskey* ales (for St David's and St Pat's).

SP

## DAWKINS ALES

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Alfred Place, Kingsdown, BS2 8HD 9304824 CAMRA GOOD BEER GUIDE 2011

**Mild Trail Launch Night 21 April: The Miner's Arms**

CAMRA GOOD BEER GUIDE 2011 Mina Road, St Werburghs, BS2 9YQ 9079874

**St George's Beer Festival 21-25 April: The Victoria**

Southleigh Rd, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2BH 9745675 VENUE BRISTOL PUB OF YEAR 2009-10

**Will & Kate Beer Festival 28 Apr-2 May: The Portcullis**

Wellington Ter, Clifton Village, BS8 4LE 9085536 CAMRA BRISTOL PUB OF YEAR 2010 RUNNER UP

**Ten Real Ales, two real ciders every day: The Hillgrove**

Dove St, Kingsdown, BS2 8LT 9249818 CAMRA BRISTOL PUB OF THE YEAR 2007 GBG 2011

# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

Pub and brewery news from the CAMRA Bath & Borders branch

## BATH and SURROUNDING VILLAGES



The Belvedere on Lansdown

### **Belvedere Wine Vaults, 25 Belvedere, Lansdown, Bath**

At the time of writing (mid-February) this pub was reported closed.

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

This pub closed permanently last year and is now being converted into student accommodation.

### **Grappa Wine Bar, 3 Belvedere, Lansdown, Bath**

The lease on this wine bar, formerly a cider house called the Beehive, is on the market.

### **Former Harvester at Lambridge, Bath**

National firm Crosby Lend Lease has reduced the number of homes it wants to build on the site of the former Harvester at Lambridge on the eastern outskirts of Bath from 68 to 46. Crosby bought the Harvester site towards the end of 2007 after the previous plans to build a nursing home there were rejected. The firm applied to demolish the pub and put up 68 homes in 2008 but withdrew the scheme two months later. It has now submitted a new application to build 46 homes. There would be two blocks of apartments at the site, where the pub closed in 2007, and which has been vandalised in recent times.



The Horseshoe at Combe Down after closure

### **Horseshoe, 124 North Road, Combe Down, Bath**

Bath firm Elysan has cut the number of flats that it wishes to create out of the currently closed

Horseshoe from five to four. A first application had been turned down because of issues to do with the listed status of the building. The developer has submitted a new application for the pub, which his firm bought last year, arguing that there's a need for first-time buyer accommodation in the Combe Down area. The latest plans, which are being opposed by the pressure group Bath Heritage Watchdog, are for four flats which the developer says means that the former pub's front doors and entrance porch can be retained and a staircase re-instated to its original position. The Horseshoe, which has been a pub since around 1875, closed at the beginning of August 2010 after being on the market for around four months.

### **Longacre Tavern, Long Acre, London Road, Bath**

This unspoilt example of a sixties-design pub closed in 2009. We believe that shortly after closure the freehold on this pub was sold. It has now been converted into a Domino's Pizza emporium.



The Longacre Tavern – now Domino's Pizzas

### **New Westhall, Westhall Buildings, Upper Bristol Road, Bath**

The lease on this pub, situated around a mile from the city centre, is up for sale by Melrose.

### **Northend Inn, 41 Northend, Batheaston**

This pub closed for the second time in as many years in September 2010. In the meantime a second planning application has been submitted by owner and former landlord Sally Gray for conversion to private use. Her first application to turn the pub into a private house was rejected following a strong campaign by local residents. The Northend re-opened in around November 2009. The freehold of the pub was then placed on the market in February 2010 for the eye-watering price, even by Bath standards, of £600,000. Christie & Co were the selling agents. There is once again a strong campaign from the local community fighting the new application. Even local property agents James A Baker have effectively stepped into the fray on the side of the objectors, stating that the pub was clearly overvalued. Meanwhile the community is making up for the loss of its pub by holding The Northend Out, regular evenings of live music, drinks (including real ale) and fun, at the local church hall.



New Westhall

### **O'Neill's Irish Bar, 1 Barton Street, Bath**

A name change here: O'Neill's Irish bar, situated near the Theatre Royal, has recently become Molloy's.

### **Ye Old Farmhouse, 1 Lansdown Road, Bath**

The lease on this Wadworth-owned pub, a regular spot for live jazz and an outlet for the next-door Abbey Ales brewery, is up for sale.

### **Rose & Crown, Larkhall, Bath**

This Wadworth-owned pub on the eastern outskirts of Bath closed on Saturday 22 January. The future of this pub is uncertain.



The Rose & Crown in Larkhall

### **Victoria Works, formerly Belvoir Castle, 32-33 Victoria Buildings, Bath**

In recent years this pub, which is situated on the Lower Bristol Road around half a mile out from the city centre, has seen a number of changes of landlord, a complete refurbishment and a name change. Following a recent period of closure it re-opened on 14 January. The new landlords seem to be aiming for a young market.



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# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

## EAST SOMERSET

### Inn at Freshford

There has been a change of management at this handsome old pub, picturesquely situated near the confluence of the rivers Frome and Avon, with both new landlord and new staff taking over towards the end of

2010. This pub, along with the Cross Guns at nearby Avoncliff, forms what is in effect the estate of Box Steam Brewery.

### Viaduct Inn, Monkton Combe, near Bath

This pub, located just off the A36 at the bottom of Brassknocker Hill, closed in around October 2005. In June 2006 planning consent was given for the conversion of the pub and an associated out-building into nine residential units. The development was underway by October 2007 but has never been properly completed. We understand that the former pub is being sold again but at the time of writing, mid-February 2011, could find no details.

The Inn at Freshford

### Farrington Inn, Bristol Road, Farrington Gurney

This pub has recently closed. It is understood that the landlord is still living on the premises.

### Lamb, 1 Christchurch Street East, Frome

This pub, which following a major renovation by the local Blindman's brewery re-opened as a modern-style pub with accommodation in early 2008, has recently been sold to the Penguin Dining Company.

### Farmers Arms, Spring Gardens, Frome

This pub, situated on the very northern edge of Frome, seems to have opened and closed on a number of occasions in the past few years. It closed again towards the end of last year. A board outside the pub is advertising the lease.

### Fir Tree Inn, 140 Frome Road, Radstock

This large roadside pub on the eastern edge of town remains closed. A planning application has been submitted for change of use.

### Tynning Inn, Walnut Buildings, Radstock

The lease is up for sale on this pub. It is understood that at least one person is interested in taking the Tynnings on as a pub.

### Ship, Oldford, near Frome

This long-closed pub has become a permanent loss. A sign outside the pub says that it is due to open soon as the Bay Leaf, a Taste of India restaurant. The Ship first closed in mid-2008. It was then refurbished and re-opened in December of that year, but this one attempt to revive its fortunes failed and the pub closed for a second time in January 2009. The freehold was placed on the market shortly afterwards but only seems to have sold quite recently.

### Somerset Arms, Paulton, near Radstock

This pub has recently closed. Its future is uncertain.

### Sun, Whatley, near Frome

This once popular food-orientated pub closed several years ago. The current owner has tried to market the premises as a pub but was unsuccessful. A planning application to convert the pub to a private residence has been granted.

## WEST WILTSHIRE

### Plough, Bradford Leigh, near Bradford-on-Avon

The freehold of this pub is on the market for £749,995. The selling agents are Meridian Business Sales.

### Bear, 26 Silver Street, Bradford-on-Avon

This long-closed pub should be re-opened by the time of publication. The former Usher's town-centre pub had been acquired by Blindman's brewery and, over the last year, a major refurbishment of the building has been underway. During that time the lease has been sold on.

### King's Head, Chitterne, near Warminster

The pub is technically in the Salisbury CAMRA branch area but only a little beyond the boundary of the Bath & Borders branch. The King's Head is the only pub in the isolated village of Chitterne on Salisbury Plain. Following a long period of closure a major refurbishment last year seemed to beckon a promising future for the pub, but since then it has closed again and is on the market for £195,000.

### Lamb at Tinhead, re-named Paulet Arms, Edington, near Westbury

The lamb has recently re-opened and has been re-named the Paulet Arms. It closed in July 2009 and, following a huge renovation project, the pub has re-opened. The Lamb at Tinhead was one of four public houses in the village, the others being the George, the White Horse and the Plough. Now it is the only survivor. The Lamb's original owners were the manorial Lords of Bayton. It is thought that the pub got its name from the wool trade as the inn served as an overnight resting place for shepherds. The name was probably changed to the Paulet Arms in the 1750s only to be changed back some time later. At that time the village was a prominent resting place on the turnpike road from Bath to Salisbury. The ascent up to Salisbury Plain required a change of horses to pull the coaches up the steep slope. Around 1750 the enterprising Lord of Edington Manor, Harry Paulet, saw a business opportunity to

(Continued overleaf)



The Bear at Bradford on Avon



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# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

(Continued from previous page)

expand the Lamb to a coaching inn for this purpose. By 1780, however, this part of the coaching road fell into use and Tinhead's glory as a busy turnpike village ended.



The Longs Arms at South Wraxall

## Longs Arms, South Wraxall, near Bradford-on-Avon

This Wadworth-owned pub is currently closed following the departure of the previous landlady Jacqui Prior on Tuesday 4 January. The pub is to undergo renovation in advance of new tenants moving in.

## Plain Ales Brewery, 17c Deverill Trading Estate, Sutton Veny

We understand that this still fairly new, but already successful micro-brewery is planning to expand and take on extra staff. Plain Ales started out on a very small scale in the isolated village of Chitterne in 2008. Around a year ago it moved to its current site and greatly expanded production. The brewery serves around 150 pubs direct. A feature of its beers is that the beer names are all prefixed by the syllable Inn: such as Innocence, Innspiration, etc.

## Rose & Crown, 36 Stallard Street, Trowbridge

This pub has been closed for around three years. Shortly after closure it was acquired by local developer Thomas Rothschild and has subsequently been the subject of two planning applications to demolish the rear toilets and two-storey garage block at the back of the pub

and erect new single-storey toilets and a three-storey bedroom block. The first application was refused as the rear buildings are considered to be within the curtilage of the Grade II-listed pub. The outcome of the second application is as yet unknown. Meanwhile we gather that a local landlord has recently put in an offer on the pub.



The Rose & Crown at Trowbridge

## White Lion, Market Place, Westbury

This pub closed on or around Boxing Day last year and is up for sale by Christie and Co. All offers were to be considered with a preferred closing date of 24 January.

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

The landlord of this village centre pub has set up a small scale brewery called Devilfish. Some few experimental beers have recently been available on sale at the pub. The landlord is, however, already widening his horizons and is planning to move into larger premises and gear up to a five-barrel sized operation.

Steve Hunt (photos Andrew Swift)

## Blindmans Brewery concentrating on what they do best

It is a brave company which decides to do a u-turn on a previously made decision. Blindmans Brewery has made that brave decision, and has got out of the pub trade. It is not just because the pub trade is going through difficult times. Although they have learnt a great deal from their venture into the hospitality business, it was, says head brewer Paul Edney, simply stretching their capabilities too far. The brewery is a small company which produces an astonishing amount of beer, and trying to run pubs as well just took up too much of their time, especially as the beer business has been flourishing.

So the Lamb at Frome has been sold, and is again open for business. A report on the *beerintheevening* web site has already given it the thumbs up. Although it says there were only three real ales on at the moment, it looks likely that this will increase as spring and summer wear on. The new owners also plan a refurbishment in a few weeks time.

The Bear at Bradford on Avon has just opened, and here again, Blindmans Brewery has withdrawn from its involvement. The only beer so far seen on the bar is Wadworth's 6X but hopefully other guest ales will soon appear.

This leaves the brewery able to concentrate on what they do best – brewing beer. It also means that Paul and Lloyd can go further with their plan to produce bottled beer, for which they have had many requests from farm shops in the area. Work is already far advanced on this project. I'm certainly looking forward to being able to take some Blindmans beer home with me.

However, they are not quite out of the hospitality business – they may run bars at events such as weddings.

Meanwhile, the Bath and Borders branch of CAMRA has put forward Icarus as their beer choice for the Great British Beer Festival on behalf of Blindmans. Let's hope it is selected, and that it does well. It is a traditional beer – no fancy ingredients but a rich colour and full of flavour.

Kirsten Elliott

## Bath & Borders diary

• For details of branch activities, contact Denis Rahilly below.

## 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.

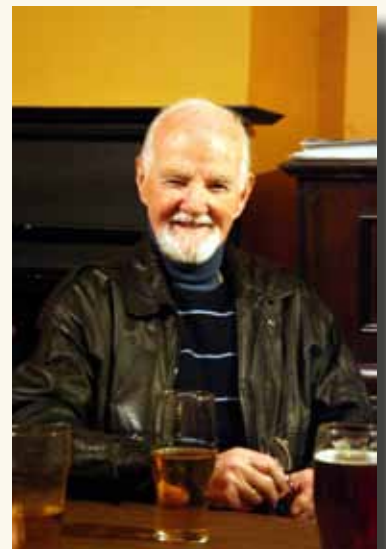
## Frank's Last Stand

On February 16th a very special Irish music night was held at the Royal Oak in Bath as part of the pub's established winter beer festival. Since the pub reopened in 2005, Frank McGarry has become a familiar face and a stalwart of the fortnightly Irish nights. Frank was a real character, one of those people who had a rare gift of being able to get on with anyone and, even into his eighties, still able to demonstrate to youngsters his remarkable trademark 'table stand' – like a horizontal handstand on the edge of a pub table.

Sadly, he passed away last November and, to commemorate his life, Frank's family commissioned Becky and John at Art Brew to produce a one-off brew, with a brief that it had to be "something that Frank would have approved of". The result was 'Frank's Last Stand', a rich strong 5.8% beer evolved from Dark Brut. The beer was offered to musicians and friends at this special tribute evening, with some remaining barrels from this limited-order brew retained for sale at the Royal Oak, with one or two maybe appearing at selected outlets up country.

Here's to Frank!

Alan Reynolds





# Watering Holes in the Desert

brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

## Pub News

The **Captain's Cabin**, one of Weston's oldest pubs and one of the few in the town with some character to it, seems to be on borrowed time. The owner of the nearby Royal Hotel site is proposing a major redevelopment of the area, including the Captain's Cabin site. On the face of it, it could be argued that this will bring a welcome investment in an area of town badly in need of rejuvenation – the proposals include 63 apartments, shops, cafes, information centre, a museum and a 43-bedroom "boutique hotel." The developer says that a new Captain's Cabin will be built on the ground floor of the apartment block, but it clearly won't be anything like the current pub. Locals also question the need for a new hotel when others in town have been closing at a rate of knots in recent years. Grandiose plans for developments in Weston that come to nought are ten-a-penny, so I suspect this story may not yet have run its course.

Richard Westlake was surprised to read in the last Pints West that he is "the new management" at the **Parish Pump** in Worle. Richard, the licensee, has informed us that, "I have been here almost nine years and will hopefully be here for a further nine years." We are happy to correct this error and to encourage you to try the good range of ales on offer.

Re-opening dates are awaited for the **Lloyds No 1** (ex Cabot Bars) and the the **Imperial** which has been under-going a major refurbishment.

The **Waverley** has recently been taken over by Paul Sprackman who also runs the Good Beer Guide-listed **Criterion**.

The Weston CAMRA sub-branch recently ran a very successful bus trip visiting the **Crown** at Churchill, the **Wookey Hole Inn** and the three pubs in (lucky) Priddy – the **Hunters Lodge**, **New Inn** and **Queen Victoria**. Due to the success of this, we will be running further trips from Weston over the course of the year. The next will be on Friday 8th April. This will visit the Good Beer Guide-listed **Windmill** at Portishead and **Black Horse** Clapton in Gordano, the **Old Barn** and **Battleaxes**, both in Wraxall and finishing at the **Blue Flame** Nailsea. Tickets are £7. The bus will leave from Off The Rails, Weston station, at 6.45 and return there at 11.00. You can book your place by contacting Tim Nickolls, details below.

Tim Nickolls

## Weston diary

- **Thursday 10 March** – Joint Bristol city centre social with Bristol & District Rare Ales Group (BADRAG). Seven Stars 7.00, Bridge 8.15, Cornubia 9.30. Trains from WSM at 1839 or 1910. Trains back at 2156 or 2315.
- **Wednesday 16 March** – CAMRA's 40th Birthday social at the Re-gency, Upper Church Road. 8.00 onwards.
- **Friday 18, Saturday 19 March** – Bristol Beer Festival.
- **Friday 8 April** – Minibus trip. Visiting Windmill, Portishead; Black Horse, Clapton in Gordano; Barn and Battleaxes, Wraxall; and Blue Flame, Nailsea. Depart Off The Rails 6.45. Back at Off The Rails 11.00. Cost £7 in advance to Tim Nickolls.
- **Friday 22 April** – Robin's Good Friday Saunter. A tour of Weston's best drinking holes led by Robin E Wild. Commencing midday. Further details to be confirmed nearer the time.
- **Friday 20 May** – 3-pub town social. Commence the Captains Cabin 8.00 (subject to it not having been demolished by then), Claremont 8.45, Raglan 9.30. Timings approximate.

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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# Steel yourself for Sheffield

With the national CAMRA Members' Weekend and AGM due to take place in Sheffield this April (15th to 17th), this seemed a good opportunity to give an account of the most recent annual Weston CAMRA trip to foreign fields, which just happened to be to Sheffield. The choice of destination was partly fuelled by a survey last summer that reported that at any one time there are around 240 different real ales available in the city.



The Sheffield Tap

Travel was surprisingly reasonable, with return rail travel from Weston costing £38. We left Weston at 9.30 on a wet Thursday November morning and arrived in Sheffield at around 1.45. Naturally we were keen to sample our first beer and before leaving the station we were confronted by a large sign advertising the **Sheffield Tap** on platform one. This is an impressive Grade 2 listed building, previously known as "The Edwardian Refreshment Room and Dining Rooms of Sheffield Station." It was saved from dereliction in 2008 and is now a self-styled "World Beer Freehouse." They have no formal ties with any brewery but a regular selection of five or six beers from the Thornbridge brewery are supplemented by a similar number from other breweries. At the time of our visit beers from Brewdog and Dark Star sat alongside the Thornbridge beers – three of the very best breweries in the UK. The pick of the mouth-watering selection that we sampled were the Thornbridge Halcyon Green Hopped IPA (weighing in at 7.7% ABV) and Brewdog Paradox, at a mighty 10% ABV. The Sheffield Tap is probably the only pub I have visited in the UK that has an upcoming guest beer board dedicated to keg beers. These are all great choices from around the world.

Dragging ourselves out of the Tap, we caught a tram to the **Hillsborough Hotel** about 15 minutes away. The Hillsborough is a very reasonably priced hotel (£25 a night for B&B) which is a Good Beer Guide (GBG) entry and is the home of the Crown brewery. After dropping our bags and a quick half of Crown Benny Goodman, we were off. A 10-minute walk in the direction of the city centre took us to the **Wellington**. GBG-listed (one of 26 listed pubs in the city), the "Bottom Wellie" is a typical northern street-corner pub – friendly, with bags of character and characters. It has been a pub since being built in 1842. It survived being a victim of Whitbread's "Tour of Destruction" in the sixties and is now the Little Ale Cart brewery tap. There were four Little Ale Cart beers, plus six guests. I had a superbly hoppy Little Ale Cart Norna at 4% ABV and only £1.90 a pint. Not for the first or last time during the trip I came across breweries that I had never heard of. Here I had a great pint of Walsingham Annesley Runner Stout, Walsingham being a brewery not listed in the current GBG. Another common feature of pubs in Sheffield is the range of foreign beers on offer – here the Wellie had 12 Belgian bottled beers to choose from.

Another 10-minute walk took us to the Kelham Island area. We entered the **Kelham Island Tavern** with eager anticipation, the pub having been CAMRA's National Pub of the Year in 2009 and 2010. Unsurprisingly, we weren't to be disappointed. The pub has been very tastefully

decorated since being rescued from dereliction in 2002 and reminded me of some Belgian and German bars that I have visited. A wide and superb beer choice. I had Sheffield Porter, White Rose Dark Knight (£2.30 a pint) and one of my beers of the weekend – Brunswick Black Sabbath, 6% ABV and accurately described in the GBG as "*A genuine mild, with a voluptuous feast of coffee, chocolate and caramel flavours.*" A very special pub.

About 30 seconds walk away is the **Fat Cat**. Among the beer delights sampled here were Kelham Island Life On Mars and the best beer name of the weekend – Texas Frogspawn Massacre from Doncaster's Toad brewery, which only began operations in 2010 and is going from strength to strength. We took the opportunity to eat. Some had an excellent pork and pepper casserole for a mouth and wallet-watering £4.50. Others had steak pie & veg for the same price. We noticed an ad for their Monday curry night when you can eat for £2.95!

We were stuck for directions to our last stop for the evening, the **Gardner's Rest**, so, with the lack of an available policeman, we returned to the **Wellington** to get directions. It seemed rude to take advantage of their local knowledge without making a purchase, so we enjoyed some more Norna and also Zenith, all the way from the Salamander brewery in Bradford. The Gardner's is not easy to find, being tucked away in an industrial area on Neepsend Lane, running parallel with the main A61, the two roads being split by the River Don. However, it is well worth seeking out and became one of our favourite pubs of the weekend. This is the brewery tap for the Sheffield brewery and was totally refurbished in 2009 following flooding. It is bright and clean, yet still has a warmth to it. There are signs of the owners wanting to make the pub a real part of the community and there was a good mix of people enjoying themselves. There are notice boards advertising up-coming events both in the pub and elsewhere in Sheffield. During our visit the walls were adorned with photographs from customers and other local people – exhibits from a photography competition organised by the pub. We had a few games of bar billiards (this is apparently the last table left in Sheffield), accompanied by Sheffield Summit IPA and Bonfire Mild. Aside from the Sheffield beers, there were ales from five other breweries – mainly local, but Great Heck from the new Windsor & Eton brewery ended our first day very nicely.

We thought we would start Friday with a concession to culture. Unfortunately, our enquiries at the tourist information centre revealed that the city's museum is bizarrely closed on Fridays and Saturdays. We decided that a walk in the country would blow the cobwebs away. One of the good things about Sheffield is its close proximity to some outstanding countryside. A 15-minute bus ride from our Hillsborough base took us to Low Bradfield in very hilly terrain in the Peak District. A picturesque village and you will not be shocked to hear that it has a GBG-listed pub. On a cold day there is little more appealing than seeing smoke pouring from a pub chimney and we entered the **Plough** eager for some warmth and good beer. It satisfied on both counts. The Plough is a free house and has been a pub for over 200 years. It has two rooms both very distinctive. The public bar is small and dominated by a ¾ size snooker table, leaving little room for manoeuvrability. The other bar is primarily food-orientated and was very full on our visit. We sampled Belgian Blue from the nearby Bradfield brewery (purple in colour due to the blueberries used) and Peel Hill from Doncaster's Thorne brewery. £2.10 a pint. Surprised to see Thatchers Heritage cider.

We caught the bus back to Sheffield, stopping halfway at the **Nag's Head**, Loxley – birthplace of Robin Hood. The Nag's Head is the Bradfield brewery tap and no less than five of their beers were on offer. We noticed a board advertising that it was "Pie Day Friday" – which meant that you pick any pie from a list of about 10 and any Bradfield ale for the princely sum of £5! We all enjoyed a big plateful (potatoes, three veg and loads of gravy with the pie) in front of the fire. Most of us went for Farmers Poppy Ale (we were there the day after Remembrance Day) and Farmers Stout. The latter was served too cold for our liking, but at 90p a half we couldn't really complain. Another ¾ size snooker table at the Nag's Head – presumably a local speciality.

Back in Hillsborough, we visited the **New Barrack Tavern**. Eight ales on here, plus a lengthy list of Belgians. The pub has close ties with Castle Rock brewery, but I went for very nice halves of Barnsley Bitter





The Plough

and Ollie's Army from Acorn brewery.

We were keen on visiting Dronfield, a half-hour bus journey from Sheffield across the border in Derbyshire. Part of the attraction was to visit the **Coach and Horses**, a pub with close links to Thornbridge brewery. Five of Thornbridge's excellent beers were on offer – I had very good Lord Marples and Jaipur IPA. There were beers on draught available from the USA (Sierra Nevada Brown) and Belgium (Maredsous Blond). Another attraction for some of us was that the pub adjoins Sheffield FC, the oldest football club in the world, founded in 1857. Unfortunately, by the time we arrived it was dark so all I can tell you is that Sheffield were playing Quorn on the Saturday!

Bus back to Sheffield city centre. The **Devonshire Cat** did not look too promising from the outside. With very loud music coming out, it looked like being a noisy version of Wetherspoon's. However, it proved to be another gem. The background music was annoying as this meant that people were having to shout at each other instead of just being able to talk (must be getting old), but this did not detract too much. A fantastic selection of beers and an interesting menu. A dozen real ales. I had their own Brew Company Devonshire Cat Pale Ale, which was superb. I also had Blue Monkey Original, Anglo Dutch "Cheers To 10 Years" with its heavy hints of coconut and Acorn Rivalka IPA which was one of the beers of the weekend. There was a huge menu of over 100 beers from around the world. We had not intended on moving away from the real ale, but succumbed to a bottle of a 10% Black Chocolate Stout from the Brooklyn Brewing Company, which was shared amongst us and burned on the way down.

A 10-minute walk to the **Bath Hotel**, which is on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Interiors. This means that it goes without saying that it is a fascinating pub to visit. A bonus was the five excellent ales on offer. We started with a top-quality pale Abbeydale Deception – voted beer of the festival at the last Steel City Beer Festival. This was followed by Raw Dark Peak Stout. Raw is a Derbyshire brewery that only started up in 2010, but this beer was top-notch, even when measured against the strong Brooklyn stout drunk a little earlier. We intended going back the following night for the Phoenix, Idle and Magpie beers but, sadly, this never materialised.

We retired to our hotel and had nightcaps of their own Crown brewery Brooklyn Heights (5.8% ABV and really good) and 6% ABV Black Jack Stout. Time for bed.

Saturday was bright and blustery. Our morning constitutional comprised a pleasant walk around the botanical gardens. We then caught a bus to the Western outskirts of the city. Our first stop of the day was the **Rising Sun**. In many ways I feel that this was the best pub we visited all weekend and is an object lesson for many landlords on how to run an enterprising and successful pub in these very difficult times. The pub is operated by the local Abbeydale brewery and six of their beers were available. In addition, there were seven guest cask ales. I had Daily Bread, Brimstone and Absolution from Abbeydale, then Brass Monkey Organ Grinder Stout and Anglo Dutch Jaspers Pale Ale (apricots, replacing last night's coconut in this one from AD). There were tasting notes written on each pumpclip so the customer has a reasonable idea of what they are purchasing. There was a large board explaining the pricing policy, which was very transparent, directly linking beer strength

to price. This was in six bands ranging from £2.40 for a beer between 3% and 3.9% ABV, up to £2.90 for beers at 5.7% or higher. There was a beer menu, comprising over 40 beers from Belgium and other parts of the world. Each beer had its own page in the menu, with a picture of the beer in its glass, a statement on the beer from the brewery and comments from beer guides. There were large bookcases – not filled with the usual tat, but a great range of books, with beer, sport, history and quizzes strongly featured. Next to one of the bookcases was a large pile of games. Posters around the pub advertised upcoming events, which included tutored ale tasting evenings, Belgian beer tasting evenings, themed food and beer evenings, quizzes, live music, a malt whisky and whisky sausage tasting evening. The list goes on. Throw in lunchtime and evening food, comfortable seating, a piano and the day's papers and that's about it. Pretty much the complete pub.

A 15-minute stroll (okay, I took the bus and passed the others) and we were in the **Ranmoor Inn**. A Victorian neighbourhood pub. Five ales – Bradfield Farmers Blond and Bitter, Theakston Bitter, Taylor Landlord and Abbeydale Moonshine. A short bus ride to Broomhill and we were at a pub called the **York**, which we had spotted in Sheffield CAMRS's magazine, Beer Matters. The York only re-opened as a pub last September and is gaining a good reputation locally. Comfortable and "upmarket" with the beer being expensive for Sheffield at £2.70 to £2.90. Six ales on offer (and mulled cider). We went for the Brew Company Anvil Porter and Kelham Island Pale Rider. A minute's walk and we were



The Rising Sun

in the **Fox and Duck**. This is a large, one-room pub run by Sheffield University Students Union. We hadn't eaten and the Fox doesn't do food. They are, however, relaxed about people bringing in food from outside, so we nipped across the road for a curry to bring back – washed down with Wold Top Best (£1.85 a pint) and Crown HPA. A bus into the city centre and we headed for the **Harlequin**. Another fantastic real ale emporium. Operated by the Brew Company, it offers nine ales, several of which changed during our hour's stay. I had the Brew Company Hop Monster (I'm a bit of a sucker for a beer with "hop" in the name) and Elland Fireball. Both excellent. I noticed that there were two Brew Co house beers available for an attractive £2.10.

A short walk for a flying return visit to the **Kelham Island Tavern**. This was uncomfortably packed with an early Saturday evening crowd spilling out onto the pavement, despite the cold weather. I had swift halves of Phoenix Monkeytown Mild and Sheffield Summit IPA. It goes without saying that they were in superb condition. Our party briefly split up. Some of us went back to the **Barrack** for some live music, accompanied by Castle Rock Black Gold (£2.10). We then all reconvened back at the **Gardner's Rest**, where a very fine acoustic duo were playing a bizarre mix including Velvet Underground songs! The final beers for the day were Nutbrook Dun Wokkin and Naked Brewer (true!) Palindrome Porter.

Sunday morning was a bit subdued, spent waiting for our lunchtime train back to Weston. Just time for a farewell visit to the **Sheffield Tap** for Thornbridge Lumford and Acorn Old Moor Porter.

If you are thinking of a trip to Sheffield – perhaps for the national CAMRA Members' Weekend – go. You won't be disappointed.

Tim Nickolls

# A Round with Robin

This column is not normally associated with a book review, but there are two books I have to recommend that I was given for Christmas. *Brewing for Victory* by Brian Glover (the Lutterworth Press) is an engaging, informative non-fiction book about brewers, beers and pubs in World War II. It also brings the reader up to date with what happened to pub hours from 1900 up to the beginning of the war, along with prices and taxation of beer but not cider. There are many local references to the Bristol area and some madcap military schemes for getting beer to the troops abroad. Well worth a read.

The second book is quite different: *Death, Destruction and a Packet of Peanuts* by Chris Pascoe (Portico) is a rollicking pub crawl to all the major battlefield sites of the English civil war, and the pubs near them. Immensely funny in places (and at times not dissimilar to Duncan Shine's humour), it is not so concerned with the quality of beer but a good observation of the English pub, and some drinkers therein!

At the **Regency** pub in Weston-super-Mare (WsM) I was taken to task by referring to Bass drinkers as being unadventurous, for which I apologise, but feel a paragraph about Bass is required reading for a beer that used to be so common but nowadays is becoming rarely seen and, according to the 2011 Good Beer Guide, only around 60,000 barrels were brewed in 2010. Once the pride of Burton upon Trent, Bass is now brewed for AB InBev by Marston's but at least it has retained the ABV of 4.4%. Personally I prefer Bass served "Bristol fashion", that is, straight from the barrel with little or no head, which is not how the 1920's adverts displayed it as with a foaming head.

Whilst on the subject of the Regency, I must point out that there have been some changes to the beer range here with a mini beer festival of eight or so guest ales every last weekend of the month at £2.75 a pint, until further notice. Also soon, Courage Directors will be replacing Courage Best by popular demand.

This beer is also available at the **Criterion** in WsM, served straight from the barrel, and recently St Austell Proper Job IPA has become fairly regular as has Theakston's Old Peculier.

Over the road at the **Raglan Arms** after a few changes of cellar and managerial staff, Miles is now at the helm, and is keeping the discount of 50p a pint off real ales for card-carrying CAMRA members until further notice. Basically this works out at £2.20 a pint which ain't half bad and cheaper than the Wetherspoon's Dragon. As I write RCH beers dominate here, with Doom Bar and Greene King IPA as guests but soon Miles intends that O'Hanlon's beers will major here.

The **Red Admiral** keeps its prices pre-VAT rise to end of March, but although the **White Hart** has put the VAT rise on drinks the real ale is still only £2.60.

I have done a map of central and west Weston-super-Mare showing the real ale outlets, and if anyone needs it they can get it from me by emailing me at [robin-e-wild@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:robin-e-wild@hotmail.co.uk) (but I apologise that I'm not prepared to send it by post).

I was having a quiet drink in the **Three Tuns** near College Green in Bristol the other day when landlord Ned suggested I visit the **Ship** in Park Row, as it seems to have slipped the attention of Pints West in recent times. On my way there, I popped into the **Gryphon** opposite Zed Alley in Colston Street. There was an article in Pints West about this "heavy metal" pub, which might have put me off, but I was pleasantly surprised to find the music not too loud and not too heavy and I enjoyed a pint of Bath Ales Festivity (5%) for £2.40. I liked the feel of the place and the Gothic wall stencils that put me in mind of a pub in Bruges, or even the Hobgoblin at Bath. Other beers that were on included the Titanic Captain Smith.

Just around the corner is the **Ship**, which I'd not been to since it was a Theakston's pub, but Ben the landlord told me that he's been selling real ale now for two years. Though being an Enterprise inn, he manages to get the most interesting beers he can off their list, and when I was there he had three from Caledonian and Robinson's Unicorn. I had halves of Rabbie Burns Amber Ale (3.5%) and Double Dark (4.6%), and both were of good quality, and the pub was buzzing with a good age range of people.

My fellow drinker Tim from WsM is planning to write about our trip to Sheffield, so I will only mention one pub there that he didn't go to. It was purely by chance that I found this pub, as I was visiting the

Greystones area of Sheffield where my grandparents used to live until the late 1920's. Having found Greystones Hall and photographed it and other Victorian buildings, I was looking for a bus stop when I came across a pub called **Greystones**, only opened two weeks earlier as a Thornbridge pub, previously known as the Highcliffe. Eight handpumps displayed the normal range of Thornbridge beers, whilst in a hidden corner a ninth handpump had the new Christmas ale on, Wild Holly (4.8%), of which I had a half to accompany the half pint of Lumford (3.9%).



I have only been to two winter ale festivals, the usual two for me, Exeter and Tewkesbury. Both were well attended and in each case I was the sucker who went early to get a table for my fellow drinkers from WsM! My favourite beer at both festivals was the Thornbridge Raven (6.6%), a dark IPA brewed with three malts and three hops. The reason for not needing to go to other festivals is because of the monthly "bee-riodicals" at the Seven Stars in central Bristol, which have all been tremendous. For me, the Sussex one in January has been the best one with 1648, Dark Star, Ballards, Hepworth and Rother Valley all vying for the best ale. The Gribble Wobbler (7%) and Ballards Wassail 6% were the best strong beers but my favourite was the 1648 Winter Warrant at 4.8%.

In the snow and ice this winter, when the trains have been almost running on time, it has been exciting to come to Bristol at least twice a week. We are lucky to have such a vibrant city with so many good pubs in it: the **Bridge Inn** with its Monday offer of £2.20 for ale (I had the Saltaire Triplechocoholic on my last visit), the **Knights Templar**, the **Cornubia** and the newly reopened **Stag & Hounds** in Old Market (excellent Tim Taylor Landlord) are all fairly easily reached from Temple Meads station even in inclement weather.

Robin E Wild

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# Severn Vale CAMRA

## GWB brewery visit

Eight members of the Severn Vale sub-branch visited the Great Western Brewery a while back. We were greeted and made very welcome by the owners Kevin and Sandra.

The brewery is housed in an old bakery complete with its own ghost, dating back over 200 years. It is of traditional style and spread over two floors.

Kevin gave us a comprehensive tour of the brewery, which included sampling of the various malts, hops and some very sticky black treacle.

Afterwards we sampled four of their brews, Classic Gold, Maiden



Severn Vale CAMRA members at GWB

Severn Vale CAMRA is a sub-branch of the Bristol & District branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. The sub-branch covers roughly the area bounded by Thornbury in the north, Severn Beach in the south, the River Severn in the west and the M5 in the east.

Voyage, Old Higby and the latest, Hambrook Pale Ale.

Kevin was very professional about the whole brewing process and was certainly passionate about real ale.

It was a memorable evening and enjoyed by all.

Rod Lees

## Severn Vale pub news

The White Hart in Littleton on Severn has a new manager. We wish him much success. On a recent visit, the beers were thought not to be quite up to standard, but it's hoped that the beers – like the new manager – will settle in quickly.

The Cross Hands in Pilning still seems to be limping along with yet another change of landlord.

The Swan in Thornbury High Street seems to have closed again following its recent refurbishment and re-opening.

Martin Farrimond

## Severn Vale diary

- **Wed March 16th** – Branch meeting at the Anchor, Thornbury, 8pm.

For further up-to-date details, check the website at [severnval.camrabristol.org.uk](http://severnval.camrabristol.org.uk).

## Severn Vale contacts

Neil Halsall (chair): [Neil.Halsall@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:Neil.Halsall@southglos.gov.uk)

Keith McIndoe (secretary): [ainsdeng@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ainsdeng@blueyonder.co.uk)

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## Readers' Letters

Readers are welcome to send letters to Pints West Editor,

Steve Plumridge,  
Garden Flat, 6 Royal York Villas,  
Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR

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

### An important point

It seems to me that whenever there is a story regarding pubs in the national press, there's always a negative vibe. Under-age drinking, binge-drinking and the ubiquitous 24-hour drinking! It's all about 'drinking' and how bad it is for society at large.

Admittedly we do get the occasional 'horse-drinks-beer' tale, but by-and-large 'pub bashing' is the order of the day.

Professional publicans do not want underage and/or binge drinkers in their pubs because, although they are a minority, they ruin the atmosphere of a well-controlled environment – not to mention the legal threat to a landlord's livelihood. In any case, why would binge drinkers want to pay £3.00 plus for a strong lager in a pub when they can – and do – buy 15 bottles of the stuff for £6.00 from the local supermarket, which they are free to drink – unsupervised – anywhere that suits them?

24-hour drinking? I do not know personally of one pub that has a 24-hour license and more importantly I do not know a single pub that opens up for 24-hour drinking. Or indeed any pub that would think it financially worthwhile to open for 24 hours. Pure myth!

On the other hand, there rarely seems to be mention of the hard work that the large majority of publicans and their staff do; they work long hours to play a very important part in our local communities. In addition, many raise substantial sums for charities, large and small.

Thanks to successive governments' failure to provide a level playing field, in the process encouraging people to drink cheap takeaway alcohol in an unsupervised environment, the country is losing hundreds of pubs a year.

Surely one or two stories about the good work landlords do wouldn't go amiss, and

could play a tiny part in slowing down the loss of a truly great British institution.

Alan Morgan, Abbey Ales, Bath.

### Legible pump clips

I was delighted to read in your last issue that Bristol Beer Factory had won an award for the design of its beer-pump clips. These things have been a thorn in my flesh for some years now.

When I visit a pub I want to know the name of the beer, the brewer and – most of all – its strength. (As it happens I do not own a car, but I imagine that to drivers the strength of the beer should be even more important.) Why, then, do I have to put on my reading-glasses, bend down and puzzle to find the information I want? On the majority of pump-clips it is printed so small as to be almost illegible and often in a colour that makes it even harder to read, such as orange on a red background (which I recently encountered).

I have often thought that breweries must spend a tidy sum on graphic designers to produce their pump-clip designs. Presumably those people don't drink real ale, or perhaps the brewer omits to explain to them that the object they have been commissioned to design is stationed on a level with the average man's navel – and not too many men have eyes down there! When I was at school my geography teacher instructed that maps should be 'SIMPLE, CLEAR, NEAT AND BOLD' and that is exactly what is required from a pump-clip. Honesty compels me to say that the most helpful one I have seen recently was in a Wetherspoon's house where they had obviously no clip for a particular guest ale and had typed its name and strength on a piece of white paper which was stuck onto another clip. Brilliant!

Christopher Redwood,  
Highbridge, Somerset.

### Proof?

I enjoy enjoying reading the CAMRA newsletters on the internet, even though I am on the other side of the world.

However, I am puzzled about the strength of some of the beers claimed on page 32 of the

Winter 2010 issue. These are the Tokyo oak-aged stout at 18%, Tactical Nuclear Penguin, a double-aged stout at 32%, Schorschbock, a 40% beer, and Sink the Bismarck, a 41% IPA.

What do these quoted strengths represent?

I understood the maximum alcohol content (ABV) of a beer or wine produced by natural fermentation is about 13-14%, without fortification or distillation. They cannot be % proof figures, as 100% proof is about 50% alcohol-by-volume, or ABV.

Many thanks, Ron Wells,

Wainuiomata, New Zealand.

*The figures quoted are indeed percentage alcohol by volume (ABV). Extraordinary lengths are gone to in order to increase the strengths way beyond those produced by natural fermentation (lengths which we understand do not include distillation).*

### Swiss brewpub

I read Pete Tanner's article on the Swiss brewpub chain Les Brasseurs in Pints West number 88. He forgot to mention that there is a third pub in the chain in the town of Nyon which is on the Geneva to Lausanne railway line and whose streets seemed to be full of underage drinkers!

In my view this was the best in the chain perhaps because it wasn't in a city with large numbers of tourists.

Overall I was less than impressed with their beers which I felt lacked flavour and body and some were excessively sweet.

It also has to be said that Switzerland has a shortage of independent brewers and this chain does still represent a welcome change from the chain brewers but I would still visit Switzerland for the scenery and not its brewing scene. My visit there also included several unplanned trips to the cash dispenser!

Clive Walder, Birmingham CAMRA.

### Dogs allowed?

Had a good read of Pints West which I picked up at the Ring o' Bells, Hinton Blewitt. Lovely meal (venison/pheasant/pigeon cottage pie with mashed parsnip topping) and a pint of London Pride.

Bruno my Border Terrier enjoyed it too, especially the real fire, after a circuit of Chew Valley lake bird-watching.

Talking of dogs, we only visit pubs which allow dogs in the bar. Please could you include in your reviews whether or not dogs are made welcome if with well behaved owners?

Mike Breward (by email).

## Rucking Mole joins the pack!

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**Rucking Mole** 4.5%<sub>abv</sub>  
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**Landlord's Choice** 4.5%<sub>abv</sub>  
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**Molecatcher** 5.0%<sub>abv</sub>  
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**Holy Moley** 4.7%<sub>abv</sub>  
Spring beer that's heaven 'scent'

**Barleymole** 4.2%<sub>abv</sub>  
Straw coloured Summer ale

**Molegrip** 4.3%<sub>abv</sub>  
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**Moel Moel** 6.0%<sub>abv</sub>  
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# The Good Pub Guide for Dogs!

*Sonic the Brewdog's guide to pubs offering good real ale and a welcome for our canine friends*



As I have advised before it is obvious that *all* pubs have no real problem allowing dogs in – it's just their pesky human owners that are the problem! Now that I have clarified that, and in response to a recent reader's query, I would like to share with you my experiences so far in the world of real ale. But bear in mind that, as I am only two years old and my owners don't take me to the pub anywhere nearly often enough, there must be many more pubs for me to find yet!

For some time my owners never took me down into central Bristol on the pathetic excuse that "they did not think that dog's would be allowed in many central pubs". Well I have certainly proved them wrong on that as the following list shows.

I have been made very welcome in all of the following excellent pubs – all offering great real ale of which I am mysteriously rationed to a few measly licks from the human's fingers. Given the chance I would of course drink them under the table!

**The Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, with eight or nine changing real ales (except when Paul the landlord breaks one of the pumps which is becoming an unfortunate habit!) and always a great welcome from the staff and many of the regulars for me.

**The Cornubia**, Temple Street, just around the corner from the Seven Stars, with six or seven changing beers and real cider, and another friendly welcome for me from Phil and Jackie.

**The Three Tuns**, Hotwells (Arbor Ales plus four or five guest beers and real ciders) – this one confused me as I was used to meeting Ned and Natz up at the Portcullis in Clifton but now they seem to be here? Food including Sunday roasts is on offer.

**The Bank**, John Street, just off Broad Street, with four changing beers and several ciders. I have been welcomed here as "much better than kids" which goes without saying of course! Food served in the afternoons only, including superb Sunday roasts.

**The Shakespeare**, Prince Street, with the full Greene King range plus two guest beers which change infrequently. Good food including Sunday roasts here too. Nice friendly pub.

**The Robin Hood**, St Michael's Hill, with five constantly changing real ales, interesting foreign and UK draught beers, and food including Sunday roasts.

I have also appeared briefly in both the **Gryphon**, Colston Street (four real ales and good rock music) and the nearby **Colston Yard** (Butcombe pub plus guests and good food) but we were not clear on what the actual dog policy at either was, so please check before going in.

A little further out, in the Clifton area, I am always welcome in the **Portcullis** in Wellington Terrace which has about eight changing real ales and cider and good food too. I am also aware that its sister Dawkins pubs the **Victoria** in Southleigh Road and the **Miners Arms** in St Werburghs (both around six or seven real ales) would also be pleased to see me. Message to the humans – pull your finger out and get me there soon!

We have found that very few pubs further out into the countryside have any problem allowing dogs and their owners in, and here are the ones that those lazy humans have taken me to so far.

**Plough**, Congresbury – this is where I first discovered pubs and real ale whilst still a puppy. I took to the beer instantly in this lovely old pub serving five or six changing beers.

**New Inn**, Cross, Somerset (on A38 near Axbridge) – we were welcome to eat and drink in the lower bar area and had a choice of four changing real ales plus cider.

**Hunters Lodge**, near Priddy Somerset – lovely old isolated

traditional inn on the Mendips with around four changing local ales on gravity, cracking high value simple food, real fires and a big beer garden.

**Queen Victoria**, Priddy – lovely, friendly Butcombe pub with good food and real fires.

The nearby **New Inn** also allows dogs in one bar and offers several real ales and many ciders.

**Castle of Comfort**, isolated pub near East Harptree high on the Mendips – we were allowed in the lower bar and all outside areas at this lovely old pub with four beers on offer and good food.

**Old Inn**, Hutton, near Weston-super-Mare – we were welcomed in the bar area and enjoyed Sunday roast washed down with a choice of four or five beers always including RCH.

**Star**, Pucklechurch – big on cider with several real ales and food too.

Which brings me to ... (drum roll please) ...

## Sonic's Pub of the Year.

We have made quite a few visits to the **Cross House** in Doynton (two miles from the A420 at Wick) which offers four or five real ales including Timothy Taylor Landlord and really great food. Free dog biscuits at the bar too!

Last summer I was allowed to play in the beer garden at the Cross House and had my favourite toy with me – a scruffy little woollen dog called "Shag" ... don't ask as this is a family publication! When we left poor old Shag got left in the garden. I knew this was happening and kept trying to alert the humans. Sadly none of them have yet learnt to speak Pomeranian, despite it consisting of a handful of different barks – are they thick or what? Anyway a month went by and they kept searching for him to no avail. Finally they took me back to the Cross House and on arrival asked if Shag had been left there. Amazingly the staff immediately produced him from under the counter and we were reunited at last. My pub of the year was decided on the spot!

Good drinking to you all,  
Sonic the Brewdog Murray.



Sonic gets his toy back from Adrian at the Cross House  
(photo Marilyn Murray)

*A note from my owner.*

Please remember that not all pubs or other customers welcome dogs – it is always best and polite to check with the pub first. There is a world of difference between a small ball of fluff like Sonic (Oi! watch what you're saying – Sonic) and a couple of large unruly dogs running amok. Please check with staff where dogs can and cannot go and keep them under good control at all times. Just because we were allowed in does not make a guarantee that all dogs will be.

Vince Murray

# Digital music is killing pubs

OK, my title here is a bit of a sweeping statement. Digital music is not killing all pubs, and we can all point to some establishments that seem to thrive playing mp3s and CDs. However, most readers will be painfully aware of the rate of pub closures over recent years, and it is my suggestion that digital music – especially mp3s – are driving people away from pubs rather than enticing them in.

Many musical pubs are popular for the recorded music they play as well as live bands. A good example here is the Bell in Bath, but a few years ago it became apparent that almost everyone who came to hear the Sunday lunchtime bands would leave immediately after the musicians finished. The pub would empty within 30 minutes of the band finishing, and I wondered, “why did they all leave so rapidly?”

Last year the pub began playing records instead of CDs when the bands finished, and the effect was dramatic. Many more people stayed on for the afternoon and later. A vinyl-only policy has also helped boost receipts on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, suggesting “**Digital (CDs, Mp3s) = empty pub**” and “**Analogue (Records, Bands) = full pub**”.

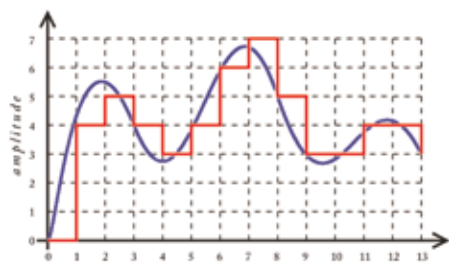
A possible explanation may be found using an analogy with visual experience. Suppose you travelled to Paris to see the Mona Lisa, and when you got there you found you were looking at an enlargement of a low-resolution jpeg. Instead of being able to see brush strokes, pigments, fabric and signs of genius, you would see pixels in 256 colours.

To record sound digitally, the smooth musical waveform is ‘sampled’ thousand of times a second and represented by a series of numeric values. These values are then converted back to an approximation of the original wave by the digital player. In principle however, no digital recording is able to reproduce the original wave accurately. To make things worse, mp3s were designed to compress music into the smallest practical file size to be transferred across the web in the days of dial-up connections. While a jpeg can be good enough for a web page, far more detail is needed for a large high-quality print. In the same way, CDs and mp3s can sound reasonable on ear buds or in a small room, but played in a larger room – a pub for example – the loss in detail becomes apparent and the auditory ‘pixels’ become more prominent than the music itself.

Many ‘experts’ maintain that a sampling rate of 44.1kHz (usual for CDs and many mp3s) is high enough to trick our ears into hearing something that is close to the original sound, and many people are apparently unaware of the limitations of digital playback. However, 44.1kHz is only just one octave above the highest range of many human ears, and some have suggested that this generates an effect similar ‘The Mosquito’, a high-pitched noise machine that is sometimes deployed to prevent people loitering where they are not wanted (e.g. outside off licences). In other words, it is possible that mp3 players actually repel people from pubs, albeit on a subconscious level. Music fans in Bath will be of no doubt that something drastic has happened to close so many fine musical pubs – the Porter Butt and the Hat & Feather are two prominent examples, while pubs like the Old Green Tree and the Star in Bath (which play no recorded sound at all) are as busy as ever.

As Luke Daniels, former landlord of the Cornubia in Bristol (where he always had a record player available for his and customer use), explains: “I am definitely a vinyl head... There is certainly a noticeable difference between formats, with vinyl being much more revealing – you notice and can hear more of the sounds that were recorded. And you seem to have a more emotional reaction to the music played, because it is analogue. This is a subconscious thing. In a nutshell, vinyl sounds clearer and fuller and you enjoy the music more...”

Vinyl is on offer at the Bridge Inn in Bristol, where arrangements are very relaxed when I visit. The turntable is easily accessible to customers, and a varied collection of 33s and 45s includes all-time classics from Hendrix, Floyd and the Doors. Many genres are represented and the collection is frequently bequeathed more vinyl from regulars. Pints



A graphic representation of a sound wave (blue line) and its digital approximation (red line)

of guest beers ‘Xmas Cheer’ and ‘Charlies Angel’ are gleefully consumed while I’m delighted to find that most records are in remarkably good condition. When customers are queuing to put records on, a ‘one side rule’ is in operation, but our

hosts are happy for us to choose what we want this evening. As well as three shelves of vinyl available downstairs, there’s a ‘special collection’ housed elsewhere for safekeeping. A fruit machine was removed three years ago to make space for the records and has been “the best thing that ever happened to the pub since the telly broke” according to the regulars. Kasia the landlady is very happy with the arrangement, as it keeps customers happy and there are few records here she doesn’t like. Regulars generally keep an eye on things, and are on hand for help if you’ve never operated a turntable before – they laugh retelling the story of one customer who tried to play an LP still in its sleeve.

Of course there are some people who continue to defend digital reproduction – but not usually in places that offer a vinyl alternative. Some claim, for example, that “in an otherwise noisy pub you can’t hear the difference” but I do not agree. Ironically, while customers may not be able to hear the ‘music’ clearly in a noisy pub, the digital ‘sizzle’ distortion (characterised by its high pitch and consistency) is often the most prominent contribution from the speakers. A poor quality system will also amplify distortion in favour of a pure signal, and in both cases the physics of waves dictate that distortion travels further across a room than lower frequency sounds, for the same reasons that the ‘tinny’ sound of someone’s ear buds can fill an entire railway carriage.

Get your records out, or try sampling the extensive selection at the Bridge Inn where they have a turntable which can be used any time. In Bath, the Bell hosts ‘open decks’ on Thursdays, ‘bring your own vinyl’ sessions on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, plus vinyl DJs Friday and Saturday nights. Needless to say, both pubs have great selections of real ales.

All your views welcome.

Simon Rigby ([pinkmilkfloat@googlemail.com](mailto:pinkmilkfloat@googlemail.com))



The Mona Lisa on the left looks fine at this size, but when enlarged pixels begin to show



Local CAMRA members had a great time at the Chimp House for the Christmas social and pictured are the landlord and his son who laid on a self-service mini beer festival for us.

Richard Brooks



# Branch diary

## Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA

- **Wed March 9th** – Committee meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.
- **Thurs March 10th** – BADRAG mini trail. Meet Seven Stars 7-8pm, then Bridge Inn 8.15-9.15pm, then Cornubia 9.30pm until close.
- **Wed March 23rd** – Branch meeting, upstairs at Horts, central Bristol, 7.45 for 8pm.
- **Thurs March 31st** – Pubs Group meeting, Cornubia, 7pm.
- **Fri April 8th** – Clifton cider crawl, 7pm start, full details TBC.
- **Tues April 12th** – Bristol Pubs Group social. Meet Highbury Vaults 7pm (or earlier) for crawl of local area, departing from there 7.30pm.
- **Wed April 13th** – Committee meeting at the Cornubia, 8pm.
- **Thurs April 21st** – BADRAG Mild Month launch, Miners Arms, St. Werburghs, from 7pm.
- **Wed April 27th** – Branch quarterly meeting, upstairs at the Lazy Dog, 112 Ashley Down Road, BS7 9JR.
- **Sat April 30th** – BADRAG East Bristol Trail starting midday at the Staple Hill Oak.
- **Sat May 7th** – BADRAG Clifton & Kingsdown Trail, starting midday at the Portcullis.
- **Wed May 11th** – Committee meeting, Cornubia, 8pm.
- **Sat May 14th** – BADRAG Harbourside & Bedminster Trail, starting midday at the Grain Barge.
- **Thurs May 19th** – BADRAG gathering, Masons Arms, Frenchay.
- **Sat May 21st** – BADRAG South Glos Trail by coach. Departs Cornubia, 11.45am.
- **Wed May 25th** – Branch meeting, upstairs at Horts, 8pm.
- **Thurs May 26th** – Pubs Group meeting, Cornubia, 7pm.
- **Sat May 28th** – BADRAG City & Temple Meads Trail, starting midday at the Berkeley, top of Park Street.
- **Sun May 29th** – Coach trip to cider festival at Clytha Arms, Abergavenny. Details TBC.

Please check our website ([www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk)) or sign up to our yahoo group for the latest information and more details on any of the above events. Email Tim Proudman at [badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk) for the latest information. Please note that all coach and brewery trips must be booked in advance, either by email, or in person at a branch meeting.



## CAMRA pub discounts

An extra benefit of CAMRA membership is that a number of pubs are now offering discounts on the price of real ale or traditional cider to card-carrying CAMRA members. Some examples from the Bristol & District branch area:

- The **Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, Bristol
- The **Cornubia**, Temple Street, Bristol
- The **Bank**, John Street, Bristol
- **Horts**, Broad Street, Bristol
- The **New Inn**, Mayshill
- The **Old Stillage**, Redfield
- The **Anchor**, Thornbury
- The **Raglan Arm**, Weston-super-Mare
- The **Bristol Cider House**, Surrey Street, Bristol



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The actual details of the discounts vary from pub to pub and from time to time. The latest details may be found on our web site at [www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk) but, even better, visit the pubs and check for yourselves.



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**LETTERS:** please email correspondence to:

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or post it to:

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Clifton, Bristol BS8 4JR.

**Published by** the Bristol & District Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, end of February 2011 ©

**Next edition:** end of May 2011 (probably).

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**CAMRA Good Beer Guide:** suggestions for future entries, and comments on existing ones, can be made to our GBG co-ordinator, Vince Murray: [vincent.murray@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:vincent.murray@blueyonder.co.uk).

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

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**Design & Layout:** Steve Plumridge.

**Printed by** Caric Press Limited ([www.caricpress.co.uk](http://www.caricpress.co.uk)).



### Thanks to this issue's contributors

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| Eddie Taberner      | Mike Jackson     | Steve Matthews          |
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| Ian Beckey          | Norman Spalding  | Tim Proudman            |
| Jon Parr            | Pete Taberner    | Vince Murray            |
| Julia Tuckey        | Richard Brooks   | Editor: Steve Plumridge |

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## Weston diary and contact

See page 27

## Severn Vale diary and contacts

See page 31

## Bath & Borders diary and contacts

See page 26



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*PINTS WEST (Bristol & District) - edition 89*

12/10

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To the Manager Bank or Building Society

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Date



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