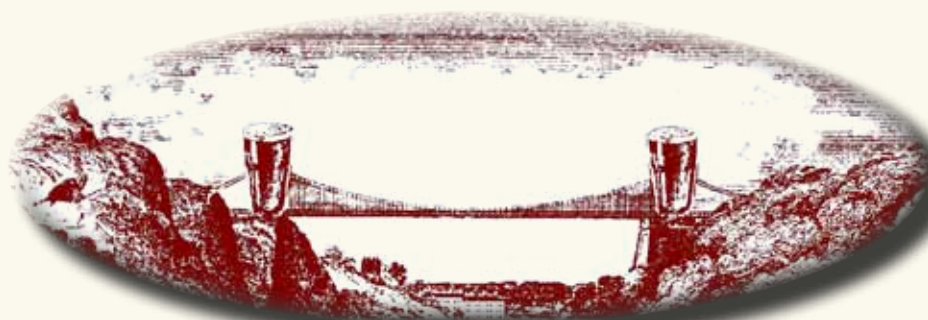




**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

AWARD-WINNING



www.camrabristol.org.uk

No. 91

Autumn
2011

**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)

CAMRA's 40th Anniversary



See centre pages

Champion Beer of Britain 2011

Oscar Wilde writes his name in the beer history books!

After a year of local tasting panels and regional heats leading up to the finals, CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is proud to announce that Mighty Oak brewery's Oscar Wilde has been crowned the 'Best Beer' in Britain at the Great British Beer Festival held at Earls Court, London in August.

Oscar Wilde, which has an ABV of 3.7%, is described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2011 as a "roasty dark mild with suggestions of forest fruits and dark chocolate. A sweet taste yields to a more bitter finish."

The Maldon-brewed real ale was judged the Supreme Champion over a host of other finalists in seven different beer categories (Bitters, Best Bitters, Strong Bitters, Golden Ales, Milds, Winter Beers*, and the Speciality class), including beers from both small microbrewers and large regional brewers.

Roger Protz, of the final judging panel, spoke in praise of the winner. He said: "Oscar Wilde was a stand-out winner, universally praised by the judges for its overall quality. Once again a dark beer has triumphed over paler beers! It's a beer with great depth of character, and for the style has a lot of hop bitterness as well. It proves that a dark beer can be refreshing even in very hot weather."

An elated John Boyce, Managing Director of Oscar Wilde brewery, on hearing the results, said: "I always had a lot of confidence in Oscar Wilde as it was successful from day one. We've been brewing it for at least 10 years, winning prizes ever since. Not bad for an Essex beer!"

With Mighty Oak securing the Gold award for 2011, this year's Silver went to Marble brewery's Chocolate, whilst the Bronze award went to Salopian brewery's Shropshire Gold.

Mighty Oak brewery's victory comes in the wake of CAMRA's new research out recently showing how, in just five years, the number of

drinkers trying real ale for the first time has risen by a staggering 40% (from 37% of UK drinkers in 2006 to 52% in the present day).

**The Winter Beer category was judged in January at the CAMRA National Winter Ales Festival, and the winners were all fast-tracked to the final competition.*

The results in full

Overall winners

Champion Beer of Britain: Mighty Oak, Oscar Wilde (3.7% ABV, Maldon, Essex)

Second: Marble, Chocolate (5.5% ABV, Manchester, Gtr Manchester)

Third: Salopian, Shropshire Gold (3.8% ABV, Shrewsbury, Shropshire)

Category winners

Mild category

Gold: Mighty Oak, Oscar Wilde (3.7% ABV, Maldon, Essex)

Silver: Rudgate, Ruby Mild (4.4% ABV, York, North Yorkshire)

Bronze: Coastal, Merry Maidens (4% ABV, Redruth, Cornwall)

Bitter category

Gold: Salopian, Shropshire Gold (3.8% ABV, Shrewsbury, Shropshire)

Silver: Teignworthy, Reel Ale (4% ABV, Newton Abbot, Devon)

Joint Bronze: Triple fff, Alton's Pride (3.8% ABV, Alton, Hampshire)

Joint Bronze: Potton, Shannon IPA (3.6% ABV, Potton, Bedfordshire)

Best Bitter category

Gold: Houston, Peter's Well (4.2% ABV, Houston, Renfrewshire)

Silver: Country Life, Golden Pig (4.7% ABV, Bideford, Devon)

Joint Bronze: Castle Rock, Preservation (4.4% ABV, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire)

Joint Bronze: Bollington, Best Bitter (4.2% ABV, Bollington, Cheshire)

Joint Bronze: Blythe, Staffie (4.4% ABV, Rugeley, Staffordshire)

Golden Ale category

Gold: Cumbrian Legendary Ales, Loweswater Gold (4.3% ABV, Hawkshead, Cumbria)

Silver: Salamander, Golden Salamander (4.5% ABV, Bradford, West Yorkshire)

Bronze: Holden's, Golden Glow (4.4% ABV, Dudley, West Midlands)

Strong Bitter category

Gold: Moles, Mole Catcher (5% ABV, Melksham, Wiltshire)

Silver: Kinver, Half Centurion (5% ABV, Kinver, Staffordshire)

Bronze: Adnams, Broadside (4.7% ABV, Southwold, Suffolk)

Speciality Beer category

Gold: Oakleaf, I Can't Believe It's Not Bitter (4.9% ABV, Gosport, Hampshire)

Silver: Amber, Chocolate Orange Stout (4% ABV, Ripley, Derbyshire)

Bronze: Orkney, Atlas Wayfarer (4.4% ABV, Stromness, Orkney)

Winter Beer of Britain winners (announced in January 2011)

Gold: Hop Back, Entire Stout (4.5% ABV, Downton, Wiltshire)

Silver: Marble, Chocolate (5.5% ABV, Manchester, Gtr Manchester)

Bronze: Dow Bridge, Praetorian Porter (5% ABV, Catthorpe, Leicestershire)

Bottled Beer of Britain winners (sponsored by Hotel du Vin)

Gold: St Austell, Proper Job (5.5% ABV, St Austell, Cornwall)

Joint silver: Molson Coors, Worthington White Shield (5.6% ABV, Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire)

Joint silver: Brown Cow, Captain Oates Dark Oat Mild (4.5% ABV, Selby, North Yorkshire)

Teignworthy Brewery John Lawton's visit to the Great British Beer Festival

On visiting Earls Court in London in August, I enjoyed a few pints of ale from other small breweries around the country. At 3pm the awards were announced during the Trade Session. I only popped out for a moment ... on my return a fellow South West brewer patted me on the back, telling me that we had won a Silver Medal in the Bitter class! This was a wonderful surprise for me.

The beer itself is REEL ALE, the original beer Teignworthy brewed at 4% ABV.

I devised this beer as an easy drinking type of bitter for all types of people. The description in the Good Beer Guide is: "Reel Ale - a clean, sharp-tasting bitter with lasting hoppiness, predominately malty aroma." Along with its amber colour this is what I have in the humble pint of ale. I probably could live on crusty white bread, well matured cheddar or stilton, and this type of ale for a long time.

The pint needs to have a good white head, large and small bubbles. This must lace down the side of the pint glass, sticking to the sides like a piece of lace. The clarity must be good, almost a polish. Lastly, the taste and smell must be pleasing, along with a certain dryness on the back of the tongue urging you to drink more of the ale!

This is what the ground work should be to get a good pint and get the recognition it justly deserves. **CHEERS! MINE'S A TEIGNWORTHY!**



“Moles strikes a blow for malty, well-balanced, beer-coloured beers!”

Mole Catcher, a 5.0% ABV all-malt brew from Wiltshire brewer Moles, has been voted Champion Strong Bitter by CAMRA at the Champion Beer of Britain Awards 2011, staged on the opening day of the annual Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court in London.

The beer beat off competition from eight other category finalists – including ales by Black Sheep, Adnams, and Fuller’s – to be declared the best Strong Bitter in the UK.

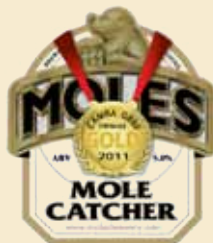
Commenting on the success, Moles Brewery’s managing director Roger Catte declared: “Moles strikes a blow for malty, well-balanced, beer-coloured beers!

“This is a major surprise. It’s usually golden ales that win awards, so for an all-malt, traditional strong bitter like Mole Catcher to take top prize speaks volumes for the quality of our beers. Everybody at Moles has played a part in this fantastic achievement.”

Since he started the brewery in 1982, Roger Catte has steadfastly refused to allow anything other than malt, hops, yeast and of course water into his brewing process. He says there are no additional sugars, no extraneous adjuncts and chemicals, no fancy herbs or spices ... or fruit. Just the basics. What many might call ‘traditional’ brewing, on a tower plant in a small brewery located on a former RAF base near Melksham.

The company has won awards in the past – Rucking Mole was a SIBA Champion – but, by and large, national recognition had passed the company by. That was until August when Roger Protz announced the winner of the Strong Bitter Class was Moles Mole Catcher.

Mole Catcher is available from Moles Brewery or its distributors. Phone 01225 708842 or visit www.molesbrewery.com for more information.



A full-bodied, dark, strong ale with a delightfully spicy hop aroma and taste coming from the single varietal Cascade hops which also give it a long bitter finish.



Moles brewing, office and sales staff celebrate their award. Roger Catte is at the front holding the glass of beer-coloured beer.

Rucking Mole joins the pack!

ALL YEAR ROUND

Tap Bitter 3.5%^{abv}
Smooth malty flavour & clean bitter finish

Best Bitter 4.0%^{abv}
Well balanced, copper coloured bitter

Molennium 4.5%^{abv}
Deep amber coloured premium ale

Rucking Mole 4.5%^{abv}
Clean, dry & malty golden bitter

Landlord's Choice 4.5%^{abv}
Dark, strong and smooth hoppy bitter

Molecatcher 5.0%^{abv}
Copper coloured ale with spicy hop aroma

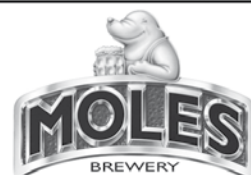
IN SEASON

Holy Moley 4.7%^{abv}
Spring beer that's heaven 'scent'

Barleymole 4.2%^{abv}
Straw coloured Summer ale

Molegrip 4.3%^{abv}
Rich ruby red, Autumn brew

Moel Moel 6.0%^{abv}
Warming Winter ale



Melksham, Wilts SN12 6TJ
Tel: 01225 708842



www.molesbrewery.com

The Bar Code
by Eddie Taberner



24/03/11

Pub campaigners and MP welcome change of ownership of landmark Bristol pub

Bristol CAMRA Pubs Group has joined forces with the local MP to welcome the sale of landmark pub, the Lamplighters in Shirehampton. The pub, which is currently closed, was previously owned by Enterprise Inns has been acquired by the Churchill Property Group who have vowed to ensure the building will reopen as a pub.

Bristol CAMRA Pubs Group has been campaigning with Bristol North West MP Charlotte Leslie for the last year to ensure that the Lamplighters would reopen as a pub. A petition by the local MP to keep the building as a pub has attracted almost 300 signatures from local people.

Commenting on recent developments, Peter Bridle of Bristol CAMRA Pubs Group said: "It is clear that there is a lot of support for the Lamplighters not only in Shirehampton but also from further afield. Of all the pubs that have closed in the Bristol area in recent times, the Lamplighters is one of the top two pubs we get asked about most frequently. It is clear that it is a much loved pub and many people want to see it reopened. It is a wonderful pub situated on the bank of a river and we now look forward to the Lamplighters reopening so that it can once again be a great local pub for the community. We are delighted that Churchill Property Group intends to see the pub reopen as soon as possible."

Charlotte Leslie said: "The Lamplighters is an historic and key part of Shirehampton and it would be a tragedy if it closed as a pub. Our petition to keep the pub open has attracted overwhelming local support. The pub is unique and has so much potential. I am delighted that every effort is going to be made to restore the Lamplighters to being truly one of Bristol's beacon pubs."

The Lamplighters is a listed building. The pub closed in early 2010 and many locals were fearful that the pub would never reopen again. The pub was recently purchased by the Churchill Property Group from national pub operator Enterprise Inns. Churchill Property Group are now looking to find someone to lease the pub and have been in talks with local breweries and pub operators who are interested in leasing the pub on a long-term basis.

Matt Moody of Churchill Property Group said: "Our first job is establishing the works required to the building and these are currently



Outside the Lamplighters, from left to right: Pete Bridle, Chairman of Bristol Pubs Group; Matt Moody of Churchill Property Group; Charlotte Leslie, MP for North West Bristol.

being costed. We then intend to undertake these works, ideally, in conjunction with an operator to meet their specification. We believe that the opportunity for a large free house of over 4,500 sq ft serving the local community will prove attractive, particularly given the unique setting and the proximity to Clifton, Sneyd Park, Stoke Bishop and businesses in Avonmouth. We have instructed specialist pub-letting company Melrose Licensed Property to find us a new tenant and are hopeful of identifying someone we can work with in the near future."

Support can still be expressed for the pub at the on-line petition website at www.savethelamplighterspub.bristolpetitions.com.

If you would like to enquire about the Lamplighters you can contact Matt Moody at Churchill Property Group on 07720 349505.

The Lamplighters address is Station Road, Shirehampton, Bristol, BS11 9XA.

Pete Bridle

The Bell in Redcliffe – time to ring in the changes and celebrate 260 years!

The Bell Inn in Redcliffe is an old character pub dating from 1752. It was sold by Enterprise Inns, without a restrictive covenant, in September 2009. It has however remained closed ever since, without any remedial work and its condition continues to decline.

This has not been helped by 'tea leaves' seeking scrap metals who have stolen lead flashings from the skittle alley and pub roofs, causing considerable internal damage. The nearby St Mary Redcliffe church had half a ton of lead stolen from its roof recently; thankfully the local police have made an arrest in this case, but the high price of scrap metals is driving this crime wave.

The Bell was, however, sold at a bargain price by Enterprise, so the new owners would have realised that significant spend was required. The Bell has an excellent location serving not only the nearby Redcliffe estate, but also the adjacent Caxton Gate and Magdalene Court developments. It was also popular with the clients of the nearby Ramada Hotel, which has of course the English Heritage listed Kiln Restaurant 50 meters opposite the Bell, the base of an old glass kiln. The Bell Inn is 10 years older than this kiln base, and deserves to celebrate its 260th year in 2012 open once again as an important historic community public house!

Mike Chappell



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.



CAMRA joins forces with Sunday Mirror to support community pubs

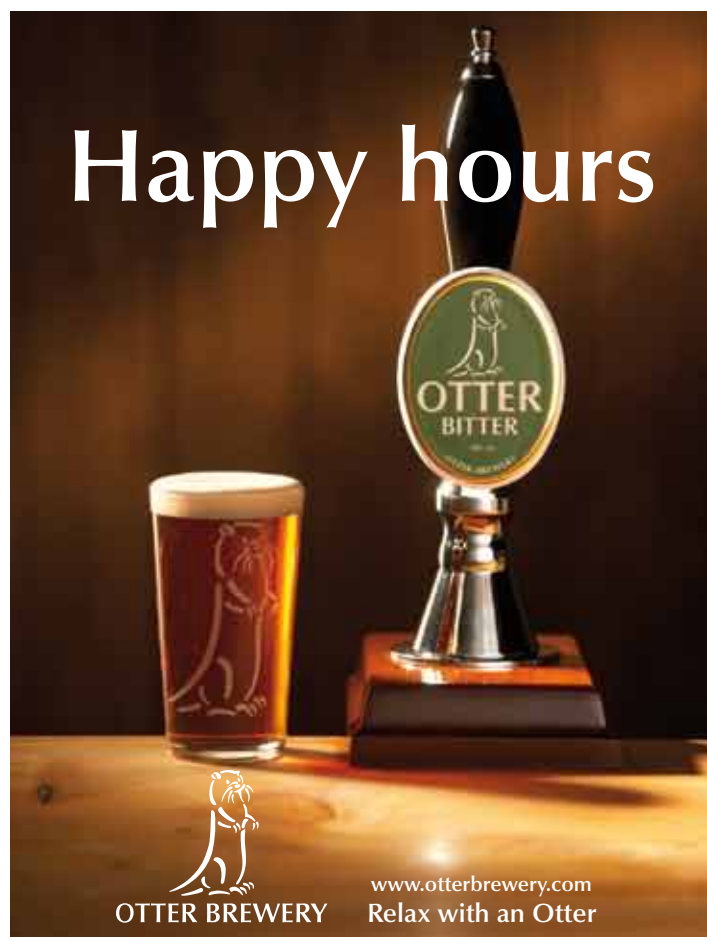
The Sunday Mirror has been in liaison with CAMRA's Head Office in recent weeks regarding the plight of community pubs. As a result, the national newspaper has run a series of pub related features highlighting the challenges facing pubs and encouraging people to support their local.

Off the back of this, the newspaper produced several thousand window stickers and CAMRA HQ sent these to branches for distribution. These will be displayed in pub windows as a way to encourage support for community pubs.

Bristol Pubs Group chair Peter Bridle (right) is seen presenting the first of the stickers to be distributed in our area to Star & Dove (Totterdown) manager Leigh Pascoe (centre) on a recent social. Fellow Bristol Pubs Group Adam Bell is on the left of the picture.

The Star & Dove has recently reopened and is really going for the local trade with an increased range of real ales. We wish them every success.

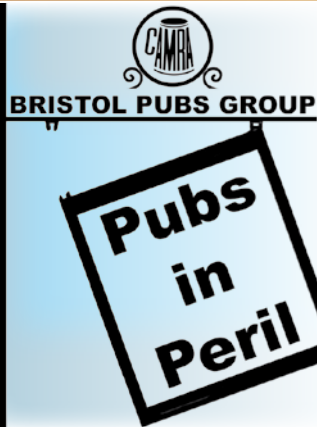
*Pete Bridle
(photo Keith Shapland)*



Happy hours


OTTER BREWERY

www.otterbrewery.com
Relax with an Otter



Pub News

The Bristol Pubs Group recently applied pressure to oppose the demolition of the **Farriers** in Fishponds and have been victorious. The applicant, Morrisons supermarket chain, have withdrawn their application. Similar has happened at the **Highwayman** in Kingswood where the applicant has withdrawn a planning application to demolish the pub

and build 11 homes plus a commercial unit, following objection from many including the Bristol Pubs Group. The **Red Lion** in Whitehall, a two-roomed community local with garden, has been acquired from Wadworth by Four Counties Inns. Some unusual beers for our area, such as Sarah Hughes and Dark Star, have been seen there on recent visits. The closure of the **Hop Pole** and the **Hauliers Arms** means that around a quarter of Redfield's pubs are closed. In Eastville the **White Lion** site is intended for development with the addition of 13 flats, but with the retention of the pub.

Bedminster's **White Hart** has re-opened following a short closure but the **Plough and Windmill** has closed. The **Star and Dove** in Totterdown is doing a good trade in real ale whereby a cask of ale will only be served once and not repeated, so if you fancy something different the Star and Dove is certainly worth a look. I hope their list of available ales is long! The **Lamplighters** in Shirehampton has been bought from Enterprise Inns by the Churchill Property Group who intend to seek a tenant and get it reopened. Their vision and commitment to this popular pub should see it thrive once again. There is bad news at the **Bourne End** in Brentry. This community pub has closed, like its fairly near neighbour the **Wayfarer** on Pen Park Road. The nearest open pubs are the distant **Old Crow** in Henbury or the **Pegasus** in Southmead (the **Standard of England** has been converted into yet another Tesco shop). The grim news continues at the **Old Fox** on Gloucester Road which seems destined to be converted into an Indian restaurant.

Outside of the city the **Tennis Court** in Kingswood has closed and

may have had its freehold sold. Can any readers let us know the status of this pub? The **Holly Bush** at Bridgegate is for sale, and we understand that the **White Hart** at Bitton

could be opening very soon – good news for this long-closed pub and for Bitton. Another **White Hart**, that of Iron Acton, has been re-opened by Greene King following an over-long closure. Bath Ales' Frampton Cotterell pub, the **Live and Let Live**, has a new manager in Nicki Rees. She is no stranger to the area, or to running pubs, having run the Badminton Arms and the Penny Farthing in the past, but has spent more recent times away from the Bristol area. **Ye Old Inn** at Westerleigh is due to re-open at any time, but the **Swan** at Thornbury is not. It seems that owners Enterprise Inns have no immediate plans. In Oldbury-on-Severn the **Ship** has been re-opened by local man Steven Ridge. He is planning to offer two real ales, ciders and a restrictive food menu.

The **George** at Backwell is offering good food and up to four real ales. Great news comes to us from Faulkland in Somerset where the **Tucker's Grave Inn** has re-opened following nearly three months of closure. This pub is listed on the highest category of CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors for its unchanged tap room with 200 year old lettering on the door, its main room that has no counter and its passageway with ancient panelling. If you haven't been there before, or even if you have, then take a trip to enjoy this classic rural gem.

At the time of writing, the **Adam & Eve** in Hotwells and the **Greyhound** in Clifton are reported closed.

Still closed and looking for some interest are the **Red Lion** in Clifton and the **Queen's Head** in Willsbridge.

Mike Jackson

(with help from members of the Bristol Pubs Group)

CAMRA takes on FOSBR



Outside the Miles Arms, Avonmouth

In June, at the Alma Vale Tavern in Clifton, the Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR) and the Bristol Pubs Group met for an introduction. At the meeting, FOSBR challenged us to a skittles match. With other members of CAMRA to make up the numbers, FOSBR were taken on at the Miles Arms in Avonmouth on Sunday 31st July.

After a very friendly couple of hours, CAMRA had the satisfaction of winning. This was much helped by Robin E Wild having spent the previous two days playing in other matches. There were some high scores by a few members of each team, though. Julie Boston of FOSBR has invited CAMRA for another friendly competitive event, maybe in the new year.

FOSBR have spent several years in fighting for the preservation of the smaller railways in our area. They also have members who are very keen to support pubs near railways and produce a guide to the pubs along Bristol's Severn Beach Line under the banner FOSBEER (Friends of Suburban Beer). It was this mutual interest that first led to the meeting between them and the Bristol Pubs Group.

If you want more information on FOSBR, visit www.fosbr.org.uk.

Tim Belsten

The Vittoria

The "real" pub on Whiteladies

CAMRA
Good Beer Guide
2011/12

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 Red Lion rises again

Some great news from East Bristol: the Red Lion in Whitehall Road, BS5, which Wadworth had allowed to run down to the point that it had been closed for some time, has reopened. Better still, it is now completely free of tie and in very good hands. Those hands belong to Keith Hewett and his partner Anita – well known from running the Good Beer Guide-listed Chelsea Inn in nearby Easton. They are now running both pubs. The Red Lion venture has financial support from Milk Street Brewery of Frome and Edward Toomer who owns well known real ale pubs in Poole, Trowbridge and elsewhere.

The Red Lion will be open from midday to midnight seven days a week and will offer up to four quality real ales. Initially there may be less as Keith needs time to attract real ale drinkers to a pub not noted for quality beer in recent years. Already in the first week or two Dark Star Old Chestnut and Sarah Hughes Ruby Mild have featured. Milk Street will also feature fairly often. The pub itself is a work in progress with improvements planned to the exterior, lounge and garden areas. An amusing new pub sign already features. There is a pool table and dartboard. Food is currently limited to bar snacks but there are plans to introduce simple bar meals at some stage.

We welcome this bold new venture and wish

Keith and Anita all the best as they develop this pub which had looked likely to be lost for ever. Indeed there is now an attractive real ale crawl in this part of Bristol if you add in the Chelsea, the Old Stillage (Arbor Ales) and the JD Wetherspoon's owned St Georges Hall. All are within a short walk of the Red Lion.



Vince Murray

## Pub crawl by suburban railway

Bristol & District CAMRA's annual "pub crawl by train" on the Severn Beach railway line took place on Saturday 6th August 2011. It was well attended this year with 17 people in total, although no more than 16 at any one time. This is what we found:

The **Mill House** at Stoke Bishop (eleven minutes' pleasant walk from Sea Mills railway station) was a pub we had not visited in the last eleven years. It has one large comfortable room with a TV for live sport – Bristol Rovers were on while we were there! – and a sizeable outdoor drinking area. Four real ales were on sale: Courage Best, Butcombe Bitter, Molson Coors Sharp's Doom Bar and Young's Bitter. This is a much improved range on two years ago when a report on the British Pub Guide website said it had only Courage Best and Directors. The Young's was undrinkable but was changed with good grace, while the other three beers were fine.

Next, to Clifton Down station from where we walked to the **Victoria** on Southleigh Road, a Dawkins pub which had four beers from the Dawkins brewery and two others, one of which was Tournament from Goffs of Winchcombe. All beers sampled were very good and Juno, a 4% ABV elderflower wheat beer, was especially popular.

After a short walk back we came to the **Vittoria** on Whiteladies Road, which as usual had four changing real ales from regional brewers, all in very good condition.

Back on the train to Montpelier station, where a five-minute walk brought us to the **Cat and Wheel** on Gloucester Road. Bass, Doom Bar and St Austell Tribute on sale here, together with our favourite, Molecatcher from Moles brewery, a 5% ABV beer which won the Gold award in the strong bitter category at the Great British Beer Festival earlier that week. A notable thing about this pub, which may be the last two-bar community local on the Gloucester Road and has three outdoor drinking areas, is the outdoor TV allowing smokers and others to watch the live rugby!

Another short train ride brought us to Stapleton Road where the **Sugar Loaf** is almost next door to the railway station and has a pleasant beer garden. Four beers were on sale including Cotswold Spring

Codrington Codger, Otter Ale, St. Austell Tribute and Goffs Lamorak, a seasonal ale available in August only. Unfortunately the Otter was not at its best but was changed with good grace; all the other beers were fine.

Less than five minutes' walk away is the **Greenbank**, where we found Bath Gem, Fuller's London Pride, Bristol Beer Factory Sunrise and one other real ale on sale, plus an outdoor drinking area at the back. The landlord apologised that he had just returned from a trip away and could not vouch for the quality of his beer; one was in poor condition but was changed with good grace and the Sunrise was very good and very popular.

Seven or eight minutes' walk further on we came to the **Chelsea Inn** where two real ales and a cider were on sale, both in very good condition.

After another walk of ten minutes or so we reached the **Red Lion** on Whitehall, a two-roomed former Wadworth house which was reopening that day. The new owners are a partnership including Keith Hewett, the landlord of the Chelsea Inn, and Milk Street brewery from Frome. Beers on sale included Milk Street Funky Monkey and Beer; all were in very good condition. The pub was very busy with large numbers of families with children, plenty of lager and tins of Natch being sold and a barbecue and live music in the beer garden.

Five minutes more walking brought us to the **St. George's Hall**, a Wetherspoon's with a large range of real ales including two from Bull Mastiff brewery.

The final port of call was just a few minutes' walk down Church Road towards Lawrence Hill railway station: the **Old Stillage**, an Arbor Ales pub. Four beers were on sale including their wonderful Oyster Stout, the bitter, hoppy and refreshing Motueka and Brigstow Bitter, plus one from Yeovil Ales. All were very good. The popular outdoor drinking area at the rear now has added wall art!

If anyone reading this is tempted to try a rail ale crawl of their own, be warned – a day return ticket from Temple Meads to Avonmouth for four adults using a Groupsave discount costs six pounds – that's £1.50 each – nearly as much as half a pint of beer costs in Clifton!

Norman Spalding

# News from Bath Ales

**Beer Festival**  
**70 +** Real Ales and Ciders from Wessex and the South West  
**Fri 7th & Sat 8th October**  
**Weymouth Pavilion**  
 Live Music in Evening Sessions  
 Good food available every Session  
 Admission Charges: 11am - 3 pm £3  
 6pm - 11pm £4

Weymouth Pavilion 01305 783 225;  
 Boot Inn, Weymouth;  
 Blue Raddle, Dorchester;  
 West Dorset CAMRA: [www.camrawdorset.org.uk](http://www.camrawdorset.org.uk)  
 or 01305 772 286

Buy TICKETS from Last Year Sold Out! - get YOUR tickets early!!

**Weymouth Octoberfest 2011**

Organised by: West Dorset Branch

**CAMRA**  
 Campaign for Real Ale  
[www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)  
[www.camrawdorset.org.uk](http://www.camrawdorset.org.uk)

Gem continues to account for over two thirds of Bath Ales' annual production, taking into account in cask, keg and bottle. It is continually in demand and has secured permanent placing at several of the major retailers nationwide. Its following in the London area has also now been established, due to some local promotions through the bigger pub groups.

**Summer's Hare**, their summer seasonal ale (which they describe as "a light and hoppy beer, full malt flavour with a fruity bitterness, brewed at 3.9% ABV") has done very well and will be replaced from September by brand new ale for autumn: **Hare & Hop**. This ale is described as "crisp and dry with heavy hints of autumn fruits and a fresh, heady aroma" and is also brewed at 3.9% ABV. Bath Ales have used foreign hops for this beer, which they say gives it those lovely hints of autumn fruit. They also continue to produce **Ginger Hare** which they say has firmly established itself; this is an alcoholic ginger beer, created with a blend of malt, hops and real root ginger. It is also available in bottle and has been placed at one of the major national retailers.

The launch of the Bath Ales loyalty card scheme, the **Loyal Hare Force**, has been apparently been very successful with a following still growing daily. "It's a great way to give something back to our loyal customers who visit our pubs."

Bath Ales has been attending all the big local festivals during the summer, including Glastonbury, the Harbourside Festival, several events at Bristol Zoo, Womad and the Bristol Balloon Fiesta to name but a few.

The Bath Ales pubs continue to thrive these being the **Hare on the Hill**, the **Wellington** and **Graze Bar & Chophouse** in Bristol, the **Live and Let Live** in Frampton Cotterell, the **Swan** at Swineford, and the **Hop Pole** and the **Salamander** in Bath. The latest news of food events and special offers in the pubs (and the online shop) are available via the Bath Ales newsletter "Hare and Now". In its tenth year, it continues to provide news, views, offers, promotions, competitions and much more ([www.bathales.com](http://www.bathales.com)).

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bath ales



# A tour of micro-brewers

One of our recent socials was a Saturday trip to various brewpubs, breweries and pubs just north of Swindon and, fortunately, the day dawned bright and sunny.

Our coach was soon on the M4, and with no delays we arrived a little before opening time in the beautiful village of Lechlade. After parking up, we made our way to the **Crown Inn**, a lovely family-run free house, which is also home for the **Halfpenny Brewery**.

Head brewer Graham Gerrard was on hand to welcome us (having specially opened the pub an hour early for us, and also delaying the start of his camping holiday!) and, after we'd all had a chance to get a beer, took us through the courtyard into the brewery at the back. He then talked us through the history (he is an engineer by trade) and explained that the brewing equipment (a four-barrel plant) had been purchased new from the Porter Brewing Company and that they had been brewing using natural ingredients for just under three years. Some bottling is also done. We tried all five brews, these being Old Lech (4.5%), Thames Tickler (4%), Anniversary Ale (4.2%), Four Seasons (4.3%) and Ha'penny Ale (4%).

It was then time to move on to the Crown Inn's 'sister' pub, the **Radnor Arms** at Coleshill and home of the **Old Forge Brewery**. We were warmly welcomed by Alan Watkins, who also owns the aforementioned Crown Inn. He gave us a tour of the brewery which is just over a year old and situated in a separate building to the right of the pub, and explained that they had recently won the Fine Farm Produce Award for the quality of their beers, brewed using local ingredients wherever possible.

The pub itself has only been a pub since 1949 when it was converted from a blacksmith's. It is owned by the National Trust and retains its historical touch, with a fantastic fireplace and horseshoes on the walls. Alan explained how he took it over in early 2010 and started the brewery soon afterwards, again using a four-barrel plant. There were a number of very tasty brews available, and I personally enjoyed Anvil Ale at 3.8% and the stronger Sledgehammer at 5%, all served from casks mounted behind the bar. The pub has also been voted Pub of the Year (2011) by Oxfordshire CAMRA, and its not hard to see why!

As a parting present, Alan kindly gave us each a bottle of beer produced at the brewery in order to remember them by; many thanks indeed Alan.

Our next target was **Best Mates Brewery**, near Wantage, and located on a farm seemingly in the middle of nowhere! After a slight detour around another farm, we soon sighted a number of casks further up the farm track and knew we'd come to the right place. Brewer Darren Weal was on hand to welcome us, and invited us to grab a glass and pour a pint; there were two beers set up for us, Alfie at 4.4% and Midsummer Madness coming in at 3.9%.

The brewery is actually in two converted cowsheds and uses a five-barrel plant, installed in 2007. Typically up to five different beers are brewed, according to seasonal demand, and using water from a local borehole. Bottling is also done by hand on site, and his quality brews have proved very popular in both local pubs and shops, as well as online too. Darren was happy to answer our many questions about the beers as we stood in the sun admiring the surrounding countryside.

All too soon it was time to go, and Darren very kindly gave us a bottle of beer each to commemorate our visit by; thanks Darren!

Our next stop was a short distance into Wantage itself, to the **Shoulder of Mutton**, run by Peter Fowler, who is no stranger to pubs or breweries, having run Pitstop Brewery in the past.

This excellent pub serves a number of real ales and ciders, mostly from local brewers, and included a very black beer coming in at 7%, specially put on for us. Just a half then for me please! Peter very kindly laid on cheese rolls and other nibbles for us as we sat in the courtyard in the sun, and took time off to talk to us about his possible plan for a new micro-brewery sometime in the future.

We certainly wish you the best of luck Peter, and perhaps a return visit will be on the cards!

Our last stop was the **Swan** at Faringdon, another new micro-brewery. Unfortunately the brewer was taking a short break from brewing, so instead we were able to choose from the extensive array of handpumps on the main bar, mainly featuring beers from local and small breweries. The pub itself is very smart and well looked after, and split on two levels. I'm sure a repeat visit will be on the cards too, once brewing restarts.

It was now time to head back to the M4 and home after a most successful day, and likely to be my last as branch social secretary.

Our thanks go to Matt, our driver from Aztec Coaches, as well as Graham at the Halfpenny Brewery, Alan at the Old Forge Brewery, Darren at Best Mates Brewery and Peter at the Shoulder of Mutton, for their warm welcomes and hospitality. Although none of the beers we drank today are common in our area, should you find them in your travels, then do give them a go – you won't be disappointed!

Tim Proudman (photos by Tony Durbin)

Crown Inn / Halfpenny Brewery: [www.halfpennybrewery.co.uk](http://www.halfpennybrewery.co.uk)

Radnor Arms / Old Forge Brewery: [www.oldforgebrewery.co.uk](http://www.oldforgebrewery.co.uk)

Best Mates Brewery Ltd: 01235 835684

Shoulder of Mutton, Wantage: [www.themutton.co.uk](http://www.themutton.co.uk)



Graham Gerrard centre of attention at the Halfpenny Brewery.



In the Old Forge Brewery. Alan Watkins is all in black in the centre.



Darren Weal (in the yellow T-shirt) with some of his Best Mates.



Peter Fowler, stood centre, at the Shoulder of Mutton.

# News from Butcombe

## New Beer Partnership for Butcombe

Butcombe have formed a partnership with Adam Henson, a Cotswold farmer and TV rural affairs presenter, to create a new beer to be called **Adam Henson's Rare Breed**. This relates to the farm's collection of rare breed animals, a crusade started by Adam's father, which form part of the Cotswold Farm Park tourist attraction – and it's also a great bar call!

Maris Otter barley has been grown on the farm for some years and this premium malt, combined with Herefordshire hops and Mendip Spring water, not forgetting the expertise of the Butcombe brewers, has produced an eco-friendly 'grain to glass product' – a distinctive refreshing golden ale with an ABV of 4.2%. This will be launched in October, in cask, at Wetherspoon's beer festival and in bottles from 150 Booker Cash & Carry outlets.

## Other Butcombe news

The brewery will be having an open day on Saturday 1st October from 11am to 3pm as part of the 'Made in North Somerset Showcase', which runs from 17th September to 2nd October, and to mark the start of National Cask Ale Week. Last year's event was very popular with

beer sampling, brewery tours and the Butcombe-sponsored Mendip Morris men, who will be performing again.

Mark Walton is happy to return to the Mendip area as the manager of the **Queen Vic** in Priddy, having latterly had a spell at Butcombe's **Fox & Hounds**, Charlton Adam and previously as manager of the **Swan** in Rowberrow.

**Mendip Spring**, one of the brewery's new seasonal ales this year, has had an extended brewing time with its original April to June slot being extended into August to satisfy demand.

North Somerset Brass Band are playing at all Butcombe's Mendip pubs on Saturday 3rd September, starting at noon at the **Ring O'Bells**, Hinton Blewitt; followed by the **Queen Vic**, Priddy at 1.30pm; the **Ring O'Bells**, Compton Martin at 2.45pm; the **Swan**, Rowberrow at 5pm; the **Lamb**, Axbridge at 6.30pm; and finally at the **Queens Arms**, Bleadon at 8pm. They will certainly be in need of a few drinks after those exertions!

Butcombe's 'Brewer of the Month' will feature beers from Titanic Brewery, Stoke in September; Oakham, Peterborough in October; and Moorhouses, Burnley in November.

The **Colston Yard** in Bristol held an American Beer Festival on the weekend of August 18 to 21st, comprising draught and bottled beer with the accompaniment of themed food.

Butcombe's name is spreading eastward with the famous **Harp Bar** in Covent Garden, CAMRA's national pub of the year, deciding to stock its beers. The **Soho House** in London is now selling Butcombe Bitter as its only cask beer.

The Dorset & Somerset Air Ambulance has been adopted by Butcombe as its charity of the year, benefiting from a generous 50p per brewer's barrel of beer produced. One of the brewery staff, Kirsty, had cause to be very grateful to it last year, after being involved in a very serious car accident from which, thankfully, she has fully recovered.

The brewery products can now be purchased on-line and the brewery now has a Facebook fan page and has launched Butcombe on Twitter.

Margaret Evett



## Butcombe Brewery Open Day

**Saturday October 1st, 11 am - 3 pm**

to mark the start of **Cask Ale Week** (1st - 9th)  
and as part of the

**Made in North Somerset Showcase**

(17th September - 2nd October)

celebrating the best of the region's food, drink, arts and crafts.

**Free beer and the Mendip Morris Men!**



NATIONAL  
**Cask Ale**  
**WEEK**  
1st-9th OCTOBER 2011

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**Contact the editor, Steve Plumridge  
Email [steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk)**



# In Brief

News from **RCH Brewery**, based in West Huish near Weston-super-Mare, is that they will be holding an open day on Friday 23rd September from 11am to 2pm with 'Made in North Somerset'. They will also be at the farmers market at Tyntesfield on Sunday 2nd October. Their beer Firey Liz, brewed to a strength of 5.0% ABV, will be returning for the Wetherspoon's beer festival in October.

The **Great Western Brewing Company** (often referred to as just **GWB**) has been adding to its brewing equipment. They recently obtained two new fermenters, and have bought a malt mill, racking machine and cask washer. They continue to do very well, and their recent Hambrook Pale Ale (HPA) has been so successful that it has become a regular beer in their portfolio.

The **Bag O'Nails** in Hotwells is finally set to reopen. Luke Daniels (who ran the Cornubia a few years back) has signed the lease on the pub and is embarking on doing the place up and installing new equipment. At the time of writing there is no particular date set for reopening. If it's not open by the time you read this, you can follow progress in Luke's blog at [sagaofnails.blogspot.com](http://sagaofnails.blogspot.com).

The **RAFA Club** in Westbury-on-Trym (Carlton Lodge, 38 Eastfield) is having a beer festival on Saturday 17th September. The £2 entrance fee will give you access to a large choice of real ales at reasonable prices. Food will be available, apparently including breakfasts available from 8am, and there will be live entertainment in the evening.

The **Windmill Hill Social Club** in Vivian Street, Windmill Hill has started selling St Austell Tribute at a very reasonable £2.50 a pint. As this is on sale from Friday until it is sold out you might do well to give them a call 0117 9634159.

The **Bristol Real Ale society (BRA)**, a University of Bristol Students' Union society, is to hold a charity beer and cider festival in the Union building on 11th and 12th November. There will be "real ales and ciders from the Scottish Highlands to the Welsh Valleys, from Yorkshire to the sunny South West!" There will also be hot food and live music. Tickets are £5 for a day (afternoon until closing time) or £7 for the weekend, which includes a souvenir glass and your first pint free. BRA members and advance tickets get a second free pint. The festival is open to the public, not just students. See [www.bristolrealale.co.uk](http://www.bristolrealale.co.uk) for more details as they come.

## Cotswold Spring launch new beer

After promising new beers to tempt our tastebuds, Cotswold Spring Brewing Company have launched a new IPA called Trooper. The tasting notes describe it as a 5.2% ABV beer with a sweet malty start in the mouth with fruit coming through, a punchy hop bite with a distinctive bitter finish.

Director, Mark Frankcom said, "We're really excited about our new IPA. We want people to see the real craftsmanship of our award-winning master brewer (Nik Milo) and the character of our beers and brewery. The best way to do that was by refreshing our brand and launching some great new beers like Trooper."

Cotswold Spring also promise several new beers will be added to their portfolio this year but they are being a little coy on what they will be. Watch this space!

The brewery has recently invested in bottling capability on their premises. Mark said, "The ability to do small batches of our beer in bottles is really important to us. We want our established prize-winners and our new recruits to be available to our customers, so you should be able to see Old Sodbury Mild as well as Trooper in bottles in the near future." The bottling facility should be up and running in the autumn.

Steve Matthews



## News from the Bristol Beer Factory

The Bristol Beer Factory is arranging a 'Beer & Food Tour' throughout the months of September and October. These are to demonstrate how well beer can partner all sorts of food. There will be events in Bristol (four or five), Cheltenham, Somerset and London. The venues will include Flinty Red, the Pump House, the Daffodil, Hotel du Vin and the Apple Tree Inn, with dates to be announced soon.

The brewery has recently released a new special beer called Saison. This is classic Belgian-style farmhouse ale, brewed with Saison yeast, carefully balanced with hops, and is described as "deliciously spicy with berry fruits to the fore."

Their craft beer project for the year is to brew 12 stouts ready for Christmas. This is reportedly coming along well with stouts ageing in whisky casks and on raspberries as well as some classic styles, all to be released in a limited number of cases at a brewery open day in December. There are apparently also some further exciting projects in the pipeline.

The Bristol Beer Factory has launched a new range of T-shirts that have been designed by Miller Design and feature the slogan "State of Independents". These are available from the brewery at a cost of £12.50 each.

Overall, the Bristol Beer Factory reports that things are going well and in the last year they have doubled brewing capacity and the team has grown from five to nine people. They are doing a lot more brewery tours and have increased their bottled craft beers from three to nine (12 different beers have been available bottled at one time or another) with hand-bottled, bottle-conditioned beers ranging from wheat beers to stouts and American IPAs. Of course they have also brewed a fantastic range of specials for cask (including Collaboration with Arbor Ales and Zero Degrees for the Bristol Beer Festival) and Southville Hop was crowned champion bottled beer at SIBA South-West.

Richard Brooks



The Bristol Beer Factory brews a wide and diverse range of Craft Beers.

Beers available from  
[www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk](http://www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk)  
- The Brewery Shop, North St  
- The Brewery, Durnford St

or from our outlets at the  
- Tobacco Factory  
- Grain Barge  
- Barley Mow

# New Council House Beer Festival

Many people will recall that for some years the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real ale, held its annual beer festival at the Council House, College Green, Bristol before moving it to the larger venue of the Brunel Passenger Shed at Temple Meads.

For the first time since then there will be another beer festival at the Council House, this time run by BS1 Events. This starts with what they are describing as a "networking event" from 6pm on Friday 28th October, followed by two sessions from 12 noon till 4pm and from 7pm till 11pm on Saturday 29th October. They are estimating a range of 60 real ales and ciders including a good selection from local breweries. Food will be available at all sessions.

We should be clear that this event is being organised and run by BS1 Events and not by CAMRA. However, some advice and support has been provided by the Bristol & District branch and there will be a CAMRA membership/information stand at the festival, hence the usage of the CAMRA logo on the BS1 Events advert.

Furthermore, BS1 Events are offering a free extra half pint to CAMRA members that attend. The ticket price is £10 and includes tokens for five half pints. With the additional one for CAMRA members, they will receive a total of six half pints included in the ticket price. Tickets will be sold online at [www.bs1events.co.uk](http://www.bs1events.co.uk) from 1st September 2011.

Any queries about the BS1 Events Beer Festival at the Council House should be directed to BS1 Events.

Richard Brooks

## Horse & Groom reopens

The Horse & Groom, situated in St George's Road behind Bristol City Council House, reopened recently following several months of closure. The pub has been acquired by Stuart Marshall who is known as the landlord of the Orchard pub, near the SS Great Britain, which won the national CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year in 2009.

The Horse & Groom is a free house and Stuart and his team want the pub to become well known for its real ales and, not surprisingly, cider.

The pub, which dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, has undergone a notable tidy up and redecoration since its recent acquisition. The interior is now welcoming, simple and unpretentious with two distinct areas. On my visits the service has been friendly and prompt. Ales available have included offerings from Otter, Moor, Fuller's, Bath Ales and Palmers. There are currently usually three ales available at any time. Real cider is also available of course.

The pub is still "work in progress". While the front and bar areas have seen substantial improvements, Stuart is now turning his attention to the first floor where it is intended a function room will be available for use by September. I was surprised and delighted to find out that the pub also has an outdoor area to the rear. At the time of writing this area is not really suitable for use. It appears not to have been used for quite some time. However, once the function room is complete, attention will turn to making the rear outside area a place for customers to enjoy.

A new kitchen is being added but the pub already has a simple and good value food offering. On the subject of good value, the real ales are reasonably priced and, better still, on Mondays all draught products are sold for just £2 a pint. Currently the opening hours are restricted to 12 noon until 7pm – let's hope that as trade increases the hours will be extended.

The Horse & Groom is a friendly traditional pub in the middle of the city – handy for the Centre, College Green and Park Street areas. Its future looked a little questionable until recently. Its prospects now appear to be a lot brighter and Bristol & District CAMRA has even booked its November branch meeting there (the pub will consider staying open to the public later if the function room is in use).

It's handy for a mini crawl with the Three Tuns very close by as well as the Bag o'Nails which hopefully should have reopened by the time you read this, so why not check it out soon?

Pete Bridle

Horse & Groom, 17 St George's Road, Bristol BS1 5UU.

Open 12 – 7pm, Tel: 0117 922 1217.

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**Meet up and sample the  
beers whilst networking!**





# Inn and around Portishead

## Redcliffe Bay Beer Festival

After a year off for good behaviour, I am pleased to say the 6th Redcliffe Bay Beer Festival takes place on the nights of Friday, 18th and Saturday, 19th November 2011 at Redcliffe Bay Hall. Two locals, John Steward and Ian Looker, have taken over the running of this festival. John and Ian are both keen ale drinkers and John even has a proper beard. As the festival had been my baby, I am delighted that the festival and its customers will be in safe hands (in his previous life John's day job was helping people with psychological problems). The new boys will have their own ideas as far as the beers on the night go but I expect they will continue to use some of our excellent local, independent breweries. They are starting to put their thoughts together on which other areas they will visit to pick up beers which rarely appear in our local pubs. It is hoped they will have around 30 real ales available in total. As before, to achieve this range, polypins will be used.

All the proceeds will continue to go to the charity, the Children's Hospice South West. Tickets for each night will be just £5 to cover entry, tasting notes and a commemorative glass. Basic food such as filled rolls will be on sale at both sessions.

John and Ian will be selling tickets at a couple of sessions at local pubs. First they will be at the **Windmill Inn**, Nore Road, Portishead between 7.30 and 9.30pm on Tuesday, 13th September. Then, on Thursday, 15th September they will be at the **Ship** on the Coast Road, in the Redcliffe Bay area, between 7.30 and 9.30pm. If you can't make either of those dates, you can get tickets by writing to John Steward at 29A Hillside Road, Portishead, BS20 8EU with your cheque payable to 'The Children's Hospice South West' plus a stamped, addressed envelope. Tickets usually run out by the end of September so don't hang about. No tickets are available on the door and tickets are non-refundable. CAMRA members will of course be welcomed and the Hall is on the main Bristol to Portishead bus route.

## More Musings of Vic Long

Long-standing (in more ways than one) landlord of the **Ship Inn**, Vic Long, has been busy again. He has been researching his family history and found that ancestors of his on his mother's side lived in the **Black Horse**, Clapton in Gordano back in 1841 and one of them, John Parsons, was shown on the census as being the landlord. Vic assured me that current landlords, Nick and Jane, do not need to look out for him turning up and claiming his inheritance in the near future.

I can also announce that young Victor is coming into the 21st century these days by recently visiting a chiropractor, seeking to ease a shoulder problem. You can imagine his reaction when the young lady placed his arm in an unusual position as part of this process. Am I the only one to notice a spring in his step since?

*Neil Ravenscroft*



A glimpse from the 2005 Redcliffe Bay Beer Festival of one of the new organisers, John Steward

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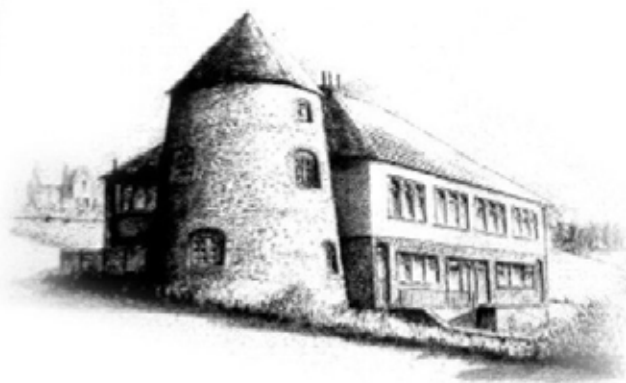
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### Some festival and contact details in brief

- Sept 9-10, Chew Valley, Ubley, Village Hall - Steve Blanchard, 01761 462468, shblanchard@aol.com, www.chewvalleybeerfestival.co.uk
- Sept 10-11, Somerset CAMRA, WSR, Minehead - Alan Walker, 01823 330364, apwalker@tiscali.co.uk
- Sept 16-18, Wedmore, Village Hall, BS28 4EQ - Trevor Prideaux, 01934 710004, trevorprideaux@hotmail.com, www.wedmoreale.co.uk  
(supplied by Trevor Brideaux)

## Arbor Ales at Foodies Festival



Arbor Ales provided the only real ale bar at the “Foodies Festival” in Battersea Park on Saturday 30th July. In spite of the very warm weather, excellently conditioned and cooled ale was enjoyed by this correspondent and several thousand other visitors.

An fine addition to the portfolio sampled that day was Nelson Sauvin, one of their single hop brews, which went well with Arbor’s new Oyster Stout cheese produced by the Cheshire Cheese company! A job well done.

Pictured serving at the event are Jon Comer (peering above the cask and Namaya Reynolds.

Mark Hanrahan

## News from Arbor Ales

The main development at Arbor Ales currently is the success of the new range of bottled-conditioned ales. All bottling is done in-house at the brewery, which allows for a large selection of different beers to be available; at the time of writing no fewer than twelve different beers were conditioning. In addition to Arbor’s own two pubs, current outlets include Grain and Grind on Gloucester Road, West Country Ales in Cheddar, Corks of Cotham and Favourite Beers in Cheltenham.

On the global front, last year’s harvest of American hops has sold out, having been over-subscribed by 30 per cent. The brewery still has limited supplies of a few of these hops but one or two beers are on hold until this year’s harvest arrives around November time. In particular, this means that the three 18-gallon casks of **Yakima Valley IPA** (7.0% ABV) recently sent to the Great British Beer Festival offered the last chance to sample this popular ale on draught until the next harvest becomes available; there are still a few cases of bottles available, but these will no doubt be gone before too long. As a consolation, **Kiwi IPA** has been brewed using Green Bullet, Nelson Sauvin, Motueka, Pacific Gem, Pacific Jade and Southern Cross hops. A 12% barley wine has also been brewed in collaboration with the Dorset micro **Art Brew**.

An ‘outside bar’ is now up and running having been active at the recent Harbourside Foodies Festival in Bristol. The travelling Arbor Ales bar also featured in Battersea Park, London at the end July to promote the forthcoming move by the brewery to sell their wares in the capital. The 100 new casks recently acquired have all gone into circulation and it looks as though another batch will be required sooner rather than later.

Lastly, congratulations go to Paul Worsley, assistant brewer at Arbor, who has just picked up his first award. Paul’s first attempt at brewing **Oyster Stout** recently won Beer of Festival at this year’s Cotswold Beer Festival. An impressive achievement considering Paul only started brewing back in February.

Henry Davies

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

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

“Aye, I’ve got plenty of ACKERS,” grumbled my friend, twiddling the umbrella

in his coçktil, “but no bloomin’ pub and no bloomin’ *Theakstons*

*Old Peculier*, that’s for sure.” “Why don’t you juřt go home and get

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

the rays beside him, “It’s the missus, won’t go anywhere it rains.” “Ah, I see.” I replied, wondering

how the leggy Latino lovely liked being referred to as the **MISSUS**. Then, wiřtfully, I thought

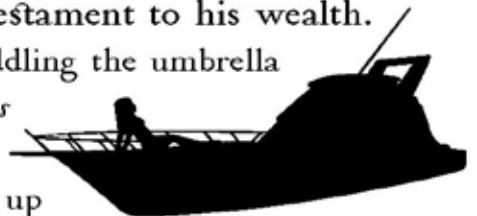
of my very own řpecial rain-řpattered corner of Yorkshire. The lady

I loved would be there now, behind her bar serving pint after pint of

*Theakstons* Old Peculier, dark, rich, and deliciously strong. With my

return tiçket burning a hole in my poçket, I turned to my mate in exile.

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



PECULIERLY FINE COMPANY



# Gloucester - ghost town?

Ever had a free evening but fancied going somewhere different? This was how Vince Murray and I ended up one summer Saturday in Gloucester. Neither us could recall ever having more than a random drink in this cathedral city, less than an hour by train from Bristol. But there are six pubs here listed in the current CAMRA Good Beer Guide, five of which have the “train” symbol, meaning within half a mile from a train station.

We arrived at the fag-end of the shopping day, and were surprised by how quiet the streets seemed even in the shopping area, where the majority of the pubs are located. Working on the principle of starting at our furthest point out, we headed up Westgate Street until on the periphery of the shopping area we arrived at **Pig Inn the City**. This is a sizeable, friendly boozer which seems to serve as a southerly brewery tap for Malvern's St George's Brewery, as their brews, including a new experimental beer, occupied four of the six handpulls.

The friendly landlord, pleased to see new customers, came over and introduced himself. “You’ve come from the big city to visit our quiet village,” was his illuminating first quip. Echoing the views of the local CAMRA's *News Views & Events* pamphlet which we had just picked up off the bar, he decried the lack of trade in the city centre; lack of buses, exorbitant taxis, limited traffic access and aggressive parking wardens were all mentioned. Trade was down he declared, despite running what is clearly an enterprising pub with signs everywhere for food offers, entertainment and sport on TV.

Next stop was the **Dick Whittington**, a fine old building much extended over time, where five pumps dispensed beers including Severn Vale Dance, a rich, malty and fruity brew, plus Thornbridge's mighty Jaipur IPA. At this point we ventured off plan. We had been intrigued by a largely critical article on Sam Smith's pubs in *The Tippler*, Gloucestershire CAMRA's newsletter, so we popped into the neighbouring **Old Crown**. We found many of the criticisms to be cogent. There was no branding outside of the pub, and inside we found a smart but austere pub with a moribund atmosphere, the five punters all seemingly seated as far from each other as possible staring gloomily into their pints. This was at 7pm on a Saturday evening! As the beer range is disappointingly all keg, not a real ale in sight, Vince ordered a half-pint bottle of the brewery's excellent Cherry beer, and was taken aback to be asked for £3.70, remarkable as he had purchased a bottle for £1.99 in Gardiner Haskins in Bristol that very morning! My bottle of Oatmeal stout was a stunning £4.06! We departed shaking our heads at this extraordinary brewery, and headed to the **Fountain** for solace. This is a fine old inn dating from the



17<sup>th</sup> century, with a pleasant outdoor courtyard to drink in. Six real ales included Pure Gold from Purity brewery and Old English Rose from Cotswold Spring.

Next stop was the **Cross Keys Inn**, which is apparently known as a live entertainment venue, although there was nothing on when we were there. It was now peak time on a Saturday night and we were astonished to find ourselves alone apart from one other customer. This was not the sort of Saturday evening we were used to!

Finally we finished off at the **New Inn** on Northgate Street, which had long been on my ‘pubs to visit’ list. This is because of the exalted place it holds on the CAMRA National Inventory of historic pubs as the most complete galleried coaching inn still in existence. In 1553 the accession of the ill-fated Lady Jane Grey to the throne was announced from the same galleries. The galleries and courtyard are stunning, but the building inside lacks the same attention. There were four real ales here including offerings from Shepherd Neame and Thwaites. We chose to eat here as the menu proclaimed two meals for £10. This was the only positive I can find on the food we were served, which took an inordinately long time to come. But at least the New Inn was blessed with other patrons. On the way back to the station we passed the **Regal** in Kings Square, a Wetherspoon's outlet, which with its proximity to the bus and train stations seemed to be flourishing.

On alighting at Temple Meads we were immediately swamped with people heading into Bristol city centre for an evening's fun, what a contrast!

So, our verdict? Well, we were made welcome in all the pubs (bar maybe one), and visited some great pubs with good quality beer being served. The pubs were doing their very best to put on a good range of real ale (Sam Smith's excepted), although we didn't encounter much dark beer – maybe we are spoilt in Bristol! We were truly astonished by how empty the streets and pubs were. If tumbleweed had blown down the streets we wouldn't have been surprised! Perhaps trade has moved out to the redeveloped Gloucester docks area, or as some suggested, the fault lies with the council for the paucity of events taking place in the city centre at night. In any event it was a crying shame to see so many fine pubs virtually deserted.

Finally, if you are intrigued, go and have a look for yourself. You will be welcome and the pubs need your support!

Phil Cummings

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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)

### Disabled access

I like my beer but I'm also wheelchair bound, so I can tell you precious few pubs are really accessible or have loos for the disabled. A large number are accessible only with help and a substantial minority are totally inaccessible. By way of illustration only seven of the 30 pubs listed under Bristol in the 2011 Good Beer Guide are, to my knowledge, accessible and of just those seven pubs only four are listed as having truly wheelchair accessibility to the pub and the WCs, although a fifth – the Colston Yard – does but is not listed as such. Of the remaining pubs 12 are accessible only with difficulty and help and 11 are totally inaccessible. If you think this number is high the only consolation I can offer you is that disabled access to Bath pubs is even worse.

Which brings me to the usual excuses for not doing anything about access: "this is a listed building", "the planners would object", "it would cost too much", "cause too much disruption", "there's only one of you" and so on. I've heard them all. Many are of course excuses not reasons. And as for "there's only one of you", I have family and friends and if I can't get into a pub they don't come in either.

The only pub operator that seems to take its legal and social responsibilities seriously is Wetherspoon; most of their pubs have easy disabled access and WCs despite many being in listed or converted buildings.

It can be done.

Yours sincerely,  
Chris Buckell,  
Bristol.

### Take the rough with the smooth.

Whilst expected, I was still disappointed to hear in your summer edition that the Crown on Soundwell Road is definitely to be developed

for flats. It could be such a good pub in an area with a population fast increasing due to many other newly built apartments nearby. If anything you might think this could strengthen the case to keep it.

All the while it seems Wetherspoon goes from strength to strength. During the middle of June on a Sunday morning whilst returning from a car boot sale in Longwell Green I visited the quite newly opened Jolly Sailor in Hanham, a recent Wetherspoon addition. Very nice it was too! As I savoured my Westons Marcle Hill I had a pleasant chat with the barmaid. As I fought off the guilt trip that weighed on me for having a pint at 9.20 in the morning, a habit that I've mostly stopped indulging in, she informed me that it once had a bit of a reputation for being a bit rough. So hats off to Wetherspoon for doing such a fine makeover on it. In the time I had that one pint I noticed two families go in and order breakfast and drinks. Whilst I applaud Wetherspoon for obviously having found a niche in the market, and I took on board some of the positive things that your last edition highlighted, my concerns for many of the more traditional outlets still remain. Whilst the industry is, I feel, largely a matter of its own misfortunes, for all I know the Jolly Sailor may well have become another permanent closure if not for Wetherspoon. So congratulations to them for doing such a fine job on it!

Lastly a topic that also interested me, having one myself, was your letters concerning dogs in pubs. Out of the seven pubs along my local high street in Staple Hill (in which I include one that's only five minutes' walk off it), I'm glad to say that only two object to me taking my little Pekingese in. Doesn't this just all boil down to a degree of common sense and good manners on the part of the dog owner and manager? As long as the dog is on a lead, well behaved and kept away from either people who are eating or a designated eating area, I really can't see what the fuss is about. In actual fact I've found that many managers admit to the dogs often being better behaved than many customers.

Craig Weadon,  
Staple Hill,  
Bristol.

know it is a Wetherspoon's, but it is a manager training Wetherspoon's. The manager is both supportive and enthusiastic about his real ales, and the cellarman is a branch member, so the beers are always very good. I hope that the cellarman, should he read the article, will not be offended.

However, an excellent article.

Cheers,  
Morris Elsworth,  
Chairman,  
CAMRA North Devon Branch.

*Andrew Swift responds: Morris, no offence intended. I was merely trying to flag up pubs beyond the Good Beer Guide in this article and the others in the latest Pints West. There are many, many excellent pubs in North Devon – far too many to include – and I'm very glad I made a special trip out to Holsworthy recently to try the Old Market. I liked it so much made a return trip. Glad you liked the article – hope to meet up some time, either at the Tom Cobley, which we get down to quite often, or at a beer festival down your way.*

### Bristol Pubs Group

As a member of Bristol Pubs Group (a sub-committee of Bristol & District CAMRA) I would like to point out the good work being done by the group. The group's main interest is in saving and supporting community pubs and the social issues around them in our area. Even though we are all members of CAMRA, its main objectives are not pushing for the sale of real ales; the most important issue is to save the pubs for the local community who live and socialise in them. Without community pubs there would be very little real ale anyway.

With the constant closing of establishments in the Bristol area, we need to fight the decline and the current sad state of affairs. The issues surrounding the large pub companies and their practices often result in pubs that seem to struggle to keep going in these hard financial times. In an area such as mine in South East Bristol it is too late as there are no pubs at all in Knowle West and the surrounding areas are also dwindling fast. The Happy Landings on the Wells road closed at the end of 2009 and was the last pub open around there – a heavily populated area with nowhere to go. Plenty of supermarkets though selling cheap alcohol which, as we all know, has played a major part in pub closures!

There have been several success stories for the group and through dedicated work, especially by the tireless Pete Bridle, pubs have been saved, such as the Lamb at Cadbury Heath. Some others are to open again such as, the Lamplighters in Shirehampton for one. The Farriers in Fishponds is currently on our radar and it is hoped it will be saved from the negative plans of Morrisons. Other pubs such as the Highwayman in Kingswood have people trying to save it too. So, if you feel strongly about a local pub in your area that may be in trouble or likely to close then get in touch with our group. There are bi-monthly meetings on last Thursday of the month, the next one being held on 29th September at the recently re-opened Horse and Groom behind the Council house.

Keith Shapland,  
BPG and CAMRA member.

### North Devon pubs

Having attended the last CAMRA regional meeting held in Bristol on Saturday, I picked up a Pints West magazine and read with great interest an excellent article by Andrew Swift entitled "Reasons to be Cheerful ... in North Devon." I thought the article was excellent and he obviously enjoyed a lot of good North Devon pubs. It was a shame he by-passed Barnstaple's insertion in the Good Beer Guide. I

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# APPLE: 40 years on (nearly)



In the beginning (well, 1971) there was CAMRA, an organisation set up to protect and promote real ale. And without it, we would be in a real state, shuffling around trying to find the one pub in a hundred that still served proper beer. And very successful we've been.

But in the mid-seventies, it was agreed that we would also fight to preserve and promote real cider and perry. And we've been very good at that as well, but not a lot of people know CAMRA for cider and perry. So let me explain.

In 1986 a national committee was set up within CAMRA specifically to deal with cider and perry – APPLE – the “Apple and Pear Produce Liaison Executive”. (Bit of a mouthful, eh?) And since then, with just a small band of us, we have achieved a great deal.

One of the first things we did was to create a definition of what CAMRA would accept as real cider and perry. This was altered slightly a few years back, and this definition is about to undergo a full review. This isn't, as some producers think, us telling them what they should make, it is only telling them what we, as CAMRA, accept.

In the early days of APPLE we launched the first annual cider trip, which visited several producers in Somerset. When I say launched, we didn't actually go by rocket, not after we found out that you can hire a coach much cheaper. And that first trip was so enjoyable that we've been doing it every year since.

We have also been instrumental in getting CAMRA festivals to have separate bars for cider and perry, and have found this to be the best way to campaign for perry. CAMRA festivals are almost the only events where you will find a range of perries, although in the early days, most customers didn't know what perry was. Now there are customers who go to beer festivals just to drink the perry, as they can't find it anywhere else, unless it's some poor imitation in a bottle labelled “pear cider”.

And since those early days of CAMRA, when we held four national cider and perry festivals long before the current fad of pub cider festivals, we now run a Cider Pub of the Year competition, a Cider and a Perry of the Year award (with the finals taking place at Reading Beer and Cider Festival in May), we have produced window stickers for pubs

selling real cider, we liaise with producers, give technical advice, run a cider training course at the Great British Beer festival, monitor what is happening in the industry, communicate with Parliament, organise a cider and perry month each October, encourage pubs to stock real cider, and a great deal more that I can't mention here, because I'm running out of breath.

APPLE meets four times a year, and despite the seriousness of what we are doing, we often have the meetings at a festival, so there is a social side to things. But, as volunteers, we need to be having a good time and enjoying ourselves as well, otherwise we wouldn't be doing it for nothing. So let's hope that it continues for another 40 years (nearly).

Mick Lewis

## Real cider sold here?

### REAL CIDER



### SOLD HERE

Ten years ago Westons Old Rosie won CAMRA's National Champion Cider of the Year Competition for an unprecedented third time in a row, but ten years ago not even Old Rosie was widely available in every town or city.

In fact it was no exaggeration to describe the cider and perry landscape of ten years ago as a dusty desert where CAMRA beer festivals popped up temporarily as oases of real cider and perry. The only other chance to get a drop of the real stuff was to travel to cider producers and purchase products at the farm gate – not something everyone could do.

Real cider and perry had to be hunted out by a band of enthusiasts who became ‘evangelists’ sharing their wisdom, tips and recommendations with each other.

Ten years on and there has been a gigantic shift in the availability of real cider and perry. In 2011 every CAMRA region has at least one pub selling real products, and almost 1,000 pubs have been issued with CAMRA's ‘Real Cider Sold Here’ stickers. These have been made available to those which have been signed up to CAMRA's scheme to promote pubs selling real cider and perry.

There is a list of such pubs (and cider shops) at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) – click the ‘ABOUT CIDER’ section top right and scroll down to the ‘Is there a good cider pub near you?’ section. If a pub near you (or your own pub) has at least one real cider or perry available throughout the year, then you can submit the pubs details for the list and CAMRA will send a free window sticker to the pub.

As you would expect with this increased availability year on year there are more entries for CAMRA's Cider & Perry Pub of the Year Competition. Increased demand for products has meant increased supply from existing and new producers, which in turn has led to an increase in the number of apple orchards being planted.

In 2011 consumers want products which are close to nature, unadulterated with chemicals and gases, and locally created into unique drinks capturing heritage, quality and flavour as only real cider and perry can do.

So wander down to your local and enjoy a glass of your choice. Wassail.

Gillian Williams

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# CAMRA's 40th A



CAMRA member no. 000138, Mr F Pritchard



Branch Chairman Richard Brooks cuts the cake accompanied by Com

Founded in 1971, CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, reached its 40th anniversary this year and the Bristol & District branch held a party to celebrate this milestone at the Commercial Rooms, Corn Street, Bristol on Thursday 30 June.

Our thanks go to Helen Bull and her team at the Commercial Rooms who really pulled out all the stops to help make this a great event. As well as a buffet and some raffle prizes they went the extra mile on the beer and ensured that a range of 12 guest real ales was maintained throughout the busy evening. This went down very well with the CAMRA members present and resulted in the Commercial Rooms setting a new record of selling 1,002 pints of real ale in a single day. The Commercial Rooms is now offering a discount of 50p on a pint of real ale on production of a current CAMRA membership card.

Of course we should also remember to thank the CAMRA volunteers who put some time and effort into



# Anniversary Party



commercial Rooms manager Helen Bull (left) and local CAMRA members.

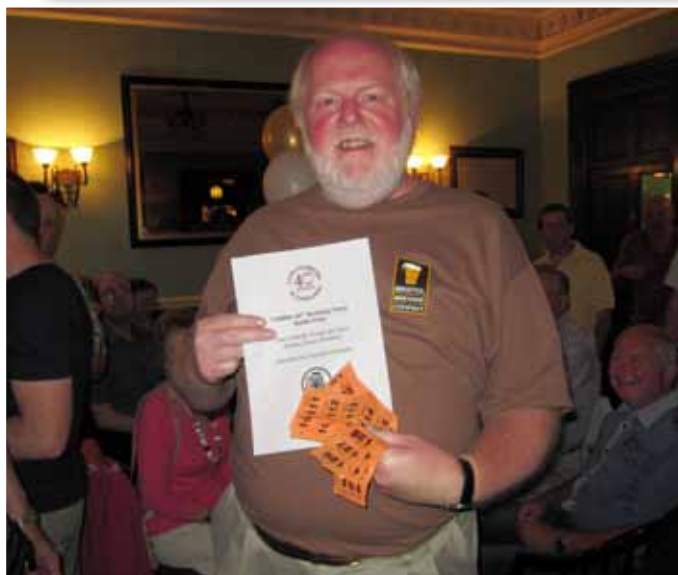


planning and organising the party.

Local member and brewer Vince Crocker of Ashley Down brewery kindly donated a firkin of real ale as a raffle prize, which was quickly snapped up. A donation of some bottles of Thomas Hardy Ale for the raffle was apparently from CAMRA member number 000123, although unfortunately he was not able to attend the party. The lowest membership number spotted during the evening was that of Mr F Pritchard, CAMRA member number 000138. New joiners can now expect to receive a CAMRA member number of well over 300000! Both our local branch membership (over 2,400) and the national CAMRA membership (over 127,000) are at an all time high.

At the party there were also pub games to be played, a CAMRA 40th birthday cake and plenty of catching up with people about both old and new times, so a splendid time was had by all. Roll on the next 40 years...

*Richard Brooks*



# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

## Pub and brewery news from the CAMRA Bath & Borders branch

### *Bath and Surrounding Villages*

#### **Jubilee, 91 Whiteway Road, Bath**

Around 4am on 5 July, a major fire broke out at this former pub on the edge of the city. The Jubilee, which opened in 1888, incorporating an earlier beerhouse called the Whiteway House, closed in 2008 and was acquired by Ellson Homes. Planning permission had already been granted for residential units on the site. The main road past the pub was closed for several hours as firefighters brought the blaze under control and made the structure safe.

#### **Westgate, 38 Westgate Street, Bath**

This city-centre pub has recently been acquired by Greene King. We understand that this may be the first Greene King-owned pub in Bath. At the time of writing it had closed for a major refurbishment.

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

This once-popular pub on Lansdown Road closed earlier this year, planning permission for change of use having been granted in 2010. The building had been an inn – originally a very upmarket inn – since 1792.



Belvedere

#### **Hare & Hounds, Lansdown Road, Bath**

The lease of this popular pub is being advertised by Scottish & Newcastle.



Hare and Hounds

### *East Somerset*

#### **Woolpack, 2 Warminster Road, Beckington, near Frome**

This large village-centre pub has recently undergone a major and thoroughly excellent refurbishment. The whole design and atmosphere of the pub has been utterly transformed.

#### **George Inn, Long Street, Croscombe, near Wells**

For the second time this friendly village locals' pub has been awarded the accolade of Bath & Borders Branch Rural Pub of the Year. The certificate was presented to landlords Peter and Vryan Graham by branch chairman James Honey on the evening of Thursday 9 June. The George first won this award in 2009.

#### **Corner House, formerly the Lamb, 1 Christchurch Street East, Frome**

This pub was acquired from Blindman's Brewery by the Penguin Dining Company earlier this year. The subsequent change of name from the Lamb to the Corner House has not seemed to have been accompanied by any change in the atmosphere, style or décor of the pub, or even of the beer range, which remains largely Blindman's based. The major refurbishment carried out by Blindman's, which transformed this once run-down pub into a pleasant, welcoming, modern pub-cum-restaurant with outstanding accommodation upstairs, is still relatively recent.

#### **Bell, 13 Frome Road, Rode, near Frome**

This large roadside pub is now under new ownership. At the time of

writing little had changed at this smart, food-orientated pub. The major refurbishment by previous owners Flatcappers is still recent. The beer range now includes beers from the local Blindman's brewery.

### *West Wiltshire*

#### **George, 67 Woolley Street, Bradford-on-Avon**

The George is beginning to look like the real ale place to go in Bradford-on-Avon. The pub is now serving up to six beers regularly on gravity with a range that has included not only beers from the comparatively new Devilfish brewery but the even newer still Willy Good Ales (see later on). There has also been a recent refurbishment.

#### **King's Arms, 24 Coppice Hill, Bradford-on-Avon**

It sometimes seems that you gain one pub and then lose another. Only back in February, just up the hill from the King's Arms, the long-closed Bear re-opened following an extensive refurbishment. In May the landlord of the Greene King-owned King's Arms left and the pub closed. In June it re-opened as an Indian restaurant.

#### **Plough, 49-51 Trowbridge Road, Bradford-on-Avon**

The landlord of this large roadside pub sadly and unexpectedly died in June.

#### **Three Horseshoes, 68 High Street, Chapmanslade**

Following a refurbishment this pub re-opened at lunchtime on Wednesday 18 May. The pub is now owned by the same company that has recently acquired and refurbished the Rose & Crown in Trowbridge and who also own the Duke of Cumberland at Edford, near Radstock. The Three Horseshoes was visited by members on Thursday 7 July. The pub, rather like its two sister pubs, has a light, open feel. All the drinking and dining areas are knocked through but retain separate characters. A large open fireplace commands the area to the left of the main entrance and bar, where there are comfy chairs and sofas and a generally cosy feel. To the right of the entrance and opposite the bar is another distinct area with wood-block flooring. Beyond that there is a large carpeted area which, very much with diners in mind, is laid out neatly with tables and chairs. There is a beer garden out back and a relatively large car park to the side of the pub. The range when we visited consisted of Wadworth 6X, Butcombe Bitter and Milk Street Beer. We understand that the latter is a guest and that the guest policy of the pub at the moment is to alternate Milk Street and Devilfish beers. Thatcher's Heritage cider is also available.

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

This pub is just beyond the southern boundary of the Bath & Borders branch area but is regularly used by some of our active members. The new landlords, who took the pub a few months ago, have worked hard on the maintenance of the building and garden, which is now lovely, and have restored the pub to the friendly village local that it was a few years ago. Customers seem to be returning in good numbers. The beer range includes Plain Ales as standard with two guests. The pub is now selling food described as "pub food". The menu looks interesting and prices are reasonable. Food is not available, however, on Mondays.

#### **Red Admiral, Hackett Place, Paxcroft Mead, Hilperton**

This is a completely new pub. Situated in the retail area of the extensive Paxcroft Mead housing development to the east of Trowbridge, this Martson's-owned pub opened its doors in May. The Red Admiral is very much a food and family orientated pub. There are five Marston's related beers, with Pedigree heading the range. Jennings beers feature regularly. Meanwhile the food, in the opinion of one of our members who visited the pub on Tuesday 28 June, was very good.

#### **Golden Fleece, Folly Lane, Shaw**

This pleasantly situated rural pub is technically just outside the Bath & Borders branch area. The pub changed hands in around May.

#### **Axe & Cleaver, Frome Road, Southwick, near Trowbridge**

This pub, which had been closed for years, re-opened in the spring almost without announcement. There has been no refurbishment so far



# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

at this pub following its sudden re-opening, or at least no sign of any. Indeed the interior still resembled, at the time of writing, the Indian restaurant that the pub had been turned into before the premises previously closed. The range includes Moles which, during a recent visit by a local member, was found to be very good.

## **Rose & Crown, 36 Stallard Street, Trowbridge**

This Grade II-listed pub re-opened at 5pm on Thursday 16 June. Now owned by the same company that has recently acquired and refurbished the Three Horseshoes at Chapmanslade, and which also owns the Duke of Cumberland at Edford, the Rose & Crown has undergone a thorough renovation and refurbishment. The pub was visited by local members on the evening that it opened, which was very well attended. The whole atmosphere of the pub has been transformed. This once cosy pub now has a light, modern, open feel. The two bars have been knocked through but retain separate layouts. The Rose & Crown still feels like a two-bar pub. The left-hand bar is laid out with tables and chairs and is clearly very much the dining area of the pub. Meanwhile the right-hand bar has comfy chairs and a more spacious feel. To the rear of the pub is an outdoor area, enclosed on three sides, which makes a pleasant sun-trap on warm summer days. The pub was once something of a land-mark with its vibrant pink painted walls. Over the years the paint had begun to fade and peel and the rendering itself had started to crack. The rendering has now been repaired and the exterior of the pub smartly re-painted a more sober light grey. Meanwhile the pub has widened its appeal. Catering not only for drinkers and diners but also for people who may simply wish to drop in for a quick coffee or a light snack. This is a smart move as the pub is only a stone's throw from Trowbridge station. Finally the beer range during opening night consisted of Wadworth 6X, Butcombe Bitter and Bombshell from the new and local Devilfish brewery.

## **Fox & Hounds, 6 Deverill Road, Warminster**

This popular freehouse, just off the town centre, has been awarded the accolade of Bath & Borders Community Pub of the Year. A special social was held by the branch on the evening of Tuesday 14 June to hand over the certificate.

## **Snooty Fox, 1 Brook Street, Warminster**

This tucked-away pub, situated in the southern part of the town, has

recently changed hands and been refurbished. The focus of the pub is, as it was before, very much towards food.

## **Yew Tree, 174 Boreham Road, Warminster**

This Marston's-owned pub on the southern edge of the town has recently been taken over by new landlords who are clearly putting a lot of effort into turning the Yew Tree into much more a community pub.

## **Pear Tree, Top Lane, Whitley, near Melksham**

This pub is technically just outside the Bath & Borders area. It has recently been acquired by celebrity chef Marco Pierre White.

## **Willy Good Ales, Winsley, near Bradford-on-Avon**

This is a new microbrewery that has only recently gone into production. Only bottled beers were produced up until around the end of May. Early June saw the brewery's first cask beer, Willy Hop, making its debut in at least two pubs in Bradford-on-Avon, namely the George in Woolley Street and, we believe, the Three Horseshoes on Frome Road. Willy Hop is also available in bottled form alongside a wheat beer and a double IPA. The bottled range is available from the Hartley farm shop, where the brewery is based, and Troughs in Avoncliff.

*Steve Hunt*

## **Tucker's Grave re-opens**



The National Inventory-listed pub Tucker's Grave has re-opened. Situated on an isolated crossroads between the villages of Norton St Philip and Faulkland, this uniquely traditional pub closed on 31st May with (what seemed at the time) the retirement of landlords and owners Glenda and Ivan Swift, coming on the back of Ivan's worsening illness. The future of the pub seemed very uncertain. But Glenda has missed her customers so much that she has decided to re-open Tucker's Grave and run it with help from locals.

The pub opened its doors to the public on Tuesday 16th August and was visited by the branch two days later. We're happy to report that almost nothing has changed; you'd almost never know that it had closed. The one slight change is that London Pride has replaced Bass. Meanwhile the pub still sells Butcombe Bitter and, of course, the perfectly excellent Thatcher's Cheddar Valley cider.

*Steve Hunt*



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# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

## Beer festivals in and around Bath & Borders

### **RISING SUN, WINSLEY ROAD, BRADFORD ON AVON, 26-29 AUGUST**

The annual Rhythm & Booze Festival, with beer, cider and a barbecue, raising funds for Dorothy House. ([www.rising\\_sun\\_at\\_bradford\\_on\\_avon.co.uk](http://www.rising_sun_at_bradford_on_avon.co.uk))

### **THREE CROWNS, CHIPPENHAM, 26-29 AUGUST**

This superb family-run pub hosts yet another festival, with 19 beers plus 16 ciders and perries, and food served all weekend. ([www.threecrownschippensham.co.uk](http://www.threecrownschippensham.co.uk))

### **INN AT FRESHFORD, 27-29 AUGUST**

A 'Best of the West' festival with beer, cider, live music and barbecue. The inn has been under new management since the beginning of the year, offering a range of beers from its sister company, Box Steam Brewery, and is rapidly gaining a reputation for real ale. It is also linked with the Cross Guns at nearby Freshford, and the websites of both pubs include a downloadable Two Valleys Walk through the unspoilt countryside between them. Both pubs have railway stations with regular services from Bath, Bristol and towns in Wiltshire. The bank holiday beer festival is an ideal opportunity for a mini-pub crawl through glorious countryside with no need for a driver. ([www.theinnatfreshford.co.uk](http://www.theinnatfreshford.co.uk))

### **WAGGON & HORSES, BATHEASTON, 28 AUGUST**

Cider and ale festival from noon in this pub which has recently been taken over by new management.

### **ORGAN INN, WARMINSTER, 9-10 SEPTEMBER**

The 4th Organ Beer Festival, with 13 ales plus nine ciders and perries in this splendidly quirky and very friendly hostelry ([www.theorganinn.co.uk](http://www.theorganinn.co.uk)). The festival coincides with Heritage Open Days at Warminster Maltings, one of only two traditional maltings still surviving in the country. The malting is open on Friday 9 September from 15.00 to 16.00, and on Saturday 10 September from 14.00 to 15.00 and 15.30 to 16.30. Booking is required – please call Elisabeth Collins on 01985 212825. ([www.heritageopendays.org.uk/directory/HOD007347E/](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/directory/HOD007347E/))



The Raven (from early last century showing the pub when it used to occupy the shop on the corner, now occupied by an estate agent)



Rising Sun, Bradford on Avon



Waggon and Horses



Inn at Freshford

### **WESSEX BEER FESTIVAL, COURT HOTEL, CHILCOMPTON, 9-10 SEPTEMBER**

Organised by the Rotary, with 30 beers and 27 ciders. Tickets available online. ([www.wessexbeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.wessexbeerfestival.co.uk))

### **LANGFORD BEER FESTIVAL, LANGFORD SPORTS CENTRE, 16-17 SEPTEMBER**

32 beers are lined up for this well-established and popular annual event down in the Wylde Valley in Wiltshire, now in its twelfth year. All

proceeds go towards developing the Langford Sports & Community Centre. ([www.phreatic.co.uk/langfordbeerfestival](http://www.phreatic.co.uk/langfordbeerfestival))

### **RAVEN, QUEEN STREET, BATH, 30 SEPTEMBER-6 OCTOBER**

A Harvest Beer Festival, featuring over 30 beers, with twelve on at any one time. If you've been to previous festivals at the Raven, you'll know that unusual beers from anywhere in Britain are likely to turn up – with the Harvest theme dictating the selection, who knows what delights will turn up? ([www.theravenofbath.co.uk](http://www.theravenofbath.co.uk))

Andrew Swift



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## Bath Beer Festival cancelled

**The Bath & Borders branch of CAMRA has reluctantly decided to cancel the beer festival which was to have been held at the Pavilion in Bath this October. After 33 years at the venue, the decision was not taken lightly, but, due to a combination of factors, the branch members felt they had no alternative.**

The decision was prompted by the decision of the management of the Pavilion to impose a ban on the use of glasses at this year's festival and insist that plastic glasses be used instead. The branch was notified of this in June. Apart from going very much against the grain as far as any red-blooded CAMRA member is concerned, this had serious financial implications.

First, it was felt that there would be a drop in attendance because some people would simply refuse to drink out of plastic glasses. It was agreed that, if the festival went ahead, it was only fair that any publicity should highlight the use of plastic glasses, as they are not only virtually unknown at CAMRA beer festivals, but go against the whole ethos of the organisation. It was also felt that this would avoid the problem of people asking for their money back once they got into the festival and realised they would have to drink out of plastic glasses.

Second, it was considered unlikely that many people would want to keep plastic glasses as a souvenir of the festival. If they returned the glasses and asked for a refund at the end of the sessions, this would not only reduce profits but also leave the organisers with boxes of unwanted plastic glasses – thus creating problems of how to dispose of them.

Third, the price of suitably robust plastic glasses (ie not the squidgy ones that end up with half your drink over the floor) was significantly higher than for similar ones made of glass.

Where the use of plastic glasses has been imposed elsewhere, it has generally been because of health & safety or public order issues. Neither issue was relevant in this case, as the Bath Beer Festival had run successfully for 33 years with no concerns on either score. When pressed on this, the management replied that the ban on glasses was necessary because of the number of breakages in the past. It was pointed out that the number of breakages had always been low, and that there had always been CAMRA volunteers on hand with dustpan and brush to clear up any breakages. Unfortunately, this seemed to cut no ice.

Faced with this, it was felt that a likely – but unquantifiable – fall in attendance, combined with a rise in costs as a result of implementing the diktat, posed a serious threat to the viability of the festival. As a result, it was decided that there was no option but to cancel the event.

This was, however, not the first issue to have raised concerns over the suitability of the Pavilion as a venue for future beer festivals. It was in fact the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back. There had been concerns for some time about the escalating cost of hiring the Pavilion, especially in light of the facilities available and the general ambience of the building. The high level of security was another issue. Some volunteers felt that security was heavy-handed at times, especially in dealing with customers after sessions had ended. For years, volunteers had provided perfectly adequate and appropriate levels of security – as they still do at other festivals – but this option was not made available by the current management at the pavilion.

Health and safety issues had also been an irritant in the past, particularly at the 2010 festival. Not only did all electrical equipment – including that used by the bands – have to be checked, it was decreed that matting should be laid in front of the trestle tables where beer and cider were served. It was explained that this was to prevent people slipping. The Pavilion has a concrete floor, and there had never been any concerns over customers slipping in the past. Addressing a non-existent slip hazard actually created a potential trip hazard, as some customers discovered when their feet caught the edges of these 'safety mats'.

In 1954, John Betjeman called the Pavilion an 'unworthy little building', comparing it to 'an outsize army hut'. Fifty-seven years on, time has not been kind to it. It was thrown up quickly over a century ago to cash in on the roller-skating craze that was sweeping the country. When it opened as a roller-skating rink on 17 September 1910, it had a sprung wooden floor, which was later ripped out and replaced by concrete after the building flooded. Its builders would probably be astonished to see the Pavilion still in use as one of the city's top entertainment venues. The lack of alternative large venues in Bath (apart from the upmarket Guildhall and Assembly Rooms) has, however, ensured its survival. In 1930, it was acquired by Bath City Council and it is still owned by Bath



& North East Somerset Council. It is managed, however, by Aquaterra, who also run the adjacent sports centre and other sports facilities in and around the city.

Readers of *Pints West* may be aware that the Pavilion has since February 2007 also been the venue for the Bath Cider Festival. This has no connection with CAMRA but is organised by Chris Lilley, the catering manager at the Pavilion. Since 2008 he has also run a cider festival at Temple Meads in Bristol. 2008 also saw the launch of Lilley's Cider Barn on a trading estate in Frome. This supplies cider to pubs and other outlets across the south west. Mr Lilley recently announced plans to open a microbrewery in the unit at Frome. He also runs a catering company providing dinners, hog roasts, corporate events, etc. You will doubtless have seen his hogs roasting if you have been to the Bath Beer Festival in recent years – as catering manager he has a monopoly on catering at the venue.

The decision to cancel the 34<sup>th</sup> Bath Beer Festival is not one that has been taken lightly. It was, however, a unanimous and indeed an unavoidable one. The local branch is actively looking at alternative venues for future festivals, and, while it has been considered advisable not to rush into organising a festival at a new venue this year, there will be a festival in 2012.

This story has a postscript.

Earlier this month, Charles Lilley contacted the local CAMRA branch to inform them that he would be running his own beer festival at the Pavilion and asking if he could have last year's trading figures.

After CAMRA had cancelled the festival, the management of the Pavilion – which had previously indicated that the glass ban was non-negotiable – said that there was a possibility it could be rescinded. It is not known whether Mr Lilley will be using plastic glasses at his event.

As you may well see posters advertising the Bath Beer Festival over the coming weeks, please be aware that CAMRA has no involvement whatsoever – either directly or indirectly – with any beer festival to be held at the Pavilion this autumn. There will be no CAMRA Bath Beer Festival in 2011 – it will, however, be back, revamped and raring to go next year. The organisers are already looking for another venue, and as soon as a festival is arranged, details will appear in *Pints West* and on the Bath & Borders website. The organisers thank you for your support over the last 33 years and look forward to seeing you at the Bath Beer Festival in 2012.

Andrew Swift

# Good Beer Guide 2012 launch

## *Your chance to buy*

**2012 is not as far away as you think**, and as normal we at CAMRA will be launching the latest edition of our ever-popular Good Beer Guide in September – the only properly and independently researched guide to the best pubs for real ale in Britain.

As local co-ordinator for many years, I can vouch for the amount of legwork and dedication put in by our local unpaid volunteers in making sure that only the best ale pubs make it into this prestigious guide. It was hard work but we were thirsty enough to do it!

The book aims to identify the best 4,500 pubs in Britain, including 63 chosen by our local branch covering Bristol and parts of South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. Those 63 were the subject of many visits and much debate amongst us over the last 12 months, and many more were nominated than we have space for. A place in the Guide is much sought after by all licensees who are serious about keeping real ale.

Nobody who enjoys a quality pint of ale should be without this book – especially if you plan to travel around the UK on business or for leisure. With the price of a pint nowadays, why risk drinking poor beer, when the book can steer you towards the best pubs wherever you are?

Even if you bought the Guide last year, the ever-changing pub industry means that a significant amount of it will now be out of date. In our own area around 25% of the pubs featured this year will be different from last year, and a similar story will be true in most other areas too.

In addition, the Good Beer Guide aims to list all known real ale breweries and their regular beers (many thousands). The majority of these will also have tasting notes supplied to steer you towards your style of beer – it can be bewildering to see a large bank of handpumps and have no idea which one is for you. This list also comes in handy at beer festivals or when buying beers in an off-license or supermarket. There are also always numerous interesting beer-related articles to read.

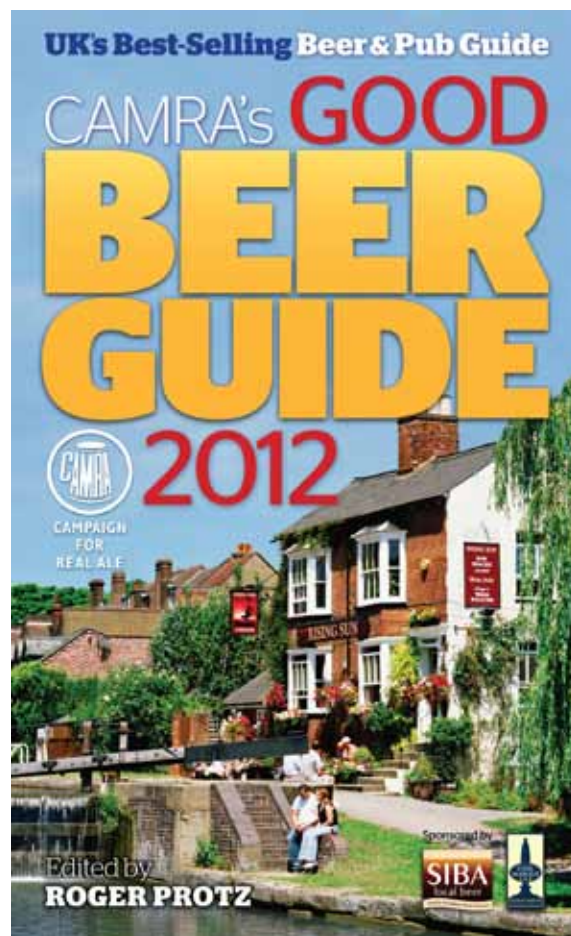
The book will be available in main book shops, or online from CAMRA from mid September, and makes an ideal Christmas or birthday present for anyone who enjoys a pint. However, we are offering the chance to buy it in person from some of the volunteers who helped write it at our annual launch event.

The Good Beer Guide 2012 will be launched on Friday, September 16th at the Cornubia, Temple Street, Bristol, BS1 6EN, just off Victoria Street close to the former Courage Brewery and near the Fire and Ambulance stations. It is also just a short walk from Temple Meads Station. The event will run from 12 noon to 7pm and copies of the Guide will be on hand. Last year we sold an impressive 96 copies and actually ran out. Phil and Jackie, the licensees at the Cornubia, have promised to put on an extra special range of beers for the day, so why not plan to stick around for a pint or two? The pub also offers discounts on pints of real ale to CAMRA members if you show your card.

The cover price is £15.99 but for this day only it will be available at the bargain price of £12.50, or just £10 to card-carrying CAMRA members.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the event.

*Vince Murray, GBG Co-ordinator, Bristol & District CAMRA*




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## Be the first to pick up a cut-price Good Beer Guide from Bath's Pub of the Year ...

... not that you'll need any incentives to buy the 2012 *Good Beer Guide* of course – but, if you did, knocking a hefty chunk off the price and holding the launch in Bath's pub of the year should be all the convincing you'd need.

On 16 September, the Bath & Borders branch of CAMRA launch the 2012 *Good Beer Guide* at the **White Horse** in Twerton. Jase Clarke, the landlord, has risen to the occasion handsomely. Five real ales, plus ciders, will be available, and the White Horse's famous sausage platters, with a choice of 24 handcrafted bangers (including three fiendishly challenging chilli varieties) will be available, plus Scotch eggs and various other delights. There will also be live entertainment from 9pm – details are yet to be finalised but the White Horse is gaining a serious reputation for its entertainment so it's bound to be worth listening to.

The launch kicks off at 6pm and runs till 8.30pm. Not only will you be able to pick up a copy of the new *Good Beer Guide* hot off the press, but for one night only the cover price of £15.99 is reduced to just £12.50. If you're a CAMRA member, there is a further reduction to £10, so don't forget your membership card. The same card will also get you – again for one night only – 10p off the price of a pint.

As well as being among the first to find out which pubs have made it into next year's *Good Beer Guide*, you can find out for yourself why the White Horse was unanimously voted Pub of the Year by the local CAMRA branch.

So how do I get there, I hear you ask? If you live in Bath, take the No 5 bus to Twerton, get off by Twerton Chippy and walk up Shophouse Road, which, although quite a climb, should take you ten minutes at most. If you're from out of town, the easiest way – if you live near a station – is to take the train and get off at Oldfield Park station. From there, it's also about a ten minute walk, following a simple set of instructions – which are ...

... walk up the slope from the platform, turn left along the road and take the first right into West Avenue. Follow the road round to the right and carry on along Lyndhurst Road. At the end turn right. Just before



Jase and Chloë at the White Horse

you reach a railway bridge, turn left along a footpath and head between some modern houses. Carry straight on through a housing estate for about 200 metres. When you meet a road climbing steeply uphill turn left. You will find the White Horse at the top.

There are regular services to Oldfield Park from Temple Meads, Keynsham, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Westbury, Warminster and Frome.

We look forward to seeing you at the White Horse on 16 September.

Andrew Swift



## How did your MP respond?

In recent years the closure of pubs in the UK reached alarming levels and, according to who you believe, had peaked 18 months ago, with closures at a rate of 200 plus per month. Thankfully that rate has dropped to 100 per month. Most of us have become used to seeing pubs close and slowly deteriorate over three to five years, before demolition.

What did happen in the last 18 months was a sudden increase in the number of pubs that did not reinvent themselves as takeaways or restaurants (planning consent was not required) but were suddenly and quickly demolished almost overnight (at that time, consent was not always required).

In response to this rapid change to demolition, CAMRA set up a nationwide campaign to have planning consent added as a condition to the demolition of pubs within a wider framework for the protection of community assets, ranging from community centres, libraries, leisure centres and community pubs. This overall campaign came together through a group of organisations including CAMRA and interested a number of MPs.

MP Nigel Adams put, through an early day motion (EDM), a private member's bill – Protection of Local Services (Planning) Bill – which would include protection of community assets including pubs. The Bill attracted the support of almost 100 MPs and fell at the second stage due to lack of parliamentary time. Consequently the Pubs Minister, MP Bob Neill, hoped the Localism Bill may be used to close this loop-hole. Several local MPs including Chris Skidmore and Charlotte Leslie supported this EDM.

In an effort to gauge the support for such changes with our local MPs, I undertook to write to all MPs within the Bristol and District area. To my surprise, the Branch covers 12 constituencies! These range from Thornbury in the North to Wells in the south and Weston-super-Mare in the West, to the borders of Bath in the East.

For the record, the following MPs cover the Branch area:

- Bristol South – Dawn Primarolo, Labour
- Bristol East – Kerry McCarthy, Labour

- Bristol West – Stephen Williams, Liberal Democrat
- Bristol North West – Charlotte Leslie, Conservative
- Kingswood – Chris Skidmore, Conservative
- Thornbury & Yate – Steve Webb, Liberal Democrat
- Filton & Bradley Stoke – Jack Lopresti, Conservative
- North Somerset – Liam Fox, Conservative
- Weston-super-Mare – John Penrose, Conservative
- Bath – Don Foster, Liberal Democrat
- North East Somerset – Jacob Rees-Mogg, Conservative
- Wells – Tessa Munt, Liberal Democrat

Approaching MPs whilst being a constituent is relatively easy, but being from outside their constituency they become very defensive. Many quote parliamentary protocol, being a Minister or working for the Speaker's Department, as a reason for not replying. In this case only one MP used this escape route!

Each MP was asked one simple question. Bearing in mind that I was asking not as a constituent, but on behalf of a national campaigning organisation, I asked if CAMRA could seek their support 'in principle' for the right of local communities to have some say in the future of their local services that matter to them – particularly the community pub. Not an earth-shattering question by any means.

The results: surprisingly, very encouraging. Out of 12 MPs, I received seven responses. Six – Scudamore, Leslie, Primarolo, Fox, Webb and Penrose – all supported the general principle of supporting community assets, ranging from very strongly (Skidmore and Leslie) to a general nod in that direction. Only one (Rees-Mogg) responded with the 'not a constituent' card.

I received no replies from the following: Foster, Lopresti, McCarthy, Munt and Williams. It would appear that half of our local MPs do support the importance of community assets and I would recommend and encourage both Branch members and the general public to open dialogue with their local MP on this issue sooner rather than later.

Ray Holmes, Branch Public Affairs Officer

# Hats off to our local Good Beer Guide heroes

With all the discussions about CAMRA's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday this year, a few of us got around to discussing which of our local pubs had appeared in most editions of the Good Beer Guide over those 40 years. By local, we refer to what approximates to the former county of Avon, including parts of South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. We quickly identified the three main contenders and I set off with what I thought would be a nice straightforward task. After months of scratching around hunting for people still in possession of the older Guides, I believe that I have identified the following – but am willing to stand corrected if anyone knows better!

The honours for our longest continuous entry go to the **Rising Sun at Frampton Cotterell** which has appeared in every edition since making its debut in 1977 – that is an incredible **35 consecutive years** in the good book, first published in 1974! This wonderful free house (pictured) has been in the same family for as long as anyone can remember, and continues to impress to this day. Whilst the pub has been extended over the years, and now offers a wide range of food, the basic formula has remained the same throughout – great beer, proper conversation and a convivial atmosphere. It always seems busy whenever we visit. Recent years have seen the Stone family open the nearby Great Western Brewery and the pub now acts as the brewery tap. Nevertheless there are usually three or four other beers on offer from the likes of Butcombe, Wadworth, Wickwar and Cotswold Spring plus the odd surprise guest beer. Congratulations to all concerned for an incredible achievement – there really cannot be many pubs in the UK that have made 35 consecutive editions!

Despite the above, we have a pub that has actually been in even more editions of the Good Beer Guide! The wonderfully unspoilt and unchanged **Crown at Churchill** (pictured) first appeared in 1975 and has appeared in all except one edition since! For reasons that nobody seems to remember it was omitted from the book in 1986 (answers on a postcard please!). That makes **36 appearances** in all! This pub is found tucked away down the narrow Skinners Lane, a right turn if heading south just past the traffic lights on the A38 at Churchill. I first went there around 1978 and can vouch for it not having changed at all. A rambling old stone building, with dim lighting, lots of nooks and crannies, real fires and no gimmicks or modern distractions, this has the feel of a bygone age. Eight or nine real ales are offered, all straight from the cask and mainly from small localish brewers such as RCH, Cotleigh, Palmers and Cheddar Ales. Food is sourced from local ingredients and served lunchtimes only. It is no coincidence that this pub has also remained in the hands of one family for around 25 years. Keeping it in the family seems to be the way to keep it in the Guide!

An honourable mention must also go to the **Highbury Vaults** on St Michael's Hill in Bristol. This real ale institution has appeared in all Good Beer Guides since 1986, except in 1996. Once again nobody can remember the reason for the omission that year! Still, that is an impressive 25 out of 26 years. The pub has survived several changes of ownership, from Smiles (several owners) through to Wells and Young's currently. What has remained constant is its management and its winning formula, namely proper beer, a convivial environment, good food which never dominates and the ever popular rear beer garden. Well done to Bradd and his team.

All three of the above pubs have continued to thrive though thick and thin by identifying what they do best and sticking to it. None of them ever felt the need to change to a silly name, totally "modernise" their interior or allow TVs or electronic devices to dominate. Nor did they allow their food offering to take centre stage to the detriment of drinkers. They have been rewarded by the loyalty of their customers, and by being our longest standing Good Beer Guide entries. Surely a lesson to those who insist that constant chopping and changing is necessary for success? Long may these three continue their incredible runs.

Vince Murray

(with thanks to Henry Davies and Conor O'Neill for their research)



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| Sunday:     | 12.00-16.00 |



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# Severn Vale CAMRA

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.

## Brewery visit

Several Severn Vale members paid a visit recently to Kingstone Brewery, just over the water in Tintern, Monmouthshire. This brewery is no mammoth in scale, but what it lacks in size, it makes up for in the sheer number of beers produced on the tiny five-barrel plant – all housed in a single room overlooking the scenic River Wye.

Ed the brewer manages to craft no fewer than eight real ales from this plant using just four fermenters, whilst his wife bakes bread fresh every day for sale in the adjoining shop. The overriding theme is “KIS” (keep it simple). There is no water treatment given to the water drawn from their own source. The wort is fermented in one of the simple upright, stainless steel fermenters, and eventually racked directly into casks or bottles. All the bottled beer is unfiltered and unpasteurised.

And the tasting? Ed treated us to a sample of every single beer he brews – all from bottles as he has no room for stillage.

Eventually, after buying our fill of bottles, we adjourned to the nearby Brockweir Inn, unfortunately to be told they’d finished off two casks of Kingstone the previous night and had none left.

*Martin Farrimond*

## Pub news

The **Plough** in Thornbury has changed hands recently. At present, there still seems to be no real ale available.

Apparently, the **Ship** in Oldbury on Severn re-opened before we went to press. No details at present, but watch this space.

The **Cross Hands** in Alveston has new landlords in the shape of Ian Phipps and Ed Gilbraith. Several Severn Vale members called in recently and were given a warm welcome by Ed. Beers on offer were the almost statutory (for our area), conservative selection of Doom Bar, Courage Best and Draught Bass – all of which were in good condition, it has to be said. There are also plans to stock a ‘LocAle’ guest beer on the presently unused fourth beer engine.

## Severn Vale diary

- **Fri Sept 2nd:** Explorer trip: Boar’s Head, Aust; White Hart, Olveston; Swan, Tockington.
- **Wed Sep 21st:** Sub-branch meeting. Fox, Old Down, 8pm.
- **Fri Oct 7th:** Explorer/survey trip: Thornbury town centre. Meet at Wheatsheaf, 8pm (tbc).
- **Thu Oct 21st:** Sub-branch meeting, Anchor, Oldbury on Severn, 8pm.
- **Fri Nov 4th:** Explorer/survey trip: King William, Hallen; Fox, Easter Compton; Bowl, Lower Almondsbury.
- **Wed Nov 16th:** Sub-branch meeting, Wheatsheaf, Thornbury, 8pm.



- **Fri Dec 2nd:** Nailsworth area pubs trip (tbc).

For up to date details and an last minute changes, keep an eye on our diary page at [www.severnval.camrabristol.co.uk](http://www.severnval.camrabristol.co.uk). We also send regular reminder emails for our events. If you’d like to be added to the distribution for these, just drop an email to our secretary, Keith McIndoe, email address below.

## Severn Vale contact

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

The Bar Code  
by Eddie Taberner



24/06/11

# Watering Holes in the Desert

## brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

### Weston Whispers

WELL, we have had two pubs re-opening, the **Lloyds Cabot Court** and **Sam's Bar and Grill** (formerly the **Major from Glengarry**), and we have had two pubs burn down, the **Raglan Arms** and the **Chalice Bar** (three if you include the **Royal Pier Hotel** which used to serve great Worthington E in the 1970's)!

It has been suggested that we do a three-pub social (see diary) to take in the two pubs re-opening, and to start at the Grand Pier bar. Also in November we could do a crawl of the pubs in the 2012 Good Beer Guide in Weston-super-Mare, but at the moment I can't put in print what they are, so I will inform people on email or in *What's Brewing* in good time before the event.

On a personal note I will miss the **Raglan**, which Miles has turned around with the beer quality improved, and the bands appearing there have been varied and mostly good. One band stands out for me and that was a group of three young people calling themselves *Streetfightsilence* whose CD I bought, who were due to play at the Barcode until two days before, when their gig there was cancelled. I also miss the whacking 50p off a pint for CAMRA members, a discount that made it more appealing to me than the 'Cri' opposite, although the choice of beers there is greater.

The **Waverley** has been mentioned for its discount and beer festival in 'A Round with Robin' where the quality of the beers there are very good indeed and the "dug-out" is good for bands and festivals and where we will be hosting a Bristol CAMRA monthly meeting in September.

Mike Coleman led a riverside beer and ramble up the Severn river

bank on the 6th August and eight of us from Weston CAMRA went on it. We went by bus from Gloucester to Ashleworth and walked past the huge National Trust Tithe barn to the **Boat Inn**, which is in the Good Beer Guide, and which had a choice of five beers and a few ciders too. Some then caught a bus and three of us walked to the next pub, the **Haw Bridge Inn**, a Wadworth pub with moorings by the river. Horizon was good here. The next pub where we all met up was the **Yew Tree Inn**, near Chaceley, where they had a beer festival with a couple of beers we'd not seen before. The last riverside pub we all walked to is a favourite place for wedding receptions as it is very picturesque, the **Lower Lode Inn**, which actually served Donnington beer, quite a rarity. This is opposite the Cheltenham rowing club where another wedding was taking place! Here a ferry ran across the river to take us on to Tewkesbury for a beer in the **Royal Hop Poles** before getting the train back to Bristol from Ashchurch. Six of us wound down outside the **Cornubia** listening to the blues band before returning to Weston.

I gave a mention in a recent issue of *Pints West* to the **Imperial** for its beers and décor, and recently heard the Weston band the *Fallen Apples* there, and the acoustics were really excellent.

The **Regency** has had a few monthly beer festivals and one most recently with ten guest ales to coincide with the Lions beer festival where we had a social on August 12th.

I would like more ideas from other members as to our future programme as I'm sure some of you reading this must have a pub that you'd like us all to go to. Would anyone be interested in another skittles match at the *White Hart* versus the WsM Lions as we had one last year? The beer is normally very good there. Also slightly further afield but very accessible from Taunton, there are some amazing pubs in Wellington, that we could do a crawl of possibly in the New Year. Please email me with your ideas.

Robin E Wild



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## Weston diary

- **Friday 9th September:** Three-pub crawl starting at the Grand Pier bar at 8pm (closes at 9pm), followed by Sam's Bar and Grill 9pm and concluding at Cabot Court 10pm.
- **Wednesday 28th September:** Bristol & District CAMRA branch meeting at the Waverley "dug out", Severn Road. 7.30 for 8pm (prompt start).
- **Friday 14th October:** Three-pub crawl in Taunton (maybe four if we have time). Meet at Weston rail station 7.15, possible group ticket savings.
- **4th November:** Weston Good Beer Guide pub crawl. New and old entries. Details by email later, or email Robin after the press embargo is lifted.

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

## Weston contact

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or text 07857602293 (only phone if really necessary)



*If you'd emailed Robin E Wild for details of this pub crawl like he said, we wouldn't be so lost now*





# A Round with Robin

There have been a few new and old local beer festivals to attend this summer, with a few more in the pipeline that I will hopefully write about in the next edition.

At the end of May the **Waverley** in Weston-super-Mare (WSM) – which as reported recently has been taken over by Paul at the **Criterion** and is being run by Nick Smith, who is offering a discount to CAMRA members – had its first festival. This was held in the ‘Dug Out’, a WWII communal air raid shelter, and with many beers and ciders, plus the local band Combyne Arvesters playing on Saturday night. My favourite beer was Everards Wakatu (3.7%) and my favourite cider Hex Brown Apple.

Earlier that same day, a group of us had travelled by bus via the **Kings Head** at Wells, to the **George Inn** at Croscombe beer festival. Knowing I was to be attending the Waverley in the evening I erred on the side of caution (for a change). The Devilfish Bombshell was a new beer for me and it went well with a game of skittles.

The following Monday, the bank holiday, we went to the **Golden Lion** beer festival at Wrington by bus, and with eight beers and a few ciders I opted just to stick on the beer. I found the Bath Ales Summer Hare the most palatable, but as all the beers were the same price and all straight from the barrel, I was able to have a “wildlife mix” consisting of Everards Tiger, Exmoor Fox and Bath Summer Hare. This was delicious but, readers, “Don’t try this at home!”

The first day of June bought us the Lancashire ‘Beeriodical’ at the **Seven Stars** in central Bristol with many fine ales, the best in my opinion being the Leyden Crowning Glory (6.8%), but also worth a mention was the Prospect Nutty Slack (3.9%) which Phil was disappointed at not being able to get at the nearby **Cornubia**. Prior to going to the ‘Beeriodical’ I had been drinking in the Cornubia and the Milestone Shine On (4%) was extremely hoppy and so good it even put the Arbor Summer Cornubia house beer to shame. Not to worry though as Arbor added more hops to the next batch, and by July this was as hoppy as only a great Arbor beer can be!

As with many Wednesdays this summer I went to the **St Georges Hall** in Redfield as they have had happy Wednesdays where all ale is £1.79 a pint all day! On that day I had the Kelham Island Pale Rider, and on my way back to Lawrence Hill Station called in at the **Old Stillage** for some Art Brew Blackcurrant Stout (4.6%), and as usual got my CAMRA discount there.

On a less boozy day my mate Mike and I walked over Bossington Hill to Porlock from Minehead, about nine miles, and were pleased to get a Clearwater Smiler at the **Ship Inn**, which was very thirst quenching.

Here and there I have had the opportunity (and being at the right place at the right time, mostly by chance) to sample some exceptional one-off ales. For example a half of Arbor Lemmy’s Ruin 6.66% at the **Seven Stars** might well have been the same beer as the Arbor Rainbow in the Dark (also 6.66%) at the **Gryphon**, but somehow I don’t think so, definitely some tweaking of the brew. The Gryphon had a beer festival too this summer and that was well attended, the beers all being on the top floor! They also had a seven-month-old barrel of Bath Ales Festivity in July, which I was able to have the second pint of (a chap called Simon from Bristol CAMRA beat me to the first).

Going back to mid June, Cheddar Ales beer festival was good on a chilly windy day with squally showers but that did nothing to dampen the outside of festival drinkers. The choice was staggering, as some of Bristol CAMRA will remember, ensconced within the brew house, but we were in a marquee. The mighty Arbor Yakima Valley compared favourably with the Castle Rock Harvest Pale, but my overall winner was Dark Star Ascension PA (4.7%).

The first weekend of July heralded the Claverham Birds and Bees beer festival which had 37 beers and five ciders. Surprisingly Honey Buzzard did not make a showing as this would have satisfied both criteria, but although my personal favourite was the rarely seen Wren’s Nest (4.2%) from Howard Town brewery, the beer of the festival (as voted for by CAMRA members present) was the Lymstone Stone the Crows (5.4%), a rich dark beer with a long hoppy aftertaste.

The ‘Beeriodical’ for July at the **Seven Stars** was the turn of Suffolk, and although Paul was dubious about the availability of choices for this it turned out very well. The St Peters IPA (5.5%) was predictably good, but other surprises wowed too including the Nethergate Essex Beast (6.2%).

The quality of the Bristol Beer Factory Acer has made it, without question, my favourite beer from them and it’s always well served at the **Barley Mow**.

The second weekend of July was the **White Horse** at Twerton beer festival and I went on the Friday and the Monday. This pub is the Bath & Borders CAMRA Pub of the Year 2011, and the accolade is well deserved. The welcome is friendly even if they are just opening, and one helps to carry in the shopping! Many of the beers were on gravity serve but hand pump too. On the Friday my favourite was the Harvistoun Haggis Hunter (4.3%) but on the Monday the unusual High House Farm Maften Magic (4.8%) scored highly when all the gravity served beers were half price! The food here is well thought of but at lunchtimes you can get a good taste of what the chef has to offer by having one of their scotch eggs: I had the chilli volcano which was delicious, and next time will try the black pudding scotch egg.

At the **Three Tuns** Solstice beer festival, landlord Ned (who has since moved on) did us proud for his swan song and the Dark Star Summer Solstice was very acceptable; I was disappointed though to have missed out on the Arbor Blackima Valley though.

At the beginning of August Phil at the **Cornubia** opened his burger bar by the pub, which was very well received. On the beer front, Atomic Fusion has long been a favourite of mine and there it didn’t disappoint.

At the same time the **Seven Stars** was having its West Yorkshire ‘Beeriodical’, where it was impossible really to have a favourite as the Magic beers and the Ridgeside from Leeds were both amazing. The quality Elland 1872 Porter also had a showing as did beers from Saltaire, Old Spot from Cullingworth and others who were new to me.

On the last Thursday of July the **Regency** pub in Weston-super-Mare had its annual day out, and though I have been drinking there for upwards of 30 years this was the first time I had been on one. We went to Teignmouth by coach, and the landlord Mark, had produced a map and a list of pubs for each of us. As some of those in CAMRA know, the **Clifford Arms** in Shaldon has been the brewery tap for Ringmore Craft Brewery for a number of years, so I was determined to go there. We caught the ancient ferry to Shaldon and without too much trouble found the pub, where I had a pint of the Ringmore Oarsome bitter (4.6%), and also a pint of the Red Rock Devon Coast IPA (4%). We then went to the **Shipwrights Arms** in Verbena Terrace on the edge of Ringmore for an Otter Bitter which was in good condition. This pub has a garden with view over the estuary, and they have regular beer festivals. We then visited the **London Inn** as it was on Mark’s list and ended our little tour of Shaldon at the **Ferryboat Inn** where we fell in with elder Ernie, Dave and Copper Dave that we knew, in the garden, over a pint of Teignworthy Old Moggy. Catching the ferry back to Teignmouth, we then visited another three pubs, of which mention must be made of the **Devon Hotel** for its hidden garden.

Robin E Wild



## Seven Stars

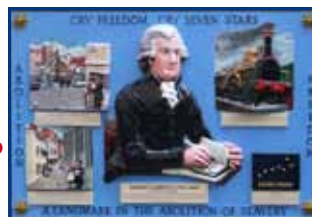
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# Summer expedition to Wales from Weston

Sixteen of us met at Off The Rails on a typical dull July day before boarding a mini-bus to escape from Weston-super-Mare during T4 weekend. The departure time was carefully planned to ensure that we arrived at the first pub at opening time but despite this we still had to loiter in the car park of the **Clytha Arms** until doors opened. This excellent Good Beer Guide (GBG) listed pub was well worth the



Inside the Clytha Arms

wait and deserves its many awards including CAMRA's Gwent Country Pub of the Year for sixth time in 2011. Whilst the food menu looked attractive, available beers sampled were Wye Valley Bitter, Otley 01, Flower Power, Felinfoel's Celtic Pride and Rhymney Dark and Bitter on draught. As well as these excellent beers there was an extensive range of cider and perry available including Weston's Vintage, Two Trees Perry and Nethergate Border. One of the highlights of this excellent bar was the gents' toilet which had an amazing set of murals, most memorably an air raid warning that in such an event we "should dive into a urinal 'cos nobody hits them." The drawings were worth seeing and explained why one of our group was seen taking his camera into the loo! Some were tempted by the prospect of a Welsh beer, cheese and music festival on August bank holiday weekend with on-site camping at £10.

Our main destination was next up at the picturesque **Llanthony Priory Hotel** which was only a short drive away. There we sampled Newman's Summerberry Steam Bitter and Felinfoel Double Dragon on draught, which were well received. Although the range on draught was a bit limited, this pub is well worth the 70-mile journey from Weston for its splendid location and scenic beer garden. Perhaps due to the limited choice of beers, a splinter group strolled down the hill to the **Half Moon Hotel** which was previously listed in the GBG in 2007 and good reports were given by this errant group, particularly on the Bullmastiff Son Of a Bitch.

A short 14-mile drive took us to the **Angel Inn** at Grosmont, again GBG listed and noted for being a true community pub cooperative. As well as the excellent range of beers – Wye Valley's Butty Bach, Otter Bitter and Tomos Watkin's summer ale Cwrw Haf (my spell check hated that) – they offered Taffy Apples draught cider. We were entertained by the local gamekeeper and his tales of poachers in what is a very friendly, welcoming pub close to the English border with Herefordshire.

Next hop took us over the border back into England where we parked up at Redbrook before strolling back across a footbridge to visit the **Boat Inn**, Penault sitting on the Welsh side of the River Wye, which was listed in the 2009 GBG. Here we were spoilt for choice with the biggest range of ales and ciders of the trip. Amongst the beers sampled were Flower Power, Wye Valley's Butty Bach and Bitter, as well as Mayfield's Copper Fox. There was also a list of around 20 ciders to sample as well as a large choice of draught beers. Food menu looked inviting but since time was pressing, with so many beers and so little time, it was off to the **Cherry Tree** at Tintern which unfortunately was closed. We then replanned and headed the short distance onwards to the **Coach and Horses** in Chepstow, also GBG listed and which was Gwent CAMRA Town Pub of the Year in 2010. Beers on tap included Brains' trio of IPA, Reverend James and SA, plus Kingstone's Bitter and Young's Waggledance. Some sadly were a little too chilled.



Outside the Llanthony Priory Hotel

This was our final stop on our invasion of Wales so it was back over the Severn, this time free of charge, on our way back to Weston-super-Mare where we ended our 150-mile trip. However the journey back was enlivened by some interesting discussions on the relative merits of sixties pop icons Billy Fury and Elvis. A great day out and thanks to Mike Coleman for organising this excellent trip.

Bob Reynolds (photos by David Coppins)

## Cheddar Ales beer festival raises thousands for charity

Cheddar Ales' third annual brewery beer festival back in June was a memorable event, and the brewery's most successful with around 1,500 people visiting over the weekend to sample the 45 award-winning ales on offer. Over 4,000 pints of beer were sold during the event.

"It was an incredible couple of days," said John Magill, the event's organiser. "We had a great crowd, all very friendly and well behaved, but they were so thirsty we could only just keep up at the bar. We averaged about 200 pints an hour over the weekend, which is really going some."

The festival raised an impressive £2,650 for charity. The money is to be split between three good causes – refurbishing communal areas at St. Michael's Cheshire Home in Axbridge, providing new equipment

for Weare Community Pre-school and helping the British Heart Foundation.

Cheddar Ales have recently launched a new ale, **Bitter Bully**, a 4.0% ABV pale ale. It's brewed using three American hops. You can expect to find it in cask in Bristol in the Green Man, the Hillgrove Porter Stores and the Inn on the Green in Bristol, amongst others. It will also be available bottle-conditioned in all their usual outlets.



Alan Sibley



## BADRAG - Bristol And District Rare Ales Group

**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)

**T**rawling the internet isn't something some of us would usually associate with beer drinking but you might find the following link interesting: [zythophile.wordpress.com/2011/06/01/the-woman-who-served-george-orwell-pints-of-mild](http://zythophile.wordpress.com/2011/06/01/the-woman-who-served-george-orwell-pints-of-mild).

It's all about the lady who used to serve George Orwell with pints of Simpson's Dark Mild from a pot jug back in the days when mild was the most popular style of beer. The style has been enjoying a comeback for some years now and perhaps we have turned a corner with **Mighty Oak's Oscar Wilde** being judged as **Champion Beer of Britain** this year. Lots of highly regarded brewers are turning their hands to producing mild beers now that the "rush for gold" seems to have reached its peak.

And why not? With little or no hops, mild is all about the malt – and it doesn't have to be dark. It's just that varying degrees of roasting produce different flavours and amber/dark malts produce amber/dark beers. Traditionally lower in alcohol than most bitters, mild is a refreshing drink for when you want the fluid without too much of the effects and it can provide a welcome relief for those with sensitive stomachs, not over-gassed like keg lagers and no acid re-flux if your stomach reacts to bitter hops.

Keep an eye out for BADRAG events over the coming months if you fancy giving it a try – all are welcome!

- September 15 - Robert Fitzharding, Bedminster.
- October 20 - Old Stillage and St. Georges Hall, Redfield.
- November 17 - The Gryphon, Colston Street, followed by the Three Tuns, St. George's Road, Hotwells.

*George Clarke*

## New look Volunteer Tavern

**M**onday 19th September sees the reopening of the Volunteer Tavern in St Judes, Bristol, following a period of closure of four or five months and a major refurbishment.

This is a joint venture between Martin Gibson, who owns the Volunteer, and Martin Hughes who has the Hope & Anchor on Jacobs Well Road. Peter Gibbs, who has worked at the Hope & Anchor for seven years and been a manager there for the last two, will take on the role of pub landlord, living on the premises.

The pub will have four pumps dispensing real ales, maybe a fifth one later as trade picks up. There will be a changing range of ales on, from local breweries as well as some from further afield. Wickwar Brewery have invested so there will often be one or two from them, but Martin Hughes pointed out that this is not a Wickwar pub, but completely independent.

The pub will also serve food and be open all day.

For those who may have known of the pub in the past, and perhaps considered it less than salubrious, the message now is: "You can rest assure that there will be absolute zero tolerance of any form of anti-social behaviour at the Volunteer and we will be working very closely with the staff and officers from nearby Trinity Road Police Station to ensure that this is always the case."

The Volunteer Tavern is located in New Street, St Judes, very close to Cabot Circus, which can in fact be seen from the pub's garden. It is also just a minute's walk away from the Phoenix which also reopened following its own major refurbishment last year.

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

# Camping and Cwrw in Wild Wales

Leaving Westbury-on-Trym in early July I head for Aust and the M48 bridge. It costs £5.70 to enter Wales by car, but the rush when you begin the crossing, almost in the sky, is well worth it! We (me and dog) are going to the upper reaches of the Twyi (Towy) Valley, in Carmarthenshire, to my favourite campsite – this was my second visit this year. It is 12 minutes' walk from a remote country inn which has been the Carmarthenshire branch of CAMRA's pub of the year four times since 2001. It has also been in the Good Beer Guide (GBG) for most of the last 20 years.

We follow the B4235 road from near Chepstow Racecourse to Usk, Abergavenny, then the A40 to Brecon by-pass, and then another 20 miles to the small market town of Llandovery. From there it's about eight miles up the east side of the Twyi Valley to the scattered village of Rhandir-mwyn, which commands magnificent views of the lush valley and rolling, green and wooded hills. To the north lies the RSPB sanctuary at Dinas (once the last refuge of the red kite in Britain), Llyn Brianne (a reservoir), and the wilderness of mid Wales. ([www.rhandir-mwyn.org](http://www.rhandir-mwyn.org))

The campsite is run by the Camping and Caravan Club, so the facilities are excellent. It is also spacious and flat, with plenty of room for tents. I am a member of the club, in a tent, am over 60, and it was 'Mid Season', so it only cost me £4.90 a night. And they offer seven nights for the price of five!

I made several visits to the **Royal Oak**, which is up an increasingly steep hill from the campsite, next to a general stores and a tea room. It is run by Christopher and Rachel who acquired the premises two years ago. Chris used to work for Fuller's in Chiswick and he has a George Gale and



The Towy Bridge, a basic pub, open, but for sale

Co lantern as decoration in the pub.

There were two ales on draught, Evan Evans Spa and Young's Gold, as well as three ciders, Fiery Fox, Happy Daze and Two Trees Perry, all produced by Gwynt y Ddraig, of Pontypridd, which, I was told, means



The upper Twyi Valley and campsite at Rhandir-mwyn.

Dragon's Breath. The inn has an extensive range of bottled beers and ciders, and I tasted a 330ml bottle of Red Stag Bitter, 3.6 per cent, produced by Newman's Brewery of Caerphilly. I was going to have this as a split with Young's (memories of Ram Rod and Special), but I realised that it was too good. This was followed by a tasty 500ml bottle of O-Garden, 4.8 per cent, produced by Otley Brewing Company in Pontypridd. Sadly I wasn't able then to drink Otley on draught. ([www.theroyaloakinn.co.uk](http://www.theroyaloakinn.co.uk))

About a mile north is a very basic country pub called the **Towy Bridge**. No real beer, but a fine position by the river. It was for sale in July. Two miles down the valley, on the west side, is the Forestry Commission's Cwm Rhaeadr (Valley of the Waterfall) with great walks and a 6.7km trail described as 'suitable for proficient mountain bike riders with good off-road skills and a high level of fitness and stamina'. Then to the picturesque village of Cil y Cwm with its medieval church and cobbled gutters used by the drovers over centuries to water sheep. The **Neudd Fawr Arms** (Big Hall Arms) is a country inn which has recently changed hands. It has two big fireplaces and a separate dining room. Like the Royal Oak it has a history of providing good food and ale. There is a certified campsite in easy walking distance at Glangwenlais Farm – the venue for the Small Nations' Festival in July. ([www.cilcwm.com](http://www.cilcwm.com))

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The Neuadd Fawr Arms in the picturesque village of Cil y Cwm, near Llandovery.

Llandovery, on the edge of the Brecon Beacons, has fine Georgian buildings, including the **Kings Head Inn** in Market Square, which is listed in the GBG. It is not uncommon to hear Welsh spoken in the cobbled square, and red kites fly over the town. Across the square is the **Red Lion** which is on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors but has very limited

opening hours. I noticed that the faded Red Lion sign has been removed.

The town is quite remote: 20 miles from Brecon, and about 15 from both Llandeilo and Lampeter, but it is on the scenic Heart of Wales railway line, which runs from Swansea to Shrewsbury. There is a weekly livestock market when the town is full of old Landrover Defenders and Hyundai Four Tracks. Prince Charles bought a farm and estate just outside the town three years ago, and the town is hoping for an economic boost.

The historic **Castle Hotel** has recently changed hands and is now much brighter. George Borrow's *Wild Wales*, published in 1862, talks about the



George Borrow stayed here: the Castle Hotel in Llandovery. Narrow road to right of hotel is the A40!

the hotel and Llandovery in some detail. 'Llandovery is a small but beautiful town, situated amidst fertile meadows. It is a water-girdled spot, whence its name Llandovery or Llanymdyfri, which signifies the church surrounded by water.' The hotel is making an effort to feature real ale and on my visit was offering Brains' The Rev James, Evan Evans' Warrior, and Cwrw Haf

(Summer Beer) by the new Kite Brewery in Gorslas, near Cross Hands. The head brewer, Iain Masson, is ex Greene King.

Llandeilo is an attractive hill-top town with magnificent views over the Twyi Valley to the Black Mountains and the Iron Age fort of Carn Goch

with its stone ramparts. The Evan Evans' brewery tap, the **White Horse**, is in a small square off the centre, very pleasant, with a full range of the brewer's beers. **Sal** in New Road is also listed in the GBG.

Further west are the ruins of Talley Abbey, near a lane which leads to the hamlet of Cwmdru. There are many Cwmdru's in Wales, but this one is remarkable, a time warp of adjoining 18th century cottages and a chapel owned by the National Trust. The locals have set up an Enterprise Company to run the untouched pub and post office/general stores. The **Cwmdru Inn** is open Wednesday to Saturday, 7 pm to 11 pm, with beer from barrels. Over a stream, there is garden and a sports field, and an original two-hole latrine (not in use!). ([www.cwmdru.com](http://www.cwmdru.com))

I stopped at the old church in Talieris, miles from anywhere, and a nice guy with a beard called Tim, from Pill, drove up to take photos of a massive yew tree. He told me he is a member of the Ancient Yew Group.

Finally, another sort of camping: about five miles west from Cwmdru, somewhere via a maze of lanes, is the legendary Tipi Valley, below Mynydd Figyn, Britain's first and longest lasting alternative eco-village founded in 1974. I thought of trying to find it, then thought better of it. Apparently, the villagers are friendly, but it's best to make contact first.

John MacRae



The White Horse in Llandeilo, brewery tap of Evan Evans.



Near Talley: the Cwmdru Inn, and post office and shop run by locals through an Enterprise Company.

## News from Dawkins

**H**elen and Krishna at the **Green Man** in Kingsdown are hosting a beer festival with a medieval theme from 15th to 19th September, with over twenty ales and ciders plus hearty food. Inspired by this, the brewery is making a dark medieval beer or 'gruit'. These beers were made without hops; herbs providing the bitterness. Beer with hops that came along in later centuries was called 'bitter' to distinguish it from unhopped 'ale', though the terms are now interchangeable. This interpretation will be a 4.8% ABV bittersweet, darkly fruity ale using a dozen different grains including oats, with hops being replaced by heather, mugwort and yarrow. The beer, launched at the festival, will be called **Gruit Lush**.

Other Autumn brews will be a new version of **Double Dawkins**, still at 5% but much hoppier, and they've been asked again to brew **Slapstick**, a 5% dark ale to promote the annual Bristol Silents' Festival of Silent Comedy in January. The beer will go out from early December.

A recent deal with a real ale wholesaler has seen several vanloads of Dawkins beers go nationwide, which is good news for them, but did push back production of their New Zealand-hopped **Green Bullet**, now appearing on the bars from early September.

Paul and Dee at the **Victoria** in Southleigh Road, Clifton are steadily expanding their range of Belgian bottled ales; they should reach 50 during this Autumn, complete with a Belgian Beer Bible offering full descriptions with snippets of history about the breweries, along with interesting Belgian facts.

At the **Portcullis** in Clifton, Joe is thinking up any old excuse for a mini-fest, so look out for some lame excuses over the next few months, plus his annual Hopfest in October.

## DAWKINS ALES

BREWED IN TIMSBURY, BATH 01761 472242



[www.dawkins-ales.co.uk](http://www.dawkins-ales.co.uk)

**The Green Man: Medieval Festival 15-19 September**

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

**The Miner's Arms**

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

**The Victoria**

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

**The Portcullis**

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

**The Hillgrove**

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

# Get interactive with CAMRA!

Bristol & District CAMRA are now on Facebook. You can find us by searching Facebook for “**Camra Bristol & District**” or by following the link from our website [www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk). Once you have arrived at the correct CAMRA Bristol page (which has a CAMRA logo) and can see the messages that are already there – please click on “Like” to show your interest. This is important as it will connect you with our Facebook page and will allow you to take part if you want. Facebook is interactive, so as well as reading messages you will then be able to add your own, for example an

item of pub, beer, brewery or beer festival news or even a picture.

Please note that the old “Guest book” on the website is no longer in use – just put your messages onto our Facebook page instead.

You can also get information from Bristol & District CAMRA by following us on Twitter (**@CAMRABristol**) and by signing up to our email list by sending a blank email with the word “Join” in the title to [CamraBristolNews-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:CamraBristolNews-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk) and then respond to the confirmation email that you will receive.

Richard Brooks

## Reasons to be Beerful Part Three

I may even get around to writing Parts One and Two one day! Meantime I have a few questions for you, if you are not yet a member of CAMRA. Are you one of those folk who has often thought of joining CAMRA but never quite got around to it?

Do you enjoy drinking real ale in pubs or at beer festivals?

Do you have £20 to invest but have no idea on how to get a guaranteed good return on it with no risk?

If the answer is yes to any of the above then I will prove to you that it will be difficult to find a better way of investing that £20 than by joining CAMRA. This is because there are now an unprecedented number of benefits offered with CAMRA membership.

To start with you will receive £20 worth of **Wetherspoon's vouchers** each worth 50p off a pint of real ale at any outlet. Use all 20 and that's your £20 back before we start! In addition many pubs around Bristol and elsewhere are offering very worthwhile discounts to CAMRA members and more pubs are joining in all the time. I will list some of the best offers below.

The **Seven Stars**, in Thomas Lane, our reigning Pub of the Year, gives a very generous discount on all real ales – usually around 40p to 50p per pint at all times. The discount is available to all customers during the afternoon happy hour, but carries on at all times to members showing their card. If, like me, you are a frequent visitor here then the annual saving is very considerable indeed. Four pints a week (conservative estimate in my case!) saves you about £90 a year.

The **Bank** in John Street has two very generous offers exclusive to members – all real ale and ciders are reduced to £2.10 from Monday to Friday 4pm to 7pm only – exclusive to us. Even better is the offer of a free pint when you buy a Sunday roast. This is an incredible bargain as the food is superb and very fairly priced in the first place. One Sunday roast a month and you've saved around £30 a year.

The **Commercial Rooms** in Corn Street, **Cornubia** in Temple Street, **Horts City Tavern** in Broad Street, **Gryphon** in Colston Street and **Old Stillage** in Redfield are all offering 10% off pints of real ale. They have just been joined by the **Three Tuns** in Hotwells. Should you average just 10 pints per year in each of these another £18 has been saved.

Many other pubs offer discounts that are restricted to certain times – these include the **New Inn** in Mayhill, the **Globe** in Frampton Cotterell and the **Orchard** in Hanover Place.

In addition to all these discounts other benefits include 12 copies of our monthly newspaper “What's Brewing”, and four copies of our quarterly magazine “Beer” delivered to your home. These will keep you up to date with all that's occurring in the world of real ale and cider, and give you advance notice of upcoming beer festivals around the country. Talking of festivals, membership gives you exclusive access to the first ticket sales event for **Bristol Beer Festival** and those precious Friday night or Saturday afternoon tickets that always sell out early! Once at the festival you get a free drink too. All CAMRA beer festivals offer either discounted entry or a free drink to all members. Yet more savings! As if that's not enough, there are great savings on all CAMRA publications, including £5.99 off the **Good Beer Guide** – see elsewhere in this edition for our upcoming launch event for the 2012 book. There is even a current offer of 10% off holiday cottages via Cottages4you – if taken up, another £50 plus saving! Your local branch runs quite a number of social events including minibus tours of rural pubs, and brewery and festival trips – membership will give you access to these with advance notice. Who knows, you may get the itch to join us more actively in campaigning or volunteering to help at our beer festival.

To summarise – you only have to take advantage of a few of the above benefits to more than double your money as a member. Personally I reckon that I currently get around a 1000% return on my membership. It was not why I joined 25 years ago, and is a recent phenomenon, but is a nice bonus all the same. If it helps persuade more of you to join then that's all for the better.

So, I reckon I've proved beyond doubt that investing your £20 into membership must be one of the very best ways of gaining a huge return. Forget the stock market, or the savings account – you know it makes sense!

Please remember that these offers can be subject to change so always check with the pub concerned if unsure. You must show your membership card.

Membership forms are printed in every Pints West or you can join online at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk). If you join at an organised social event we normally buy you a welcome pint too.

Vince Murray

## 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:

- **Anchor**, Thornbury
- **Bank**, John Street, Bristol
- **Bristol Cider House**, Surrey Street, Bristol
- **Commercial Rooms**, Corn Street, Bristol
- **Cornubia**, Temple Street, Bristol
- **Globe**, Frampton Cottrell
- **Gryphon**, Colston Street, Bristol
- **Horts**, Broad Street, Bristol
- **New Inn**, Mayhill
- **Old Stillage**, Redfield
- **Orchard Inn**, Hanover Place, Bristol
- **Parish Pump**, Worle
- **Queens Arms**, Bleadon
- **Red Admiral**, Locking Road, Weston-super-Mare
- **Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol
- **Three Tuns**, St George's Road, Hotwells, Bristol
- **Woolpack Inn**, St Georges, Weston-super-Mare



The actual details of the discounts vary from pub to pub and from time to time. The discount is at the discretion of the pub and can be as little or as large as the pub feels suits their business. Some of 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.

There is even a national database of pubs which have been officially registered as participating in the scheme, which can be accessed at [www.camra.org.uk/discountscheme](http://www.camra.org.uk/discountscheme). CAMRA members can use the search facility here to find details of participating pubs. Furthermore, pubs licensees / managers (or CAMRA branch officials on their behalf) can sign up their own pubs for the scheme here, and will receive some free posters to promote their offers.

*Before visiting the pubs, you may wish to check with the licensee that the discounts listed on this database are still current. Pubs are within their rights to change promotions to suit their business and may not have got round to informing CAMRA of these changes.*

[www.camra.org.uk/discountscheme](http://www.camra.org.uk/discountscheme)



# Branch diary

## Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA

- **Wed Sep 7th** – Explorer trip, cost £6, coach dep Cornubia 6.45pm to pubs in the Almondsbury, Thornbury, Oldbury areas.
- **Sat Sep 10th** – Minehead Beer Festival. Coach dep Cornubia at 9.45am. See Helen Featherstone to book.
- **Wed Sep 14th** – Committee meeting, 8pm Cornubia.
- **Thurs Sep 15th** – BADRAG social gathering, Robert Fitzharding, Bedminster. 7pm.
- **Fri Sep 16th** – GBG launch at the Cornubia, midday onwards until around 7pm.
- **Sat Sep 17th** – Proposed trip to the Wedmore Beer & Cider festival. Coach dep Cornubia 11am, price and other details tbc.
- **Wed Sep 21st** – Explorer trip, cost £6, coach dep Cornubia 6.45pm to pubs in the Clevedon, Congresbury, Wrington, Churchill areas.
- **Sat Sep 24th** – Tasting panel induction meeting, details, time and venue tbc.
- **Wed Sep 28th** – Branch meeting joint with WsM sub-branch at the Waverley 'air raid snug', Weston-super-Mare, meet 7.45 for 8pm. Coach depart Cornubia 7pm. Cost £4.
- **Thurs Sep 29th** – Bristol Pubs Group meeting, Horse & Groom 7pm.
- **1st-9th Oct** – Cask Ale Week, plus CAMRA/APPLE Cider month. Local events to be advised.
- **Thurs Oct 4th** – Bristol Pubs Group social, meet Cadbury House 7.30pm for walking tour of pubs in the Montpelier and Stokes Croft area.
- **Tues Oct 11th** – Explorer, cost £6, coach dep Cornubia 6.45pm to pubs in the Uphill, Bleadon, Hutton, WsM areas.
- **Wed Oct 12th** – Committee meeting 8pm Cornubia.
- **Wed Oct 19th** – Explorer, cost £6, coach dep Cornubia 6.45pm to pubs in the Cross, Rowberrow, Axbridge, Cheddar areas.
- **Thurs Oct 20th** – BADRAG social gathering, start Old Stillage, Redfield 7pm, then St. Georges Hall tbc 8.30pm.
- **Wed Oct 26th** – Branch meeting (quarterly) upstairs at Horts, Bristol, 7.45 for 8pm start.
- **Wed Nov 9th** – Committee meeting, 8pm Cornubia.
- **Thurs Nov 17th** – BADRAG social gathering at Gryphon, Bristol for 7pm, then on to Three Tuns for 9pm.
- **Wed Nov 23rd** – Branch meeting, 8pm, likely to be at the Horse & Groom, Bristol.

For more details on any of our meetings, socials or events, just visit our website ([www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk)) or email [badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:badcamrasocials@blueyonder.co.uk) for more information. Please note that all coach trips must be pre-booked. All details are correct at the time of going to press, but events outside of our control may lead to changes, so always check to make sure the trip or event you wish to attend is going ahead as advertised.

*As I am shortly to stand down from the role of Social Secretary, anybody who would like to get involved in organising, planning and running such events, please get in touch at the above address, or contact any committee member – full details via the website.*

Tim Proudman

## Twitter & Facebook

You can now follow Bristol & District CAMRA on Twitter. Use [@CAMRABristol](https://twitter.com/CAMRABristol) to get the latest tweets about branch news and activities. The branch is also on Facebook as [Camra-Bristol-District](https://www.facebook.com/Camra-Bristol-District).

## Thanks to this issue's contributors

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**Subscriptions:** to be put on a mailing list (for UK addresses) send ten 1st class stamps to the editor.

**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).

**Trading Standards Officers:** contact for problems such as consistent short measures, no price lists...

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## Bath & Borders diary

- **Thursday 8th 8:30pm:** a mini-crawl of Warminster, starting at the Masons Arms, then on to the Organ Inn and onwards.
- **Tuesday 13th 8:30pm:** a social at the Bell Inn, Buckland Dinham.
- **Friday 16th from 6 to 8:30pm:** the 2012 GBG launch at the White Horse in Twerton, Bath. Come to buy your nice box-fresh GBG at our Pub of the Year.
- **Thursday 22nd 8:30pm:** a mini-crawl starting at the Bell in Standerwick and then Full Moon in Rudge and the Kicking Donkey.
- **Tuesday 27th 8:30pm:** the branch meeting to be held at the Coeur de Lion, Bath.

## Bath & Borders contacts

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

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

## Weston diary and contact

See page 28

## Severn Vale diary and contacts

See page 27

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# of Two Halves



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I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association

I enclose a cheque for \_\_\_\_\_

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*PINTS WEST (Bristol & District) - edition 91*

12/10

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