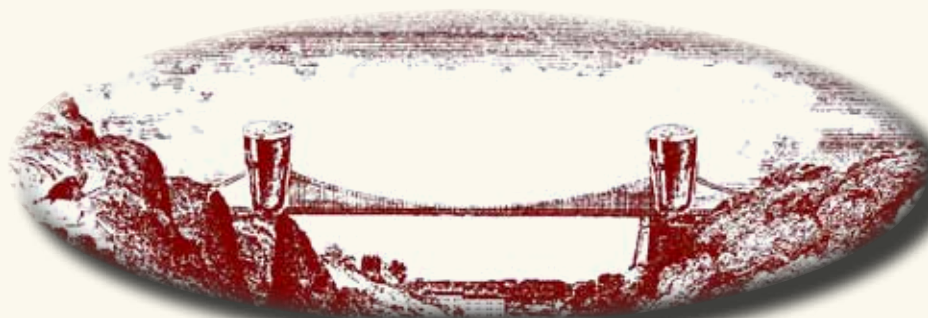




CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

AWARD-WINNING



www.camrabristol.org.uk

No. 92

Winter
2011/12

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)



Bristol Beer Festival 2012 to be the biggest yet

Lots of people have already been asking about the details of our next beer festival and how they can get hold of tickets, so it gives us great pleasure to announce that the fifteenth annual CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival will run from 15th to 17th March 2012.

It's still at the popular venue of the Brunel Passenger Shed at Temple Meads, however this time the festival will be our biggest ever! The demand for tickets has grown steadily with it selling out quicker every year, so for 2012 we are adding an extra session on the Thursday evening (we will also be ordering more beer). The 2012 Bristol Beer Festival will feature over 130 different real ales plus a great range of cider and perry, and food will be available at all sessions.

Tickets will go on sale to CAMRA members on Sunday 5th February at the COMMERCIAL ROOMS in Corn Street, Bristol from 11am until 2pm.

Tickets will only be sold to card-carrying CAMRA members at this session. There is a maximum of two tickets for each valid CAMRA card presented for the Friday evening and Saturday lunchtime sessions of the beer festival. The limit on ticket purchases for the Thursday evening, Friday lunchtime and Saturday evening sessions is four tickets for each valid CAMRA card presented. Anyone who signs up to join CAMRA on the day will also be able to purchase festival tickets.

On Sunday 19th February tickets will go on sale at the OLD FISH MARKET in Baldwin Street, Bristol from 11am to 2pm.

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

Simultaneous ticket sales sessions will take place with the same rules at OFF THE RAILS at Weston-super-Mare train station on both 5th and 19th February.

Tickets will not be held back, so once they have sold out they really are all gone. If there are any tickets remaining after these sessions they will be put on general sale at the SEVEN STARS in Thomas Lane, Bristol from Wednesday 22nd February.

All ticket prices include £5 worth of beer festival tokens, which



customers will receive on entry enabling them to go straight to the bar. Also included is a festival programme and a commemorative pint glass, marked for third- and half-pint measures, and this year sponsored by Cotswold Spring Brewery.

Please bring the correct cash to the above ticket sales sessions as we will not be able to accept cheques or credit cards. Ticket details and prices are as follows.

Thu 15 March evening, 7pm-11pm, £10 (incl £5 of tokens)

Fri 16 March lunchtime, 11:30am-4pm, £10 (incl £5 of tokens)

Fri 16 March evening, 7pm-11pm, £10 (incl £5 of tokens)

Sat 17 March lunchtime, 11:30am-4pm, £10 (incl £5 of tokens)

Sat 17 March evening, 7pm-11pm, £9 (incl £5 of tokens)

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

Richard Brooks

Front page pictures

Top left: Martin Hughes, Peter Gibbs and Martin Gibson at the reopening of the Volunteer Tavern in St Judes.
(Photo by Richard Brooks.)

Bottom left: The magnificent bar at the King's Head in Victoria Street, central Bristol - the last National Inventory pub in town.
(Photo by Tim Belsten.)

Bottom right: Attendees at the recent launch of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2012 at the Cornubia in Bristol.
(Photo by Robert Coyne.)

Rucking Mole joins the pack!

Melksham, Wilts SN12 6TJ
Tel: 01225 708842

ALL YEAR ROUND	IN SEASON
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	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

Scrumpty (6.0%abv)
Sparkling (6.0/4.8%abv)
Bottle (4.7%abv)

www.molesbrewery.com

Bristol Beer Factory 'Best Drinks Producer'

The Bristol Beer Factory has won 'Best Drinks Producer' in Radio 4's prestigious BBC Food & Farming Awards.

The short-listed entrants were decided on votes from the public and the winners by an expert panel of judges chaired by chef and restaurateur, Richard Corrigan, who said about the winners, "They are working hard to save some of our greatest craft skills and artisanal traditions and reflect where Britain is today and give us optimism for our future." The judges liked the fact that the Bristol Beer Factory is at the heart of the community in Southville and Ashton and central to the regeneration of the area. They also loved the brewery's 'Twelve Stouts of Christmas' idea of a dozen beers specially created to celebrate the festive season.

Bristol Beer Factory Managing Director, Simon Bartlett, had previously said, "Wow, we are blown away to have made the finals at this years Food & Farming Awards. It is fantastic that people have nominated us for such an award, and great justification in what we are trying to achieve at the Beer Factory."

Upon receiving the news that they had actually won, George Ferguson, founder of the Bristol Beer Factory, said, "We see this as an accolade for Bristol and the craft beer industry as a whole and feel very lucky to be representing independent brewers up and down the country who put so much care and attention into producing high-quality craft beers."

On the topic of the 'Twelve Stouts of Christmas', a year of trials, experiments and patience has come to an end. Tasting, blending and



The winning team

arguing over different brews has led to a point where they have a truly unique case of twelve different bottle-conditioned stouts. These were launched at a brewery open day on 26th November and are now available from the brewery or online. There are only 150 cases of the 'Twelve Stouts of Christmas' available, although there are a small number of some beers that will be sold individually.

Head Brewer, Chris Kay, said, "I have enjoyed the challenges this project has thrown up and I'm particularly happy with how the Raspberry Stout has turned out; the 25kg of raspberries that were used in making this beer have given it an incredible aroma. I'll definitely be having a bottle on Christmas Day."

Simon Bartlett added, "We think the 'Twelve Stouts' case will make a fantastic Christmas present – what more could a beer lover want this year?"



Bristol Vintage 2011 is a beer they have created to celebrate the 1,000th brew in the brewery. Simon Bartlett, along with brewers Chris Kay and Brett Ellis, have carefully selected five malts and four of their favourite hop varieties to make a full-flavoured, strong, dark ale. After fermentation the beer was aged on some fresh English oak to add another layer of complexity to it. An extra special brew day was required to produce the desired amount of beer, Simon starting the brew day off at 1am, and Chris finishing the day at gone 9pm. Three mashes were required to produce the 6,000 pints wanted. Hops were selected from England, Germany, New Zealand and the US, all bringing something different to the beer, and leading to a distinctive hop presence that complements the malts and balances the beer.

The Bristol Beer Factory Christmas beer **Bristletoe** is now available again in both cask and bottle-conditioned form. It has been spiced with ginger, coriander and orange peel, and is a lower alcohol (4.3%) alternative to many Christmas beers.

Their new Beer Shop & Café should now have opened on North Street (next to Mark's Bread). Bristol Beer Factory bottled and draught beers will be available Monday to Saturday, along with other products made on site.

There is also the online shop at www.bristolbeerfactory.co.uk.

Richard Brooks



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

Beers available from
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

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.



Pub news from the Bristol Pubs Group

There has been a lot going on with our branch area's pubs in the last few months, and I'll start with the good news. The **Volunteer** in New Street, St. Jude's has re-opened and is presenting up to four real ales. The pub has enjoyed significant changes and should offer a wider appeal. It is a bit difficult to find as it cannot easily be seen but it lies between the Phoenix and Old Market near the sadly closed Seven Ways; it's worth checking out. The **King's Arms** in Kingswood has been acquired by Michael Evans who has put in Czech Budvar in place of the 'other lager' and is offering two real ales. Another re-opener is the **White Hart** at Bitton. This pub closed in December 2008 when its owning company went into administration. It has been re-opened by a couple who are coming back into the trade after time away. It is the only pub in Bitton and deserves support. The **Tennis Court Inn** in Kingswood is being prepared for a re-opening, while the **Hollybush** in Bridgegate is also facing a welcome re-opening. One of Thornbury's oldest hostellers, the **Swan**, has also re-opened its doors as has the **Ring o' Bells** in Nailsea, which closed for a short while recently, but is now open once again.

If you are interested in buying the freehold of a public house then one of these could be for you. The **Plume of Feathers** in Hotwells is closed and for sale (*now sold? Ed*), but the **Scotchman and His Pack** on St. Michael's Hill in Kingsdown, the **Black Cat** in Bedminster, the **Ship** in Oldbury on Severn, the **White Swan** in Downend and the **Cross Hands** in Pilning are all open but for sale. The **Anchor Made For Ever** in New Cheltenham has its lease available but is currently trading.

And now for the bad news. The **Highwayman** in Kingswood is again pending a planning application to demolish and build houses on the site. The Bristol Pubs Group has objected to two applications regarding this pub this year and hopes that planners can be persuaded as to the value of this community asset. The **Red Hart** in Hartcliffe looks set for demolition in favour of the usual house building. Nearby the **Rising Sun** in Bishopsworth is boarded up. Lockleaze has no open pubs with the **Golden Bottle** and **Gainsborough** closed, and nearby the **White Lion** in Eastville remains closed with the owner seeking to make major changes, albeit with an intention to retain a bar.

And finally, the **White Hart** in Midsomer Norton has gained statutory listed building status at Grade II. This Victorian town pub, with three rooms off of an entrance passageway, is listed on CAMRA's National



The White Swan at Downend - freehold for sale

Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors for its unchanged interior fittings and original layout. These types of pubs are rare and their preservation is of the utmost importance to CAMRA's Pub Heritage Group, who applied for the listing. This should at least offer some vital protection.

Keep pubbing, stay vigilant, and most of all, keep enjoying your pub!

Mike Jackson



The Kings Arms in Kingswood - now serving real ale!

“Now if I had that pub, you know what I'd do is to...”

Chris and Stephen Allcock, of Euphorium Bakery Ltd, have recently acquired The Victoria in St. Werburgh's, bringing their portfolio of pubs up to seven, including The Star in Pill, The Plough, and The Horseshoe, both in Filton. They are looking to expand, and are short of not so much pubs as landlords.

As such, they need enthusiastic prospective landlords who want to make pubs work. If you want to run a pub in the Bristol or North Somerset area, please contact us - we don't do ties, and are interested purely in creating successful, long term businesses with a completely hands-off approach to running the pub. We will buy, and let - it is your business from the outset.

If you are interested, please contact Chris Allcock on 07770 754 622.

Bristol Pubs Group Day of Action

Wednesday 23rd November marked a busy day for the Bristol Pubs Group, part of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Early morning radio interviews took place with some members, plus Charlotte Leslie, MP for North Bristol. A press conference was then held in Horts, Broad Street.

The conference was held with representatives of Bristol City Council attending, including Ian Quaife the Community Cohesion Manager, Cllr Patrick Hassell (Hillfields), Cllr Steve Comer (Eastville) and Cllr Neil Harrison (Cotham, and Assistant Cabinet member for Planning). Press and media included ITV News, Radio Bristol, Heart FM and the Evening Post all doing interviews.

Chaired by Peter Bridle, the Group's chairman, a panel of speakers explained a few of the ongoing problems pubs are suffering. Peter opened saying, "We already have a situation where some areas of Bristol no longer have a local pub. If residents want to go out for a social drink, they have to travel to another area." He called for the Government and local councils to work towards:

- A halt to the escalating beer duty imposed on beers;
- Dealing with cheap off-sales of alcoholic drinks such as those in supermarkets;
- Giving pubs better planning protection, including having their own classification of properties;
- Removing the stranglehold large pub companies (pubcos) can have on licensees, with high rents, and forcing the pubs to buy solely from them.

Peter highlighted a recent survey of pubs the Group had carried out in Fishponds. Well over 80% had felt financial pressures in the past year, including pricing from pubcos. Over 60% felt adversely affected by the rise of beer duty and the VAT rise. Other problems included difficulties in licensing, including entertainment, plus Council business rates. 62% suffered tight competition with supermarket prices. These factors all lead to 46% having to reduce staffing, with one publican working 100 hours per week with no staff. Taking out those with no power to make decisions, or having not traded a full year, the figures were even higher!

Keith Shapland of the Group, spoke of the demise in South Bristol, where areas are virtually dry of traditional, community pubs. Only very recently, the landlord of the Shakespeare in Totterdown had decided to close. A large number have been converted to other uses including a supermarket, a steak restaurant, dental surgery, flats, art theatre, or just plain demolished! All despite the planned increase in residents the Council is expecting in South Bristol by 2026.

Glen Dawkins (owner of Dawkins Ales and Dawkins Taverns), explained the problems involving the stiff competition pubs face with supermarkets selling alcoholic drinks at loss-making prices. Glen said, "A pint of Tesco Value cider works out at just 39p, while a pint of Tesco Value bitter costs just 22p. The average pint in a pub costs £3 – and at that level the publicans are making very little profit."

Cllr Steve Comer highlighted the problems which could arise if this leads to areas having no pubs left. With cheap supermarket beers available, drinking on the streets would increase, leading to more anti-social behaviour and litter. This is in contrast to the control felt in community pubs. He added, "Pubs have always been very much part of communities in Bristol – think of all the football teams, darts, skittles and crib teams, the local history societies and community charity groups that come out of the friendly local."

Ed Lobbett of the Bank Tavern, a free-of-tie pub in John Street in central Bristol, spoke about the business model used by large pubcos. He said, "A tub of ale can cost me between £50 and £70, but exactly the same product will cost £120 to £150 for [tied] licensees who are forced to buy their beer from their supplier." He went on to say that if a small pub closes, the pubco does not feel a loss. It still has the property in their portfolio, which can simply be sold on for other uses, such as flats.

After the discussion, the press and media were taken on a tour of north Bristol, to be shown pubs which had closed, with some totally demolished. They were shown:

- **Gainsborough, Lockleaze** - A modern 1960's-style typical estate pub. Once a large public bar and smaller lounge bar. Closed March 2010. Freehold now sold and awaiting its fate.



The Day of Action started with a press conference in Horts

- **Golden Bottle, Lockleaze** - Again a 60's-style pub with two large bars plus skittle alley/function room. Closed in August 2011, but with some hope of being revived as a pub.
- **Standard of England, Southmead** - Originally a four-bar drinking place with a skittle alley, which was a lively, well-used local. Closed in May 2010 and now a Tesco's Express;
- **Wayfarer, Brentry** - Originally a smart two-bar pub with a large garden and kiddies' corner. Once a good place for lunch-time food for the local business community and BAC workers, until it closed for good in May 2011. 'For Sale' board still up but likely to be demolished and replaced by three units.
- **Bourne End, Brentry** - A true community pub with two bars, skittle alley/function room, pool table, etc. After 18 years, the landlord departed in May 2011 due to ill health. Remained closed since, and rumoured to be demolished and replaced with houses.
- **Henbury Inn, Henbury** - Purpose-built 1950's pub. Originally two bars, skittle alley and function room with separate bar. Closed in 2006 and now replaced by flats. Only the support frame for the hanging pub sign remains.
- **Masons Arms, Lawrence Weston** - Originally an old extended cottage. One bar, skittle alley, pool tables and dart boards. Huge surprise when it shut in May 2010, as probably the best in the area. Demolished very quickly by December 2010. Planning for houses approved.
- **English Rose, Lawrence Weston** - Large, typical 60's-style pub. Large public bar and smaller lounge together with skittle alley and function room. Closed in 2008 and replaced with a very large flats complex.
- **Penpole Inn, Kingsweston** - Another 60's-style brick pub. Large bar, smaller lounge and skittle alley. Closed in March 2010. Planning approved for nine houses to be built on site.
- **Iron Bridge, Sea Mills** - Large imposing building. Originally two large bars. Food was served throughout the day and there was a pleasant garden at the rear. Just opened up as a day nursery.

The tour ended at a revived pub, the Three Tuns in St Georges Road, central Bristol, giving all parties an opportunity for face-to-face discussions – and a drink at last! Matters on better planning protection for pubs were discussed with Cllr Neil Harrison. Bristol Pubs Group welcomes a newly adopted planning policy (BCS12) to protect public facilities including pubs. However, Tim Belsten expressed the Group's concern over its possible misinterpretation, after the decision to allow conversion of the Iron Bridge to a day nursery. Some clarification was agreed necessary. Other suggestions over the protection of pubs were discussed.

The day was felt to be a success in making the powers that be more aware of the problems pubs are facing. The Group hopes this will also help pubs in other CAMRA branch areas, as the news was the opening story on ITV West Country News, which covers the South West down to Land's End.

Tim Belsten

The Welly goes from strength to strength

The Wellington, affectionately known as 'The Welly', is a large, detached red-brick pub at the top of Gloucester Road in Horfield. Much loved by locals, the business community, Bristol Rovers and Bristol Rugby Club fans alike, this popular pub goes from strength to strength.

The Welly was taken over by Bath Ales in 2002 and won the Bristol & District CAMRA Pub of the Year in 2005. Within the last three years, a lovely (sometimes sunny) patio was added complementing an attractive conservatory extension which has allowed more focus on the food side of the business. Earlier this year, a children's garden/play area was finished which has proved a big hit with families.

Manager Vicki Brake, who joined Bath Ales from Welsh brewers Brains four months ago, is supported by a friendly team of assistant managers Tom, Martin and Toby. Wilf Penfold, a highly rated chef who has previously worked at River Station, Berwick Lodge and Bath Ales' own Graze Bar & Chop House in the city centre, heads up the food operation.

The standard range of Bath Ales beers is always available (SPA,



Gem and Barnstormer) plus a seasonal which, until recently, has been the wonderful Hare and Hop brewed using New Zealand Sauvignon hops (think heavy hints of autumn fruits, a fresh, heady aroma and a crisp, dry taste – lovely!). The new seasonal is of course Bath Ales' award-winning porter, Festivity. There is also a changing guest ale, which recently has featured beers from Purbeck and also Dark Star Winter Meltdown.

Bath Ales has recently launched a loyalty card scheme called the Loyal Hare Force which allows you to save money off food and drink, plus participation in special offers.

So what's in the pipeline for 2012? In the New Year, the pub will be vamping-up its accommodation offering. Ten double en-suite rooms, including conversion of some outbuildings into two disabled access rooms, are planned.

The Welly's opening hours are 12 to 11 Monday to Thursday; 12 to 12 Friday and Saturday; and 12 to 11 Sunday. Food is available from midday to 10pm every day. On Saturdays and Sundays, you can also enjoy breakfast at the Welly from 9am.

Alison Bridle

*The Wellington, Gloucester Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 8UR
0117 951 3022 – wellington@bathales.co.uk*

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Bob Bagshaw RIP

PINTS WEST has received the sad news that our friend and colleague Bob Bagshaw sadly passed away on Tuesday November 8th, aged 85. Bob was one of the earliest members of Bristol CAMRA, having joined up in the 1970s, and he became a very active and influential member. For many years he performed the role of Branch Treasurer and the branch money was never in safer hands. He had a great acumen for accountancy and knew where every penny belonged! Personally, I will remember him proving to be an astute and tough negotiator when we went together to visit potential venues for Bristol Beer Festival – he usually spotted pitfalls that I might well have missed.

Bob formed a formidable double act with fellow early member and former Branch Chairman Colin Pursey and they were often seen out together around Bristol and Somerset's real ale haunts. Bob told me that he had a real passion for eating fish, but that sadly for him his wife Coral could not stand it and was not keen to cook it for him – so he had to eat out when he wanted to indulge his passion. Naturally he always made sure that the pub also served a decent pint of ale! He said all this with a twinkle in his eye – it remains one of the best reasons I've heard for needing to go out pubbing!

Bob remained active socially and within CAMRA until around 10 years ago when he suffered a serious stroke. Although he never properly recovered he was still seen out with Colin from time to time until recent years and although he found it hard to communicate it was obvious that that sharp brain was still functioning as well as ever!

Bob is survived by Coral and his daughter who have our sincere condolences – RIP mate.

Vince Murray

News from Bath Ales



Bath Ales has announced an ambitious investment plan to double production volumes in the next two years and then expand to four times its current size in five years' time. The investment in new brewing equipment alone will exceed one million pounds.

The first step to enable this growth has started with a new bigger facility opened in the last few weeks to house the distribution, logistics and office staff. Other functions will be transferred over the next few months, enabling capacity to be expanded and creating further employment. The new operation will be more efficient and integrate more environmentally-friendly features such as renewable energy.

The new site is less than a mile from the existing premises in Warmley on the outskirts of Bristol and close to its existing bottling plant. At around 38,000 sq ft it is more than four times the size of the present base at Caxton Business Park. The existing facility will be used until a new brewhouse is established, which could take up to 18 months.

Bath Ales is presently brewing seven days a week at fifty barrels a day to cater for the increased demand for its products and is bottling for more than twenty other breweries.

Bath Ales is also delighted to announce the return of **Festivity**, their seasonal Christmas ale. Festivity is a specially crafted old-style porter brewed at 5.0%. Hints of rum mingle with coffee and vanilla to create a truly festive beer. Festivity makes its return as seasonal winter ale following popular demand. Once again, last year's brew sold out in record time and therefore Bath Ales have produced more this year to make sure no one has to miss out.

Bath Ales head brewer Gerry Condell said: "This is another great year for Festivity. It's in excellent condition and we have had really good feedback from the first casks sold through our pubs. We're delighted that this porter has such a loyal following." Festivity is available on draught and in bottles.

This follows on from their 3.9% autumn offering, **Hare & Hop**, which has gone down very well. This is something due in no small part to the choice of imported Nelson Sauvin hops from New Zealand, along with the wheat as well as barley malt. Many people would like to see this beer become part of the permanent range (*me in particular - Ed.*).

Bath Ales is capitalising on other artisan products, discovered on Twitter, which are all available in their new Christmas hamper. As well as a bottle of Festivity porter, contents include (Bath Ales) Dark Side paté by award-winning Bristol charcuterie, Castellanos, hand-made (Bath Ales) Barnstormer chutney by Kitchen Garden Preserves of Stroud, Spelt Oat Cakes from Sharpham Park of Somerset, and a luxurious handmade soap from Village Green Soaps, which uses Bath Ales'

flagship bitter Gem as an ingredient. Bath Ales will also be offering a Festive Christmas Pudding for the first time, which will be available in the brewery shop and the seven pubs in the Bristol and Bath area.

Finally, Bath Ales recently handed over a cheque for £6,500 to Frenchay After Burns Children's Club, which was raised during the Summer Charity Bike Ride. This was the biggest amount ever raised and Bath Ales wants to thank all its customers for helping them raise such a fantastic amount.



CAMRA Members' Investment Club

Have you ever wished that you owned part of a brewery or one of the many pub chains that are now emerging? Well, now you have the opportunity of turning that dream into a reality. If you are a member of CAMRA you are eligible to join the CAMRA Members' Investment Club (CMIC).

For a minimum of £5 per month you could start making an investment in the many companies in which the Club owns shares. These include Adnams, Black Sheep, Carlsberg, Duvel Moortgat, Enterprise Inns, Fullers, Greene King, Joseph Holt, Hop Back, Hydes, Mitchells & Butler, Punch Taverns, Shepherd Neame, Thwaites, Wadworth, JD Wetherspoon, Young's and a whole host of others.

The Club operates like a unit trust and members can pay in a round sum amount each month by standing order – from £5 up to a maximum of £166. A single annual payment can also be made up to a maximum of £2,000. The amount can be altered at any time and, if necessary, can be stopped and your investment cashed in or left to "ride" – the choice is yours.

At 31 October 2011 the funds of the Club were almost £10.5 million.

By holding a growing share in particular companies, the Club's votes at the AGMs could make a difference to either a takeover bid or other hostile actions. Having a voice in the boardrooms of the pub-owning groups could help influence their guest beer policies, which is becoming increasingly important in the market where the smaller brew-

eries are competing with the giants.

For the members, the Club organises tours of the breweries in which it has shares both in the UK and in Europe. These visits often present the opportunity of meeting the directors of the companies as well as viewing their brewing operations.

The Club also has its own web site at www.CMIC.uk.com. For an information pack on joining the Club, the contact details are: CMIC, 31 Chapel Brow, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 3NH
Tel: 0845 130 BEER (i.e. 0845 130 2337)
Fax: 01772 455528
Email: info@CMIC.uk.com.



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All change in Clifton

Well, not all, but there are certainly a few changes to note in the Clifton village area. The **Hop House**, in King's Road, off Clifton Down Road, was recently sold by its long-time owners Wadworth and reopened under new management as a free house in November. The new owners also run the **Ram** on Park Street and the **Robin Hood** on St Michael's Hill, Kingsdown, the latter an entry in the current Good Beer Guide, which bodes well for the beer quality in their new establishment. This was certainly evident on a visit on opening day, with Moor Star, Moor Revival, Wye Valley Golden Ale and Bristol Beer Factory Independence all on tap and in good condition. That level of quality has so far been sustained on subsequent visits. Plans are to have at least two real ciders and/or perries on permanently, and gradually to increase the range of ales according to demand. Matt and Luke appear to have a winning formula with the bar; the kitchen appears equally busy, with new menus available and the Sunday roasts already proving popular. When run by Wadworth, the pub used to close by 7pm on Sundays, but the Hop House is now open all week. Music has dominated on recent Friday to Sunday visits, which will no doubt please some, but makes conversation at normal volume difficult. Regulars will notice few other changes for now, although a more extensive make-over is planned in the new year, probably February. With the high quality of the beer experienced so far, and the beer range far exceeding that under



The Hop House by night

its previous management, the Hop House is very definitely one to watch.

Elsewhere in Clifton village (at the time of writing), the **Greyhound** on Princess Victoria Street remains closed, and the **Somerset** awaits a new permanent manager following the departure a couple of months ago by the previous incumbents.

The **Royal Oak** on The Mall has a new real cider (Thatchers Heritage) on the bar to accompany its regular real ale offering, and has upgraded some of its furnishings. The **Clifton**, on Regent Street, also appears to be under new management after a few days' closure for repainting. The beer range and quality here has improved significantly and new menus have appeared, keeping the kitchen busy on recent visits. Unfortunately this also appears to mean that tables in both front and back bars are being reserved for diners, if the chalk boards seen on tables on a recent Friday evening visit are to become a regular feature. With the dramatic improvement in beer quality, it'd be really unfortunate if those who just want a drink are made to feel somehow less welcome. But it's early days yet and, again, one to watch.

Lesly Huxley

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News from Butcombe Brewery

A very pleasant time was had by visitors to the Butcombe Brewery Open Day on October 1st, with those serving behind the bar experiencing a very busy few hours! Free beer and nibbles, brewery tours, Mendip Morris Men and **the sun** (!) all contributed to the convivial atmosphere.

December sees the all too brief return of **Christmas Steps** (4.2% ABV), Butcombe's light ruby seasonal ale.

Adam Henson's Rare Breed (4.2% ABV), Butcombe's new partnership beer, will launch into the free trade on January 1st 2012. A launch party for licencees, and attended by Adam Henson, will be held on January 4th at Calcott Manor, in Gloucestershire. (Official invitations are available from Butcombe area sales managers.) The beer will also be available nationally via Heineken Cask Orders throughout February.

A very welcome piece of news is that **Old Vic Bristol Porter** (4.7% ABV) will be making a return during February and March. A new venture for Butcombe last winter, this porter made quite an impression on CAMRA members, so if you didn't try it then, do catch it this time



round!

Butcombe Bitter has just had a four-week promotion via Greene King, resulting in sales of around a thousand nine-gallon casks. Fuller's will also be promoting it in London and the Home Counties during the first two weeks in December.

A new 150-barrel conditioning tank is currently being installed at the brewery to keep up with demand. Bottled beer sales are up 300% from last year and Fuller's are

now bottling 150-barrel runs of Butcombe Bitter, Gold, Brunel IPA and Adam Henson's Rare Breed.

A new concept from Butcombe is the establishment of a female-friendly room, with attractions such as soft cushions, named 'The Green Room', in their new pub in Cheltenham, the **Frog & Fiddle**. This sounds like an interesting idea in this large male-orientated pub.

The 'Brewer of the Month' promotion to the free trade will feature beers from Tring brewery in January and Hop Back brewery in February.

Margaret Evett

The 'Ringers' reopens



One of Nailsea's longest established local pubs, the Ring of Bells on Whiteoak Way, reopened on 5th November after a three week closure following the departure of the previous tenant. The popular Enterprise Inns pub has been taken on by local Dave Green who knows it well having spent 19 years on the other side of the bar!

Dave is a true real ale and cider enthusiast, and one of his first moves was to remove the old top-pressure system from the cellar. His current three pumps will carry Butcombe Bitter, Bath Ales Gem and Doom Bar, with the latter two being rotated with a guest ale chosen by customers. He will also be looking to try stocking a real cider, which the pub has never offered.

Dave intends his seven-day-a-week food offer to be a major attraction of the pub. A confessed 'foodie' he is offering high-quality traditional English snacks and meals prepared from local fresh produce at affordable prices. Look out for his themed food nights. Sundays will see the return of the popular carvery.

He plans to bring back some traditional bar games including bar billiards and shove half-penny and to regularly feature live traditional music.

Alan Sibley



**"Christmas comes but once a firkin.....
And when it does we're firkin workin'!"**

Have a great Butcombe celebration
with the best
Christmas Beer around

Christmas Steps

(available now)



A new Butcombe beer for 2012
Adam Henson's Rare Breed

(available from 1st January)

Back by CAMRA demand
Old Vic Bristol Porter

(available February and March)



The Volunteer Tavern reopens

Following a period of closure, the Volunteer pub has recently reopened after a sympathetic refurbishment.

Where is the Volunteer, you may ask! Is it that pub in King Street? Well, no. This Volunteer is another lovely pub in central Bristol. Given its central location, it could be considered surprising how few people – including many Bristolians – know of its existence. However, it is perhaps a little tucked away – but this adds to its charm.

Time to find out where this hidden gem is maybe; the place is only about one or two minutes' walk from Cabot Circus! As their web site helpfully points out:

"Located just on the edge of central Bristol is a small collection of shops called Cabot Circus. You know it? Well, just on the opposite side of the road from side of Cabot Circus with Harvey Nichols, Next and House of Fraser on a road just to the right of Future Inns car park lies our lovely little tavern in the town!"



The business is owned jointly by two Martins – Martin Gibson who has run several pubs in Bristol over recent years and Martin Hughes who has very successfully run the splendid Hope & Anchor on Jacobs Wells Road, Hotwells for over 10 years.

The single-roomed pub is quite small inside which gives it a lovely intimate atmosphere. It gets better with a delightful partially covered garden to the rear.

The two Martins along with Peter

Gibbs, who manages the pub having had seven years experience at the Hope & Anchor, want to return the Volunteer to being a friendly, community-based pub. They want to create an environment where customers should be able to enjoy a decent meal and drink in a safe and relaxed environment. What better way to get away from all the hustle and bustle of the shopping centre!

The pub usually offers four real ales. Generally there will be a Wick-war ale or two on plus beers from other independent breweries. The pub also offers a range of other draught and bottled products and has a focus on single malt scotch whiskies. Additionally, as they really want to be a part of the Bristol real ale scene, they have introduced a 10% discount on real ale to CAMRA card holders.

In keeping with its "traditional" values, the pub does not have sports TV or games machines. However, they do realise that the world is ever changing and it is also important to keep up with some trends. For this reason the pub has free wi-fi (hurrah!) for customers and a Twitter site



Martin Hughes, Peter Gibbs and Martin Gibson on the opening night at the Volunteer Tavern
(photo by Richard Brooks)

(@VolunteerTavern). They are using Twitter to notify customers of upcoming real ales and other developments such as menu changes and specials.

Pubs like this deserve support and let's hope both the local community and people who really appreciate pubs can help see it into a new era as a successful local. The food offering (which includes Sunday roasts) is available for much longer hours than most pubs and they have very recently hosted live music events with blues and acoustic sets on a Friday and a ukulele duo on the Saturday. So, who knows what they have up their sleeve next!

So, as they say locally, where's it to? See below and maybe see you there!

The Volunteer Tavern, 9 New Street, St Judes, Bristol BS2 9DX

0117 955 8498 – www.volunteertavern.co.uk

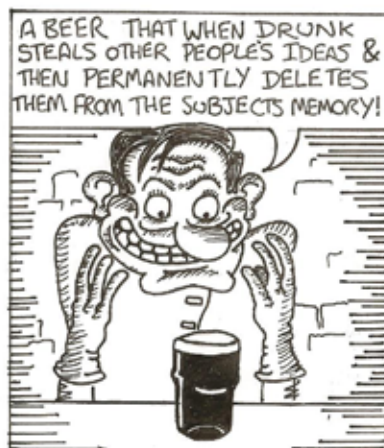
Twitter: @VolunteerTavern – www.facebook.com/VolunteerTavern

Opening times: 12noon to 11pm every day

Pete Bridle



The Bar Code
by Eddie Taberner



15/06/11

Cotswold Spring produces a Stunner

After updating their branding and adding four new beers to the brewery's portfolio, Cotswold Spring has now started bottling some of their own beers at their brewery in Dodington Ash. The first four beers available in bottle – all bottle-conditioned – are **Ambler**, **Codger**, **Trooper** and **Vixen**, though we are told that there will be more following soon.

Stunner is another new beer created by the brewer, Nik Milo. Nik says, "Stunner is a straw-coloured beer with a tropical palate and refreshing finish." Also, keep an eye out for a new oatmeal stout called **Guv'nor** and Nik's Christmas ale, a spicy old ale with orange, cinnamon and ginger.

Following an invite from Cotswold Spring, the branch had a brewery visit where many of the members were able to taste **Trooper** for the first time as it had only been released to pubs a week before. We were welcomed by John Warlock, Nik and Mark Frankcom who then gave a very entertaining presentation about beer making at the brewery. During the visit members were also invited to write comments about two versions of a prototype wheat beer. Many members then sampled the other beers that were available, **Gloucester Glory**, **Codger** and **Old English Rose**.

During the return trip to Bristol, the group stopped at the New Inn at Mayhill where the managers, Alix and Dave McKillop, made us welcome with hot nibbles and their usual fine selection of ales, which included Cotswold Spring's award-winning **Old Sodbury Mild** on tap.

Steve Matthews



Branch members had a great time at the Cotswold Spring Brewery (photo by Richard Brooks)

Commercial Rooms 200th anniversary

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Open Lunchtimes & Evenings
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ANOTHER edition of Pints West, another picture of a cake in the Commercial Rooms!

This time the impressive creation was to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Commercial Rooms building (although it was only converted into a Wetherspoon pub in 1995). Pictured are manager Helen Bull with colleagues Phil Opoku and Aiden Waller.

Richard Brooks

Inn and around Portishead

Pub Crawling in Portishead

With a supply of Pints West in my rucksack and accompanied by the new organisers of the Redcliffe Bay Beer Festival, Ian Looker and John Steward, I attempted a local pub crawl which proved more eventful than expected. We cheated a bit to start with by getting a lift to our first pub, the **Royal Inn**, by my wife who seemed glad to get rid of me for the night. At the Royal we had the choice of four real ales; regulars Sharp's Doom Bar and Butcombe Bitter, and guest beers Wickwar's Sunny Daze and Brains' Bitter. We tried the latter two and had no complaints at all. Landlord, Jimmy and his son, Mike, who runs the bar, both seemed in good form and we were feeling perky when we left. The Royal is well positioned at the end of Pier Road, with views over both Severn Bridges and with attractive gardens and a large patio which take advantage of this. The new marina housing development surrounds the Royal and you can take a short flight of steps from near to the pub down to the lock-side area of this development, which we did. From here we could have walked across the lock gate but instead we chose to walk alongside the marina so that we could choose which boats we would buy if we ever had enough money or enjoyed sailing. From here we walked in the direction of Parish Wharf Leisure Centre and Waitrose. At the end of Station Road and next to the (one and only) petrol station, we headed straight up Wyndham Way as if we were going out of the town.

At the first roundabout, at Gordano Gate, we came to the **Brewers Fayre**, attached to the Premier Inn. Now it has to be said that John was a bit reluctant at this stage. This establishment, owned by Whitbread, is certainly part of a chain. The pub has a cosy drinking area but its larger area is designated to eating and it serves smaller people well by offering generous play facilities. John was tight-lipped about exactly what had traumatised him at this place but as he has a wife and three daughters it could just be the memory of spending on food rather than beer. We tried both the real ales, Wadworth 6X and Butcombe Bitter, and both were fine.



The Albion, Portishead

With Mr Steward still trembling slightly, we carried on along Wyndham Way with the **Albion** as the next stop. At this stage I need to point out that, although all three of us are "incomers" from other parts, we have between us over 60 years experience of living in the town by now and we still got lost! I say "we" but the truth is Ian struck off in the opposite direction into the thick of one of the new developments as if under alien influence. His buddy, John, dutifully followed close behind and I hung further back like a sulky teenager and remonstrated as we tramped over play areas and footpaths, frightening the locals. Finally, I put my foot down, insisted we headed back on track and emerged close to where Ian had struck off in the first place, having lost a quarter of an hour drinking time. To this day, Ian insists he knew where we were going all the while and he had a little smile to himself shortly after when I mislaid a public footpath. For those of you who want an easier life, you should either walk up Wyndham Way and then turn right down Bristol Road or cross Wyndham Way at the pedestrian lights, take the pathway into Brampton Way, turn left down Cadbury Road and then right down Bristol Road.

At the end of Bristol Road is the Albion which had just undergone another refurbishment. This has opened up the place to give it more room. To us old blokes the improvements appeared pretty good but our concentration was on the beers. Being owned by Greene King, their beer choice mainly comes from this range and we had their IPA, Abbot and Speckled Hen to choose from. We tried the Abbot and Speckled Hen and were pleased with both. Landlord, Andrew, told us he intends to have five real ales on in the future and if they are all as good as my Speckled Hen (which was lovely and creamy) we can look forward to that. Now, you wouldn't know it from our approach but the Albion is just round the corner from the end of the High Street and from here we had a pleasant two-minute stroll to **Clarence House**.

A couple of us are members of Clarence House, a comfortable and welcoming members' club with three skittle alleys and a large function room. We spent a pleasant time chatting to Sarah and Derek who were running the bar while we sampled the Butcombe Bitter and Courage Best. From here we travelled back up the High Street towards the middle of town and the **Phoenix Bar** which is hidden behind the Ghandi Restaurant. At the Phoenix we were greeted with the usual banter, orchestrated by Liz (AKA Whiz) behind the bar. Landlady Dawn was sunning her bits in Portugal. As usual, an enjoyable time we had and the Marston's Bitter and Pedigree went down well.

Thus ended an interesting walk via some of the pubs in Portishead. If anyone is interested in joining an Ian Looker Mystery Tour in future, feel free to approach him.

Neil Ravenscroft

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PORTISHEAD



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Celebrating real cider and perry

Jerry Says...

Real cider is a long-established traditional drink which is produced naturally from apples. Today, real cider (and perry, made from pears) is in a similar situation to that which faced real ale some 30 years ago, with the number of outlets for real cider diminishing. Sadly, many of the most well-known ciders and perries (*not* 'pear cider') in the UK are produced artificially rather than naturally. Even if you're primarily a beer drinker, it is well worth looking out for real ciders and perries in local pubs to experience the range of delicious natural flavours available. Fortunately, despite the patchy national picture, here in the West Country we have some of the best cider pubs around, and real ciders and perries are appearing more regularly in real ale pubs too; something to gladden the heart of **Jerry Fletcher, Bristol and District CAMRA's cider officer**.

Although you might associate cider and perry with the hazy days of summer, October is cider and perry month – the time of year when the fruit is pressed and cider is made. CAMRA marks this by announcing our **national Cider Pub of the Year** which for 2011 is **Ye Olde Cider Bar** at Newton Abbot, recognised as one of only a handful of cider houses remaining in Britain. The pub serves 20 to 25 real ciders and perries at any one time, and has never held a licence to sell beer or spirits. Two years ago, the national winner was our own **Orchard Inn** in Bristol, which still serves an excellent and extensive range of ciders and perries, and which has also expanded its real ale offering.

Jerry notes, "Nominations are already being received for the 2012 competition, the deadline for which is 20th January 2012. We'll be writing to members soon to canvas nominations. Members and non-members alike can also make a nomination via the national CAMRA website at www.camra.org.uk/page.aspx?o=293835." Meanwhile, Jerry adds, "I'm looking at the possibility of organising a trip combining a day at the races with a visit to local hosteleries including, of course, **Ye Olde Cider Bar**. Newton Abbot is a Summer jumps course, so any trip is unlikely to take place before May at the earliest." If you're interested in such a trip, do let Jerry know.

Another key month for cider-makers (and drinkers) is January, the time of **Wassail**. According to Wikipedia, "Wassailing refers to a traditional ceremony that involves singing and drinking the health of trees in the hopes that they might better thrive. The purpose of wassailing is to

awake the cider apple trees and to scare away evil spirits to ensure a good harvest of fruit in the autumn." As Jerry says, "Last year for the local CAMRA branch Wassail, we visited **Westcroft** near Burnham-on-Sea – and a good time was had by the 22 people attending from the branch. This year I am hoping to arrange a trip to **Rich's cider maker** of Highbridge, Watchfield, Somerset, to join their Wassail celebrations on 14 January 2012."

Closer to home, which other cider pubs does Jerry recommend? "There are lots of good places in Bristol, but with Christmas shopping on the cards, if you want a break and enjoy your cider, why not step across the road from Cabot Circus to the **Bristol Cider House**? 200 yards or so away in Surrey Street, it's housed in an original Georgian building. Charlie Jarvis, the landlord, offers up to twenty real ciders. On my last visit, the choice included Black Rat, Broad Oak Perry and Rich's Medium, and a cider-tasting was taking place. Around ten people were discussing which cider was which, comparing taste with tasting notes. According to Charlie, these bookable events usually last around three hours, including a buffet, with a prize for the person who correctly identifies the most ciders. Overall it's a lovely pub."

And if you're Christmas-shopping for a cider enthusiast? Jerry adds: "It is almost a year now since the **Bristol Cider Shop** on Christmas Steps opened, and it has gone from strength to strength. It offers a huge range of draught and bottled ciders, perries and cider-related gifts including books on these traditional drinks, cider mustard and cider pickle. The Rose Farm mustard is a particular favourite of mine. They also arrange tours and events."

Cider or perry when served cool is refreshing and tasty; at this time of year you may also find mulled cider on offer, a delicious way of warming up as the weather turns colder. So don't forget, real cider and perry aren't just for summer ... they make a great tippie for Christmas and the winter months too! Seek them out, you won't be disappointed.

Lesly Huxley

(Jerry Fletcher can be contacted by email: jeremyfletcher@virginmedia.com)



Brewery news

RCH

Our friends at the RCH brewery, based in West Huish near Weston-super-Mare, report that business is good and that their occasional brew **Fiery Liz**, brewed to a strength of 5.2% ABV, went down very well at the recent Wetherspoon's beer festival. In fact it went down so well that they had to supply a second batch. Their Christmas special beer, **Steam Sleigh** at 3.8%, will be in the Wetherspoon's pubs this year too.

For those of us after something a little bit stronger, the mighty **Santa Fé**, (which weighs in at 7.3% but drinks much easier than you would expect) is being brewed as I write, ready for release on December 1st. I recommend that you seek it out as it's always worth the effort – although please respect the strength! One pub that has confirmed that it will be taking some is the Old Inn at Hutton near Weston-super-Mare.

Vince Murray

Zero Degrees

The Zero Degrees brewpub in Colston Street, Bristol has two new speciality beers. The brewer, Anna Schwaeble, tells me that the 4.2% **Apple Wheat Ale** which they have been serving through November is a spicy wheat beer which has a similar flavour to their **Wheat Ale** but with the addition of an appley tang. By the time you read this it may have been replaced by their 4.2% **Gingerbread Ale**; this is also a 4.2% wheat beer, but in the Belgian style with added cloves, cinnamon and orange which give it a gingerbread like flavour. It will be available throughout December.

Chris Rogers

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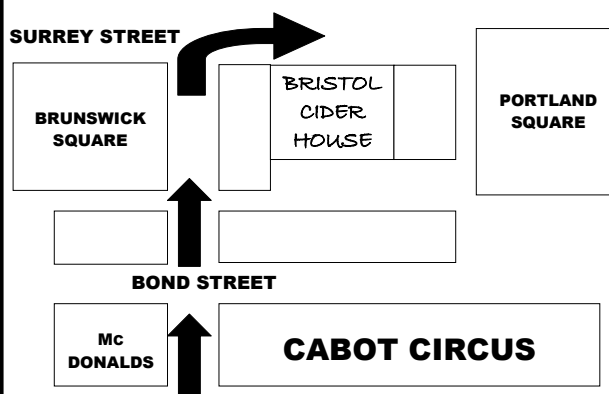
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The White Hart, Bitton

It seems many years since, on Friday nights, many of Bitton's locals gathered in the White Hart for a meat raffle and a few pints. The pub was the true heart of the village, everyone enjoying these evenings. Unfortunately, after more than one change in ownership, the pub closed and fell into disrepair.

A long time passed before the news spread that it could possibly be



re-opening. Everyone's hopes were dashed again, however, when one of the men behind the plan to re-open, died. This put all plans on hold and, to make things worse, vandals moved in and stripped the building of all copper piping, etc. It was to be an expensive renovation.



It was, therefore, very welcome news to hear that, after a long period of closure, the White Hart in Bitton was to re-open. This it did, on November 4th with a great reception from the local people.

The new landlords, Chris and Wendy, intend to run it as a traditional pub, with food to match when the kitchen is completed early next year.

There is a large open-plan front bar area, with a TV and with a dartboard in one corner, plus a smaller quiet room, ideal for club meetings or for locals to have a quiet chat, situated to the rear.

The regular cask beer is Doom Bar with one, possibly monthly, changing guest ale.

Varied live music events are planned, and it is hoped to restore the garden, making it into an attractive facility.

The pub is currently opening all day from 12 noon.

Bristol and District CAMRA wish Chris and Wendy well for the future.

Margaret and Terry Evett

CAMRA National Winter Ales Festival

Britain's biggest showcase of winter beers returns!

If you're looking for any excuse in January to shake off the cold and damp of winter, pay a visit to CAMRA's National Ales Festival from 18th to 21st at Manchester's Sheridan Suite.

With a whopping selection of over 300 winter warmers, as well as foreign beer and real cider/perry options, the festival is the biggest showcase of its kind in Britain. During the four-day festival, thousands of stout, porter, strong mild and old ale drinkers are expected to come through the doors, and with recent research showing that 52% of alcohol drinkers in Britain have now tried real ale, the festival is welcoming newcomers to see what all the fuss is about.

To complement the beer, the festival promises an unbeatable food buffet including English and Indian dishes, as well as live music on the Saturday.

The National Winter Ales Festival is also home to the Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition and on the opening day (January 18th) all eyes will be on who wins the top prize after Hop Back brewery of Downton, Wiltshire took the overall title in 2011 for their Entire Stout.

Graham Donning, festival organiser, speaking in anticipation of the 2012 event, said: "Considering the positive growth we've seen over the last couple of years in terms of the number of brewers opening up across Britain, let alone those producing winter beers, we're gearing up for another great year and welcome drinkers old and new to come along and enjoy a pint. I can't remember the last time there was so much choice available to drinkers in terms of stouts, porters, old ales and other winter beer styles on the market, so it's an exciting time to be organising this festival."

For more information, please visit www.alefestival.org.uk.

Over 200 beers

including foreign beers plus cider and perry

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5.00PM-10.30PM

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12.00-10.30PM

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12.00-10.30PM

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www.alefestival.org.uk



Arbor Ales 500th brew

Arbor Ales recently celebrated its 500th brew – a 9% ABV IPA. The boil (the part of the brewing process where the hops are added to the ‘wort’) occupied 500 minutes, resulting in a powerfully hopped ale! Another development is that of “Freestyle Friday” wherein once a fortnight the brewers give their fancies free rein and create an original one-off ale. The latest one is a 7% ABV stout called **Approved**. Made with Amber malt it is moderately hopped and very moreish. At the brewery recently I sampled the newly racked **Slumberjack** (6.9% ABV), a seasonal dark and delectable, smooth and intensely warming old ale.

Jon Comer, the founder of Arbor Ales, told me that the main news is that they are “too busy; when we think we’ve got everything done and can take a break, someone phones up with another order.” At the moment the number of casks conditioning in the cold store is at an all time low. With six regular outlets in London taking their beers, as well as a similar number in Reading, expansion is the only answer. Plans for 2012 revolve around the installation of a possible 10-barrel-length plant, together with additional fermenting vessels, more casks and increased bottling capacity, in larger premises.

On the in-house retail front (that’s the “tied estate”), the recent beer festival at the **Three Tuns** in Hotwells was a great success – twenty-four nine-gallon casks being consumed by the lucky participants.

Henry Davies



Arbor Ales
AWARD WINNING CRAFT BREWERY

500th Brew IPA
9.0% ABV

Cascade
4.0%

Slumberjack
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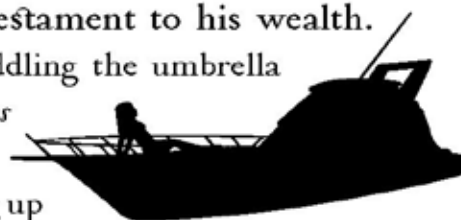
GBG 2012 amendment

For those who have purchased the new Good Beer Guide 2012, please note that the details for the Three Tuns in St Georges Road in Hotwells are already out of date following a recent change of management (although it remains an Arbor Ales pub). The phone number is now 0117 9070689 and the pub is no longer open all day every day. The new hours according to the Arbor Ales web site are Monday to Wednesday 12-2.30 and 4-11; Thursday 12-11; Friday and Saturday 12-12; Sunday 4-10.30 (closed lunchtime).

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

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

“Aye, I’ve got plenty of ACKERS,” grumbled my friend, twiddling the umbrella in his coçktil, “but no bloomin’ pub and no bloomin’ *Theakstons* Old Peculier, that’s for sure.” “Why don’t you just go home and get some?” I asked. He snorted, glancing at his trophy wife soaking up the rays beside him, “It’s the missus, won’t go anywhere it rains.” “Ah, I see.” I replied, wondering how the leggy Latino lovely liked being referred to as the MISSUS. Then, wißtfully, I thought of my very own şpecial rain-şpattered 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.



Severn Vale CAMRA

Joint social with Dursley sub-branch

Our closest CAMRA neighbours – notwithstanding Bristol Branch to the South – is the long-established Dursley sub-branch. So neighbourly are they, that you more or less only have to go a couple of hundred metres north from Thornbury, and you're treading on their turf. You may not realise it, but pubs like the **Swan**, Tytherington (for many years a Good Beer Guide-listed pub) and the **White Horse**, Buckover are both in the 'GL' postcode area, and hence fall under the auspices of Dursley sub-branch.

With Severn Vale being a relative newcomer, we thought it might be a jolly wheeze to get to know our local GL colleagues a bit better. And

what better way to do that than over a few jars. And if skittles could be arranged too...

Much planning later and organising of people and transport, Saturday 12th November saw around eleven Severn Vale members descend *en masse* to the skittle alley of that regular national Pub of Year contender – the **Salutation** in Ham, just South of Berkeley. We were met by six or seven Dursley members, including chairman Chris Arrowsmith. So it looked like the numbers for skittles would be in Severn Vale's favour!

Don and Sue, who run the Salutation, managed to whip together an excellent buffet to keep the wolves from the door, and provided us with

a choice of six different real ales – mostly from local breweries. Amongst them was Severn Vale brewery's Severn Bells, as was their brewer, Steve. There were no complaints about quality of beer! Steve's prowess with brewing beer was, it has to be said, not entirely matched by his skittling. That said, playing killer at skittles is always a bit of a lottery. I got lucky on several occasions in that the player before me (Andy Pickin) almost always knocked down the one remaining pin, leaving me with a full set of nine to demolish.

I'm slightly of the opinion that the standard of skittles declined during the afternoon, but am in no doubt that the beers stayed in fine form.

The thing about doing this sort of thing, is that you want to do it again. Or several agains. Now, which pub shall we choose next time?

Martin Farrimond



Severn Vale pub news

The **Fox**, Easter Compton, when visited recently was only selling bottled beer (no cask or keg). Reasons for this are uncertain, but we'll try to find out what's happening.

The landlord of the **Anchor** in Thornbury, Dave Cox has increased the discount given to card-carrying CAMRA members. Real ale discount is now 15p and 5p per pint and half pint respectively. Ashton Still Cider is also discounted by 10p and 5p to CAMRA members.

The **Barrel** in Thornbury has also introduced a CAMRA discount of 10p / 5p for all real ale and cider.

Martin Farrimond

The Swan, Thornbury

We're really pleased to see that the Swan on the High Street, Thornbury has reopened under new management after a short period of closure. We'd been concerned about the viability of the pub in recent times as a succession of tenants had come and gone. It was always going to be an uphill struggle as the pub was pretty run-down, and in need of some TLC – not to mention investment.

Now the pub has a new landlord/landlady/landperson (not sure which term is the one to use in these days of extreme political correctness), who seems committed to make the pub work for herself and the town centre. Significant renovation has already taken place and still more is planned. The pub interior is now tastefully decorated and is sympathetic to the building and location. There's now a focus on food where previously there had been none, and the whole place is more upmarket/upbeat than formerly.

At the moment, the capacity for real ale choice is very limited with just the one handpump in operation, but there are plans to expand on this as the business builds, with the potential of a beer festival next year. We wish Sandra the best of luck with her endeavours and hope to see a large and more interesting range of beers in the future being consumed by enthusiastic customers.

Andy Pickin



Christ the King Beer Festival

Christ the King is the local Roman Catholic church for Thornbury. Belonging to the church is their social club on Castle Street, housed in a wonderfully restored and maintained 15th-century ceiling-beamed hall. The social club normally has casks of ale to quench the thirst of their members, but additionally – in October – they run their annual beer festival.

Put aside any thoughts you may have about CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival, or our local branch's Bristol Beer Festival – this is obviously not on the same scale. But what the small scale of the event brings is a friendly, sociable, and much needed beer festival to Thornbury, allowing the local burghers to sample delights many of which are not normally available in the town or surrounding area.

It's not a CAMRA-run festival, it's run by volunteers from the club. There were 15 beers available, provided by local sponsors. Some from as far away as the Manchester area (JW Lees), others more local (Wickwar). All were in great condition and went down well.

The aim of the festival is to raise funds for the social club to help with the upkeep of the hall. This year's festival is claimed to be most successful yet, raising a record amount for the Catholic Club.

Whilst not a CAMRA event, Severn Vale CAMRA members assisted in serving at the bar and the organisers generously offered free entry to card-carrying members, although this was arranged too late to make the last issue of Pints West. Hopefully next year we'll be ahead of the game.

We look forward to this event again next year and hope to be able to assist once more in its further success.

Andy Pickin

Severn Vale contact

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

Severn Vale CAMRA

Severn Vale calendar

The most up-to-date calendar of activities is available on our web page at severnval.camrabristol.org.uk. We're now using Google calendar embedded into the web page which allows you to select different types of views (weekly/monthly/agenda list) and to print out the page should you wish. Just click on any listed event to see all the details for that event. Always check the website before setting out for any event. We don't like to make changes to the published calendar, but it does sometimes happen.

The current agenda is:

- **Fri 2nd Dec:** Trip to pubs in Nailsworth, Glos
- **Thur 8th Dec:** Monthly trip to Old Spot, Dursley
- **Wed 14th Dec:** Sub-branch meeting and Christmas social - Anchor, Thornbury, 8:00pm
- **Fri 6th Jan:** Pub Survey Trip - Thornbury
- **Fri 13th Jan:** Monthly trip to Old Spot, Dursley
- **Wed 18th Jan:** Sub branch meeting - Boar's Head, Aust, 8:00pm
- **Fri 3rd Feb:** Pub Survey Trip - Hallen, Easter Compton, Almondsbury
- **Fri 10th Feb:** Monthly trip to Old Spot, Dursley
- **Wed 15th Feb:** Sub-branch meeting - Fox Inn, Old Down, 8:00pm
- **Wed 22nd Feb:** Branch meeting, Thornbury. Details TBC.
- **Fri 2nd Mar:** Pub Survey Trip - venues tbc
- **Fri 9th Mar:** Monthly trip to Old Spot, Dursley
- **Wed 21st Mar:** Sub-branch meeting - Bowl, Almondsbury, 8:00pm

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.



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Saturday:	10.30-19.30
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King's Head - the last National Inventory pub in town

CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors is always being reviewed and now the Bristol and District branch area has only one pub left on the main list, the King's Head on Victoria Street, but what a treasure it is!

Born in the troubled 17th century, out of the carnage of the English Civil War, the pub became something of a beacon in the hard-working area of Temple, surrounded by weavers, potters, glass makers and even brewers.

Surviving town planners when they ripped the medieval heart out of the area with the installation of Victoria Street (during which the King's Head got a free transfer from Temple Street to Victoria Street itself), the pub then had to endure the worst the Luftwaffe could throw at it followed by post-war austerity.

Sixties and seventies brutalist offices then sprang up all around and only a petition by regulars saved the pub itself from being demolished and re-developed, gaining it Grade II listing just in the nick of time. The interior, then scheduled for "improving", had a minor miracle performed upon it, it was saved!

A far-sighted manager from nearby Courage's brewery saw the potential of the interior and had it restored and in so doing maximising its potential – making it the perfect respite from all of those grotty modern office blocks.

Many thanks to co-licensee Andy Price for taking the time and trouble of guiding myself and photographer Tim Belsten around this glorious homage to an earlier time.

Mark Steeds
Photos by Tim Belsten

The National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors is CAMRA's pioneering effort to identify and protect the most important historic pub interiors in the country. It has been part of the campaign's mission for the last 35 years to not only save real ale but also Britain's rich heritage of pubs. The main aim of the National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors has been to list those pub interiors that have remained much as they had been before the Second World War. They need to be protected and cherished in order that future generations can enjoy them - along with good beer.



↑ The Kings Head circa 2011; note how it's lost its hip roof and gained an end gable! Other buildings in the rank have also had 'makeovers', and Neptune's statue, which you can just see right of shot in Andrew's postcard, has run off to the Centre in the intervening years.



↗ The Kings Head in its full 1900's splendour with "Home Brewed Beers" emblazoned in enamel letters on Victoria Street fronting window. Note the pre-blitzed tower of Temple Church which clearly demonstrates how closely the pub came to oblivion.



The rear view has had → the "ghastly carbuncle on an old friend" treatment with the unsubtle addition of a first floor height cellar cooling unit.



← I asked Andy of the Kings Head what his favourite feature was and he immediately replied "the Burton mirror", a truly lucky survivor as it was covered in 16 coats of emulsion prior to restoration. The mirror itself is gorgeous; locally made by Fred Breen of Bedminster and dated 1860.

To the left of the mirror is an old faded Bristol Evening Post clipping celebrating the pub, and to the right is an old gas pressure gauge that enabled the landlord to adjust the pressure within the pub to accommodate fluctuations in the supply – such as when the street lights were turned on!



↗ This fine pump array of ales bears testimony to the fact that the KH has been a constant inclusion in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide. Andy is frequently asked what the old header signs refer to and I duly asked what type of drink the 'Hollands' sign represented; "Dutch Gin" was the patient reply. Almost the entire length of the pub is given over to these delightful galleries with their old signage, 'pie crust' upper moulding and acanthus leaf topped supports in beautiful rich mahogany. The narrow counter is actually made of black veined marble and was covered in Formica before the restoration.



↑ The Tramcar Bar dates back to early Victorian times and must have represented a major upheaval when it was first installed. There's no proof but all of the fixtures and fittings bear all the hall marks of George Parnall's, a company based nearby to the KH in the then newly created Victoria Street, they were some of the finest bar and hotel fitters in Britain who could do this type of work and one of their last ever jobs was fitting out the QE2.



↑ It was common for pubs of the 19th Century to boast screened off areas and the Kings Head one is a gem, ensuring that what went on inside the screen, stayed inside the screen. Re-enforcing Andy's theory that the bar made up the whole of one side of the pub, he showed us an old cellar entrance built into the floor that could have only been in use when the bar was in situ. The cellar in the pub could feasibly date back to the 12th Century. The ceilings have a superb tobacco brown patina from all of the smokers over the years and are reminiscent of the famous 'Brown Bar ceilings' of Antwerp.



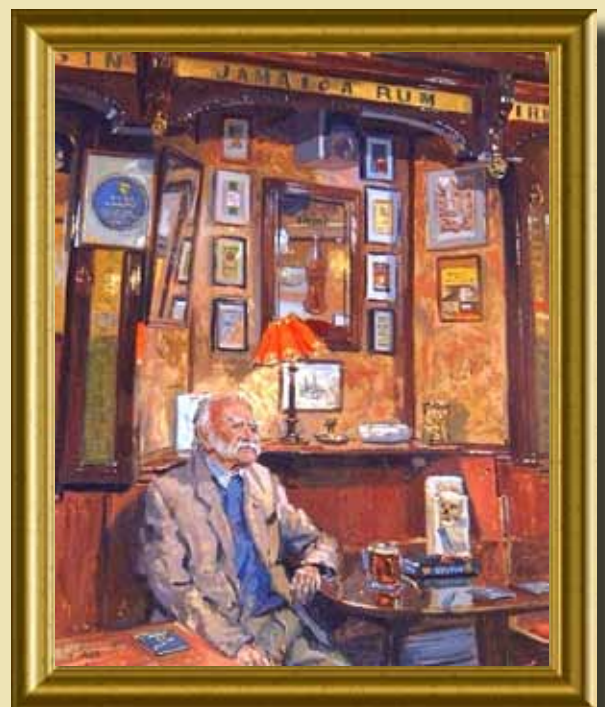
↑ Andy pointed out that the installation of the 'Tramcar Bar' entailed removing a major portion of the back bar and although the galleries were thankfully kept, the marble counter was removed. You can clearly see the beautifully glazed vertical supports (with their sumptuous green and gold circular motifs) terminating where the old counter top would have been. These are repeated on every gallery. In this view you can also just about make out the ancient Bell Push – to the right of the Tramcar Bar entrance – which was used to summon service, or was it a 'panic button'? It's your call...



← The gas lit Cigar or Pipe Lighter is a major feature of the Tramcar Bar and customers both sides of the screen could use it. All of the lamps were originally gas lit and many original ones remain with their electric replacements made especially to flicker. Andy says that many now, unfortunately, have lost their flicker. I lost mine the other day.



← Original Georgian Wainscot walling made out of 12-inch-wide planking. The pub's pre-Victorian layout seems to suggest that it was one long drinking bar originally and, prior to that, twin roomed.



A painting of the interior of the King's Head by local artist Ian Cryer.

BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

Pub and brewery news from the CAMRA Bath & Borders branch

Bath and Surrounding Villages

Curfew, 11 Cleveland Place West, Bath

This Wadworth's-owned pub re-opened in September under new management. The pub had closed suddenly in August with the unexpected departure of the previous comparatively new landlord.

Hop Pole, 7 Albion Buildings, Upper Bristol Road, Bath

New managers took over at this Bath Ales-owned pub during the summer.

Park Tavern, Park Avenue, Bath

This pub, situated on the western edge of Victoria Park, closed in September. It had been on the market for some time.

Richmond Arms, 7 Richmond Place, Lansdown, Bath

The freehold of this pub is on the market for £450,000 (after a 10% reduction in the original asking price). The selling agent is James A Baker. This Punch Taverns-owned pub, situated in a terrace in a sought-after area on the northern outskirts of the city, is one of only a tiny handful of pubs in the whole of the northern part of Bath and the only pub in the predominantly residential area around Richmond Road. Since being taken over by Phil Cleverly earlier this year the pub is attracting an increasing number of locals, who are committed to keeping it as a pub. Meanwhile the local CAMRA branch has vowed to oppose any attempt to close the Richmond Arms.

Saracens Head, 42 Broad Street, Bath

A refurbishment of this pub, which has entrances on both Broad Street and Walcot Street, was carried out during the late summer and early autumn. The pub has been significantly smartened up.

Victoria Works, 32-33 Victoria Building, Lower Bristol Road, Bath

This recently refurbished pub has been renamed *The Works* and is now thriving as a popular sports pub.

Westgate, 38 Westgate Street, Bath

This city-centre pub, recently acquired by Greene King, closed in the summer for an extensive refurbishment, which was completed in around October. The bar has been moved giving the impression that the pub is far roomier than it was before whilst an upstairs area has been opened up to the public. The beer range in early November consisted of Greene King IPA, Hook Norton Old Hookey and Wadworth's 6X. The pub was also selling a range of four real ciders.

Raven, 6-7 Queen Street, Bath

The Raven in Bath has teamed up with Pieminister Pies to hold an ale and pie tasting event early next year. It is scheduled either for the last Monday in January or the first Monday in February. Full details from the Raven closer to the time.

East Somerset

Inn at Freshford, The Hill, Freshford, near Bath

There was a successful beer and cider festival held on the August bank holiday weekend at this large and picturesquely situated old inn. This pub and the nearby Cross Guns at Avoncliff are owned by, and are main outlets for, Box Steam Brewery.

Foresters Arms, 58 Goose Street, Beckington

This pub, which had closed earlier this year, re-opened in around September under a former landlord of the Barge at Bradford-on-Avon. A lot of work has been done on the pub and the beer range during a visit by a local member in September comprised London Pride, Moles Best, Bath Ales Gem and St Elmo's. The new landlord is thinking of getting beers in from the nearby Devilfish micro.

Farmers Arms, near Spring Gardens, Frome

This pub, situated on the northern outskirts of Frome, has gained planning permission for change of use to a private residence. The pub

was placed on the market but failed to sell as a pub at an auction held earlier this year.

Griffin, Milk Street, Frome

A new landlord at this former Bath & Borders Pub of the Year took over in August. The beer range has been extended to include three guest ales alongside the three Milk Street beers. On a recent visit the guests included beers from Yeovil, Cheddar and Moor.

Old Globe Inn, 31 Vallis Way, Frome

This pub, which seems to have been repeatedly closed and re-opened in recent years, does now seem to have closed for the long-term. The future of this pub is uncertain.

Packhorse, 13 Christchurch Street West, Frome

This attractive two-bar pub, which closed temporarily in May, closed again in the summer on what seems a longer term. The future of this pub is uncertain.

West Wiltshire

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

In May this town centre pub closed. In June it re-opened as a Indian restaurant. We now understand that the freehold of this former pub is on the market for £240,000. The selling agent is James A Baker.

Cross Keys Inn, Lye's Green, Corsley, near Warminster

New landlords took over at this tucked-away Wadworth's-owned pub in September.

Red Lion, 42a High Street, Heytesbury, near Warminster

A new landlord has taken over at this village locals' pub. The beer range is made up of London Pride, Ringwood Best and normally two beers from the nearby Plain Ales micro-brewery.

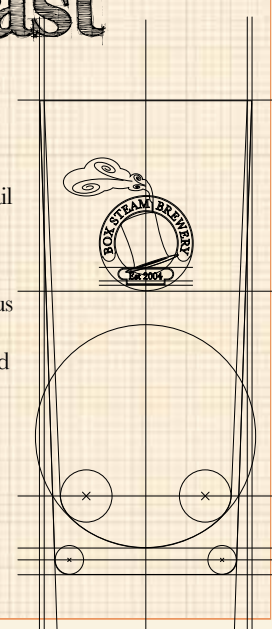
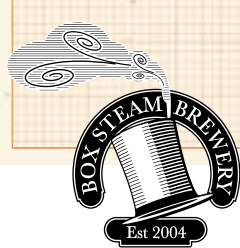
Steve Hunt

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BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

And now for the good news ...

The Bath & Borders Branch of CAMRA has announced that the 34th Bath Beer Festival will be going ahead next year on the first weekend in May at a new venue.

While the organisers apologise to anyone who was disappointed by the cancellation of last October's festival at such short notice, they feel sure that the new date and new venue will more than compensate.

It had been felt for some time that a move was overdue, but, when you've used one location for over a third of a century and no obvious alternatives present themselves, the temptation is obviously to stay put. If it ain't broke, don't fix it, as the saying goes – but, if the Bath Beer Festival wasn't broke (in either sense of the term!) it was certainly starting to look a bit frayed round the edges.

It might have been OK, back in the day, to expect punters to quaff real ale in what John Betjeman described as 'an outsize army hut', with Spartan facilities, standing room only, and decidedly non-gourmet fodder to soak up the alcohol, but – let's face it – the world's moved on.

When the Bath Beer Festival started, it was up against the likes of 'bleeding Watney's Red Barrel' (to quote Eric Idle) and there were very few opportunities to sample a range of decent real ales. Today, there are many excellent pubs in Bath and beyond serving a fantastic range of locally-brewed beers, often accompanied by top-notch food, in comfortable surroundings. Real ale is no longer a minority interest and – despite those who have tried over the decades to stereotype its adherents – it has transcended class and gender in a way that, 30 years ago, would have seemed impossible.

None of this would have happened if CAMRA hadn't saved real ale – which really was on the point of extinction in the early 1970s – but the resounding success of real ales in recent years is as much down to the quality of the product – and the people who brew it – as it is to the effectiveness of CAMRA's campaigning. That doesn't mean that CAMRA's work is done, of course – with the government screwing the licensed trade ever harder and a record number of pubs being forced out of business, effective campaigning is needed more than ever – but it doesn't make sense to fight battles that have already been won.

Real ale is rightly recognised as one of Britain's greatest cultural assets, enjoyed and appreciated by an ever larger percentage of the population. So why celebrate it at a festival whose facilities and ambience are likely to put many people off?

It was, as regular readers of Pints West will know, the imposition of a ban on glass glasses at the old venue that was the final straw as far as the organisers were concerned. Plastic glasses may be OK at some rowdy outdoor event, but at a festival celebrating the best of British brewing they are simply not on – it would be like a gourmet restaurant being forced to use paper plates and plastic cutlery.

But, as so often, a decision taken reluctantly and with some trepidation turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Not only was a new venue soon found; it didn't take the organisers long to realise how much better it would turn out to be.

Not only was it even closer to the railway station than the old venue; the management made it clear from the start that they would do everything in their power to make the festival a success. And so it was decided to hold a festival next spring – to ensure there was enough time to make all the necessary arrangements – celebrating a new start and with heavy contingent of seasonal brews – including, if possible, some

brewed specially for the festival.

Anyone who knows the Widcombe Social Club – and many people in Bath will have been there at some time or other – won't need any persuading as to its suitability. The facilities are top notch, and, as well as hosting events such as the Somerset County Darts Championships, it's also the home of the Bath Folk Festival and Bath Comedy Festival, and is used regularly by other event and festival organisers.

Punters familiar with the old venue will be pleasantly surprised with the facilities on offer – plenty of comfortable seating, with tables to sit round (and put your drinks on); a full programme of entertainment (staged in a superb 70s retro entertainment area complete with glittery backdrop – but no Watney's Red Barrel!); terrific home-cooked food ranging from snacks (including the club's trademark cheesy chips) to a tempting selection of hot meals; quiet rooms for those who just want to sit and chat; and, perhaps best of all, a terrace overlooking a willow-fringed canal basin – probably the most attractive beer garden-cum-smoking area in the city.

The festival will be held on Friday 4 and Saturday 5 May, with an evening session on Friday, and lunchtime and evening sessions on Saturday. In terms of size, the festival will be around half the size of previous ones, so you're strongly advised to get your tickets well in advance –



Widcombe Social Club is alongside the Kennet & Avon Canal. As well as enjoying the view of the canal while sampling a superb range of beers, there is also the option of a very pleasant pre- or post-festival walk along the canal to a handily-placed ice-cream kiosk. (Just don't fall in if you've had a few!)

full details of how to get hold of them will be in the next issue of Pints West, which appears in early March. Details will also be posted early on the branch website: www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk.

Real ale has come of age, and the Bath Beer Festival's move to a venue where it can be enjoyed in a really pleasant environment is to be welcomed. Fans of standing close to racks of barrels and jostling with the crowd needn't worry, though – there'll still be the option of doing that at the new venue, which should prove at least as lively as the old one – it's just that there'll be plenty of other options as well.

And rest assured, there won't be a plastic glass in sight.

Full details will be in the next Pints West – but, if you are from outside Bath and aren't familiar with the Widcombe Social Club, getting there's a doddle – leave the railway station by the new exit on the south side (or take the subway under the station if you're coming from the bus station), take the footbridge over the river, carry straight on across the dual carriageway at the pedestrian lights, turn left for 200 metres and the Social Club will be found opposite the White Hart Inn. All of which should take you less than five minutes.

Look forward to seeing you there!

Andrew Swift

News from Blindman's Brewery

Lloyd Chamberlain of Blindman's Brewery was delighted to welcome the constituency MP, David Heath, to Talbot Farm on November 11th. He came to present the company with a certificate to prove that Buff – one of the regular beers – had been a guest ale in the Houses of Parliament in April this year. As the certificate says, it had been much enjoyed by the members and their visitors. Lloyd took the opportunity to show David around the brewery, where, in the absence of Paul Edney, the head brewer, who was moving house that day, Steve Restorick, assistant brewer, explained the process to him, while Lloyd showed him samples of malt and hops.

As the brewery had just taken delivery of samples of its latest venture, bottled beers, Lloyd was able to make a presentation in return to his MP of the first two beers. The trade name of all the beers is going to be Buff, and at present they have a light Buff, an amber – the usual Buff – and there will be a dark Buff coming soon. The beers have been cold-filtered, and (somewhat to my surprise) taste excellent when chilled. The striking labels should make them an eye-catching sight in shops when they are fully available.

Kirsten Elliott



David Heath MP (centre) with Angela Riley and Steve Restorick of Blindman's



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

Bellringer is ringing the bell in Punch pubs

Punch Partnership and Abbey Ales have announced that Abbey Ales Bellringer will be available to Punch licensees from Carlsberg's Nashmead depot.

Bellringer was the first cask beer produced at the Abbey Ales brewery in Bath and is still the only one continuously brewed. Successfully launched at the Bath CAMRA beer festival in October 1997, Bellringer is now the top-selling cask bitter in Bath and is as popular with the many visitors to the Georgian city as it is with Bathonians.

Alan Morgan, MD of Abbey Ales, said, "Until recently sales had been restricted to a 15-mile radius of the centre of Bath, but with demand increasing from further afield, our deal with Punch will allow more fans of the premium golden brew to enjoy the beer, even outside of our core trading area."

Bellringer is a notably hoppy ale, amber-gold in colour, refreshingly dry, with a balancing sweetness. The beer has won numerous awards, including 'Beer of the Festival' at the Cotswolds CAMRA festival, the Devizes CAMRA festival and the Bath CAMRA Beer Festival and featured as a finalist in the Champion Beer of Britain competition. Bath MP Don Foster was so impressed with Bellringer he arranged for it to be sold as a guest beer at the House of Commons.

Founded in 1997, Abbey Ales was the first – and is still the only

– brewery in the heritage city of Bath for over fifty years, and was the initiative of experienced brewery sales and marketing manager Alan Morgan.

Meanwhile, **Twelfth Night**, the latest seasonal beer from Abbey Ales, has gone on sale. Described as a "delicious winter warmer, ruby in colour, full of malt flavours", the beer proved so popular last year that the brewery has had to work overtime to keep up with the demand for this 5.0% Christmas special. Alan Morgan said, "Every year we get requests from Bath landlords from mid October about the date we will be releasing Twelfth Night and when they can actually get it to sell. Last year the demand exceeded all expectations. However we are not going to be caught out again this year and our first brew will be double the amount brewed last year with another batch to follow. It proved very popular with visitors to the Bath Christmas market and maybe the cold weather has helped it become such an excellent winter warmer."

Twelfth Night should be available in numerous Bath pubs, including, of course, the brewery's own 'Abbey Inns' chain of pubs comprising the **Star Inn** on the Paragon, the **Assembly Inn** on Alfred Street and arguably Bath's smallest pub, the **Coeur de Lion** in the city centre.

SP

Readers' Letters

Readers are welcome to send letters to the Pints West Editor
steve.plumridge@bristol.ac.uk

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

Beer-coloured beer

I was looking at the latest edition of Pints West and was impressed to see a "beer-coloured" beer (Moles Mole Catcher) winning an award for BEST strong bitter in the UK.

Makes a change from the ever more popular blond beers being imposed upon us.

I hope this inspires brewers to return to traditional brewing recipes and bring out more of the so called "beer-coloured" beers which so many of us still prefer.

Great magazine again!
Roy Plumridge,
High Wycombe, Bucks.

Gloucester – a ghost town?

I enjoyed reading Phil Cummings' article about the disappointing drinking experience he had in Gloucester recently. It's about time the disgraceful state of drinking in this city was brought to the attention of the public outside of Gloucester.

I have lived in Gloucester my whole life and have spent 25 years drinking around the city. I work in Bristol and travel to many other parts of the country sampling the pubs and ales when the opportunity arises.

It disappoints me hugely to see what has happened in Gloucester over the last 10 years or so. Gloucester was renowned for a vibrant live music scene as well as many good pubs. Quite frankly, I and my real ale drinking buddies are at a loss to understand what, exactly, has gone wrong. The real ale revolution seems to have passed Gloucester by. I would like to give you my thoughts on what I believe to be some of the reasons.

You cannot underestimate the Wetherspoons effect on a small city centre like Gloucester. Two large 'Spoons have opened in the last 10 years. Even these establishments suffer from lack of custom most of the week, only getting busy between Thursday and Saturday.

Some of the finest pubs Gloucester has are in the hands of one locally based pub-owning company. This company has been miserly in its investments in its premises, which include two significantly historic buildings which were mentioned in the article. The relationship they have with their staff must be poor, as they have an extremely high turnover of managers. One couple walked away from their pub on the day before Christmas Eve a couple of years ago, much to everyone's annoyance as we were having a Christmas party there the very next day! I, for one, have lost faith in the pubs owned by this company and can only hope that they receive the stewardship they deserve in the near future.

The criticisms of the Sam Smiths pubs in the city are valid, although not the most important issue on the real ale scene in Gloucester, as it's been a long while since we have seen their ale in any of the Gloucestershire pubs. Ironically, Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter is delivered to the Murenger in Newport, from

Yorkshire, literally travelling past our "front door"! Special mention must be made though of the Robert Raikes Inn in Southgate Street, where Sam Smiths spent a huge amount of money restoring this historic pub. It's well worth a visit, despite the lack of any real ale.

Some of the other reasons that need to be considered when assessing the state of imbibing in Gloucester are the fact that not many people live in the centre of the city any more. Public transport provision is patchy in the evenings compared with other cities. There are no theatres, cinemas, quality restaurants or any mainstream entertainments to bring people to the city centre in any great numbers, much of it having migrated to the fringes of the city. The docks redevelopment cannot really be blamed for taking people away from the city centre as it has suffered economically itself and is widely viewed as a bit of a white elephant. Nearby, we have prosperous Cheltenham, which Gloucester has been unable to compete with on many levels when it comes to Joe Public deciding where he or she wants to spend their hard earned cash in their leisure hours.

Despite this, there is much to be admired and many reasons to hope. The Fountain, Pig Inn the City and Water Poet (Wetherspoons) deserve special mention for the role they have played in flying the ale flag. There is the imminent arrival of a new brewery in Gloucester, down in the docks area, in addition to many new breweries in the county itself. The recent 20th birthday celebrations for the city's CAMRA branch saw more than 30 attendees, all of which makes me believe that we have turned a corner and can perhaps see a revival in our fortunes. Phil Cummings' article wasn't the best advertisement for our city, but it should be a wake up call to us all.

Gloucester has much to commend it to the visitor. It has its cathedral, its docks area and its rugby. Come to the city, Bristol boys and girls, lend your support to an ailing West Country comrade and help put us back on our rightful path!

Jerry Matthews (by email).

P.S. Sad news has just reached me that Martin at the Pig Inn the City has announced he will be leaving at the end of the month, as the landlords of the pub have told him they "could get more money converting the building to flats." This is a tremendous blow as Martin has tirelessly worked to raise the profile of ale in our city and he will be sorely missed.

Phil Cummings replies: Thanks very much for the feedback. Really sad news that the Pig Inn the City is losing its licensee, we were impressed by him and his pub on our visit. I'm sure the factors you mention contribute to the issues the city has in attracting more people to the city centre. I certainly hope I can return in a year or so and focus on the improvements. It did rather bring home to us how lucky we are in Bristol!

Adam & Eve re-opened

I was reading your Autumn Pints West with interest and noticed that you had listed the Adam & Eve in Hotwells as closed under your Pub News section. Unfortunately the pub did close for two months over the summer, however my business partner Daniel and I have now taken over, re-opened the pub and are keen to develop this hidden gem.

We currently have on tap Sharp's Doom Bar and Bath Ales' Gem as regulars and, making the first of what we hope to be an extensive list of guests, we have Cheddar Ales' Potholer (which is going down a treat and is possibly one of the most pleasant golden ales I have sipped on in a while!). We are also looking for recommendations from our customers for further guests. Already lined up, and inspired by the Potholer, we have been tempted by Cheddar Ales' Totty Pot dark porter for our Christmas ale, and which we have included in our Christmas puddings already!

Alongside our ales we have a good wine selection and have launched our menu of hearty pub grub, with some interesting twists included for the adventurous such as our spiced pumpkin and Somerset cider pie. With this in mind we would like to extend a warm welcome to any and all at the Adam & Eve!

Kind regards,
John Tattersall & Daniel Truckle,
The Adam & Eve,
7 Hope Chapel Hill, Hotwells, BS8 4ND.

Plough & Windmill

My family has had ties with the Plough & Windmill pub in West Street Bedminster for many years, and the Barley Mow before that. We have noticed that the Plough & Windmill is boarded up and would like to contact the current owners to see if we can have one last look at the place before any alterations or whatever plans they have for it. I would like to be able to show my children a "proper pub" as to be honest it doesn't look any different from the early 70's! Any information anyone could provide would be much appreciated.

Regards,
Sally Nuttall (urkees@blueyonder.co.uk)

CAMRA's anniversary party

Thank you all at CAMRA Bristol & District branch for planning and organising CAMRA's 40th anniversary party at the Commercial Rooms, Corn Street on the 30th June 2011. The evening was a great success with wonderful guest ales and buffet. It was good to be with such a large number of old and new CAMRA members and to catch up with all the current news and memories of the past.

I would also like to mention that, like Mr F Pritchard (membership number 000136 as displayed in the last Pints West), I should have shown Richard Brooks, or yourself, my own membership card – number 000098 – during the evening. I was too busy enjoying myself.

Perhaps I will still be around to attend CAMRA's 50th anniversary party evening! Thank you all once again for the 40th party.

Best regards,
Paul Godfrey,
Long Ashton, Bristol.

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Good Beer Guide 2012 launched

Friday September 16th saw the annual local launch of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide. In keeping with recent tradition the venue for the event was a new entry in the Guide – this year was the turn of the Cornubia in Temple Street. The weather was kind which was just as well as the outside tables were needed to accommodate the large crowd which appeared shortly after opening time. Phil and Jacquie did us proud with an excellent range of guest beers, a barbecue and an all round great atmosphere. We sold 90 copies of the Guide on the day, only just short of last year's record 96.

The Cornubia was making a welcome return after a short period out of the book following several changes of management. Also returning were Zero Degrees on Park Row and the Eldon House in

Lower Clifton Hill. The Shakespeare in Prince Street, the Three Tuns in Hotwells and the Robin Hood on St Michael's Hill were voted in for the first time in recent memory too. A bit further out the RAFA Club in Westbury-on-Trym has become the first club to make it into the Guide locally in years, and the Bowl at Almondsbury is in too.

Down in Somerset there are quite a number of changes to our 24 entries. In Weston-super-Mare it's welcome back to the Regency and the Dragon, plus a debut for the Ship Inn at nearby Uphill. The Lamb in Axbridge also makes its first appearance for years. Over on the Mendips are two excellent new entries in the Waldegrave in East Harptree and the Plume of Feathers in Rickford. Clevedon has its first entry for a few years with the deserving Royal Oak. Further north the Kings Arms in Easton in Gordano gains recognition for the first time.

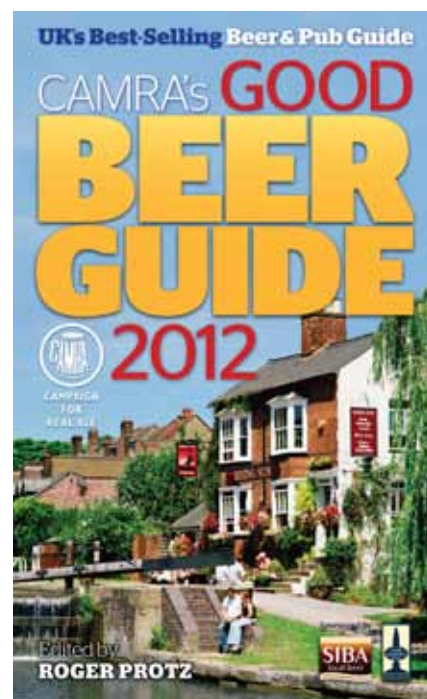
All of the above pubs have good reason to be proud as they have achieved a place in one of the most competitive parts of the country to get in the Guide. To make room, some very good pubs have missed out this time and will be doubly determined to get back in next year.

The Good Beer Guide remains the only guide that is compiled entirely by unpaid volunteers who check that every entry has been visited and all details checked annually. Why leave home without it?

Vince Murray



The Shakespeare in Prince Street, Bristol



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The Plume of Feathers in Rickford



Genuine Events Beer Festival

Although the event was not actually organised by CAMRA, local CAMRA volunteers contributed by assisting with setting up and managing the real ale – which was in excellent form – for the Genuine Events (previously 'BS1 Events') Beer Festival at the Council House at College Green, Bristol on 28th and 29th October 2011. Genuine Events have advised us that they are intending to organise another beer festival at the Council House in 2012.

Richard Brooks

In Brief

The **Royal Oak** in the Mall in Clifton now has on tap Thatchers Heritage, a 4.9% "flat, cloudy cider" on sale for £3 a pint, complementing the beer range which might typically consist of Doom Bar, Courage Best, St Austell Tribute and Butcombe Bitter.

The **Adam and Eve** in Hotwells, reported as closed in the last issue, has reopened. Regular beers are Doom Bar and Bath Ales Gem, with guest beers (hopefully increasing over time) such as Cheddar Ales Potholer and Totty Pot. The pub currently opens evenings Tuesday to Thursday and most of the day Friday to Sunday (closed Monday).

The **Horse & Groom** behind the Council House in Bristol now opens throughout the evening, no longer shutting around 7 or 7.30 as it did when it first reopened.

The **Wedmore Real Ale Festival** gave away £13,821 to local worthy causes at their annual presentation night on Saturday 19th November held at the **New Inn**, Wedmore. This was their busiest festival to date and they are looking forward to their 12th festival next year (14th to 16th September 2012).

Bristol appears to be gaining a new brewery in the shape of **Towles' Fine Ales** who are apparently using the kit from Berrow brewery. Currently there is no indication as to when their beer will actually be ready to go on sale.

The **Avon Brewing Company**, always a bit elusive, is now no more, having closed a few months ago. The brewing kit, I believe, went to someone in Bradford-on-Avon.

Alistair Deas, who has been running the Good Beer Guide-listed **Victoria** in Westbury-on-Trym for many years, has retired. Have no fear though, the pub is still in very safe hands, remaining, as it does, in the family. His daughter Rhona had been helping run it and now takes over fully as the "official" landlady alongside her partner Ernie. You can still expect to find excellent pints of Wadsworth, Butcombe or guest ales.

SP

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Associate
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Solution to the crossword on page 29

Across – 1. Brown ale, 9. Marston's, 10. Fruit cup, 11. Absolute, 12. Ratcatcher, 14. Best, 15. Gentle, 17. Abbotts, 21. Iota, 22. Kings Bench, 23. Narrotic, 25. & 27. The Inn On The Green, 26. Scavenge. Down – 2. Rare Hare, 3. White cat, 4. Aleo, 5. Empathy, 6. Prescribes, 7. Monument, 8. Asbestos, 13. Theakstons, 15. Guinness, 16. No tartan, 18. One-liner, 19. Tech zone, 20. An octet, 24. Mere.

Watering Holes in the Desert

brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

Weston Whispers

It was disappointing that our first social to the **Grand Pier** bar could not happen as they decided to close that evening at 7pm. However we made the most of it at the new **Cabot Hotel**.

The **Waverley** hosted a good meeting recently with the CAMRA contingent from Bristol, with over 35 members present. They also made sure that they had a dark beer on for those that like that sort of thing.

The **Regency** has had more mini beer festivals; in fact it was the only pub in Weston to actively support Cask Ale Week. Around All Hallows Eve to Guy Fawkes Night they had a range of spooky beers.

The **Dragon Inn**, now also in the Good Beer Guide, has apparently become only the third Wetherspoon pub in the country to do away with the token system; like the Commercial Rooms in Bristol, all you have to do now is to show your CAMRA card when you buy a pint. I enjoyed many beers from their festival at the end of October at £1 a pint.

The **Criterion** has got its Courage Directors bitter on gravity serve back for the winter. Recently the Proper Job went in 36 hours and the Tuesday evening quiz is still popular.

It is slightly annoying though in some Weston pubs to see signs proclaiming award-winning real ales for sale. I visited one such establishment recently where the only hand pump for Doom Bar had been turned around (for weeks I was informed). They were able to sell me a bottle of Hobgoblin for £3.50p, which was really cold and took me 50 minutes to

drink!

I touched on the **Weston Lions festival** in Pints West 91, and am pleased to say it was again most successful. There were at least twelve ales I'd not had before and some old favourites too. It had a Celtic theme. And my two favourites of the whole festival were Tryst RAJ IPA and Coastal Imperial Porter at 9%.

The **Uphill Castle Cricket Club** had a small beer festival to accompany a 10/10 cricket knockout competition. Only Bath Ales were available but at £2.50 for Barnstormer and Rare Hare I wasn't complaining.

In the last edition I wrote: "I would like more ideas from other Weston 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? Please email me." The offer is still open.

I have asked people what they'd like to do and have received suggestions such as Bath, Bristol & Exeter by train, Worle/St Georges pubs (the Lamb, the Night Jar and the Woolpack, have all been mentioned) but this is a bit spread out. I also like the Kings Head. Please get in touch with ideas.

Robin E Wild

Larkin about in Hull

Whoever says that "Hull is dull" must be Larkin about; which leads neatly to the celebrated poet Philip Larkin. He was librarian at the university in this vibrant and historic city for, I believe, 30 years. There is a poetry trail that starts at the Royal Hotel (where he used to frequent) in Ferrers Way that leads to his favourite places.

In August, Robin E Wild, Mike Colman, Graham Teague and I – all members of the Weston-super-Mare CAMRA sub-branch – did a trail of a different kind (for the benefit of research) and visited some pubs listed in the Good Beer Guide. Our first watering hole was the **George** in the wonderfully named "Land of Green Ginger" street. After travelling on a coach for approximately eight hours we were thirsting for our first Yorkshire beer. Three of us opted for Barnsley Beer Company Clog Iron, a dark mild with a hint of sweet toffee at 4.3%. Ee! It stuck to the roof of me mouth. The other chose Wentworth B, with extra heather honey.

Just around the corner is **Ye Old White Hart**, a pub favoured by Philip Larkin. Apparently in the upstairs bar an argument broke out and instigated the start of the English Civil War. Here the York Brewery Guzzler was the popular choice, golden crisp and refreshing at 3.6%. Theakston's Lightfoot was preferred by the other at 4.1%. Opposite the bar is an amazing fireplace where it's easy to imagine weary, saddle-sore soldiers warming themselves.

Third pub on the trail was another Larkin favourite, **Ye Old Black Boy**. This time we all had the same beer, Rooster's Yankee (4.3%). This is another dark beams and bare boards pub like Ye Old White Hart. Both pubs have been in the Good Beer Guide but are not at present. I highly recommend a visit to both, not only for the beer but for their uniqueness and the friendly atmosphere. For music and poetry lovers, Larkin gave lectures on jazz in each pub.

After the disappointment of finding **Walter's**, the **Hop & Vine** and the **Lion & Key** closed, we were happy to discover (after a long walk) that the **Whalebone** was open. To my delight it was the cheapest round so far, with Whalebone Mild (3.5%) at £1.50 a pint and Whalebone Neck Oil at £1.60 a pint. It is brewed on the premises, which might explain the prices. It is very much a sports bar with simple decor.

The last pub of the night, the **Wellington Inn**, turned out to be the most elusive. It's in Russell Street, a side street off the end of Freetown Way. We soldiered on until we found it and were not disappointed with the huge range of real ales. Beerworks Brewery Retro Beer of the Future was chosen and enjoyed by all and the price at £2.60 a pint was

also welcomed. It has its own brewery and an impressive display of Belgian bottled beers. Its walls and shelves have an abundance of beer mats and bottles to make any real ale drinker envious. A return trip was inevitable.

Returning from an excursion to Scarborough on Tuesday, we made our way to the **Hop & Vine** on Albion Street, which is easy to miss because it's a cellar bar. Some might describe it as bijou, it's certainly small but definitely not elegant. When it came to size, it was the beer glasses that intrigued us. They were over-sized lined glasses guaranteeing a full pint, an unusual occurrence up North, apparently. On offer were three real ales and four ciders. We all went for Leeds Samba at 3.7% and £2.60 a pint. In 2010 the pub received four CAMRA awards.

From there we went to the **Lion & Key** (formerly known as Nellie's) and the sister pub to the Wellington – this time it was open. It's just round the corner from the Old Black Boy. They are also now producing their own beers. This is a really interesting pub with lots of bric-a-brac, including (for the benefit of the older generation) Branco toilet paper, Camp coffee, bronchial cough medicines, early 20c to mid 20c household products to ease the housewives' lot, bathroom requisites and suitcases and trunks . . . but I digress, the important thing is the seven hand pumps. It was so good there, we stayed until closing time. Three beers were enjoyed as we took part in a general knowledge quiz read out by Robin E Wild. They were Great Newsome Jem's Stout (4.3%), Acorn Old Moor Porter (4.4%) and Sheffield Tramlines (4.0%).

On Wednesday night, the third night of our stay in Hull, we kept our promise and returned to the **Wellington Inn**. On the way there though, **Walter's Bar** beckoned. As Hull and East Yorkshire CAMRA pub of the year in 2009 and 2010, it promotes itself as having Hull's largest selection of cask ales and ciders.

Surprisingly, cider drinking is hugely popular, with ciders from Somerset and Devon in many of the pubs, in all the towns and cities we visited. In fact, Moorland's Farm in East Yorkshire is producing award-winning cider and apple juice.

Walter's Bar in Scale Lane has 16 hand pumps with 10 real ales at £2.80 a pint. It is a modern bar with good seating and framed photographs of classic albums pleasantly placed on painted walls. The beers enjoyed were Newsome's Sleek Dust (3.8%), Newsome's Jem's Stout (4.3%), Junction Choo-choo (4.2%) and Tigertops Klynkalche.



Weston diary

● **Wednesday 21st December:** Winter/Festive Ales Pub Crawl, start at Criterion 8pm – phone Robin for details where we are at any time after that. All the usual pubs will be visited to see if they have a Festive beer on.

● **Friday 20th January:** We will visit the other two GBG pubs in the Weston area, namely the Ship at Uphill and the Old Inn at Hutton. Meet at the Dragon Inn around 7.45pm to get a bus to Hutton first, or make your own way there.

● **Friday 17th February:** Congresbury by bus; Plough 8pm, Old Inn 9.30pm.

Non-members welcome at all of the above events.

Weston contact

Robin E Wild: email robin-e-wild@hotmail.co.uk or text 07857602293 (only phone if really necessary)

On Thursday evening I didn't join my friends due to illness but I am assured by them that more beers were imbibed and returns to two of the Larkin pubs were enjoyed. I did however join them earlier in the evening at the **Minerva Hotel** which is near the now mostly abandoned and run-down docks. It boasts five real ales but Black Sheep and Tetley were the only ones available. Robin and I played a game of bar billiards (for free) and we had a good look around taking in the maritime history of the pub. We sat briefly in apparently the smallest snug in the country and Mike was impressed with the 50-seat Brew House Theatre set in the back bar. This pub was an unexpected and welcome find.

In fact a lot of things about Hull are unexpected, not least the quietness of the streets and the people. It is a very friendly city with many more pubs and places to explore. For CAMRA members it is a must-visit venue.

Graham R Pillar

When not in Hull

Robin E Wild fills in the gaps...

On the first full day in Hull we went to Scarborough and in the short time given to us there we had time to visit three Good Beer Guide pubs. The first, situated near the castle, but quite difficult to find is the **Leeds Arms**. The Osset Silver King beer made it worth the effort, but what made the pub different is the range of nautical paraphernalia hung and strung around the walls and ceiling of the pub. There was even an oar from the old lifeboat and, safely stowed in display cabinets, rare pottery of this region. Across the hill to the North Shore, we made our way past posh hotels to the **North Riding Hotel**, probably our favourite pub of the week, which to our surprise and pleasure had become a brewpub since Christmas 2010. For a start they had six ales on including Abbeydale, Timothy Taylor, Elland and a London Porter as well as their own North Riding IPA (4.3%). They served beer in pints, half pints and thirds and you aren't required to buy more than one third at a time. How good is that, especially if the beer is a strong 'un? We were supping our good IPA when the landlord and brewer, who had been tipped off that we were from CAMRA, came up the stairs from the two-barrel-plant brewery with a taster of his latest brew, Roger's Ruin (6%), allegedly named after the local MP! This pub does beer festivals all from one brewery and on the walls there were framed pump clips with the date and information about each festival, Dark Star, Elland, and even Moor. Our final pub visit was to the **Angel**, with the walls adorned with saucy postcards which had one of our group chuckling. Four beers

were on, including Tetley's Cask Ale (now brewed by Carlsberg) and the landlord was keen for us to try it; I have to admit it wasn't bad, a nutty flavour not dissimilar to Butcombe Bitter. My preference though was for the Copper Dragon Golden Pippin (3.9%).

The following day we were taken to Lincoln which I had never been to before. After a look at the outside of the cathedral and castle (we had neither the funds to visit the inside nor the time) we went to the **Victoria**, a Bateman's pub in the lee of the castle. I had a rugby-themed beer which was too malty for me and at £3.40p for a 4% beer it wasn't the best start to the day. However just around the corner was the **Strugglers** with four ales on where I had the Rudgate Lubelski (4.3%) for under £3 which calmed me down, being nice and hoppy. Whilst the others made their way to the **Green Dragon**, I diverted to the Wetherspoon's Art Deco ex-cinema pub to take photos, before joining them there. The Green Dragon is a half-timbered building on various levels by the river and has a lot of character with old maps and prints covering the walls. I had two halves with the better of the two being Welbeck Abbey Red Feather (3.9%). On our way back towards the pick-up point we called in for a swift pint at the **Jolly Brewers**, though in the same street there are many fine looking pubs. This pub has original (modern) art on the walls inside the pub and excellent murals in the courtyard and smoking pavilion. It was very difficult to choose between Anglo Dutch God's Own Ale (4.2%) or Peerless Skyline (3.8%) as to which I preferred.

At York the following day, Graham and I needed a bit of culture as well as ale, so after we'd walked some of the historic walls, we visited the free art gallery, and the other two made their way by a circuitous route to the **Maltings** in Tanners Yard, arriving a mere ten minutes before us. A dark pub (but nothing wrong with that), it had old railway signs, clocks, mirrors and notices as well as a good selection of beers ranging from £2.68 to £3.60 a pint. I settled for halves of Leeds Pale (3.8%) at £2.86, and Ravenscroft Revolutionaries Pale Ale (3.3%) at £2.90. We then strolled around a bit more old wall arriving at **Brigantes Bar** with big picture windows letting in the light. More half pints from a big range of beers, including Yorkshire Hearty (3.7%). The others voted to stay there for more and to meet me later as I wanted to visit a few more of York's ten Good Beer Guide pubs. I then went to the **Last Drop**, a York Ales pub where a promo was on Thursdays meaning all their beers (they had four) were only £2.20, but the two Potbelly guest beers were only £2.70 anyway. I had to have the Centurion's Stout (5.4%), and then to the **Golden Lion** in Church Street, a Marston's pub but with five guest ales including the Phoenix Navy (3.8%) at £1.60 for the half I had. We met up again before catching the coach back to Hull in another York Ales pub where a half of Holdens Golden Glow was £1.30 with CAMRA discount.

A Round with Robin

About the time that Pints West 91 went to print, I happened to be sitting by the door of the **Commercial Rooms** in central Bristol. Possibly many Bristol regulars may have gotten slightly blasé about the place, but I realised its full significance to strangers when a family walked in off Corn Street and I heard a small boy say "wow!" He looked around and "wow" again. I think that this sense of wonder could be the same for a great many of the pubs in this country, or even when faced with seven or so beers of our favourite brew. This happened quite a few times to me this late summer and early autumn, predominately at the **Cornubia**, **Three Tuns** and **Seven Stars** in Bristol, but also elsewhere as will be seen in this article.

As you will have noticed, I'm sure, Graham Pillar has written an account of our jaunt up to Hull, and whilst I'll not significantly add to it I must say that my favourite pub in Hull is the **Lion and Key**, not just for its wow factor for choice of beers, nor for the incredible artefacts and clutter in the pub that wouldn't have been out of place in a Belgian bar or the Old Curiosity Shop, but for the friendly welcome we got there. When we were staying in Hull, we went on three excursions and it is about them that I have devoted a few paragraphs.

(See under Graham's article 'Larkin about in Hull' - Ed.)

After returning from Hull I had to deliver my Pints Wests, which had been in a box outside my front door for a few days, to the usual pubs in Weston. It would be nice to say that I have a drink in all of them but it's not true, and anyway since I deliver to seven pubs the last one might not get them. However this time when delivering to the **Captain's Cabin** I was most surprised to see York brewery's Guzzler (3.6%), which we had been drinking in Hull, at only £2.60 – less than we'd been paying for it in the George in Hull!

On the following Monday before going to the Shropshire 'beeriodical' at the **Seven Stars** in Bristol, I called in to the nearby **Bridge Inn** and the wow factor happened again and I couldn't resist all three beers at the Monday price: Bristol Beer Factory's Independence and Acer, and Forge Ambrosia. The 'beeriodical' was really good (it is always good) but there are so many good breweries in Shropshire, and it is with regret that I doubt Pints West would let me print all the beers I liked in it. (Was there any I didn't like?) All I can say is that I had Three Tuns Old Scrooge on three consecutive days.

The **Minehead Somerset CAMRA Beer Festival** was busier than ever this year, but I still enjoyed working there on the Saturday. I merely had time for three half pints but I did taste many more; my beer of the festival was Steel City Dark Throne (4.5%) which I recommended to many from Bristol CAMRA who came on the coach. Unfortunately this like many other beers sold out by 4pm.

A group of us from the Weston sub-branch went to the **RAFA Club Beer Festival** at Westbury-on-Trym. Although none of the ten beers were new to us it did not detract from the fact that they were well kept,

very reasonably priced and that the staff and locals were friendly and the Yeovil POSH (5.4%) could not be ignored. On our way back, while in Bristol, we called in at the Dawkins **Green Man** and the **Gryphon**; at the latter I couldn't resist the Arbor Rainbow in the Dark, surely one of my favourite beers, finally ending up at the **Three Tuns** for some Thornbridge Raven.

The Oxfordshire 'beeriodical' at the **Seven Stars** in October had many beers on that I'd not heard of; again it was difficult to find a favourite as the choice was so good on this the 13th 'beeriodical'. I missed out on a few but no doubt someone out there is peeved that I had too many of the Loden Forbury Lion IPA (5.5%).

I personally have enjoyed the last Wetherspoon's beer festival but I'm slightly annoyed at the notes when they say that something is a new beer when obviously it isn't. For example, I mentioned in Pints West 90 that I'd enjoyed the Everards Wakatu at the **Waverley** beer festival, and we are told this is a new beer exclusive to Everards and Wetherspoon's! I was able to have some beers at the **Imperial** on gravity serve in Exeter, and the same weekend was fortunate in being able to drink O'Hanlon's Port Stout at the **Crediton Inn** which has been in the Good Beer Guide for over 23 years. Most of the festival beers were taken at **Commercial Rooms**, **Berkeley** and **Knights Templar** in Bristol, and the **Dragon Inn** at Weston-super-Mare.

Skipping a few weeks to shorten this article, five of us went to London for the day by coach with a view to exploring the Good Beer Guide pubs in the Borough. On the way there we called in at one of my favourite pubs and currently national pub of the year, the **Harp** in Chandos Street, just off the Strand. Although it was crowded we got served immediately. Most of us had the RAW Dark Peak Stout (4.5%) for £3.30, and they were very pleased to take a few Pints West off us. Our next pub was the **Wheatsheaf** in Southwark Street, located under the huge old Hop Exchange. A cavernous pub, not as friendly, but with eight or so beers with most being 'LocAle'. Then to the **Market Porter** opposite Borough Market; this is everything a pub should be, huge range of beers, friendly staff, lots of bottled beers from all over the world and, for London, reasonable prices. Just around the corner we went to **Rake**, a pub next to the market, but with a covered garden. This too had a good selection of beers including Oakham ales. Finally we called at the **George Inn**, a National Trust-owned pub which must be in the inventory of historic pubs I'm sure. Well satisfied we returned to Bristol and ended up at the **Cornubia** with Dark Star Over The Moon fulfilling our expectations.

Robin E Wild



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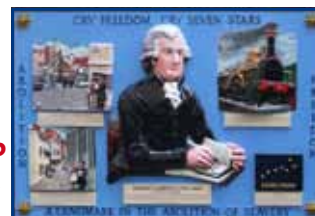
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2012 Members' Weekend and AGM

The CAMRA Members' Weekend and AGM 2012 will be held at the Riviera Centre in Torquay on 30th March to 1st April. It will provide CAMRA members with the opportunity to engage in CAMRA's national campaigns and discuss future policy and direction. It also gives members the chance to catch up with each other over a pint, visit recommended pubs and go on organised trips.

Torquay boasts a large number of good quality pubs, both in the centre and the surrounding areas. There are 10 breweries within the Torquay area, and many of them will be supplying their real ales for sale in the Members' Bar. For real cider/perry drinkers, the award-winning Ye Olde Cider Bar in Newton Abbot is close by.

Torquay boasts 22 miles of coastline, consisting of coves, cliffs and beaches, so there are plenty of local attractions for members to visit. If members fancy escaping Torquay, the Dartmoor National Park is nearby offering fantastic scenery, walks and pubs.

The Weekend is open to all CAMRA members to:

- Review what has been happening at branch, regional and national level over the past year
- Have your say, review campaigning themes and form policy
- Hear guest speakers on issues related to beer, brewing and key campaigns



- Meet the formal requirements of an AGM, including presentation of accounts
- Meet up with CAMRA members from around the country, National Executive and HQ staff members
- Discuss ideas to forward to campaign through workshops, policy discussion groups and seminars
- Enjoy a few drinks in the members bar with a good selection of local real ales
- Visit pubs in Torquay and the surrounding areas
- Visit local breweries and cider producers on organised trips.

Website link: www.camra.org.uk/aggm

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Cryptic Crossword

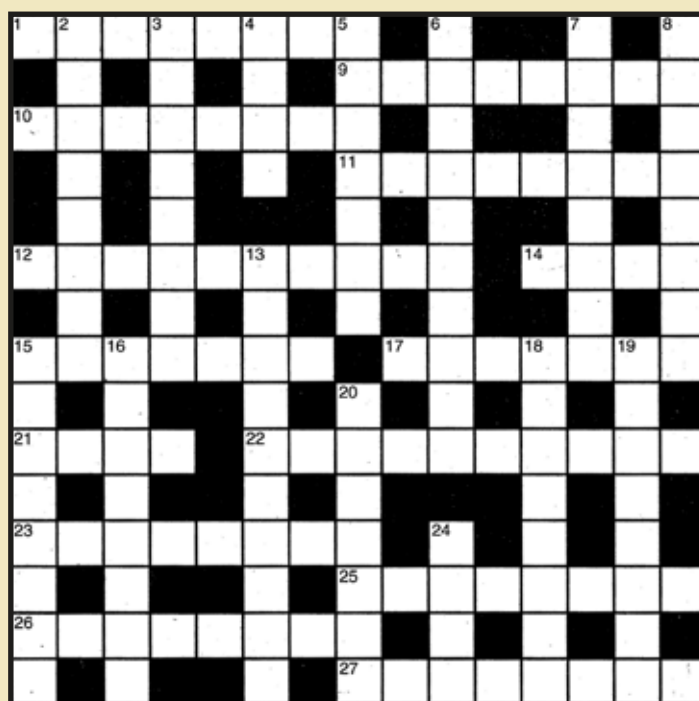
Compiled by Pete and Eddie Taberner

CLUES ACROSS

- Ex-prime minister's preferred beer, probably (5, 3)
- Pedigree beer from planet phlegm returns (8)
- Raspberry prize for the non-alcoholic cocktail (5, 3)
- A drunken blue sot is 100% alcoholic (8)
- Yorkshire terrier – and a beer for the pest controller (10)
- Drink much favoured by the Man U striker (4)
- Singular bog for the slippery customer who's well bred (7)
- Greene King's churchmen gather round black model for their ginger beer (7)
- Just a drop of (Greek) beer (4)
- Seat reserved for royals at the bar? (5, 5)
- Too much alcohol can be a real downer (8)
- 25 & 27. On course to pitch up to this north Bristol pub (3, 3, 2, 3, 5)
- Hunt for the leftovers. How Scots get their own back (8)
- see 25.

CLUES DOWN

- Undercooked game, not easy to find (4, 4)
- Negative image of Moorhouse's mild? (5,3)
- Drunken pop (4)
- Show fellow feeling. Pay them when pissed (7)
- How the doctor orders beer and crisps (10)
- Townhouse's strong ale found at city tube station (8)
- Like 14ac – and so back for the really toxic stuff (8)
- Competitor of Young's brewery ruined thanks to endless ESB (10)
- Well-known stout ensign getting drunk with us (8)
- Lack of beer or any highland dress in a Younger's pub (2, 6)



- Quick joke about sinking a 'Titanic' (3-5)
- Note drunken Czech is headless in the IT area (4, 4)
- One over the eight? Not musically speaking (2, 5)
- English watering hole where you'll find some real ale (4)

Solution on page 25.

Three go wild in windy Scotland

With some holiday to take in September and nothing much planned, I came up with the idea of a return visit to some of the pubs of Scotland, not having been up for a few years. Phil Cummings and Yug from Burnham On Sea were happy to join me and cheap flights (£24 each way) and Travel Lodge rooms (£19 per room per night) were secured a few months ahead. We flew to Glasgow on a Sunday afternoon departing at 4.45pm, took a taxi to the hotel and were in our first pub by about 6.30. I had reason to regret buying a round at the airport – I had a Butcombe Bitter at an acceptable (for the airport) £3.30 a pint, Phil went all sensible with a large tea at a fair £1.95, but Yug went off on a flight of fancy (pun intended) with a bottle of Crabbies alcoholic ginger beer! Bad enough having the embarrassment of ordering what I thought was a kiddies' drink but I was truly astonished to be charged an incredible £4.80 for it – that's FOUR POUNDS EIGHTY! Having recovered from fainting and got back up gingerly (also intended) I asked Yug for a sip of this mighty beverage of the rich and famous. As I expected it was totally crabbie! I vowed to sting Yug for a mightily expensive single malt at the first opportunity and on we went.

Phil and I have fond memories of a few pubs in Glasgow one of which was our first point of call – the **Bon Accord** in North Street. This was still as good as ever with around 10 pumps of changing guest beers. What was noticeable was that prices had rocketed since my last visit to around £3.40 per pint (this was to be repeated all over Glasgow) – I am sure that Glasgow was relatively cheap in the past. Next stop was the new Good Beer Guide (GBG) entry the **Drum and Monkey** in St Vincent Street – a rare venture north for the Nicholson's pub chain better known for their excellent London pubs. The guest beer was the excellent Acorn Sorachi IPA and I had the first of several lovely bowls of Cullen Skink soup of the trip. We had noticed that the famous **Pot Still** pub in Hope Street was back in the new GBG and were looking forward to a pint and a wee dram. We were therefore mystified to find no real ale on sale at all (the book says three are served) and that the whisky list has been dropped as it was "too much trouble to keep up" – how on earth are you supposed to choose from 500 whiskies if you have no idea what they are or at what price? On our last visit prices ranged from about £3 to £100 per measure so blind ordering would be risky to say the least! A crazy decision by the pub. We left quickly and went to investigate why another old favourite, the **Horseshoe** in Drury Street, was no longer in the GBG – a round of three different pints all in quite dreadful condition quickly answered that one! A great shame as it is a truly wonderful old historic pub with reputedly the longest bar counter in the UK. Things could only get better! We made our way across the centre to two long standing beer guide pubs – the **Blackfriars** in Bell Street and **Babbity Bowster** in Blackfriars Street. The former is a good pub with an excellent range of around six beers on (albeit served too cold on our visit) and the latter has more of a gastro pub feel and a couple of good beers at steep prices. It was the only pub of the evening that was quiet – the others were doing a very lively trade for a Sunday night. I suspect it does a lot more trade in the daytime though.

On Monday the tail end of a hurricane was forecast to hit Scotland so we set off on the train to Aberdeen with some trepidation. I had



The Grill's rather uninviting exterior



The Grill inside

saved a fortune with an advance "Friends fare" group ticket that cut about 70% off the price. It turned out that we had made a good move as we had sunny calm weather all day only to arrive back in Glasgow to hear that the hurricane had been and gone in the 11 hours that we were away! A quick pint of Orkney Dark Island in **Aitches Ale House**, a proper old fashioned boozer opposite Aberdeen station, started the day well. One of the main reasons for our trip was to visit the **Brewdog Bar** – the first pub owned by Brewdog brewery (now joined by several others). As we were aware in advance, their bars only sell the keg or "craft" version of their brews and no genuine real ale at all. We tried Alice Porter and Punk IPA which were pleasant enough but not a patch on the cask versions that we love so much. It seems that Brewdog wish to convert the world to quality keg beer which is really odd given that they can do cask so well. The "craft" versions may have a place in venues such as nightclubs, hotels and concert venues where they would be a welcome change from the dross normally served – but instead of real ale in busy pubs? Surely not. Next stop was **Ma Camerons** in Little

Belmont Street – a veritable tardis of a place that was about three times as big as you would expect on entering – a pleasant pint of Inveralmond Lia Fail for two of us and a G&T for Yug (he really is beyond hope at times!). Next up was our other main reason for being here – the simply named **Grill** in Union Street. It has to be said that had we not known it to be a famous historic bar with a great selection of beers and whiskies we would have walked swiftly past, so uninviting is the exterior (see the picture!). Even more incongruous that it is located in a main shopping street. The inside is a complete revelation – all beautifully preserved furniture and mirrors (see the second picture). We dallied here long enough to order a wee dram from

the whisky list to chase down our excellent pints. From there we visited the **Prince of Wales** in St Nicholas Lane (great range of beers and very good fairly priced food – haggis, neeps, and tatties in my case), then the **Brentwood Hotel** in Crown Street (10 beers but very few that you would seek out on our visit) and finally **Under The Hammer** in North Silver Street – a cellar bar with a small but good range of beers. Then it was back to Glasgow and a taxi to the **West Brewery** bar – which brews its own German style beers to the German purity laws. Very nice too.

Tuesday morning and we were off to Ayr and Troon by train – none of us had been here before. On arriving at Ayr we were immediately blown from pillar to post – I had to wonder if the hurricane had turned around and come back to get us after all! We headed straight to the **Glen Park Hotel** in Racecourse Road, the most unlikely home of the Ayr Brewing Company. Three of their four beers were available on hand pump, and the fourth – a 4.2% porter – was available in bottles. All four were surprisingly good – we are now aiming to get at least one down to Bristol Beer Festival next year. We then took a one-mile walk into the mini hurricane to **Geordies Byre** on Main Street – a classic old-fashioned friendly pub with up to four changing beers – and then on to the station for the short ride to Troon. First port of call in Troon was meant to be **Bruces Well** in Portland Street – we had to assume that Bruce was in fact not well as it was closed at 1pm despite supposedly being open all day! Fortunately **Mckays** is only a few doors away.

News from Dawkins Ales

Beer News

The Dawkins brewery, based in Timsbury near Bath, continues to roll out seasonal and special ales to complement its permanent beer range (which includes **Brass Knocker**, **Sixty-Six** and **Green Barrel**).

One of the specials for winter is **Slapstick**, brewed to a strength of 5% alcohol by volume (ABV) and described as a dark, deeply fruity and roasty porter. This is the third year running that Dawkins have been asked to brew the beer to support the Bristol Festival of Silent Comedy, which runs from 26th to 29th January 2012. Another winter special is **Chocadee** (5% ABV), described as a “double chocolate stout – creamy, full flavoured and, yes, rather chocolatey!” Both these beers are due to be launched on 9th December at a publicity event for the festival at the **Victoria** in Southleigh Road, Clifton.

Two further winter brews for dark beer lovers include a 5.2% Irish recipe stout, **Emerald Stout**, and **Special Dark**, a 5% fruity, strong ale which is being brewed again, having originally been brewed to mark CAMRA's 40th birthday.

Also in December we should see **Famous Five**, a 5% copper-coloured, ginger-spiced beer, only available for a very short time in Dawkins pubs. Brewery owner Glen Dawkins says this is a one-off brew to celebrate the success of all five of their pubs being awarded listings in the 2012 CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

Yet more specials due to make an appearance in the coming months include **Mumbai PA**, a rich, deeply golden IPA at 5.7%, and **The Dog Delusion**, a 4.5% blonde, very hoppy beer made to an updated recipe from the brew of earlier in the year. This one promises to be “juicier and richer”.

Of the brewery itself, Glen says: “We’re still looking to expand capacity as the wee brewing kit is groaning. If it goes to plan this will happen in the New Year.”

Pub News


The big news for Dawkins at the moment is that their original pub, the **Miner's Arms** in Mina Road, St Werburghs, can finally sell their own beer! After 18 months of negotiations with Punch Taverns, from whom the pub is leased, they're now allowed two handpumps with their bestselling best bitter **Sixty-Six** and a rotating second brew always on.

For the benefit of those in the trade, this was made possible by Punch joining the SIBA Direct Delivery Scheme (SIBA being the Society of Independent Brewers, their trade body). As long as the pub satisfies a few criteria (such as holding Cask Marque accreditation), any Punch

pub can potentially benefit from having local beer delivered direct, and several hundred are already; which is great news for the publican and public alike.

Glen says: “It’s pleasing to report that our ales are going down well with the good denizens of St Werburghs!”

SP



Members get a stamp for every Dawkins brand pint of ale they buy in any Dawkins pub; 10 stamps=any Dawkins pint of ale FREE! Plus e-newsletters, special offers. Join at the bar or online

**All five of our pubs are in the 2012
Camra Good Beer Guide**

The Miner's Arms Mina Rd, St Werburghs, BS2 9YQ 9079874
The Hillgrove Dove St, Kingsdown, BS2 8LT 9249818
The Victoria Southleigh Rd, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2BH 9745675
The Portcullis Wellington Ter, Clifton Village, BS8 4LE 9085536
The Green Man Alfred Place, Kingsdown, BS2 8HD 9304824

www.dawkins-ales.co.uk

They told us that the landlord of Bruce's Well was prone to non-opening “especially when the weather is bad” – hmmm! McKays served up a decent pint and Yug enjoyed another G&T. We then battled our way along the sea front for a pleasant pint of Inverlorn Ossian at the **Harbour Bar**. It was then back to the station and a return to Glasgow. This time we headed out to near Hampden Park and the **Clockwork Beer Company** on Cathcart Road, another of our old favourites that Phil and I have spent many happy hours in. It was not in the new GBG and we quickly discovered why – although it still had around six house brews and six guest beers, all of the four that we tried were in awful condition. That was particularly surprising in the case of the house beers which are kept under gas pressure but were flat as a pancake! To top it all they have also stopped keeping their whisky list which was once excellent – it's enough to make a bloke order a G&T for heaven's sake! No idea what the people running it now think that they are doing but it will end in tears. We made our way next to a classic old pub called the **Laurieston** in Bridge Street – still preserved as it was in the 1960s and very friendly. We expected no real ale but got a pleasant surprise with a dark seasonal brew from Fyne Ales.

We had saved our last night in Glasgow for the West End area near the university – somewhere that I lived for three months way back in 1984. This area could be described as the Clifton of Glasgow with multiple fashionable bars and restaurants around the university. Pat Harty, a Glaswegian cricketer acquaintance of mine (not many of those about!) had recommended two places to me – the **Oran Mor** at the top of Byres Road was the first. This is a quite astonishing conversion of

a church into an events centre on many levels. The main bar area was nicely busy for a Tuesday night with a really good atmosphere. Sadly the two house beers (brewed by Houston and Kelburn breweries) simply were not in great condition on our trip. It's well worth a visit just to see the interior though. The food looked popular too. It was now time to eat and we sought out Pat's other tip, the Ashoka Indian restaurant just behind Hillhead underground station. We were fortunate to get a table – quite simply one of the best, if not the best Indian meal that any of us have experienced. The penultimate pub of the Glasgow part of the trip was **Tennents** bar (around eight changing beers) on Byres Road which was as good as ever and very busy. Finally at the Partick end of Byres Road is the **Three Judges** – arguably Glasgow's premier real ale pub. Around 10 pumps dispense ever changing beers, many of them from south of the border. Very good indeed.

On Wednesday we were off to Edinburgh for another round of pubs before catching the last plane home from there – but that story will have to wait for another time as this article is already too long and I have “previous” with the editor on that subject! I will just mention the superb couple of pints of Porter at the historic **Gothenburg** brew pub of that name in Prestonpans (we were literally blown into the pub by a gale there too!). In closing all that I have left to say is that I've just come back from my local supermarket where Crabbies is on offer at four for a fiver! They would have cost £19.20 at the airport. I really must remember to sting Yug for that malt soon!

Vince Murray
(photos by Phil Cummings)

The decline of the English off licence

Much is made – quite rightly – of the increasing number of pubs going out of business, but the decline of the off licence is often overlooked. The collapse of First Quench – owners of Threshers, Wine Rack, The Local, Victoria Wine, Bottoms Up and Haddows – in October 2009 saw 1,200 off licences wiped off the map – with the loss of 6,000 jobs – at one go. That though was simply the most dramatic development in a long and sorry saga that has been going on since the first supermarkets opened in Britain in the 1950s.

In the five years leading up to First Quench's collapse, the number of off licences in Britain fell from 5,430 to 4,400. Although

many off licences survive and continue to thrive – whether it be bulk supply outlets like Bargain Booze or upmarket wine chains like Oddbins and Majestic (not to mention specialist beer stores) – the supermarkets are keen to expand in this as in every other sector. Not only do they shift staggering quantities of loss-leading lager, they also pride themselves on offering top-quality wines at competitive prices. In recent years they have jumped onto the real ale bandwagon as well, with bottle-conditioned beers – virtually unobtainable in supermarkets a few years ago – now a regular fixture in many stores. Once there seemed to be an off licence on almost every corner.



This off licence stood on the corner of Chatterton Square in Redcliffe – long since redeveloped – just across the road from Temple Meads station.



The Live & Let Live in Queen Ann Road, Barton Hill, on the corner of Goulter Street – long demolished.



The Lynmouth House at 62 Lower Ashley Road was pulled down to make way for the roundabout at the end of the M32.



The off licence at 13 Thomas Street, off Stokes Croft, demolished to make way for flats.



This off licence stood at the junction off Colston and Trenchard Streets, just up from the Gryphon. New buildings now occupy the site.



The Malthouse – now the Old Malthouse – in Westbury-on-Trym.



The British Lion on the corner of Clement and Elton Streets in St Pauls. The site is now occupied by an industrial unit just off Newfoundland Way.



The Mechanics Arms on Forest Road in Kingswood was pulled down to make for Eaton Close.



Morleys off licence at 48 Gloucester Road, on the corner of Raglan Road – now Paul Stevens solicitors.

The first of them opened in 1860 when Gladstone, then chancellor of the exchequer, introduced changes to the licensing laws. Many of the new off licences were taken out by grocers and bakers seeking a new form of income. This remained a characteristic of many off licences until well into the twentieth century. Even off licences that offered little apart from beer and cider – both bottled and in casks – and cigarettes, also had jars of sweets displayed on shelves behind

the counter. A visit to the off for a packet of sweets on the way home from school was part of the daily routine for thousands of children.

The photographs reproduced here date from the 1950s. They recall a time that many will remember – but which has gone forever – when off licences occupying premises no bigger than your front room served real ale straight from the barrel for you to carry home in a jug.

Andrew swift



This off licence, in Lypiatt Road, just off Whitehall Road in St George – by the Red Lion – is now a private house.



The New Inn – an off licence despite its name – was at 11 Queen Street, off Two Mile Hill in St George. It was also a bakery at one time but is now a private house.



The Park House, on the corner of Thornleigh and Oak Roads in Horfield, now a private house.



Inside the Park House in Horfield – George's Beers, Players Please and a magnificent assortment of sweets – plus a stool set invitingly at one end of the bar.



Inside the Malthouse at Westbury-on-Trym in the late 1950s, with three barrels of beer – including Simonds IPA – behind the counter. Simonds amalgamated with Courage in 1960. The Malthouse was very much a grocer's as well as an off licence with ham and cheese cut to order. Note the two-handled cider mugs hanging from the ceiling.



Inside the Mechanics Arms on Forest Road – the archetypal off licence – barrels of beer, jars of sweets, cigarettes, crisps and very little else.



The Pig & Whistle off licence on the Gloucester Road stood at the corner of Hatherley Road. It remained an off licence until comparatively recently but is now part of Bristol Tools.



The Nursery stood at the junction of Thistle Street and The Nursery, just off North Street in Bedminster, near the Hen & Chickens.



Although most off licences have long gone, a few have been converted to pubs. The Severn House on Severn Road in Weston-super-Mare – also known as Hansons for a time – got an on licence in the 1970s, was renamed the Waverley in 1994 and is now one of Weston's top real ale pubs.

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
- **Barrel**, Thornbury
- **Bristol Cider House**, Surrey Street, Bristol
- **Commercial Rooms**, Corn Street, Bristol
- **Cornubia**, Temple Street, Bristol
- **Dragon Inn**, Weston-super-Mare
- **Globe**, Frampton Cotterell
- **Gryphon**, Colston Street, Bristol
- **Horse & Groom**, St George's Road, 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
- **Robert Fitzharding**, Bedminster
- **Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol
- **Three Tuns**, St George's Road, Hotwells, Bristol
- **Volunteer Tavern**, New Street, St Judes, Bristol
- **Woolpack Inn**, St Georges, Weston-super-Mare



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REAL ALE

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 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. 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

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 BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk

Nothing ever stays the same – and especially not when there is so much going on in Bristol CAMRA! We've had to make a few changes to the previously published list of BADRAG events so it's worth a quick refresh here.

The December meeting coincides with the Branch Christmas Social which has now been arranged to take place from 7pm on Sunday 11th December at the Three Tuns, St. Georges Road, Hotwells.

The January meeting also coincides with a Branch "Meet and Greet" taking place at the Grapes (Chipping Sodbury) on Thursday 19th January and providing a great opportunity for BADRAG and Branch to meet up with members living out of town. We might manage to drop in at the New Inn, Mayhill on the return leg. Coach leaves the Cornubia at 6.45 so book your place now.

February 16th sees us gathering at the Hope and Anchor in Jacobs Wells Road for about 7pm, followed by the Bag O'Nails (if reopened by then as expected) around 9pm.

Advance warning for March; the third Thursday of the month will be the extra session of the Bristol Beer Festival so the BADRAG gathering has been switched to 8th March at the Barley Mow for 7pm, followed by a visit to the Bridge Inn.

It's been great to have a few new faces arriving at BADRAG gatherings over the past few months and a good time has been had by all. So if you have been wondering about showing up at one of these events then please take the plunge – conversation never runs dry as beer is such a wide ranging topic!

BADRAG has been very successful in encouraging Bristol licensees to stock some of the less often encountered beer styles and this year we are hoping to see more than ever being brought on tap in the winter season – traditionally a time for enjoying wonderful winter warmers but also a time when full bodied flavours are more welcome to the palate, providing a great balance for the hearty foods we like to enjoy when it's cold and damp outside. Even the range of bottled beers tends to get a bit wider in the winter season so if you don't fancy going out for a pint, you can still enjoy a good beer at home – and why not take the opportunity to try a few?

George Clarke

The Bar Code
by Eddie Taberner



MERRY CHRISTMAS BEER LOVERS
04/10/2011

Branch diary

Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA

● **Tues Dec 6th** – Explorer on foot. Meet Eldon House 7pm. Other pubs: Vittoria, Victoria, Lansdown, Portcullis and Hop House. Final itinerary subject to confirmation.

● **Sun Dec 11th** – Branch Christmas Social at the Three Tuns, St Georges Rd, Hotwells from 7pm. Membership cards must be shown.

● **Wed Dec 14th** – Committee Meeting, 8pm Cornubia.

● **Tues Dec 20th** – Gloucester Road Christmas Crawl – meet Inn on the Green from 6.45pm, depart 7.15pm to pubs including Wellington, Royal Oak, Lazy Dog, Annexe, Robin Hood's Retreat. Pete Bridle leading.

● **Sun Jan 8th** – Westbury Wobble. Meet Victoria, Westbury-on-Trym 12 noon, then RAFA Club, Post Office Tavern, Black Swan (Dirty Duck), Prince of Wales, White Horse, White Lion.

● **Wed Jan 11th** – Quarterly Branch Meeting, venue TBC.

● **Sat Jan 14th** – Possible Wassail trip to Rich's Cider. Coach from Cornubia 6.30pm. Return departure around midnight, so arrival in Bristol around 1am. Wassail ticket and coach price TBC.

● **Thurs Jan 19th** – Meet & Greet at Grapes, Chipping Sodbury with BADRAG. Coach departs Cornubia 6.45pm. Cost TBC.

● **Wed Jan 25th** – Committee Meeting, 8pm.

● **Thurs Jan 26th** – Bristol Pubs Group meeting. Date and venue TBC.

● **Sun Jan 29th** – Bristol Pubs Group Social. Meet Downend Tavern 12.15-1.15pm for tour of local area.

● **Sun Feb 5th** – Bristol Beer Festival ticket sales, session for CAMRA members only (and those joining on the day), Commercial Rooms, Bristol. Opens 11am.

● **Wed Feb 8th** – Committee Meeting, date and venue TBC.

● **Thurs Feb 16th** – BADRAG gathering at the Hope & Anchor, Jacobs Well Road until 9pm, then the Bag O'Nails, Hotwells (if open).

● **Sun Feb 19th** – Bristol Beer Festival public ticket sales, Old Fish Market, Bristol. Opens 11am.

● **Wed Feb 22nd** – Branch Meeting, Thornbury. Details TBC.

● **Sun Feb 26th** – GBG Selection meeting. Time and venue TBC.

● **Thurs March 15th-17th** – Bristol Beer Festival.

● **Date TBC** – Wessex Brewery visit.

Please check our website (www.camrabristol.org.uk) or sign up to our yahoo group for the latest information and more details on any of the above events, as sometimes events can change after press date – or email Andy Gray at camrasocials@btinternet.co.uk for the latest information. Please note that all coach and brewery trips must be booked in advance, either by email, or in person at a branch meeting.

Andy Gray (your new Social Secretary)

Weston diary and contact

See page 27

Severn Vale diary and contact

See pages 14 and 15

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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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.

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

December

● **Thursday 8th 8:30pm.** A social at the Lamb, Clandown, near Radstock.

● **Tuesday 13th 8:30pm.** A mini crawl of Trowbridge, starting at Stallards then on to the Rose and Crown.

● **Tuesday 20th 8:00pm.** A Christmas mini crawl in Bath starting at the Pulteney Arms at 8.00pm and heading in to the centre.

January - GBG Survey Month!

● **Thursday 5th 8:30pm.** A social at the Cross Guns in Avoncliff, near Bradford on Avon.

● **Tuesday 10th 8:30pm.** A mini crawl starting at the Swan in Shepton Mallet and then on to the George in Croscombe.

● **Thursday 19th 8:00pm.** A crawl of Warminster, starting at the Fox and Hounds and then onto the Masons and the Organ.

● **Thursday 26th 8:00pm.** A crawl of Bradford on Avon, starting at the Rising Sun, Winsley Road.

● **Tuesday 31st 8:30pm.** The Branch Meeting to be held at the White Horse in Twerton, Bath.

Bath & Borders contacts

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

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

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