



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

AWARD-WINNING



www.camrabristol.org.uk



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

PINTS WEST

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

Fight back to save your pint!

Sign the beer tax e-petition

SAVE YOUR PINT THE FACTS

- BRITS PAY THE SECOND HIGHEST RATE OF BEER TAX IN THE EU.
- BEER TAX HAS BEEN HIKE BY 42% SINCE 2008 AND IS SET TO INCREASE YEARLY BY 2% ABOVE INFLATION.
- BEER AND PUBS SUPPORT 1 MILLION JOBS.
- OVER 4,500 UK PUBS HAVE CLOSED SINCE 2008.

SIGN THE E-PETITION
CAMRA.ORG.UK/SAVEYOURPINT



It's time to save your pint and fight back against this year's budget which saw the Government continue its damaging policy of the beer duty escalator.

Every year beer tax increases by 2% above inflation meaning your pint in the pub costs you maybe 10p more. This mounting pressure is contributing to the closure of 16 pubs every single week. CAMRA is calling all beer drinkers and pub goers to sign an online e-petition today by visiting:

www.camra.org.uk/saveyourpint

We need 100,000 signatures to trigger a high-profile Parliamentary debate and put pressure on the Government ahead of Budget 2013. To stand a chance of doing this we need your help in reaching as many people as possible. So please sign the petition and then spread the word.

CAMRA also has free material to take down your local and join the campaign. Email claire.cain@camra.org.uk to order free beer mats and posters.*

With around £1 on every pint going to the Treasury in beer duty and VAT, it's time to save your pint and call time on the beer duty escalator!

**One pubs pack contains 5 x A4 posters and 100 beer mats, please let Claire know how many pubs packs you would like.*

**GEORGE OSBORNE
IS TAKING A 3RD
OF YOUR PINT
IN TAX!**

Duty and VAT on a 9p pint sold at £3 accounts for over a third of the price of a pint.



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**



Bristol Beer Festival 2012



The fifteenth annual CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival took place from 15th to 17th March 2012 at Brunel's Old Station at Temple Meads (the venue formerly known as the Passenger Shed). This was our biggest event so far with more beer available than ever before and an extra public session on the Thursday evening. This new Thursday session was the only one for which tickets did not sell out and the organisers will need to review this for next year. An innovation was that for the first time we sold some tickets online and this worked quite well, although we do not see this replacing the organised ticket sales events, especially for those sessions for which the tickets sell out quickly every year.

One thing that became clear was that adding an extra session and squeezing in the extra beer meant significantly more work was required. We could certainly do with some more CAMRA members volunteering to help with the 2013 event, the organising of which will need to start by October of this year. Look out for more information in the next edition of Pints West and in our annual branch mailout, posted to local members towards the end of the year,

The 'LocAle of the Festival' competition had an interesting outcome as the result of the judging was a dead heat with two beers of similar names sharing joint first place – **Zerodegrees Pale Ale** and **Great Western Brewing Company Hambrook Pale Ale**. Our congratulations go to both breweries. The guest judges for this process included, amongst



LocAle judges Stephen Williams MP and Kerry McCarthy MP

others, local MPs Stephen Williams and Kerry McCarthy who kindly volunteered their services, although it's rumoured that Kerry (as a non-drinker) delegated the actual tasting to her assistant.

The festival also included the official launch of **Collaboration 2012**. This was a special new beer that was been created by six local breweries: Arbor Ales, Bath Ales, Bristol Beer Factory, Great Western Brewing, RCH and Zerodegrees. Collaboration is a porter, a traditional dark beer made famous during the 18th century – there are records of the Porter Brewery in Bristol dating back to 1730. Collaboration had a smooth dark malt flavour with a hint of smokiness blended with a beautiful dark fruit full mouth feel provided by the Bramling Cross hops.

There was a wide range of real ale still available for customers right up until the festival finally closed on Saturday night, although unusually we did manage to sell out of cider at 10:30pm. We aren't one of those festivals that consider running out as being a good thing and so rest assured we will make sure to order more cider and

perry for next year!

Another tradition of ours is that the value of any unused beer tokens that customers place in the charity box on their way out are donated to



Ashley Stone of GWB (left) and Anna Schwaeble of Zerodegrees receive their awards from branch chairman Richard Brooks

an appropriate cause and this year we were able to pay £900 to CLIC Sargent.

The festival organisers would like to thank everyone that helped support the event. In addition to all the unpaid CAMRA volunteers, there are the pubs that helped with the ticket sales – the **Commercial Rooms**, **Old Fish Market** and **Seven Stars** in Bristol, and **Off The Rails** in Weston-super-Mare. We would also like to give a particular mention for our main sponsors **Cotswold Spring** (festival glasses), **St Austell** for the popular staff T-shirts, the **Bristol Beer Factory** for sponsoring the beer tokens, and **Bath Ales** for their ongoing assistance with the stillage.

Richard Brooks

Bristol wins major national campaigning awards!

The hard work and dedication to the real ale cause by members of the Bristol and District branch of CAMRA were celebrated in early April 2012 with two major national awards.

Pints West Editor Steve Plumridge accepted the award for CAMRA newsletter of the year while Pete Bridle, Chair of the Bristol and District Pubs Group, was named national campaigner of the year.

The Campaigner of the Year award is given to the person whom the judges feel has done most during the year to progress the aims and objectives of the Campaign. The citation referred to Pete's "unyielding resolve to promote and protect pubs" and the establishment of Bristol and District's "trailblazing" Pubs Group.

The awards were made at CAMRA's annual general meeting and members' weekend in Torquay. Presenting the Award, CAMRA's national Chairman, Colin Valentine, said: "This year's Campaigner of the Year has performed sterling work over the years and his branch's Pubs Group has performed amazing work in saving pubs and even playing an important part in the decision by some larger companies to cease the practice of placing restrictive covenants on pubs when sold. The work of the group has led to many pubs being reopened, saved from demolition, having planning applications withdrawn and restricting insensitive alterations."

Pete has led several initiatives with the Group, as reported in recent issues of Pints West. These include the 'Bristol Pubs Group Day of Action' in November last year, when the local media were invited to a coach tour of ten closed pubs in North Bristol. As reported in the Evening Post, the tour and related meeting emphasised the "perfect storm" of increased duty on beer, loss-leading competition from super-market budget booze and a lack of planning protection for established pubs that is creating a climate in which landlords have no choice but to hang the towels up for good. As another article in this issue of Pints West shows, the Pubs Group also has some cause for (cautious) celebration, with several pubs also reopening in recent months.

Receiving the Award, Pete said, "I would urge everyone to lobby very hard to save pubs. Don't just write one letter to MPs, keep at them until these issues are resolved. We need to campaign harder than ever to save pubs!"

Pete's leadership of this particular campaign is celebrated in the Campaigner of the Year Award but, as with the Award for Newsletter of the Year, it represents time, effort and expertise from many other contributors in the branch.



Campaigner of the Year



CAMRA Newsletter of the Year

Pints West is one of Bristol and District CAMRA's major campaigning vehicles; under the long-standing, committed editorship of Steve Plumridge, Pints West scooped the overall winner award for its great mix of articles on both local and national campaigning issues. Pints West is already a multi-award-winner, and this is the third time our newsletter has won the top national title. Presenting the award, CAMRA Director Jackie Parker said, "Branch newsletters are the local face of CAMRA and one of our main campaigning tools. Our volunteers spend many hours putting them together."

And that is a fact worth highlighting: Pete Bridle, Steve Plumridge, all members of Bristol Pubs Group and the many, many contributors to Pints West, are all volunteers. So are those who put together and deliver our annual Beer Festival, distribute Pints West to local pubs and clubs, collate descriptions of selected pubs for the Good Beer Guide and take forward many other campaigning initiatives.

Congratulations to Pete and to Steve! And many thanks to all contributors to Pints West (and especial thanks to advertisers who support cost of print and production) and to everyone involved in contributing to the Campaign.

Lesly Huxley

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Real Ale
Real Food
Real Pub

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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.

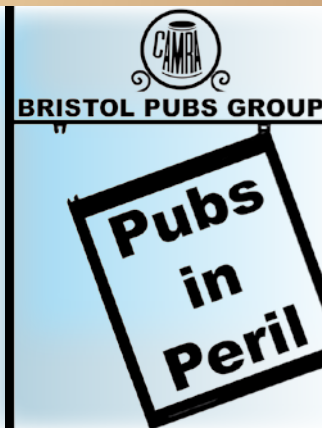
Our aims are simple.

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

Right! Who wants to buy a pub? The market is teeming with freeholds for sale, and with so many available this has got to be a good time for buying at the right price. Remember, just because a pub's freehold is on the market, it doesn't mean that it is at its end of life – it could mean that it is awaiting a new lease of life. So what freeholds are available?

At the junction of St. Michael's Hill and Horfield Road in central Bristol, the **Scotchman And His Pack** has its freehold for sale. Bang in the centre of the city **Horts** is also for sale. Next up is the **Spring Garden** at Hotwells, and then the **Coach and Horses** on Old Gloucester Lane in Old Market. Staying in the city of Bristol the **Hop Pole** in Avonvale Road, Redfield and the **Blaise Inn** at Henbury are also offered for sale. In South Gloucestershire freeholds for sale include the **White Swan** at Downend, the **Cross Hands** at Pilning, the **Ship** at Oldbury-on-Severn and the wonderful **Queen's Head** at Willsbridge with its historic heritage interior floor plan and fittings. The **Pioneer** at Keynsham is BANES's contribution to the freehold glut, though it is open and advertising a real



The Blaise Inn, Henbury - freehold for sale

ale, Doom Bar. Also reported to us is the **Somerset** at Paulton which is, you've guessed it, for sale. Of all of the aforementioned pubs some may still be still trading so don't assume they are closed pending a buyer.

News on pubs that are not for sale includes the **Horse and Groom** in St. George's Road, West End (behind the Council House) which has changed hands. It is now being run by Paul Sprackman of the Criterion in Weston-Super-Mare and is moving more towards real ale from cider. The former **Old Castle Green** in Gloucester Lane, Old Market has had another name change, now it is 'The Den' and seems to have become a club. The **Armoury Tavern** in Stapleton Road, Easton has also changed hands and we look forward to the successful continuation of trade in this significant community pub. The **Shakespeare** in Totterdown has re-opened and is selling at least a couple of real ales, while re-openings have also occurred recently at the **Kingsdown Vaults** in Kingsdown

and the **Victoria** in St. Werburgh's. Lockleaze's **Golden Bottle** is smartly presented and open for business. In Bedminster the **Plough and Windmill** has re-opened following a closure and the Full Moon in North Street has re-opened as the **Hare** following a major facelift. Bath Ales and guest ales feature. The former Prom on Gloucester Road in Bishopston has been re-named the **Gallimaufry** (which I am reliably informed

means a "mixture or medley of things") and is selling real ale alongside a restaurant business. Ale from Bath Ales, Young's and Leeds has been spotted there. Game, set and match at the **Tennis Court Inn** in Kingswood where it has re-opened after a lengthy closure and much work to prepare it for a long rally. Out of town at Felton the **George and Dragon** has been newly taken on by Kirsty and Tony, who have previously run the Coach and Horses in Clifton and the Queen Vic in Priddy.

Sadly, as usual, all is not heading in a positive direction. A 'For Sale' board has appeared at the **Miner's Arms** in Shipham in Somerset, the **King's Arms** in Kingsdown remains long closed, and the supermarkets are preying on the **Fellowship** in Horfield (Tesco), and the **Bell** (Tesco) and **Lord Rodney** (Co-op) in Kingswood. The sad-looking **Wayfarer** on Pen Park Road, Brentry looks set for demolition, while the Enterprise Inns' **King George VI** in Filton has just been reported as boarded up.



The Fellowship in Horfield – the sign says 'Let to Tesco'



The Wayfarer – will wayfare no more

Mike Jackson

The Bar Code
by Eddie Taberner



EDDIE TABERNER 01/02/2012

Local MP's backing for Community Pubs Month



Bristol North West MP Charlotte Leslie showed her commitment to the Campaign for Real Ale's Community Pubs Month by working a session behind the bar at the Inn on the Green pub in Horfield.

Community Pubs Month, which was held throughout April, is a national initiative organised by CAMRA to champion the importance of local pubs and took place to help increase footfall into pubs and to increase the awareness of pubs as invaluable community assets. CAMRA also encouraged licensees to organise and promote events to attract additional trade. It was all about giving pubs as much publicity as possible during these tough times.

We were celebrating all that is great about community pubs in the Bristol area. Although many pubs are having a tough time for many reasons, there are still some great pubs in our area and this was an opportunity for them to showcase what is good about them. We were very pleased with the number of pubs that put on special events throughout April and hope that, if successful, they may be able to use these initiatives again and even take examples of events held by other pubs and develop a positive marketing plan for themselves. The fact that Charlotte Leslie got behind the campaign is also very positive as we need MPs on our side to further influence Government on policies to protect our pubs.

Charlotte Leslie MP said: "Pubs are right at the heart of our big society. They are where communities get together and share company and ideas and I am absolutely committed to supporting them. My first job was in a pub, so I was delighted to get back behind the bar in one of



Charlotte Leslie MP and Inn on the Green licensee Owen Tunstall our country's greatest institutions – the local pub."

The MP helped out by pulling pints for several hours, clearing tables and a variety of other odd jobs.

Owen Tunstall, the licensee of the Inn on the Green, said: "It is a sad thing that all too often we hear of the negative issues associated with pubs. In a society troubled with anti-social behaviour and 'binge' drinking problems it is worth remembering the great many professional publicans across the country and what their pubs do for their communities. They are places to find new friends, maintain relationships, discuss freely the issues facing all of us today, and above all a place to get away from it all to stop us going mad!"

Pete Bridle

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- 30p off a pint of real ale for over 60's.

Quiz night every Monday with rollover jackpot.
You can also enjoy various promotions and special offers throughout the year.

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All day Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays

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BRISTOL PUBS GROUP organises a Community Pubs Month tour



The White Hart, Bitton

As part of CAMRA's Community Pubs Month campaign, the Bristol Pubs Group organised a bus tour of "re-opened" pubs one sunny Saturday in April. This was in stark contrast to the tour of "closed" pubs the Group organised for councillors, MPs and journalists as part of their Day of Action last November. So, with the mini-bus full, we set off from central Bristol at 11.30 and headed out.

First stop was the **White Hart**, Bitton, which recently opened after being closed for almost three years thanks to a local protest from villagers. London Pride and Doom Bar were on offer with another real ale promised soon. Good value food served was served here, and it had a nice garden.



The Tennis Court, Kingswood

Next it was the **Tennis Court Inn**, a two-roomed pub just off the ring road in Kingswood which reopened at the beginning of April. The pub is run by Keith Hewett and Rick Lyle (Milk Street Brewery in Frome) who also run the Good Beer Guide-listed Chelsea in Easton



The Red Lion, Whitehall Road



The Old Stillage, Redfield

and the Red Lion in Whitehall. Real ales on sale here were a selection from Milk Street including Funky Monkey and Mermaid. We have seen several pubs close in Kingswood recently, including the Highwayman which is currently under threat of demolition although the planning application has been declined following objections, including one from the Pubs Group.

On to the **Red Lion** in Whitehall Road which re-opened last August. This was a pub owned by Wadworth of Devizes. As before, a selection of Milk Street ales were on offer including Funky Monkey, Zig Zag and Bobbled. Trade is picking up here as well as real ale sales.

Church Road, Redfield still has a reasonable number of pubs although some just off the main road have closed in recent years. The **Old Stillage**, however, is run by our own local award-winning Arbor Ales who took the pub over about three years ago. They have increased the range of real ales and, as a result of great beers and choice, the pub is selling more ale and turnover generally has increased. On the day we were there, there was a choice of Bushcraft, Nelson Sauvin, Brigstow Bitter, Ryteous Mild and Hunny Beer. Better still, if you're a CAMRA member, you qualify for a discount on your beer.



Manning the pumps at the Lazy Dog

We then travelled north of the city to the **Lazy Dog** in Ashley Down Road. Formerly the Ashley Arms, this previously unsuccessful pub was put up for sale by Enterprise Inns with a restrictive covenant meaning it could never reopen as a pub again. CAMRA lobbied on this issue, the result of which led to Enterprise withdrawing this policy on the sale of pubs across the UK. The Lazy Dog opened after an extensive contemporary refurbishment and is now a successful and thriving free house with a lovely garden and decking to the rear. Real ales on sale were Wye Valley Best Bitter, Prescott's Hill Climb, Bristol Beer Factory Sunrise and Bath Ales Gem.

One of four pubs in the Totterdown community, and formerly known



as the Cumberland, the **Star & Dove** was closed for a short period from January 2011 and reopened in April the same year. The current management have just celebrated their first year and offer a changing selection of real ales – on the day of our visit Dawkins Chocadee, Fuller's ESB, Flowers IPA, Everards Tiger, St Austell Tribute and Green King IPA were all on sale. Fine food cooked by the three chefs and owner Matt, who double as bar staff, is also available.



The Star and Dove, Totterdown

Our next port of call was the **Phoenix** in St Jude's. Having closed its doors at the end of 2009, this pub, nestled between Bristol's Cabot Circus car park and the Future Inn hotel, re-opened in January 2011. It underwent a renovation to a high standard and is an ideal place to relax with friends after work or any time you are in town – particularly Cabot Circus – it's so close! It has three areas sectioned off comfortably creating a private, yet sociable, atmosphere and includes a large decked, sun trap of a garden. The Phoenix is a family and pet-friendly establishment that promotes a diverse mix of clientele. Arbor and Butcombe beers are usually available.



The Phoenix, St Jude's

Very close by to the Phoenix is the **Volunteer Tavern**. No one ever thought it would reopen but Martin Hughes from the Hope & Anchor in Hotwells and Martin Gibson, previous owner of pubs in Bristol, collaborated to put this pub back on the map. Although it is within a stone's throw of Cabot Circus, many people are unaware it is there. It is now a genuine free house selling four real ales from independent breweries and, for those who like a dark ale, there is usually one available. On our visit were Shepherd Neame's Spitfire, Celt's Silures, Totty Pot Porter from Cheddar Ales, and Wickwar's BOB. This is a cosy little pub with a pleasant rear garden. We wish them well – and you also get a CAMRA discount here.

Next up was the **Bag O'Nails**, Hotwells. This pub has been one of the best-known real ale outlets in Bristol in recent years. It was a con-



The Volunteer Tavern

cern when it closed and there were many rumours surrounding its future for the longer than expected period before it reopened. Now following a subtle refurbishment that has done nothing to take away the character of the place, well-known real ale licensee Luke Daniels is busy putting the Bag back on the local real ale map. The Bag offers a changing selection of several real ales, many of which are not often seen in the Bristol area.

An unusual feature of the pub is the range of glasses you get your beer in. These are from different eras and often are branded with beer names – not all of them missed – from the past as well as some that are still around. Notice the port holes in the floor and Malcolm, the very friendly pub cat. And the name Bag O'Nails – we are told it originates from 'bacchanalia' – meaning drunken feast....



Malcolm, the Bag O'Nails cat

And so to our last pub on what was a very enjoyable day out the **Three Tuns**, very close to College Green and Arbor Ales' second pub. It is also only a very short walk from the Bag O'Nails.

Again, this pub shows what can be achieved with what was once a struggling pub. In recent times the pub has undergone a major refurbishment including an excellent outside area to the side of the pub. From selling the likes of Ushers and Courage Best, the Tuns now sells an exciting range of eight real ales including a several from Arbor plus some very decent guest ales. In fact the pub has improved so much that it was recently voted Bristol & District CAMRA Pub of the Year for 2012. Oh, and you get a CAMRA discount on pints of real ale here also.

So ended a great day out. We visited some terrific pubs which have successfully reopened and showed what can be done to turn things around with the right attitude, quite often a free hand with regards to their real ale offerings, and some hard work. When we got the chance to speak to the licensees, it was encouraging to hear of upturns in trade and increased real ale sales.

We wish them every success for the future.

Please support community pubs!

Alison and Pete Bridle, photos by Lesly Huxley

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10,000 copies printed quarterly and distributed to hundreds of pubs throughout the region

Also available to read on-line at

www.bristolcamra.org.uk

Contact Steve Plumridge Steve.Plumridge.PintsWest@gmail.com

BADRAG - Bristol And District Rare Ales Group

As I write, flaming June is almost upon us and the summer months are not usually associated with darker beers, although in truth mild is a great summer drink. After a very well supported Mild Month of May let's hope we have a few hangers on that become a regular feature in at least a few of our pubs. I'm sure it will be reported elsewhere but particular congratulations go to Arbor Ales for their award-winning Mild West.

We have been remarkably well served in the Bristol area with a huge variety of mild ales being served, and some pubs had a mild on tap throughout May. Here are just a few of the milds (in no particular order) that we encountered on the various mild trails. Arbor Ales Mild West, Omega and Coffee Mild; Dawkins Miners Morris and Milkmaid Mild; Timothy Taylor Golden Best; Severn Vale Monumentale; Moor Millys; Moorhouse Black Panther; Oakleaf May Bee Mild; Cotswold Spring Old Sodbury Mild (OSM); Wolf Woild Moild; Rudgate Ruby Mild; Cordington Old Codger; Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild; the list goes on! A fantastic Mild Month of May.

Just in case you missed it, have a look at the following link to the Daily Telegraph of 30 April: www.telegraph.co.uk/foodanddrink/foodanddrinknews/7658531/Mild-beer-makes-a-comeback.html.

Mild was the most popular beer style in the 1950's – largely because it is a "quaffing ale", easy on the head and the stomach, allowing workers to replenish lost fluids without intoxicating them. Low ABV bitter (another style of beer we don't see very often nowadays) falls into much the same category and whilst we no longer have a preponderance of workers in manual roles, the summer months are the ideal time for drinking lower strength beers; whether a lunchtime pint or a couple in the evening. Let's hope that some of our remarkably enterprising local brewers decide to test the market.

BADRAG events continue throughout summer with regular gatherings on the third Thursday of every month.

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

○ Thursday 21 June: The **Gryphon**, upstairs room 7.00 for 7.30. This will be a wash-up meeting for Mild Month of May. What went well, what could have gone better, etc.

○ Thursday 19 July: The **Vittoria** and **Highbury Vaults**. Normal social gathering, bring a friend.

○ Thursday 16 August: The **Volunteer Tavern**. Another social gathering plus a few minutes to discuss the program for autumn months.

BADRAG works because of the enthusiastic support we enjoy and new faces are always welcome – it isn't hard to persuade a licensee to put something unusual on tap if there's a good chance it will sell, so it really is a case of "the more the merrier". Even if you can't get to one of the socials, drop in to the pub the day after – it all helps to sell beer and preserve our pubs.

George Clarke

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From the Management of the
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Exceptional Public House
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SUNDAYS ROASTS FOR £6.45 TILL 10PM

*pork sausages and pies from JD BRITTANS local butchers with mash,
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE OLD MARKET REVIVAL DAY

28 BEERS ~ 4 CIDERS ~ BARBEQUE
LIVE MUSIC ~ FREE ENTRY

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WE ARE SOURCING A VARIETY OF 18 DIFFERENT BEERS
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10 OF OUR LOCAL FAVOURITES FOR YOU TO SAMPLE OR SWIG.
THE BEERS WILL BE SPILLED FROM NOON 'TIL MIDNIGHT.

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29/6/12 - 1/7/12

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News from Butcombe Brewery

Adam Henson's Rare Breed – airport launch

May 25th saw the launch of Butcombe's latest, very successful cask beer, Adam Henson's Rare Breed, at Bristol Airport, with Adam, accompanied by his business partner, Duncan Andrews, taking a few hours off from his busy schedule of running his Cotswold Farm Park interspersed with filming for Countryfile, the television programme.

A mixed gathering, including representatives from the airport management, SSP, the Chamber of Commerce Business West, North Somerset Council and local parish councils, local business people and CAMRA, heard from Guy Newell (Butcombe's MD) and Adam Henson on why, and how, their successful partnership developed.

Simon Preece, the airport's Commercial Director, said, "Bristol Airport is delighted to be able to extend the wide range of local and regional produce available to our passengers. We have worked together with SSP UK to showcase the 'Best of the West' products available in the region. Rare Breed is an extension to this initiative." SSP, (Special Services Provider), are the leading provider of food and beverage brands in travel locations and have worked with Butcombe before.

Rare Breed will now sit alongside Butcombe Bitter in Bar Zero 9 and improved facilities should now see continued availability of a draught Butcombe beer. Bottled Butcombe beers are also available.

Other news

Butcombe plan to be present at the Bath & West Show from Wednesday 30th May to Saturday 2nd June (though Pints West may still be at the printers on those dates). A selection of beers and ciders will be on offer, all at £3 a pint. Entertainment will be provided by the Polden Ridge Mountain Boys, and both the Mendip and Cam Valley Morris Men, with Adam Henson making an appearance on the Thursday.

The **Imperial Pub Bar Bistro** in Weston, the brewery's most recent purchase, has a new chef and menu, with a claim for the best homemade burger range in town! Butcombe Bitter and Rare Breed are on tap with regular appearances of Timothy Taylor's Landlord. It is currently being managed by Jon Hayes, who was the original landlord at the **Colston Yard** in Bristol, and more recently the **Swan** at Rowberrow.

The **Globe** in Frampton Cotterell held a Butcombe evening on the 19th April as part of CAMRA's Community Pubs Month. Four Butcombe beers were on offer, along with sausages which contain their Bitter. A blind beer tasting, a written quiz relating to the brewery and a generous discount on Butcombe beers contributed to a convivial evening.



Butcombe rep Steve Phillips (left) and Globe landlord Lloyd Williams

The brewery has joined forces with the Great Weston Ride, a West Country Bike challenge of 56 miles, taking place on 15th July. The route will take in the Mendips and Somerset Levels, finishing on Weston seafront. The riders will have the reward of a well-stocked beer tent to welcome them, where they and their families can celebrate their efforts!

Look out for Butcombe's award winning zingy **Mendip Spring** which is available now, also a promised **Going for Gold**, the brewery's Olympic offering. This will, I believe be a variation on their Gold beer including the addition of Amarillo hops.

Margaret Evett



From the left: Guy Newell, Adam Henson, Nigel Ashton (North Somerset council) and Duncan Andrews (photo by Stuart Sadd)

PRIDE IN EVERYTHING WE BREW

Butcombe Brewery, Cox's Green, Wrington, Bristol BS405PA
Tel: 01934 863963 Fax: 01934 863 903 Email: info@butcombe.com

www.butcombe.com
JOIN US ON FACEBOOK - BUTCOMBE BREWERY

Bristol & District Pub of the Year 2012

The Bristol & District branch of CAMRA is pleased to announce that its 2012 Pub of the Year is the **Three Tuns** in Hotwells, Bristol. Pub manager Simon Calcraft puts the success of the Three Tuns down to a friendly atmosphere, keeping the pub clean and tidy, and serving a wide range of quality beers consisting of lots of Arbor Ales plus guests. The pub is well supported by local brewery Arbor Ales who are based in Lawrence Hill, Bristol. The brewery has the lease on the Three Tuns and has recently won a string of awards for its real ales. Normally more of a conversation pub, the Three Tuns has an Irish folk sing along on Monday nights – but we don't hold that against them!

The formal presentation of the Pub of the Year certificate took place at the Three Tuns on Tuesday 8th May. A splendid evening was had including a buffet and a celebratory cake. In the middle of the CAMRA members in the picture supporting the presentation, Simon Calcraft (flanked by Jon Comer of Arbor Ales) manages not to drop his cake whilst Namaya Reynolds (also of Arbor Ales) receives the certificate from CAMRA Bristol & District branch Chairman Richard Brooks.

The CAMRA Pub of the Year award isn't just about beer quality and there are a number of other important factors to consider. These include the service and welcome, the clientele mix (a good pub is one where anyone can feel comfortable) the atmosphere/style/décor, sympathy with CAMRA aims and whether the pub is overall good value.

Our 2012 runner-up Pub of the Year is the **Plough** at Congresbury and the presentation of the certificate took place there on Tuesday 15th May. Plough owners Garry and Charlotte Polledri (pictured receiving the certificate from Richard Brooks) expressed their thanks to all their staff and in particular to Tom Griffiths, the Plough "cellar boy" who apparently had his hair cut especially for the presentation, although he's on the bench towards the back in the picture.

Richard Brooks



Winner: the Three Tuns



Runner-up: the Plough at Congresbury

THE ELDON HOUSE

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

- ★ Up to 5 real ales, some local heroes, something for everyone
- ★ High quality food, competitively priced
- ★ Live music Sunday night, with the ever-popular quiz on Monday night
- ★ Check the website www.theeldonhouse.com for forthcoming attractions

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

In Brief

Jenny Bongard, who used to run the Inn on the Green in Horfield, and worked for Bath Ales at a variety of their pubs, has taken up the reins at the **Eldon House** in Clifton (not far from the Triangle). This frees up Rab Clarke, who owns the Eldon, to do what he revels in, which is to run bars at various festivals over the summer. The Eldon House serves up to five real ales (some permanent, some changing guests), but this is usually over the weekend when the pub is busiest. Rab says Jenny has been tasked with getting trade up that little bit more to enable five to be on at all times. We wish her well in her task.

The **Cornubia** near the fire station in central Bristol has really been flying the flag for the Diamond Jubilee. In fact there have been quite a number adorning the pub and garden. Phil and Jacki – who are now serving up to ten ever-changing real ales at a time – have gone to some effort to spruce up the now partially fenced-in garden and even have a sizable marquee accommodating half a dozen bench tables for when the weather is not so clement.

The lease on the **Bridge Inn**, Shortwood is to be taken over by Sean, the guy who runs the **Star** in Puklechurch. He will keep both pubs, and is keen to promote real ale and traditional cider. (The Star does Bass straight from the barrel.) Jackie, senior staff at the Bridge, will be staying on and working with Sean to put a bit of energy back into the place.

Wetherspoon comes to the Island in the Sea

After a wait of more than a year, JD Wetherspoon have opened their pub “**The Glass Maker**” in Nailsea, in north Somerset. Nailsea (which is Anglo-Saxon for Island in the Sea) has been lucky to avoid prolonged closure of any of its twelve pubs and four clubs, bucking the national trend. One exception was the 1960’s **Glasshouse** pub opposite the police station in the shopping precinct, which has now been transformed and expanded, at a cost of £1.4m, to become the new Glass Maker.

The doors were opened to the public on Tuesday 3rd April 2012 at 8am, five days before Easter, which proved to be a very busy period. This followed ten days of staff training with invited guests testing the service and providing feedback. The new team is led by Siobhain Sincock, the pub manager, who was previously at JDW’s **Chevalier Inn** in Exeter. (For those not familiar with the pronunciation of Irish names, her name is pronounced ‘Shivaun’ but she is known as Shiv.) Her management team includes kitchen manager Jiri (pronounced ‘Yiri’) from **George’s Meeting House**, Exeter and duty managers Andrew



Duty manager Stephen pulls a pint at the new Glass Maker



from the **Dragon Inn**, Weston-super-Mare; Debbie from the **Kingswood Colliers** and Stephen from the **Knights Templar**. Most of the forty staff live locally and are new to pub/restaurant work.

Greene King’s Ruddles County and Abbot Ale are the regular real ales, but in the first week fourteen guest ales featured on the bar with three or four available at any one time. Most bars in Nailsea field three bitters, but the nine guest ales included a wider selection of styles including Bath Ales Gem, Rare Hare and Barnsey; Brains SA; Butcombe Bitter and Rare Breed; Otter Head and Mild; Pheonix Double Gold; RCH Pitchfork and Puxton Cross Extra; Wickwar Spring Ale and Bob; and Wychwood Hobgoblin.

Duty manager Stephen told *Pints West* there is no space behind the bar for bag-in-a-box real ciders nor lines and hand pumps for real ciders, which in the “home” of Coates Cider and the late Adge Cutler, who has a memorial on the upper landing, is very disappointing. Three keg and a number of bottled ciders are available: Thatcher’s Gold sold out over the Easter weekend.

The building has a conservatory-style room with fold-back doors in the building extension with a real fire hidden in a kiln-style structure. The bar area is smaller and the bar counter is of marbled glass that is partially under-lit. It has ten real ale hand pumps. The kitchen is partly visible through a servery at the end of the bar. At the back, a very pleasant patio area faces the police station across the road. Local tributes to the history of Nailsea and its glass industry adorn the walls. The tables and chairs are of many styles, thus avoiding the problem of maintaining the matching of chairs around tables. The pub is family (until 9pm) and wheelchair friendly.

Laurie Gibney

The Glass Maker, 12 Crown Glass Place, Nailsea BS48 1RD. 01275850230

Cotswold Spring continue their winning ways

After massive success last year in gaining the title of 2011 SIBA national Supreme Champion for their beer *Old Sodbury Mild*, or *OSM* as it has now been rebranded, Cotswold Spring continue that momentum having just won four awards at the recent 2012 SIBA Wales and West beer competition. They won gold medals for *Stunner* and *OSM* within their respective classes; both now go on to compete in the SIBA national competition. They also gained two silver medals for *Trooper* and *Keeper* (an IPA and honey/wheat beer).

This is a great achievement as two of the beers, *Stunner* and *Trooper*, were only launched within the last year. Mark Frankcom, Cotswold Spring’s managing director, said, “Winning four awards from SIBA is a real testament to the skills of our master brewer Nik Milo.” Well done Nik, we all thank you.

New beers for summer

Having recently introduced several new beers as part of their rebranding exercise, Cotswold Spring are launching two new beers for summer 2012. These are *Aviator*, a 5.0% lager-style beer, and *Reveller*,



Brewer Nik Milo (right) receives the award

a fruity, hoppy summer party beer. Both beers will be available from mid-June 2012. (Watch out for the launch party – the Bristol and District CAMRA branch have an been extended an invite.)

Real ale in a bottle

Cotswold Spring have now achieved accreditation from CAMRA to call their bottle beers ‘Real Ale in a Bottle’. As such they will be able to use the new CAMRA RAIB logo. This has now been secured on eight of the brewer’s bottle beers, including the prize-winning *Stunner* and *OSM*.

Steve Matthews

The Cider Sisters

Well it's been a long time since a Cider Sisters article, so I figured it must be time for a comeback. My cider sister/partner in crime has been out of the country for quite a few years now, but is with me in spirit, especially in all things cider, so although this is a solo effort, I would like to keep the plural moniker if there are no objections!

A lot has happened since we last wrote a column, most excitingly having gained myself an adopted cider brother with whom I have ramped up a gear from cider enthusiast to cider maker, more on which another time.

But first to the event that inspired me to get writing again and flying the flag for top quality cider.

When invited via my cider brother to the Handmade Cider Company's inaugural meeting of 'Cider Club' I knew I was unlikely to need my arm twisting. However I decided to do a little research before saying 'I do'. It didn't take much. When reading up about the club on Denis France's Handmade Cider Company website (www.handmadecider.co.uk) I only needed to look as far as 'The first rule of Cider Club is you talk about cider' and I was pretty much won over. Further inspection of the website sealed the deal and when I saw the words 'please don't ask me to serve cider over ice' I knew that we were going to get along just fine.

And so it was that me and my bro headed off on a sub-zero April night to deepest, darkest Slaughterford, preparing to be ordained. Looking forward to it though we most definitely were, we had not anticipated a night of such exceptional quality as the one we got. Hanging out in the barn we got to sample a total of 13 ciders, accompanied by a fascinating talk on production by Denis, a man who really knows his onions, I mean apples. Some of the technical detail was a little hard for me to swallow but luckily the incredible range of ciders on offer wasn't!

The tasting session was such a joy, and very well managed by Si behind the bar who did an awesome job of keeping the drinks flowing and knowing whose glasses were who's – no mean feat let me tell you. Denis gave the lowdown on each of the ciders, the age, the apple varieties and details of the (one-man-band) production. There was something for everyone (and more than a few that ticked a lot of boxes for me); our notes give a range of descriptors from smooth and mellow, through orange blossom/Christmassy, on to smokey and complicated and right up to 'drug like magic' (OK, it might have been getting late in the evening by that point but you get the picture!). I wouldn't want you to think that I'm not balanced in my appraisal though and a couple of samples didn't hit the spot for me, reflected once again in the precious notes by 'empty balloon with sour aftertaste' and on to the unpredicted hints of 'old horse



and leather'.

As if we hadn't had enough to drink (I've always been a firm believer that you can't have too much of a good thing) we finished off the evening with a couple of glasses of Denis's exquisite hedgerow port and headed off cider-soaked and smiling into the freezing moonlit light (only the 20 metres or so to my campervan, fear not readers!).

I can't wait 'til the next meeting which I think is going to be in October, but in the spirit of sharing the love, please do check out the Handmade Cider Company website or better still get yourself down to one of the open days (planned for the first Saturday of each month throughout the year) – you really won't be sorry that you did.

Freya McLuckie

Ashley Down in the Bag

Luke Daniels, who recently reopened the Bag O'Nails in Hotwells following an extended period of closure, has struck a deal with Vince Crocker of the fledgling Ashley Down brewery which will see one of the brewery's beers always being on sale in the pub for the foreseeable future.

Ashley Down Best (brewed to a strength of 4.4% ABV) will feature as the Bag's first and to date only permanent beer. Luke says he will also continue to buy other beers from Ashley Down on occasion, and intends to try any new brews that Vince comes up with.

The number of handpumps on the bar dedicated to real ale has recently been increased to six, up from the five that Luke initially started with. (The cider choice has been cut down to just one for the time being.) There is also an increased range of bottled beers (up to 45), including examples from six of the seven Belgian Trappist breweries, plus offerings from America and Germany.

Vince himself reports that he is now brewing fortnightly, a three-and-a-half-barrel brew length. Apart from the Bag O'Nails, Ashley Down Best and Pale Ale both seem to be well received, regularly appearing in the following Bristol pubs: the Annexe, the Duke of York, the Golden Guinea, the Green Man, the Lazy Dog, the Orchard, the Quinton House and the Prince of Wales. He is now on the hunt for a five-barrel fermentation vessel in order to increase production to meet the demand.

SP



It's a deal! (between Vince Crocker with the cap and Luke Daniels with the beard)



A round-up of recent cider and perry news

Jerry Says ...

The cider and perry calendar includes a wassail in January to wish for successful growth of apples and pears during the growing season, and Cider and Perry month in October to celebrate the new harvest. So what about the Summer? Well, now is the time that CAMRA announces its national cider and perry champions and, as Summer approaches, more of us have the inclination and, hopefully, the opportunity, to while away sunny evenings and weekends with a refreshing drop of the stuff. As Jerry Fletcher, Bristol and District CAMRA's cider officer, says: "Summer is when cider becomes ubiquitous (and try saying that after a couple of pints!)"

Cider and perry producers from the South West and Herefordshire were well-represented in the 2012 medal table when CAMRA announced its champion ciders and perries after tastings at the Reading Beer and Cider Festival over the early May bank holiday. The cider GOLD winner was Farmhouse Cider from Cornish Orchards, based in Duloe, Cornwall. GOLD for perry was claimed by Gwatkin, based in Abbey Dore, Herefordshire, for their Blakeney Red. A full list is shown below.

Closer to home, Jerry has been enjoying some of the excellent range of real ciders and perries on offer in our local pubs. The **Seven Stars**, winner of Pub of the Year in 2010 and 2011, recently held a festival. Jerry says: "The pub always has a good range of ciders and perries, but went one step further this time with twelve to choose from. The festival was a success, and Paul Wratten, the licensee, is planning to repeat the event later in the year." The **Gryphon**, near the Colston Hall, is best known as a venue for dark ales and heavy music (a great combination) but used the early May bank holiday as an excuse for a cider and sausage festival, featuring 20 local ciders and perries provided with the support of the **Bristol Cider Shop** on nearby Christmas Steps, and a good range of locally-produced sausages.

Jerry has also found pubs in and around the Gloucester Road worth exploring, with the **Cider Press** (formerly the **Rising Sun**) now offering Thatchers Heritage and Bath Ales Bounders. The **Cat and Wheel** near the Arches offers the well-known Black Rat while the **Cotham Porter Stores**, a walk uphill from there, has Thatchers Traditional and Cheddar Valley as regulars, and occasional guests. Linger over these once led to Jerry missing the last bus and walking home to Nailsea! Usually, though, he calls in to the **Colston Yard** before catching that last bus, to enjoy a pint of Ashton Still.

Sam Granger, at the **Bank Tavern**, a cider and perry enthusiast, recently arranged for a meet-and-greet event with Martin Thatcher (yes, of Thatchers), where, as Jerry says, "pub regulars were able to sample various Thatchers products and hear more about this long-established local

cider-producer. Thanks to Sam for arranging it. The Bank usually has at least a couple of real ciders and/or perries available and offers up to 20 during its Summer Fete."

Although, as Jerry says, he "can't mention every pub in Bristol that sells real cider and perry" as there are now so many, that ubiquity could be better sign-posted through CAMRA's 'Real Cider Sold Here' sticker scheme. Over 1,000 pubs are now registered UK-wide and have received a window sticker to show their commitment to selling a real cider or perry – preferably from a local producer.

If you would like to feature your pub – as a regular or as the licensee – all you need do is submit the pub's details online at www.camra.org.uk/page.php?id=295 where you can also find details of qualifying ciders and a list of pubs already signed up. Only just over a dozen are listed in Bristol, with a few more for our wider branch area. So sign up now and let passers-by know they can come in and find a real cider or perry!

Lesly Huxley

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

REAL CIDER



SOLD HERE

CAMRA Champion Cider and Perry winners 2012

Cider

GOLD: Farmhouse, Cornish Orchards (Duloe, Cornwall)

SILVER: Sweet Vintage, Perry Brothers (Dowlish Wake, Somerset)

BRONZE: Medium, Burrow Hill (Martock, Somerset)

Perry

GOLD: Blakeney Red, Gwatkin (Abbey Dore, Herefordshire)

SILVER: Medium, Butford Organics (Bodenham, Herefordshire)

BRONZE: Stinking Bishop, Minchew (Aton-on-Currant, Gloucestershire)

Sad loss to cider community: Charlie Jarvis, Bristol Cider House

It was with great sadness that we learned after the last issue of Pints West went to press that Charlie Jarvis, of the Bristol Cider House, Surrey Street, had died.

Charlie's funeral and memorial service took place at St Mary's Church, Olveston, in February. As his close friend Martin Gibson reported, the church "was packed with over 200 people present".

Charlie was only 59 years old when he died. He was born in and spent his early years in Devon and, after leaving Birmingham University, became an accountant and eventually managing director of Kleeneze in Hanham. In around 2005, Charlie and his wife Tracey bought the Surrey Wine Vaults and traded it as a pub together. In 2008, they reopened it as Bristol Cider House, selling a variety of ciders. As Jerry Fletcher has reported previously in Pints West, the Cider House offered cider tasting events and did much to promote real cider and perry, including extending their range during the St Paul's Carnival.

It is unclear what the future holds for the Bristol Cider House, but we extend our condolences to Tracey and their two children. Charlie will be much missed.

Lesly Huxley

Appeal for help

Following a recent revision of CAMRA branch boundaries the Bristol & District branch has taken over responsibility for a couple of new areas, where we are not very familiar with the local pubs. We could therefore do with some help from those who live, work or socialise there.

The areas concerned are:

- The eastern part of postcode BS39 – including Paulton, Hallatrow, High Littleton and Clutton Hill.
- The southern parts of BS25 and BS26 around the A38 south of Cross – Lower Weare, Rooksbridge, Chapel Allerton area.

What we could do with is the following:

- Details of pubs with a good real ale offering that we should aim to visit.
- Volunteers to distribute Pints West to those pubs.
- Members living locally who would be willing to keep us updated periodically on the local pubs.

If you can help with any of the above, please email us on **Vincent Murray** at blueyonder.co.uk or write in via the editor.

Alternatively we would love to see you at any of our Bristol or Weston-super-Mare meetings or social events.

Vince Murray

Shine on ... Arbor Ales

So it's a cloudy Friday lunch time, I'm running late and I've just turned into the wrong car park in Lawrence Hill. I have someone with a clip board telling me that I am driving round the car park in the wrong direction, I am talking to my car's Satellite Navigation system using language that would seem coarse at the annual 'Dockworkers versus Football Fans swear-off competition.' I'm particularly frustrated because the person I'm going to see is extremely busy, running a successful business with maybe three or four people doing pretty much everything from product design, to production, through sales to distribution. All he's asked me to do is turn up, and I can't even get that right...

Unbeknown to me, less than a hundred yards away on the other side of a single high fence, the man I'm supposed to meet hasn't even noticed that I'm late. He's Jon Comer, founder and head brewer of Arbor Ales, and the reason he hasn't noticed my tardiness is that he's far too busy to stop and think about such things.

Indeed, when I finally negotiate my way to the correct entrance and park up opposite the new Arbor Ales Brewery in Lawrence Hill, Jon is so engrossed in cleaning barrels and preparing to add hops to his current brew, he scarcely notices me. When I introduce myself, he is utterly affable, but explains that he is 'a bit busy' and asks if we can talk as he works. When he says 'a bit busy', he means it in the same sense that Mount Everest is 'a bit lofty', or Government Tax policy on beer is 'a bit discredited'. He's a non-stop whirling dervish of activity.

"So what's the history of the brewery?" I ask as he grabs another barrel which needs cleaning before the next batch is ready. As he manhandles the next barrel onto the washer, he fills me in.

Arbor Ales was founded in 2007, using a 2½ barrel plant at the back of the Old Tavern in Stapleton. Even in those early days, the emphasis was on variety. What would it be like to change the recipe, to use more hops, a different malt, to add the hops later, or continuously through the brewing process? And this very quickly becomes a theme with Jon. I ask him if there are any flagship brews that Arbor really leans on, and he almost visibly shudders.

"We couldn't do that. Brewing the same thing over and over again, it would drive us mad." This isn't a production line designed to spew out the most profitable, least offensive product to maximise revenue, minimise variety and please the accountants. It's refreshing to hear that, for Jon at least, it's all about a passion for brewing, for trying different recipes, different styles of beer.

When the Old Tavern closed, Arbor Ales moved to a slightly larger premises in Bridge Road, Kingswood, upping production levels and using a 5½ barrel plant. They also took on the Old Stillage in Redfield as an unofficial brewery tap. Although the plant got bigger, there were (and indeed are) only two brewers, so things got pretty hectic.

As Jon talks me through the expansion of the brewery, he is constantly checking his watch. I wonder if I'm boring him, but no. He suddenly dashes across and starts removing compacted hops from a tub, breaking them up and weighing them. These are Pilgrim hops from Charles Faram in Marlborough. He climbs a ladder, takes the lid off a large wooden vessel, and pours the hops in, using a long metal tool to push them down into the brew. For the current brew is one of Arbor's single varietal hop brews. He explains that, for this recipe, 90% of the hops go in during the last ten minutes of the brew. This is an expensive way of brewing, but the nuances of flavour it yields make it very well worth it. In addition, Jon has moved from using dry yeast (i.e. having to buy it in every time) to using a strain of living wet yeast. This actually works out cheaper, but nonetheless gives consistently better results.

The desire to produce a wide variety of brews, some of them on request from regular outlets, means that Arbor do perhaps five brew runs a week. With only two brewers, to call this a hectic schedule is an understatement. Apart from the exhausting effect on the people involved, the logistical problem of always having a fermenting vessel available for the latest brew would not be out of place on *Dara*

O'Brian's School of Hard Sums. No sooner is one brew ready and casked up, than the next offering needs somewhere to ferment. It's a non-stop cavalcade of brew, ferment, cask, clean. But of course different brews take a different amount of time to be ready, so the maths gets really complicated.

And this is one of the reasons for Arbor Ales' latest move – to larger premises in Lawrence Hill. There is more room for the casks, space for an office and a new hopper and, most importantly, this location will comfortably house a new 12-barrel plant, which is due to be installed in August. Perhaps counter-intuitively, a larger plant may just free up a little time. The extra output for each brew means that the popular brews don't have to be brewed so often to keep up with demand. Similarly, it is possible to brew some products less often, beers like Oyster Stout keep quite happily for a long while once casked, so an occasional but larger brew suits it perfectly.

The hope is that the larger plant will enable Arbor to move to maybe two or three brew runs a week, leaving time for the other aspects of the business, including the sales effort, distribution and perhaps more collaboration with other brewers.

But what of the beers? Well, it's a wide variety of brews so it's always wise to check www.arborales.co.uk to see what's available now, and what's coming next. However you may well find some of the semi-regulars below in the Old Stillage, or the brewery's other pub the Three Tuns off College Green. (Tasting notes are the brewery's own.)

Hunny Beer (4.2%) – "An amber ale brewed with wild blossom honey and German hops. Not too sweet, as you might at first expect, the delicate flavours from the honey are balanced with an initial bitterness followed by a smooth 'lager-like' hoppy finish."

Brigstow Bitter (4.3%) – "An easy drinking, tawny best bitter. The colour and malty taste come from the crystal and cara malts added to the mash. We then use all English hops in the copper – Challenger for bitterness, followed by a huge amount of Fuggles & East Kent Goldings for flavour and aroma."

Artisan (4.8%) – "We selected the ingredients for our premium bitter with flavour in mind. We added a large amount of Munich and Cara malt to the mash to provide a malty base for the citrusy hop flavours that follow. These are provided courtesy of some heavy handed additions of a few of our favourite hops."

Arbor Ales are also available at a range of other pubs and retail outlets, as well as in bottled form. However, the best way to sample these beers is to visit the Old Stillage or the Three Tuns, and have a go at whatever they've come up with this week. The beers are brewed for flavour ahead of profit; and for ease of drinking rather than ease of brewing. In a world of mass-production, the words "craft-brewed" never felt so apt.

Duncan Shine

Arbor Ales

Artisan Brewers & Purveyors
of Award Winning Beers
www.arborales.co.uk

Visit our pubs for a warm welcome and a discount for card carrying CAMRA members

The Old Stillage

145-147 Church Road, Redfield, Bristol 0117 9394079

The Three Tuns

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

Bottled conditioned beers now available from selected off licenses in Bristol and the surrounding areas

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Arbor Ales
Award Winning Craft Brewery
goo goo g'joob
Imperial stout
11%

Arbor Ales
Award Winning Craft Brewery
Mild West
3.6%

Arbor Ales
Award Winning Craft Brewery
Old Knobbly
4.5%

Arbor Ales
Award Winning Craft Brewery
Breakfast Stout
7.4%

Bristol Beer Factory wins SIBA Gold

Back in March Bristol Beer Factory's Southville Hop won gold in its category and then went on to become Overall Champion Bottled Beer in the country at the national beer competition organised by the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA). Southville Hop is a bottle-conditioned beer brewed with flavourful hops from the north-west of America. Other recent SIBA awards for cask versions of their beers include Silver for Acer and Bronze for Milk Stout.



Simon Bartlett (right) accepts the award for Southville Hop

In other news, April saw the finals of the third annual Bristol Beer Factory Homebrew Competition take place at the Barley Mow and the winner was Richard Poole with Bet Noir Cascadian Dark Ale 6.5% (yes another black IPA following on from last year's winner Indian Ink) and this will be brewed commercially at the end of May or in June.

More Bristol Beer Factory bottled beer news is that Hefe, Southville Hop and Milk Stout will be available in 23 Waitrose stores across the South West and are soon to be in Harvey Nichols nationally.

The brewery has taken delivery of some new equipment. This consists of a 25-barrel "dual purpose vessel" which, at the time of writing, is full of Acer that is apparently tasting great. Also a new bottling line that can handle 1,000 bottles per hour and has been commissioned and is now in full operation.

There are also some staff changes including some new recruits: Daniel Bedford, fresh from Flying Dog Brewery, Maryland, USA (although apparently he is British) and Jonny Mills who will be joining in June when he has completed his Masters at Heriot-Watt University, plus Robin Westlake, transport.

Richard Brooks

Latest news from Arbor Ales



On my recent visit to the Arbor Ales' new brewery – at Unit 4, Lawrence Hill Industrial Estate, Croydon Street, Bristol – the first sight to greet me was head brewer Jon Comer's bearded brother Paul (nicknamed 'Hagrid' to distinguish him from assistant brewer Paul Worsley) who was bottling an 11% ABV Imperial Stout called **Goo Goo G'joob**.

Other ales ready for racking were **By Zeus**, a 6% ABV single hop pale ale with an incredible hop rate (of 420 ibu for those who know the units), and **DCLXVI** (the Roman style for the ABV 6.66%), a dark ale brewed in collaboration with the Steel City Brewery of Sheffield. The former has resinous hops on the nose and a mouthful of sweet chewy pale malt which soon turns into an explosion of hops lasting as an intensely bitter hop aftertaste. The latter beer, brewed with Zeus, Sorachi Ace and Simco hops, exhibits a powerful aroma of roast and hops, a dry leathery spiciness on the tongue and an intense roast bitter finish.

The current brewing situation is as follows: the 'constant' ales **Brigstowe Bitter** (4.3% ABV) and **Hunny Beer** (4.2% ABV) are brewed every two weeks while **Single Hop** (4% ABV) is brewed weekly. Bottling occupies two days per week. Soon to be installed, however, is a 12-barrel plant. This will allow 'constant' brewing only half as often, that is Single Hop once a fortnight and the other two once every four weeks allowing more time for the production of 'one-offs' and specialist ales.

Since Jon started brewing at the Old Tavern, Fishponds in 2007, Arbor Ales have produced 575 brews of 120 different ales. Adding to the success story is the great news that Arbor recently won five awards at the SIBA Beer Festival at Tucker's Maltings, Newton Abbot. **Mild West** (3.6%) won a Gold Medal in the Mild category while Black Eyed PA (6.5%) took the Silver Medal in the Premium Strong Bitter class. Notably, two bottled beers achieved supremacy in their relative categories: **Breakfast Stout** (7.4%) was awarded a Gold Medal in Speciality Bottled Beers and **Yakima Valley** (7%) not only won Gold in the Bottled Beer over 5% class but also took the Silver in the overall bottled beers category. Splendid news indeed for the Arbor Ales team.

Henry Davies



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

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News from Bath Ales



Increased brewing capacity proposed for the summer

Bath Ales have just signed for two new 100-barrel brewing vessels to be installed in their existing brewery. This will help to cope with the continuing increasing demands for their beers before they move to their new brewery next year.

Seasonal ales

As promised, April saw the return of strong bitter **Rare Hare** (5.2% ABV) and once again it proved very popular and sold out very quickly.

April also marked the early appearance of **Summer's Hare**, a 3.9% bitter that has a full malt flavour with a fruity bitterness. It is brewed using a transatlantic pairing of UK's Brambling Cross and Washington State's Chinook hops, with finest pale Maris Otter floor-malted barley. Summer's Hare will be brewed throughout the summer (assuming we get one!) and is the perfect ale for a sunny evening.

Summer's Hare will be followed in the autumn by **Forest Hare** which is the new name for last year's deservedly popular **Hare & Hop**.

Bath Ales has also completed a trial with a cask ale called **Solo** at 2.8% ABV. The brew, which achieved bitterness, body and flavour (despite its low abv), was well received by customers looking for a low alcohol draught beer and will be produced as a permanent featured ale as soon as production schedules will allow.

Pub news

Restored to its former glory, the **Grapes** in George Street in Oxford reopened in March as a Bath Ales pub. It is located opposite the New Theatre and is already popular with theatre goers and staff, as well as locals. This is Bath Ales' first pub in Oxford and has been sympathetically refurbished, "adding a contemporary, stylish feel to a classic pub interior." The pub offers a range of Bath Ales cask beers including its flagship brand Gem and seasonal ales. Food is served from noon every-day focusing on British classics such as home-made pies with mash, fish and chips, roast beef sandwiches and traditional Sunday lunch.

Also new to the Bath Ales estate is the **Graze Bar, Brasserie & Chop House** (to give it its full title) located in the centre of Cirencester. Formally occupied by Harry Hare's, the building, which features an ornate gothic façade, was originally constructed in the 17th century but has been added to over the years, contributing to a venue which is now full of character. The site also features a magnificent garden, a real sun trap with mature planting, perfect for *al fresco* drinking and dining. Like its Graze counterpart in Bristol it will concentrate on fine food as well as serving a range of Bath Ales beers and ciders.

The refurbishment of accommodation in the **Wellington** in Horfield, Bristol is now complete and it now boasts eight boutique-style bedrooms. There are five double guest rooms, each with king-size bed, as well as three twin or double rooms, all furnished to a high standard.

Also feeling the effects of the refurbisher's touch is the **Hop Pole**, the Bath Ales Good Beer Guide-listed pub close to Royal Victoria Park in Bath and the Bristol to Bath cycleway, whose garden has been completely updated.

Bottling success

Bath Ales Ginger Hare has been chosen by Marks and Spencer to be their own-brand alcoholic ginger ale. It will be brewed to the same recipe as Ginger Hare but will carry Marks and Spencer branding and be called Somerset Ginger Beer.

Cider

Bath Ales have introduced a 6% ABV medium dry traditional still cider, **Bounders Traditional**, available on handpump in pubs and in 20-litre boxes for retail.

Loyalty scheme

To help promote membership of the Bath Ales loyalty scheme, which has been going for over a year now, a new initiative has been launched featuring director Richard Dempster, dressed in full flying gear, saluting the 'Loyal Hare Force'. His full-size cardboard cut-out image will be seen in all participating pubs.

Bath Ales biking bonanza

Registration for this annual charity event, run on June 9th this year, is now open. Bath Ales head brewer, Gerry Condell, will do his annual pilgrimage to the brewery to meet the cyclists at lunchtime, walking be-

tween all Bath Ales pubs. This year will be more of a challenge as Gerry will be starting from the Grapes in Oxford, then calling in at Graze in Cirencester, both pubs being the new acquisitions for Bath Ales. Gerry will then visit the rest of the Bath Ales pub estate in the Bath and Bristol districts. Gerry and his hardy companions will be collecting money for the Frenchay Hospital After Burns Children's Club as they stagger their way between the pubs. Full details about the event can be found at www.bathales.com/bonanza.

Festivals and Events

This year Bath Ales is supporting a number of festivals and events either by using one of their pubs or providing bar facilities. The following are just a few of the festivities coming up:

- Real Ale & Jazz Race Night at Bath Race Course, Friday 8 June;
- Biking Bonanza, Bath Ales' own charity fundraiser, Saturday 9 June;
- WOMAD at Bristol Zoo, Saturday 30 June;
- Sulis Sound Track Festival at Bath Race Course, Saturday 21 July;
- Harbour Festival, 20 - 22 July;
- WOMAD, 27 - 29 July.



Bath Ales director Richard Dempster in the brewery's reception area

Brewery visit

Last but not least, on April 17th around 30 members of the Bristol and District CAMRA branch visited the Bath Ales brewery in Warmley. After a brief welcome by director and co-founder Richard Dempster, glasses were handed around and the sampling began.

A seemingly inexhaustible supply of SPA, Summer's Hare, Gem, Dark Side, Barnsey and Rare Hare, all straight out the barrel, was provided and generally considered to be in tip-top condition.

During the sampling, groups were formed to do a tour of the brewery areas led by head brewer Gerry Condell or one of his team (Darren, Mathew and James). Microbiologist Stuart was on hand to describe the quality control procedures and, along with Gerry, answer any questions regarding the ingredients or brewing processes for the different ales.

A video of the brewing process used at Bath Ales, starring mainly Darren, was shown and afterwards, in the well-stocked brewery shop, Richard described the new expansion plans, and the state of the new brewery with the offices and distribution areas already relocated. He also reminded us of the bottling plant now being used by nearly thirty other breweries and later regaled us with his views of the future followed by reminiscences of past brewing activities and breweries, all of which were very interesting and entertaining.

On the way home from the visit the members called in at the Bath Ales-owned Wellington in Horfield where a welcome supply of chips and assorted sandwiches was provided as well as a range of cask Bath Ales, including the last supplies of Rare Hare.

The final opinion was that Bath Ales had made a big effort and were very generous, and it had turned out to be a mutually successful event for both branch and brewer.

Roy Sanders

(Photo by Richard Brooks)

Review of visit to Beerd

My family decided to have a belated birthday outing to Beerd, Bath Ales' new "craft beer and pizza concept bar" located in Kingsdown. Opposite the Co-op supermarket, it is easy to spot with its rather fetching pea green walls and large windows looking out onto the top of St Michael's Hill.

Inside the decor is a mixture of styles ranging from bare brick walls and a lot of natural wood, through tiles and wallpaper portraying beer labels, to McDonald's style tables with brightly coloured and mismatched chairs. There is a large bar at one end with hand pumps for real ale, and on the wall behind are nine taps for the keg beers and lagers available as well as a large glass-fronted fridge containing a lot of bottled beers and lagers.



I guess you either like or hate the style but there is a nice ambience to the place, not at all like the soulless and noisy hangars in US cities which the concept is loosely based on.

The night we were there saw three ales and a cider on draught: Grain Oak the guest ale at £2.90 a pint, Bath Ales Barnsey at £3.30, Rare Hare at £3.70 and the new Bounders Traditional still cider. All drinks

are available in one third pint, half pint or full pint measures.

We enjoyed the Grain Oak (until it ran out) and what must have been the last supplies of Rare Hare; both were in excellent condition. I can't remember what replaced the former!

The keg beers ranged from Bath Ales Dark Side through German lagers, Belgian witbiers, blonde ales and lagers, to US lagers. There is a huge price differential in this category ranging from £4.10 a pint for Brugse Zot Belgian lager (won daughters' seal of approval), through £6.50 for La Chouffe Belgian blonde ale and way beyond depending on the strength and rarity of the beer.

The range of bottled beers is also vast including a Bath Ales range, beers from Bristol Beer Factory, Belgian beers and a number of US pale ales and IPAs. Many of these are bottle-conditioned. Also available in bottle or by the glass are good quality red and white Italian wines.

Bar snacks are good value with a choice of sausages, nuts, olives, dough and crispy pig skins and were extremely tasty (I admit I didn't try the latter!), all around the £3 mark.


The pizzas are rather large and very delicious and come in a selection of tastes. They are prepared to order and are baked on a special stone oven imported from Italy. A choice of salads is also available, and a small selection of desserts.

The staff were friendly and attentive and I have to say we had a very enjoyable evening with good beer and good food, and thought the concept worked well.

Admittedly some of the beer prices are a bit steep, but if you choose carefully you can eat and drink for the same, if not less, than other equivalent places in the area. Moreover it is a place where real ale fans and their uneducated family and friends can happily drink together and try somewhere a bit different.




Roy Sanders
(pictures by Jo Sanders)





Our pubs...

...for those who know

<p>Beerd 157-159 St Michael's Hill, Bristol, BS2 8DB 0117 9741567 www.beerdbristol.com</p> <p>The Grapes 7 George Street, Oxford, OX1 2AT 01865 791330</p> <p>Graze (Bristol) 61 Queen Square, Bristol, BS1 4JZ 0117 9276700</p> <p>Graze (Cirencester) 1 Goodrich Street, Cirencester, GL7 2AG 01285 658937</p> <p>The Hare on the Hill 41 Thomas Street North, Bristol, BS2 8LN 0117 9095140</p>	<p>The Hop Pole 7 Albion Buildings, Upper Bristol Road, Bath, BA1 3AP 01225 446127</p> <p>The Live & Let Live Childe Road, Frompton Cotterell, BS16 2JJ 01454 772254</p> <p>The Salamander 1 John Street, Bath, BA1 2JP 01225 428889</p> <p>The Swan Bath Road, Swinsford, Bristol, BS30 6LN 0117 9323101</p> <p>The Wellington Glooucester Road, Bristol, BS7 8UB 0117 9510227</p>
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Obituary: Mick Davidson

On Monday, April 23, 2012, Mick Davidson, the popular and charismatic publican of the Blue Flame at West End, Nailsea, died after a short illness, aged 63. A larger-than-life character, Mr Davidson was born on October 29, 1948 in Bradford.

A student at Bradford Art College he married Sue, a PA at the French Consulate based at Bradford, in 1976. The couple then joined Courage Brewery and were offered the tenancy of the Royal Oak in Nailsea. They turned the rundown High Street pub into one of the most vibrant and popular places in the town and introduced 'Folk at the Oak' to Nailsea.

Mick's daughter, Gemma, 30, a teacher, and her partner Andy Jones, a chef, who have taken over the running of the Blue Flame, a pub Mr Davidson bought at auction in 1988. During Mr Davidson's tenure the Blue Flame became known far and wide for its excellent ales, its unique décor and its outside toilets. Mick was passionate about his ale and his real cider, and the Blue Flame appeared in almost every edition of the Good Beer Guide during Mick's tenure there.

A talented guitarist, Mr Davidson held music festivals, barn dances, Halloween pumpkin parties, bonfire night fireworks, circus training nights and table skittles.

His daughter Gemma said: "We only learned he was suffering from cancer in March and his untimely death has come as a big shock to all. "My dad was always ready to help people and we have had some really kind messages of condolence." Memorial donations to help Indian orphans can be sent to funeral directors AE Davey and Sons, Silver Street, Nailsea.

Alan Sibley

Watering Holes in the Desert

brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

Weston-super-Mare no longer a desert shock!

For the third year running Weston's CAMRA branch decided to undertake a 'Good Friday Saunter' in the town centre. Due to the absence of Robin E Wild on prior commitments, I volunteered to organise the event this year. Whilst contemplating how I was going to whittle the crawl down to 10 pubs I thought back to the dark days when the Weston branch was formed in 1999 – the strapline above this article of "Watering Holes in the Desert" originates from a Good Beer Guide (GBG) of the time which described the Dragon Inn as being a haven in a "renowned beer desert." Back in those days we struggled to get beyond three pubs for a town-centre crawl. These included the aforementioned Dragon which was, in truth, a fairly inconsistent Wetherspoon's at the time. The others were the Regency – reliable quality but a fairly dull beer range – and Off The Rails which was good but had not yet started sourcing great beers from across the UK.



The Regency

So, 2011's Good Friday event started at the **Regency**. Owner Mark Short has always run an excellent pub and since Tom joined his team a few years back the focus on real ale has increased. The Regency has found its way back into the GBG. There are often interesting guests to be found and Tom runs regular mini-festivals featuring six or so beers from around the UK. Among the five beers on offer on our visit were Everards Tiger, Butcombe Bitter and Wells Bombardier. These washed down our good value Friday fish and chips to set us up for the afternoon.

A five-minute walk to the **Criterion** on Upper Church Road – since being resurrected from the dead by Paul Sprackman, the Criterion has become the favourite pub in Weston for several CAMRA members and has become a GBG regular. Most people in our party went for a new beer to most, 'Keep Calm and Carry On' brewed by the St George's brewery of Callow End, Worcestershire. A good selection is guaranteed at the Criterion and other options were Cheddar Potholer, Dartmoor IPA and the hugely popular St Austell Tribute. Like the Regency, the pub was nice and busy, with people playing bar billiards and table skittles.



The Criterion

Down to the seafront for a stop at the **Old Colonial** – this pub had changed hands many times in recent years and is now owned by Marston's who, it has to be said, seem to be doing a good job. The regular Marston's Pedigree and Wychwood Hobgoblin were supplemented by Jen-



The Old Colonial

nings Lakeland Stunner. Wychwood and Jennings are both owned by Marston's but, unlike many breweries that take over others, Marston's have allowed these breweries to continue doing their own thing, with no drop in beer quality. The Lakeland Stunner did not quite live up to its pumpclip description of "a breath-taking vista of pure golden gorgeousness" but the dry, fruity, 3.9% beer certainly went down very well while sitting outside this seafront pub watching the world go by.

A short stroll along the front to the **Cabot Hotel**, our latest Wetherspoon pub, which has become a firm favourite amongst local CAMRA members since it opened last Autumn. Although this year's Spring festival had just ended, there were still some festival beers featured among the 10 on offer over two floors (please note that different beers are available at each bar if you visit). The pick of the bunch was the very wonderful Old Moor Porter from the Acorn brewery of Barnsley, with Duncan's IPA from Inverlmond brewery based in Perth not far behind.

The longest walk of the day was the trek to the end of the pier and a visit to **Captain Jack's** bar. Butcombe Bitter was on here. The Bristol Beer Factory Grand Pier Bier seems to have disappeared from the scene of late. The pier ran a nice little beer festival over St Patrick's weekend but if you want to sell beer and make money guys, you really need to stay open beyond 7pm if you are running a beer festival.

Back to the mainland and a visit to the **Brit**, on the High Street close to the Playhouse. Over the two years since Sam Cureton re-opened the Brit after a period of closure, it has steadily got better and better. On the beer front it has progressed from having one real ale in a polyvinyl to offering one or two on hand-pump, with a close relationship built with the excellent Box Steam brewery and a fondness for putting on dark beers – other landlords take note. On Good Friday, the offering was a green



The Brit



Alternative caption
offered by Dr John:

When the tide went out
here in Weston I was
practicing for the freestyle
race in the Olympics using
the front crawl and I
thought I would just carry
on until it came back in.

beer – Stonehenge's Sign Of Spring – which is a very nice beer, not just a gimmick. A nice ambience to the place and a small discount for CAMRA members.



The Imperial

My personal farewell to the crawl was at the **Imperial**. The Imp has recently been taken over by the local Butcombe brewery. They have spent a lot of money on a very tasteful refurbishment and offer their own range of beers and a guest – Timothy Taylor Landlord on our visit. In very good condition too, albeit at a price of £3+.

The rest of the party went on to the **Dragon** – our other Wetherspoon pub – which seems to have upped its game even further since the Cabot opened. It is in the 2012 GBG and the range seems

to be better than ever. They offer card-carrying CAMRA members 50p off a pint, in addition to any other offers they may have. The guys and gals opted for more Acorn Moor Porter.

The penultimate visit was to the **Red Admiral**, owned by CAMRA member John Bowles. The Robinson's Empire was much enjoyed.

Final stop for the day was **Off The Rails** which still offers good beers and real ciders. The gang went for Merchant Navy from Somerset's Cottage brewery.

So there you have it. Ten pubs visited, all within close walking distance of each other and we could also have visited the **Royal Hotel**, **White Hart**, **Bristol Hotel** and **Conservative Club**, all of which can offer great beer on their day. We have had our problems, with pubs closing and good pubs with leases for sale but I still think I can hang up my sandals for good. Weston is no longer a desert!

Tim Nickolls



The Dragon Inn

Weston Whispers

The following beers have been superb (in their own way) this quarter: *Church End Peckham Rye* at the **White Hart**, *Hambleton's Nightmare* and *Sadler's Hop Bomb* at the **Dragon Inn**, and *Glastonbury Spring Loaded* and *Golden Chalice* at the **Regency**.

The **Brit Bar** has to be congratulated for a stunning beer festival at the beginning of May; the choice of beers was superb and the quality and friendliness of service made a real difference. If only the music hadn't been so loud for the older members of CAMRA, more beer would have been drunk. The 2012 *Bristol Collaboration* was the best I've had and the *Reivers IPA* was the first to sell out.

The **Waverley** has increased their discount for CAMRA members to 30p a pint but the **Parish Pump** does not now do a discount.

I understand that there is a campaign to try to get the **Raglan Arms** open again; it isn't clear who still has the lease on this, rumours say the pubco have taken back the lease. The **Captain's Cabin**, currently closed, is up for sale. The **Chalice Bar**, sometime known as **Chairman's Choice**, has totally been demolished except for the frontage.

The **Imperial** had a great re-opening evening with free Butcombe Bitter and Rare Breed beers and canapés served by attentive staff. I saw many faces from the past that evening and a good few members turned up as well. This is a great venue for live music! The **Cabot Court** has much improved since they opened and has more beers on (don't forget that they and the Dragon Inn both give a 50p a pint discount on production of a CAMRA card – no messy vouchers to worry about).

Bob Reynolds has produced another fine programme of social events for us this summer (see the diary); I hope we will have good drinking and companionship on these trips.

Robin E Wild

Weston diary

- **26th May, Saturday:** Mendip meander by 121 bus starting from WsM station at 12.30pm stopping off at 3 village pubs in Winscombe, Churchill and Wrington, with return to WsM at around 5pm. Led by Bob Reynolds.
- **2nd June, Saturday:** Mini-bus trip to Malvern departing WsM station at 10.30am with return by 9pm, visiting 4 to 6 pubs. Arranged by Max French. Few seats left for this one so book early.
- **15th June, Friday:** Waverley to Worle crawl starting at the Waverley at 7pm then to Parish Pump followed by visits to pubs along Worle High Street, visiting several pubs on route of bus number 7.
- **13th July, Friday:** Hops around Hotwells. Starting at Horse&Groom at 7pm ending at The Merchants Arms via Three Tuns, Bag o Nails, Grain Barge & etc.
- **24th August, Friday:** Regency followed by the Britannia, starting at 8pm.

Some local festivals

- **31st May - 4th June:** Golden Lion beer festival at Wrington.
- **2nd & 3rd June:** Scrumptstock festival at Oaktree Farm Arena on the A38 near Highbridge.
- **30th June, Saturday:** Food, cider and beer festival at Westcroft farm, Brent Knoll, Somerset.
- **27th - 29th July:** Weston-super-Mare Lions Real Ale and Cider Festival on Beach Lawns, with free entry for CAMRA members. Any enquiries on above outings or requests to join our social group please contact westoncamra@gmail.com.

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)

A Round with Robin

I'm often asked if I have a local pub. I can't really say I do, only favourites, as explained in JB Priestley's book 'The Good Companions': "When a glass of beer is one of man's few pleasures and luxuries, he will not casually swill it down, not caring when or where he drinks it. He will exercise it to the full power of choice. That is why towns are so full of public houses. To the outsider, anybody who does not understand such matters, these public houses all look alike, but to Mr Oakroyd and his friends, they are as different from each other as the books in a bedside shelf are to an old reader, and one pint at one of them is entirely different from a pint at the next one".

So this quarter's 'beeriocals' at the **Seven Stars** in Redcliffe have only been a fraction of the time spent in pubs although other publicans in Bristol may not believe this. The February one featured Kentish beers, and amongst my favourites were *Old Dray Brewery Snow Top* (6%), a chocolate fruity winter warmer, and *Kent Brewery Beyond The Pale* (5.4%) was adequately described on Paul's blackboard as "beer for incurable hop addicts". In March it was the turn of Nottinghamshire, and the top beers for my palate were *Magpie Snowdrop* (4.3%), *Full Mash Bishti IPA* (6.2%) and *Flipside Dusty Penny* (5%). April was a blinder with beers from Norfolk, the exceptional *Grain Brewery* winning hands down for me, especially the *IPA* (6.5%) and the *Porter* (5%). Also worth a mention were the *Ole Slewfoot Carabus Gold* (3.7%) and the *Golden Triangle City Gold* (3.8%).

The Wetherspoon's national beer festival was good this March; I tried their beers at the **Imperial** in Exeter, **Commercial Rooms**, **Berkeley**, **St George's Hall** and **Knights Templar** in Bristol, and the **Cabot Court** and **Dragon Inn** at Weston-super-Mare. Of all the beers I thought the *Acorn Old Moor Porter* (4.4%) gave the greatest pleasure, but the *Vasileostrovsky Imperial Russian Stout* (6.5%) and the *Caledonian Coffee Porter* (4.3%) were worthy of more than just a second pint.

In the middle of February we visited Chippenham direct by bus from Bristol visiting the Good Beer Guide-listed **Three Crowns** which had six beers from three brewers and many pub games and real fires. We returned by way of Bath, to watch the rugby at the **Huntsman**.

I must mention Doctor Morton ales, brewed by Thornbridge Beerworks; at the **Seven Stars** on the 29th February the *Ancient Grease* (4.4%) was so popular that it sold in less than seven hours! Also on the 1st May at the **Cornubia** the *Sauce of the Nile* (4.1%) sold in a day. Though they may have wacky titles there is no doubt of their quality.

I visited the **Gryphon** Metale festival at Saturday lunchtime and this was well attended, and the beers I had were well kept and served.

I followed this by a visit to the **Grain Barge** for their beer festival where again I had four halves for a very reasonable £5! They had 10 beers on gravity and I had the *Arbor 500 minute IPA* (10.7%), *Dark Star Hophead* (3.8%) and *Revelation* (5.7%), and *Green Jack Manseer* (5%).

A week later it was the Arbor third anniversary of opening the **Old**

Stillage and so we visited there for an *Arbor Breakfast Stout* (7.4%) and then via the **Volunteer** in St Judes (*Moor Revival* and *Wickwar Penny Black*) and the **Phoenix** (*Arbor Hunny Beer*) to the **Three Tuns** for *Raw Steel Aussie IPA* (6.2%) and *Arbor Junga IPA* (6.5%).

A group of us from the sub-branch at Weston-super-Mare have for the past four years made Wednesdays a trip to Bristol drinking day, and we normally visit the **Cornubia** followed by the **Seven Stars**, and sometimes the survivors visit other pubs too. In mid March we had an exceptional day when the **Cornubia** had *Dark Star Black Coffee Pilsner* (4.8%), the **Seven Stars** had *Moor Amoor* (4.5%), a chocolate, rich coffee stout, *Goddards Ale of Wight* (3.7%) and *Ole Slewfoot Citraville American IPA*, and **Start the Bus** bar had *Dark Angel Cherry Porter* (4.5%).

Although I worked at the **Bristol Beer Festival** both sessions on the Friday and Saturday, I thought it would be fun to attend on the Thursday evening as a punter along with two friends. I was glad we did as it was much quieter than the other sessions and the beers were in very good condition. My favourites (all third pints) were *Buxton Axe Edge Double IPA* (6.8%), *Dark Star Rye & Juniper Hop Bock* (5.2%), *Boggart Hole Clough Walnut Porter* (5%), and *Coniston Special Oatmeal Stout* (4.5%).

I'd just come from the BBC recording of evensong at Bristol Cathedral to the **Seven Stars** gasping for a beer only to find almost certainly my beer of the past calendar year. This is the *Bingham's Hot Dog Stout* (5%), with a good rich taste in the mouth and then a sudden rush of chilli long after you swallow. The same day the **Seven Stars** also had *Black Hole brewery Milky Way* (6%). When I had the *Hot Dog Stout* at the **Gryphon** I was in beer heaven as I was also able to have *Redemption Fellowship Porter*, *Harvest Porter* from *Harvey's* of Sussex, and the limited edition *Otley Motley Crew* (7.5%)! At the **Bag O'Nails** beer festival, with Luke at the helm, I started with the *Hot Dog Stout* and followed with the *Ascot Anastasia Exile Stout* which I knew would be good, but then the *Brentwood Boston Brown Ale* was neither from Boston, nor brown. However I cheered up with the *West Berkshire Mr Chubb's Lunchtime Bitter* (3.7%), and returned the following Monday for four more including the excellent *Elland Ginger Pale Ale* (4.2%).

The same weekend I'd been to the **Seven Stars** to listen to the music, and the singer, the *Lonely Tourist*, had a good line when he said that he'd been "suffering from a monumental hangover since 1973!" Fortunately the *Cotswold Spring Stunner* (4%) was unlikely to do that for me, though it was very quaffable.

I have been a regular visitor to the **Horse and Groom** behind the



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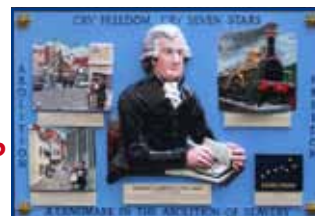
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Council House since Tony took over the management, starting when they had £1 off a pint (now 50p) of real ales for CAMRA members. This was pub of the week for Metro on 18th April, and the article said it was a shop window for *St Austell Ales*. Compare this to a reference in London Drinker Volume 34 no. 2 for April 2012 ... “*St Austell Brewery are looking to open a new pub-restaurant concern to be called the Cornish Embassy to showcase Cornish beer and food. The first site will be in either London or Bristol. I suppose that both look pretty far away from the deepest south-west.*”

On March 24th the sub-branch met up with Bristol CAMRA for skittles at the Good Beer Guide-listed **RAFA Club**, with excellent *Beer Factory Milk Stout*, followed by a mystery pub crawl to the **Annexe**, and thence to Stokes Croft area pubs, mostly by bus. Nine people enjoyed this event; it was a pity more could not attend.

Easter Monday saw the gang of three dumbfound the critics who said that there would be no buses in Somerset on a bank holiday. We visited six pubs between Taunton and Minehead, with approximately an hour in each one, and though no beers were spectacular the pubs were good. The same people visited the **Duke of York** for a game of skittles and a fine pint of *Celt Native Storm* (4.4%). As we got off the bus from the centre to St Werburghs I noticed that the **Victoria** had reopened. This is a great little community pub and the new manager, Andy, told us over our *Bath Ales Gem* that he hopes soon to have Hungarian food

served there. Keep watching this space...

After seeing an Australian friend in Bristol who I'd not seen for eight years, it was interesting to get the viewpoint of someone who'd not been to Bristol before, and I think Kirsty liked what I showed her of Bristol. After leaving her in Queens Square I headed off towards The Dings for the **Barley Mow** beer festival, but it was inevitable that I passed close to the **Seven Stars** and popped in on the off chance that they might have something interesting there. I was rewarded with *Hop-back Entire stout*, *Otley Columbo* and *Roosters Londinium*, a rich coffee porter of 5.5%. This was also available at the Barley Mow festival where I also had *Bristol Beer Factory Rise of Apollo* (4.6%), *Crouch Vale Yakima Gold* (4.2%) and *Roosters Buckeye* (3.5%).

As I was in London on the May bank holiday Saturday I popped into the **Seven Stars** in Carey Street, behind the Courts of Justice. I'd not been there since about 1968, but other than better beers, and a pub cat called Tom Paine, it hadn't changed as far I could see. This is a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide and I had *Sambrook's Wandle Ale* (3.8%) and *Dark Star Summer Meltdown* (4.8%), and the walls are decorated with monochrome photos and posters for films with a legal theme; well worth a visit.

So it will be seen that I don't have a local, but reading through this article you may notice I visit more pubs than others!

Robin E Wild

Afraid of the Dark?

A recent reference to the cheap renal excretions of *diptera nematocera* in CAMRA Newsletter of the Year *Pinctæ Occidēns* may have caused readers to think that lager had breached this last bastion of civilisation. That is possibly the first time that lager has been associated with civilisation in reputable reportage. The truth of the matter is that falling lager sales, as evidenced by recent research by the University of the Curd Age in Diyarbakir, Eastern Turkey, suggest that lager's breaching new bastions is unlikely. With that research showing lager's popularity on the wain, being on the wagon is obviously not helping sails and one has the sinking feeling that lager may well be losing its rudder. The research is original, not plagiarised from Batman Province further east where there has been a lot of robin going on, so one has red. The results have been confirmed by observations from Mount Ararat to the northeast, the highest local peak with a good view over a wide ark.

It is also understood that Roger Protz, the Editor of our Good Beer Guide, the UK's Best-Selling Beer & Pub Guide, considers that lager brewers must follow real ale's example of constantly improving quality if they are to combat its decline. Perhaps not being afraid of the dark and downing something tasteful is something wych wood be even better. If paying by czech continues, perhaps one might concede more Budvar production. Budweis brewing has been around since at least 1265, before 24-hour clocks, and the 100-day brewing cycle sounds environmentally

friendly now there are very few drays with their aptly-named draft horses about. Whatever coarse lager brewing takes, the current pounding of the pound in your pocket means that consuming huge quantities of poor-quality products will soon be history and not her story. Drinking is not a solitary affair unless one is a fan of Ellas Otha Bates, aka B O Diddle, and lager's lack of appeal for couples such as Fred and Midge bodes ill for its future, hopefully meaning that the term “wife beater” will indeed be history and no longer her story.

Increasing sales of cider, despite a Bacon painting costing \$40 million, have added to lager's woes, both red and white. The number of cider drinkers on our islands is now greater than the number of lager drinkers, a good thing for the West Country, which has opulent orchards rather than lager production lines many carbon miles away. Most people find cider more refreshing than lager and many say it has a fresher taste so it must be good for first-year students. The new Westbury Cider & Music Festival in Gloucestershire will be back this year over the Bank Holiday weekend on August 25-27 with great local ciders from Severn, Cadogan, Hayles, Orchard, Hartland, Weston, Thatchers, Moles and perhaps anything else local that readers wish to recommend to the organisers.

So, lager sales are slumping, as its imbibers have on our town and city centre streets over recent years. The latter may be due to the word lager coming from the old, pre-Wall and sausage, East German word for a place for lying down, if the truth be known. Ancient East Germanic was associated with the Burgundian and Vandalic languages, the latter maybe explaining recent town centre manifestations. Even if lager ups its game to go down in history rather than scoring a duck, the duck metaphor may still be appropriate as that is something that is able to do everything to get around – walk, fly and swim – but does none of these particularly well. So perhaps lager should not even bother trying to do one thing well, as real ale is more and more produced in microbreweries and small is beautiful so drinking local ale in one's local is far better than having the cheap renal excretions of *diptera nematocera* as the only small things in one's life.

Dr John

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BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

Pub and brewery news from the CAMRA Bath & Borders branch

Bath and Surrounding Villages

Abbey Ales, Camden Row, Bath

Congratulations to Abbey Ales who, at the recent SIBA beer festival held at Tucker's Maltings in Newton Abbott, won a silver medal in the mild category for its Abbey Mild. Meanwhile the brewery has recently acquired the Trinity Brewery Inn on James Street West as the fourth pub in its growing estate of pubs in and around central Bath.

Boater, 9 Argyle Street, Bath

Near to the rugby ground, and boasting a wonderful Georgian frontage and attractive riverside beer garden, this pub has recently been acquired by Fuller's.

Cork, 11-12 Westgate Buildings, Bath

This city-centre pub has been bought by the recently established City Pub Company for £2.7 million. The new company, founded by Clive Watson and David Bruce, is on a mission to acquire pubs in London and across the south of England. The Cork, formerly known as the Cork & Bottle, DYMK and Smith Bros., has two bars and an outside terrace and the business partners believe that it has the potential to be a strongly profitable enterprise. Even so, the sum paid is remarkable, especially when it excludes the student accommodation above the pub.

New Inn, 23-24 Monmouth Place, Bath

This Wadworth-owned pub, just to the west of the city centre, has recently been taken over by Debra Diack, licensee of the nearby King's Arms in Monmouth Street. Debra has brought back food to the pub's offerings.

Old Crown, 1 Lansdown Place, Upper Weston, Bath

A new landlord with a clear enthusiasm for real ale has taken over at this Greene King-owned pub, which is situated on the western outskirts of the city.

Rising Sun, 58 Lymore Avenue, Twerton, Bath

The freehold of this pub, which was reported as closed in the last issue of Pints West, is on the market for £325,000 plus VAT. The selling agents are James A Baker who, rather worryingly, are marketing this pub as having the potential for alternative use. The Rising Sun is situated in a large residential area on the west side of the city (Oldfield Park and

Twerton). It has a large outdoor area and, in the right hands, would have tremendous potential as a community pub.

Piccadilly Ale House, Piccadilly Place, London Rd, Bath

This pub, situated on the busy London Road, closed on 17 March. It has since been undergoing an extensive refurbishment and, at the time of writing, is believed to be re-opening soon.

Trinity Brewery Inn, 49-51 James Street West, Bath

This pub, off Kingsmead Square just to the west of the city centre, has recently been acquired by local brewer Abbey Ales. The pub is currently closed for refurbishment. When it re-opens the Trinity will be a traditional pub with a contemporary stylish feel and should appeal to theatre-goers, tourists and locals alike who will be able to enjoy beers from across the Abbey Ales range along with other locally brewed beers. The food on offer will focus on British classics such as home-made pies with mash, fish and chips, roast beef sandwiches a traditional Sunday lunch plus a house special that has yet to be revealed. The pub should open in the late spring or early summer and will be managed by Tycjan Zaleski, who is currently the manager at La Tasca in Broad Street and has extensive experience in the food industry.

Waggon & Horses, 150 London Road West, Batheaston

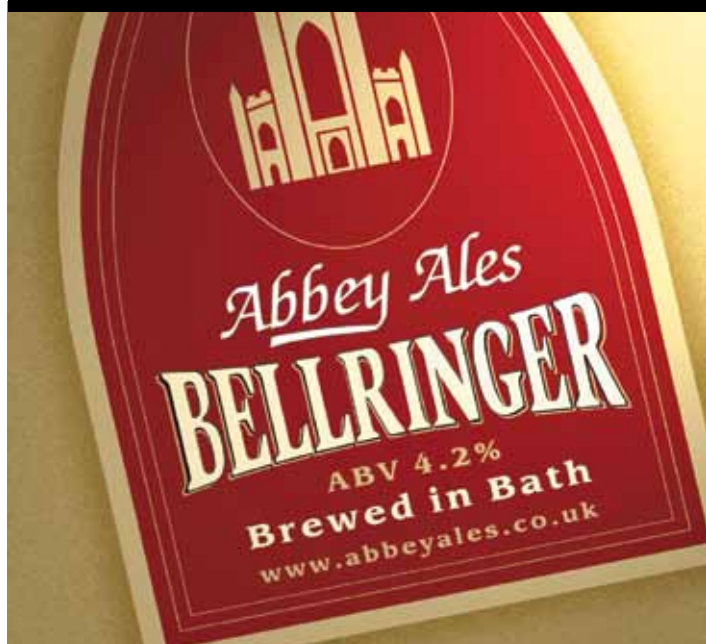
We understand that this pub, situated on the western fringes of Bath, closed around the end of March. The freehold is on the market through selling agents Fleurets but, at the time of writing, a buyer had not been found. This large building looks ancient from the outside but has a modern, lounge-style interior, giving out on to a large beautiful garden. The pub's most attractive feature is a terrace that commands panoramic views back towards Bath. Before closure the pub had been essentially a freehouse, with beers from St Austell regularly featuring, serving up varied and interesting food menu. The future of this pub is uncertain.

East Somerset

Farmers Arms, near Spring Gardens, Frome

We understand that this pub, situated on the northern outskirts of Frome, has recently re-opened under new landlords following a long period of closure.

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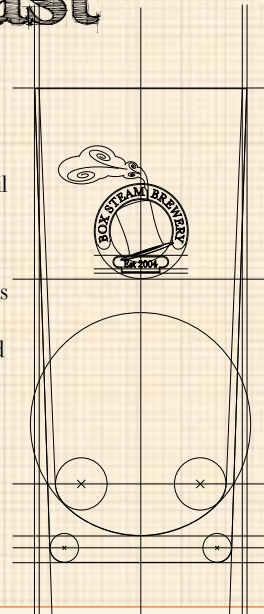
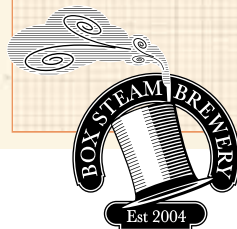
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BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

Packhorse, 13 Christchurch Street West, Frome

This attractive two-bar pub, which closed on at least two occasions during 2011, seems now to have re-opened on a long-term basis.

Greyhound, 1 High Street, Midsomer Norton

This Punch Taverns-owned pub closed earlier this year for refurbishment and re-opened in the spring. At the time of writing it had, however, closed again for reasons unknown.

Globe Inn, 18-20 Priest Row, Wells

This Grade II-listed pub, just off from the city centre, has recently re-opened. Closed for almost a year, the Globe has undergone an extensive refurbishment, with new furniture, lighting and pictures throughout. Toby Brett of the Banwell House Pub Company has assisted in the refurbishment and launch of the pub and will operate it until a suitable tenant is found. The pub has been re-designed to be a comfortable environment for coffee, food and drinkers alike with a re-vamped terrace area proving to be a popular sun trap.

West Wiltshire

Beef & Barge, The Marina, Widbrook, Bradford-on-Avon

This large modern canal-side pub on the southern edge of the town closed earlier this year for an extensive refurbishment.

Kicking Donkey, Brokerswood, near Westbury

This country pub, situated on a minor road around mid-way between the A36 at Beckington and the A360 at Southwick, closed last autumn and has since undergone a major six-week refurbishment. A new bar has been installed and the former black and white look of the interior has been lightened up. Under its new management this pub is heavily promoting its new menu. (There was even for a while a re-painted London cab advertising the newly opened pub at the Southwick end of the minor road.) Head chef Jamie Hirst is following a policy of preparing all food from scratch, going as far as to make his own tomato sauce and mayonnaise from basic ingredients. The new menu includes homemade pork sausages with thyme polenta, sprouting broccoli and onion gravy, risotto of sautéed wild mushrooms with shaved parmesan cheese, and roasted chicken breast with creamed leeks and fondant potato. The pub is also developing its extensive outdoor areas – a garden, children's play area and beer garden, ready for the summer.

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

In May of last year this town-centre pub closed. In June it re-opened as a Indian restaurant but now seems to have closed once again. We understand that the freehold of this former pub is on the market and are hopeful that it may re-open once again as a pub.

King's Head, Chitterne, near Warminster

Bath and Borders CAMRA were sorry to hear of the sudden death of the landlady of the King's Head in Chitterne in March. They send their condolences to her husband Kenton.

Paulet Arms, now Three Daggers, Westbury Rd, Edington

Another name change has taken place at this large village pub. For much of its recent history, until it closed in 2009, this pub was known as the Lamb at Tinhead. Following a massive refurbishment project this pub re-opened in early 2011 under one of its earlier names, the Paulet Arms, but more recently it has taken on another of its historic names, the Three Daggers.

Hungerford Arms, Farleigh Hungerford

This pub, situated near to the historic monument of Farleigh Castle with commanding views over the valley of the river Frome, has had an unsettled history in recent years, closing and re-opening several times. At the time of writing it is believed that this pub is again up for let.

Box Steam Brewery, The Midlands, Holt, near Bradford-on-Avon

Congratulations to this recently re-located brewery which, in the recent SIBA beer festival held at Tucker's Maltings in Newton Abbott, won a silver medal in the Speciality Beer category for its Funnel Blower.

White Lion, Market Place, Westbury

This large town-centre pub, which has been closed since the end of 2010, has recently been sold. Its future, however, remains uncertain.

Steve Hunt

Summer Cornish Beer Festival



Star manager Paul Waters multi-tasking during a previous festival

IN July, from Thursday 19th till Sunday 22nd, the Star Inn, Bath, celebrates what might be its 10th Summer Cornish Beer Festival. More importantly, the Cornish Festivals have featured 68 different beers from 20 different breweries, some of which are no longer brewing and a few are/were "cuckoo" brews (where a brewer brews on someone else's kit). This now well established festival regularly attracts tipplers from as far as Salisbury, Swindon and Cardiff.

This year's festival promises to have some old favourites as well as a good selection of anything new (the list of beers are published a week or so before). It just depends on what RCH Brewery (the courier for the beers) find are available at the beginning of July! Expect to sample about 16 different beers over the four days.

Any Star regulars who are fearful of trying something new need not concern themselves as the two old faithful, Bass and Abbey Ales Bellringer, will always be on tap.

As usual there will be Cornish Pasties to help soak up the beer as well as a selection of other tasty treats, supplied by Paul Waters, the manager. Lastly there will be the usual singing of traditional Cornish folk shanties, a tradition obviously copied by the now famous Port Isaac Fisherman's Friends.

Best in the West

The annual beer festival held by the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) at Tuckers Maltings in Newton Abbot is not only an opportunity for brewers in the South West to showcase their beers before a large and appreciative audience; there is also a competition in which panels of experienced tasters judge the beers on offer. Not surprisingly, it is this competition, more than any other, which brewers want to win.

This year, the overall winner was Discovery bitter from Forge Brewery at Hartland in Devon, which also brewed the champion beers in 2010 and 2011. The silver medal went to Wills Neck bitter from Quantock and the bronze to Glastonbury's Thriller Cappuccino Porter.

The overall winners were selected from the beers that won the individual rounds for different beer styles. Two Bristol breweries received awards in this stage of the competition. Arbor Ales won a gold for its Mild West and a silver for its Black Eyed PA, as well as gold medals for two bottled beers – Yakima Valley IPA and Breakfast Stout. Bristol Beer Factory won a silver for its Acer bitter and a bronze for its Milk Stout.

Over in Bath, it was good news for Abbey Ales which won a silver for Abbey Mild, while bronze awards went to Box Steam Brewery for Funnel Blower and Moles for Tap Bitter.

All the gold medallists go forward to the national competition at Nottingham in February 2013. Next year's festival at Tuckers Maltings runs from 18 to 20 April 2013, with judging taking place before the doors open to the public on the 18th.

Andrew Swift

The 34th Bath Beer Festival

It was after much soul-searching and with great regret that Bath and Borders CAMRA cancelled the beer festival due to be held last October, but the problems with the Pavilion had been mounting and the insistence on plastic glasses was the last straw. Although the Pavilion management backed down, it was felt this could not go on. In addition, with real ale increasing its popularity among a much wider audience, the shed-like interior of the Pavilion and the occasionally heavy-handed security was deterring people who prefer the comfortable ambience of their local pub – many of which now have their own beer festivals.



Friday evening – the first customers arrive

So the committee looked for a new venue and settled on Widcombe Social Club. There were advantages – it was much nearer the bus and railway stations – but it was smaller. However, the club committee was very welcoming, no security was needed, the food would be freshly cooked by the club's marvellous Mrs Chips, and there was no objection to proper glasses. But as the weekend neared, there was some trepidation among the beer festival committee. The beers were in one room –



The view of the Kennet & Avon Canal enjoyed by visitors to the Beer Festival

the bands and seating area in another. Would people go from one to the other? We had designated one room as a quiet room – some argued it would be unused.

In the event, it all worked out very well. The beer room proved to be self-regulating – as it started to get crowded, people would naturally move upstairs. The quiet room proved to be the hit of the day, filling up very fast – long before the bands started playing. The club bar was open as normal, so a wide range of fruit juices was available for drivers, and Bob the steward had entered into the spirit of the festival by putting on Cheddar Ales' Gorge Best, in addition to his usual – and well-kept – London Pride. Mrs Chips tried to be almost too accommodating on Friday evening, with a full menu, and an ensuing delay, but by Saturday lunchtime produced a restricted but still tasty menu to cope with the crowds.

With around 50 real ales to choose from, in addition to the ciders – including the very local Hand Made Cider based in the beautiful village of Slaughterford – as well as bottled foreign beers, it would be hard to choose an outstanding ale. Several beers were local and all the Bath and Borders Breweries were represented. For some people, a really memorable beer was Apachi, an American Pale Ale at 5% from the new Devilfish Brewery, based at Hemington. This brewery is making a great

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The unexpectedly successful quiet room

name for itself in a very short time. But for many punters, it was the Derbyshire brewery Thornbridge that was the star – with their Jaipur (5.9%) selling out fast.

Another popular beer was the dark porter Collaboration (6%). In March of this year, to recall the great days of Bristol United Breweries, six breweries – Arbor Ales, Bath Ales, Bristol Beer Factory, Great Western Brewing, RCH and Zerodegrees – got together to produce this traditional beer for the Bristol Beer Festival. And for real aficionados of dark beers, there was always Wessex Brewery's Russian Stoa. At 9%, this was one for gentle sipping towards the end of the session.

While on the subject of Wessex, two beers from that old Kingdom were getting their name mentioned around the festival. From Dorset, Isle of Purbeck's Fossil Fuel (4.1%), a light amber best bitter, was going down well at lunchtime, while from Hampshire, Oakleaf's I Can't Believe It's Not Bitter was proving to many visitors why it had won the gold award in the speciality beers in 2011.

Devon and Cornwall both made a good showing. South Hams' Wild Blonde (4.4%) seemed particularly popular as a lunchtime drink on Saturday, and Branscombe offered the ever popular Summa That. But for me, the beer of the festival was, appropriately for May, Teignworthy's Martha's Mild (5.3%). Described as a sweet, dark, ruby red mild, with a biscuit background, it was alarmingly quaffable. In fact, all the milds on offer – and there were several – were a good advertisement for this type of beer.

To quote from the Bath and Borders website, we had a huge amount



Visitors enjoying the comfortable seating in the main room at the Social Club

of positive comments about both the venue and the beer. Thanks go to all those who helped, from various CAMRA branches, especially Portsmouth and Bristol, and to Salisbury, who supplied the stillage. Thanks also go to Jase Clarke at the White Horse, who organised the music for Saturday lunchtime and supplied two bar staff, Cheryl and Ros, for what proved to be the busiest session of the event. Thanks go to both girls – the bar staff would have been hard pressed without them. But above all, thanks to all of you who came, and made the event such a success. We have yet to declare the final amount to go to locally based charity the National Osteoporosis Society, but many of you also generously gave unused tokens and donated loose cash in the collecting boxes.

If the plans go through, by next year, the Widcombe Social club will be in the middle of a rebuilding scheme, but we are already looking at a venue nearby – so keep watching our website for details of the 35th Bath Beer Festival.

Kerstin Elliott

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Alan Cassé of Bath & Borders CAMRA raises a glass to the success of the festival



Ros and Cheryl from the White Horse, Twerton



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The Fall, Rise and Fall of the Packhorse

A sad story – can you help to give it a happy ending?

Once upon a time, back in the 1600s, an inn called the Packhorse opened in South Stoke. It was not, however, right in the village, but on the old coach road which went down Midford Hill. If you have ever read Jamaica Inn, you will have a good idea of what it was like in the mid eighteenth century, when it was the centre for tea smuggling. But instead of a villainous landlord, at the heart of the operations were the two landladies, Ann Grace and her daughter, Grace Grace. However, the writing was on the wall for the inn. Around 1775, when Midford Castle was built, diversions were put in to make the hill easier, and the inn was bypassed. Nevertheless, as many coach-drivers still ejected their passengers to allow the horses to get up the hill, leaving the passengers to walk straight up by the old route, doubtless many hot and thirsty travellers stopped by for a quick wet on the way up.

However, in the 1850s it closed – only to come back to life in a new venue. Almost in the centre of the village was an old – and very large – farmhouse dating back to the late seventeenth century, which opened with a beer licence as the Packhorse. Right through the centre of it, on the ground floor, was what probably started life as a horse passage but became a footpath through the pub to the church. Over the years it went along merrily as the village pub, probably supplied with beer from the nearby South Stoke Brewery. I remember it from the late 1960s as a cheerful village pub, welcoming to walkers and locals alike.

But then along came Punch. As we all know, the pubcos have found themselves in trouble and have decided the best way is to shed pubs – preferably not as pubs. Unfortunately for the pubcos, communities have a disagreeable habit of wanting to keep their pubs. Readers of Pints West will, unlike much of the general public, know what happened next. Pubs sold with covenants to prevent them reopening as pubs, failure to invest in buildings crying out for investment, and – worst of all – constructive delicensing. When there is an ominously high turnover of managers, when managers are hastily moved on if they start to make the pub a success, to be replaced by inexperienced managers – warning bells start ringing.

They had been ringing at the Packhorse for some time. This was a pub which could and should have been successful, but things were clearly not right. An experienced ex-landlord, who started to turn

things around, was moved on. The latest landlord, Stephen Peart, was a gift to a pub company who wanted to run down a pub. He was hopelessly inexperienced, he was suffering post traumatic stress disorder after having been held by the Taliban, he got into financial difficulties and finally proved incapable of running a clean kitchen. He appeared at the Bath Magistrates Court, where his solicitor stated the pub had brought about his ruin – and by implication pointed the finger of blame at Punch.

However, his girlfriend took over running the pub. Bath and Borders CAMRA had anxieties about what was going on, but the pub's Facebook page carried a message saying, 'The Packhorse remains open and continues to serve food and drink as it has done for the past six years.' Miss Rugg, the new manager, said: 'In summary, we are open, we intend to remain open and we carry on serving food as we have done previously.'

Helen Knill, a South Stoke resident, wrote to the Chronicle to say: 'Please could you inform your readers that the Packhorse pub is alive and well and open for business as usual, under new management and with a three-star hygiene rating – the maximum it can be awarded so far.'

She added that it served an interesting and varied menu, and particularly recommended the takeaway fish and chips service on a Thursday with fish delivered fresh.

What we did not know was that the lease was already on the market. Not surprisingly, given the failure by Punch to invest in this historic building, no one took it up. What happened next is confused. The pub appears to have been put on the open market in March of this year by



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

We'd been muƙkers 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 coƕcktail, *“but no bloomin' pub and no bloomin' Theakstons*

Old Peculier, that's for sure.” “Why don't you juſt go home and get

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

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

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

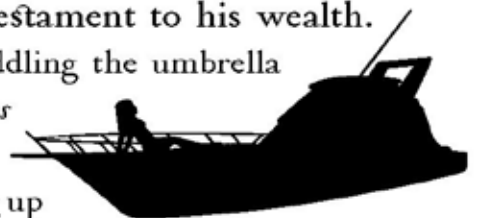
of my very own ſpecial rain-ſpattered corner of Yorkshire. The lady

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

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

return tiƕket burning a hole in my poƕket, I turned to my mate in exile.

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



PECULIERLY
FINE COMPANY

James A Baker as a freehold property at an asking price of £375000 plus VAT. The property details stated: 'The Packhorse offers a marvellous opportunity for a lifestyle business and to exploit potential to increase current trading levels.' How true that was. No surprise, then, that at least two people were interested in running it as a pub. One of the contenders seems to have been Abbey Ales. There is no mention anywhere, on James A Baker's site or on the Estates Gazette website that this was anything other than a normal sale. But that is not what happened. The contenders found themselves in a sealed bid auction, the winner being a resident of South Stoke, Mr Bob Goodman.

The first anyone knew was on 6th May, when Mr Goodman, a chartered surveyor, informed villagers that he had bought the pub, that Mr Peart and Miss Rugg had been given a fortnight's notice, the pub would close and never be a pub again. He intended to run an office from it, and live above it, he did not need planning consent and he certainly did not need change of use. He told the Bath Chronicle: 'The campaign to keep the Packhorse open should not be directed to us. We purchased the building after it was on the open market for some time and are aware that other potential purchasers did also not intend to continue using the building as a pub. The village and the people on social networks have had ample opportunity to purchase the property. We were entitled to purchase the building, as was anybody else. We can only surmise that they did not wish to do so ... As with the local school and shop in the past, the pub is no longer a viable option.'

It was true it had been on the market some time – a very short time – less than two months, in fact. To say that others had had ample time to get together to purchase was simply laughable. While it may be true there were other potential purchasers who did not want it as a pub, it is known that at least two others did want to keep it. Moreover, research has uncovered that the agents for Punch Taverns made it clear to prospective purchasers during the viewings it could only be used as a pub and when they put in their sealed bids they filled in a form stating their intended use to run the Packhorse as a pub. Furthermore the villagers know of at least three who have again approached the agents to buy the Packhorse to run as a pub.

However, the local press and councillors were immediately contacted, and planning advice taken. The advice given to the village says this: Change of use is defined through 'use classes' set out in government

guidelines. Theoretically, no planning permission is required to change use to a similar class, although it is arguable that a surveyor's office and a pub are indeed similar classes. In addition, those same guidelines describe these classifications as a 'guide only and it's for local planning authorities to determine, in the first instance, depending on the individual circumstances of each case, which use class a particular use falls into'.

Another key factor is that B&NES has its own policy to protect pubs – Policy CF7. This requires owners before obtaining planning permission to have marketed a pub – thoroughly, as a pub – for a minimum of six months. They must be able to prove that they have had no takers. Clearly, this did not happen.

Not surprisingly, feelings are running high – Mr Goodman was threatened by one angry villager, and although others have distanced themselves from it, it remains an unfortunate thing to have happened. However, reports of a death threat tweet seems to have been greatly exaggerated – apparently someone tweeted that the Packhorse was a pub to die for and this has been taken literally. A look at the comments on the Chron website, however, give some idea of the depth of feeling.

A petition has been set up, and all the information you need can be found on a website called <http://southstoke.net>. Some of the information in this article comes from that website, and it will give you other links – to the petition, for example, Facebook page and Twitter. When the planning applications come up, please send in your objections. Only last year, B&NES Council identified the pub, together with the church and village hall, as providing vibrancy and hinting at an active community. Can they really stand on their heads just a year later and accept its closure?

800 people turned up on Sunday 13th May for the farewell party. Although it was something of a wake, villagers have been heartened by the Government Inspector's refusal to grant change of use of a pub in Cambridgeshire under similar circumstances, when the applicants went to appeal.

We lost the Beehive in Bradford on Avon when Wiltshire planners did not stick to the rules – let us hope that Bath and North East Somerset Council follow South Cambridgeshire District Council's example and refuse the change of use here. This pub, now it is freehold, could be a goldmine. We need your help. Support the cause. Please.

Kirsten Elliott

Cryptic Crossword

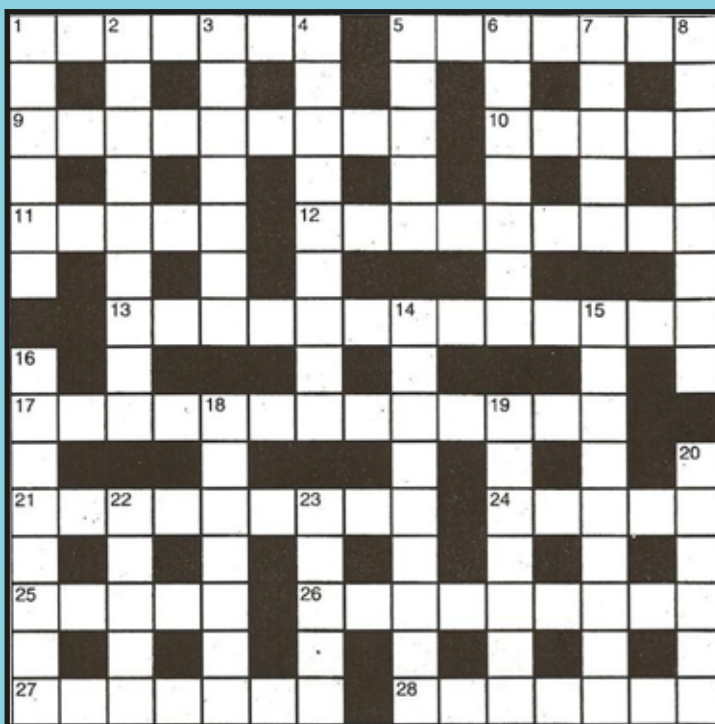
Compiled by Pete and Eddie Taberner

CLUES ACROSS

1. RCH also brewed for the well-educated student (7)
5. Classic keg beer needing a double sparkler (7)
9. Roughly grab drunken Mandela holding empty Heineken (9)
10. Salop served up some real gems (5)
11. Presentations of beers sold abroad- not right (5)
12. Strong bottled beer found in Ancient Rome or Athens? (3, 6)
13. Mix warmer ales in tin for posh non-alcoholic drinks (7, 6)
17. Mine's a rum, see nothing wrong to that extent (2, 4, 7)
21. Non-alcoholic beer for the spicy redhead (6, 3)
24. Man who is definitely not legless (5)
25. Attached to the bottle- so getting twitchy after work (5)
26. Foolish talk of illicit booze (9)
27. Awful Lite dud beer obviously watered down (7)
28. Kingdom in Oslo masks pub games lacking energy (7)

CLUES DOWN

1. Lightning fast beer from Salisbury brewer (6)
2. Barmaid certainly pulls them- first punters- and humps badly (9)
3. On I sail, drunkenly, for a secret affair with... (7)
4. ...first girl on the wireless in front of the 'Ram'. See right through her image (9)
5. With trepidation doctor starts on extremely alcoholic dram (5)
6. I moan about SA - tasteless, having no sense of smell (7)
7. Agreed! A half pint for the African beast (5)
8. What 25ac might do to obtain 17ac (8)
14. Reveal what the tenant has (topless please) then grip tightly (9)
15. Old flame takes me back before pint spilt over nothing manages release (9)
16. Call the large cops, I hear, to the Dorset brewery (8)
18. Trace me a bit of a pussy? Certainly not an Exmoor beast! (7)



19. Give vent to feelings as barmaid reveals Bristol's of international repute? (7)
20. Smashing idea. Grab an *Uncle Sam* for starters. Then bid final farewells (6)
22. Some of you drain a *Tally Ho!* in this SA province (5)
23. Media may be assembled where the Strongbow is targeted (5)

Solution on page 38

Summer in – or around – the city of Bath

There's a good chance, given Bath's reputation for real-ale pubs, that a fair few *Pints West* readers will be heading there for a day out over the next few months. But, while not wishing to steer you away from the excellent pubs in the city centre, you may, if the weather is fine, like to follow a somewhat less well-trodden route around the edge of the city. Not only are there superb pubs out of town, including several *Good Beer Guide* (GBG) regulars, but many of them have large outdoor seating areas and – an important consideration for dog owners – welcome well-behaved dogs (along with well-behaved people).

Bath is, of course, not only one of the country's top real-ale cities, but also one of its top tourist sites, and en route you can take in some of its parks as well as some of its more iconic buildings. For starters, take the train not to Bath Spa station but to Oldfield Park, a mile to the west and served by regular trains from Yate, Parkway, Filton, Temple Meads, Keynsham, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Westbury, Warminster and Frome. On leaving the train, walk up the slope from the platform, turn left along the road and take the first right into West Avenue. Follow the road round to the right and carry on along Lyndhurst Road. At the end turn right. Just before a railway bridge, turn left along a footpath and head between modern houses. Carry straight on through a housing estate for about 200 metres. When you meet a road climbing steeply uphill turn left. Your first stop, the **White Horse**, is at the top, and, as local CAMRA Pub of the Year 2011 and City Pub of the Year 2012, there is no better place to start. There is a large outdoor area (where you may find boules being played) and dogs are welcome. It's open from 3pm Monday to Thursday, and noon on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

From the White Horse, head straight down Lansdown View opposite, and turn right at the bottom along the Lower Bristol Road to find the **Royal Oak**, local CAMRA Pub of the Year 2007, 2008 and 2009 – seven handpumps, usually around 15 ciders, and one of Bath's top music pubs. The beer garden is screened from the road and dogs are welcome. It's open from 4pm in the week and from noon at weekends.

From there, cross over, head along Windsor Bridge Road and turn right along the Upper Bristol Road to the **Hop Pole**, a Bath Ales pub with one or two guest ales usually available. Open from noon daily, with a superb garden, dogs are welcome and food is served all day on Saturdays, till 4pm on Sundays and at lunchtimes and evenings on other days.

Carry on along the Upper Bristol Road and take the next left up Marlborough Lane. When you get to the Royal Crescent, turn right along it and carry on along Brock Street, across the Circus and into Bennett Street. Turn right in front of the Assembly Rooms and left along Alfred Street, where you will find the **Assembly Inn**, now run by Abbey Ales.

Carry on to the end of Alfred Street, cross over, carry on down Hay Hill and turn left along the Paragon to the **Star**, another Abbey Ales pub. No beer garden here, but dogs are welcome and this is one you should definitely not miss. A long-standing GBG entry and famous for its Bass from the barrel, the Star also holds a prominent place on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. The Star is open all day from noon at weekends, but on Monday to Friday it is closed between

2.30 and 5.30. No hot food but filled rolls are available.

On leaving the Star, cross over and continue downhill past Walcot church. Here you have a choice. Go down the steps past the church and turn right along Walcot Street to find the **Bell**, another dog-friendly GBG regular with loads of real ales, a range of sandwiches, etc, a superb beer garden and live music on Sunday lunchtimes.

Otherwise, go down the steps, cross over and turn left down to the traffic lights at the bottom. On the right is the **Curfew**, a splendid Wadworth's pub where dogs (and people) will find a warm welcome. There is a small secluded beer garden at the back.

It is open from noon every day except Monday, when it opens at 5pm. Food is served lunchtimes and evenings in the week and all day at weekends.

Turn right out of the Curfew, cross Cleveland Bridge and head along Bathwick Street to the **Barley Mow**, another superbly friendly local, with four handpumps and home-cooked food. Open all day from noon, it has a patio area and dogs are welcome.

Jane Austen lived just round the corner from the Barley Mow, and, although it wasn't a pub in her day, she did frequent Sydney Gardens, the entrance to which is at the end of Bathwick Street, across the lights. To wend your way back to Bath Spa station, head up through the gardens, and after crossing the railway go through a gateway to the right of the canal bridge and turn right along the towpath. Once through a tunnel, the towpath changes sides. It changes sides again when you get to Bathwick Hill, where you have to cross a zebra crossing and go down steps by a Tesco Express.

When you get to the deep lock at Widcombe, just before the canal joins the river, you have a choice of two dog-friendly pubs – on your left is the **White Hart**, a gastro pub with a very popular walled garden and a couple of well-kept real ales, while a little way along the street on the right is the **Ram**, a busy local with a range of real ales.

To get to Bath Spa station, carry on to the two sets of pedestrian lights across the dual carriageway and cross the footbridge over the river.

Andrew Swift



The Barley Mow



Award-winning blooms at the Star

Liquid asset

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Aust, Chepstow and the X14 bus

Summer's coming! If you're looking for an interesting and unusual day out from Bristol, may I bring to your attention the possibilities opened up by the X14 bus. This hourly bus service, provided by First, and Stagecoach in South Wales, goes from the Marlborough Street Bus Station in Bristol to Chepstow in Wales, but it receives no publicity and the buses are pretty old. It stops at The Triangle, some stop in Westbury-on-Trym and all stop at Cribbs Causeway, so people living in most part of the city can access the service.

In its 55 minutes journey from the Bus Station to Chepstow the X14 goes across the 'old' Severn Bridge (M48) which is always a thrill. But before making the crossing the bus stops near the historic village of Aust, half a mile from the bridge. Until 1967 Aust Ferry was once the main route to and from South Wales. You can walk past a vineyard to the overgrown ruins of the old ferry, and perhaps continue to the famous Aust Cliffs (geology), or walk or cycle over the two-mile-long bridge.

At one time Aust had several Inns for travellers, but now the only one remaining is the 16th century **Boars Head**, large and cosy, with a massive log fire in cold weather. Run by Marston's, the inn offers good food and a range of ales from its five breweries – Marston's, Jennings, Wychwood, Ringwood and Park.



Boars Head, Aust: one of several inns in the village when the ferry was in operation, now the only one remaining.

The Wye marks the boundary between England and Wales, and Chepstow is the first town in Wales. The X14 stops at the top of the town and from there you can walk down hill about a mile to the Wye. It is an attractive town with a Norman castle and plenty of shops. One of the highlights is High Street which has won national awards for its regeneration scheme in 2005. Just look at the quality of the paving: if only Park Street had this!

First stop has got to be the **Coach and Horses** in Welsh Street, Gwent CAMRA's Town Pub of the Year in 2011 and 2012. It's a Brains managed pub which promotes real ale and has a beer and cider festival in early June. Moving down hill is the **Beaufort Hotel**, a comfortable business hotel/pub which displays a Cask Marque. It was selling Rhymney Bitter and Butcombe Rare Breed on my visit in April. The Rhymney was a bit too warm for my taste though.

Then to the split-level **Bell Hanger** opened by Weatherspoon in 2008. It was packed on my visit on a Saturday. I had a pint of Dockside Dark,



Beaufort Hotel, Beaufort Square, Chepstow.



Journey Through The Past! The remains of the Aust Ferry taken in January 2012, with Pints West readers Dave (left) and Mike, loyal customers of the White Horse, Westbury-on-Trym.

5.2 per cent, from Gloucester Brewery, which I enjoyed very much. Also on offer that day were Abbot, Rite Flanker (Wickwar), and Rev James (Brains). The **Boat Inn** on the Back faces the river and England, as well as the 1816 bridge over the Wye. It is worth a visit, with high ceilings and a small cosy room with stone flag floors and sofas. The food looked good, but the ale was a bit predictable, however – Rev James, London Pride, Timothy Taylor Landlord and Wadworth 6X. Returning, I looked in at the **George**, a somewhat faded, but spacious hotel adjacent to the Town Arch and the Port Wall, Chepstow's medieval defences. The bar was selling Wye Valley Bitter, Greene King IPA and Brains SA.



Boat Inn, The Back, Chepstow, on the River Wye. In the 19th century, and until about 1914, daily passenger ships sailed from here to Welsh Back in Bristol.

According to the gwentcamra.org.uk web site there are four brewers of fine craft ales in the Gwent area: Kingstone Brewery of Tintern; Tudor Brewery, Abergavenny; Warcop Ales, near Newport; and Rhymney, near Dowlais, Newport. Apart from Rhymney I didn't come across them in Chepstow on this occasion. Sadly I wasn't able to visit the **Three Tuns** in Bridge Street (it was closed at lunch time for refurb). Gwent CAMRA says it now has a bright future, and is selling Kingstone Welsh Warrior ale. Next time!

John MacRae



Coach and Horses, Welsh Street, Chepstow: Gwent CAMRA town pub of the year 2011 and 2012.

Art Brew – not playing it safe

Real ale drinkers come in all shapes and sizes – both literally and figuratively – but they can be roughly divided into two camps. On the one hand, there are those who know what they like and want to drink nothing else. Their tipples of choice may have remained constant for a quarter of a century or more, and in a strange pub, faced with a variety of unknown brews, they will ask for whatever most closely resembles their favourite, and will, more likely than not, drink it through gritted teeth, grumbling that it's nowhere near as good.

On the other hand, there are those for whom variety is, in the words of that well-worn cliché, the spice of life. Not only do they do not stick to a particular brew, they are keen to sample beers from the whole spectrum of tastes, tinges, strengths and strangenesses. Show them a new beer flavoured with horseradish, peanuts and mustard and they'll feel honour bound to give it a go, even if they'll be unlikely to repeat the experiment.

Obviously this sort of distinction is a little too cut and dried, and, while there are many who fall into one of other of these camps, most drinkers fall somewhere in between, on a sliding scale from stuck in a rut to trying anything once.

That said, I am very much a member of the latter camp. It isn't that I want to try extreme beers for their own sake; more that I want to see what brewers are doing to push the boundaries and explore the potential of the brewing process. Not surprisingly, therefore, my favourite breweries tend to be those at the experimental end of the spectrum, constantly trying out new ideas – often in small batches – and giving drinkers the chance to educate and enliven their palettes. Locally, breweries such as Arbor Ales, GWB, Devilfish and Dawkins are turning out some fantastic boundary-pushing beers, while an increasing number of real-ale pubs give us the chance to sample new brews from farther afield.

One of my favourite breweries, whose beers are increasingly becoming available in the Bath and Bristol area, is Art Brew. This was set up in August 2008 at Chideock in Dorset by John and Becky Whinnerah, who many readers will remember from the Royal Oak in Bath. Having spent years running an award-winning real ale pub (local CAMRA Pub of the Year no less than three times), where they tasted thousands of beers from across the country, they had a good idea of the kinds of beer they



Art Brew brewery at Chideock

wanted to brew. Although they acknowledged that 'there is a temptation to create one best bitter, then market it to death,' they also admitted that there was no way they could live with that. They wanted to make beers showing the range of beer styles created over the centuries, while adding a modern twist. 'We see ourselves,' they proclaimed in their mission statement, 'as more Outsider Beer than Traditional Ale, more Sonic Youth than Status Quo, and hope to bring something unique to an already vital and thriving industry.'

They were determined that Art Brew should be synonymous with cutting-edge brewing from the start. One of their first brews was i Beer, a 4% golden ale with a liberal dash of vanilla, which split drinkers right down the middle. Like Marmite, you either love it or loathe it and the first sip will probably rank as one of your most startling ever. Definitely not a tipples for the cautious or incurious.

More recently, they've become known for their Hip Hop range, variations on a basic recipe and all weighing in at 4% but each showcasing a single hop – the perfect way of getting to know the qualities of different hops.

Then there is Monkey IPA, weighing in at a hefty 6.4%, and right



John Whinnerah with the SIBA award.

up there with the likes of Thornbridge Jaipur and Downton Chimera. Like all proper IPAs it is dangerously drinkable, a glorious revival of a once all-but-forgotten beer style. Ever mindful of Art Brew's mission to add a modern twist, Monkey IPA was soon followed by Spanked Monkey, with root ginger and chilli added to the cask. John, with a characteristic chuckle, once described Spanked Monkey as 'just stupid', yet, although this may sound very much like another Marmite beer, it won a gold medal at this year's SIBA South West Beer Competition in the premium strong beer category. And, if you're wondering what beers it was up against, it beat two superb brews – Arbor Ales Black Eyed PA and Exmoor Beast – which won silver and bronze medals respectively.

It's always good to see breweries which choose not to play it safe being vindicated. Winning one of the most prestigious awards in the brewing industry for a beer as challenging as this is not only good news for Art Brew but also a heartening sign that there are people in the industry discriminating enough to recognise a quality product when they taste it, even though it may be like nothing they've tasted before.

Art Brew beers have been found in several Bristol and Bath pubs, including the Raven, the Volunteer, the Hope & Anchor, the Robin Hood, the Old Stillage and the Three Tuns. Recently, Art Brew collaborated with head brewer Jon Comer at Arbor Ales on the outrageous and rather big 12% monster, Double Trouble.

Since late last year, Art Brew has also been available in bottles. Outlets where it is available include the River Cottage Canteen in Axminster and the West Country Ales off-licence in Cheddar, and there are plans to expand this side of the business.

In April, Becky officially took over as Art Brew's brewster, freeing up John to concentrate on the business side of the operation, although he will still be involved in brewing whenever he can. They have also set up a new brewing arm, called the Chideock Brewery, primarily for customers in the South West, which focuses on traditional, conservative beers rooted in the landscape of the brewery. So far they have produced Marshwood Pale, a 3.9% golden ale, and Martyr's Best, a malty well-rounded best bitter at 4.5%. They also plan to brew a 3.8% best bitter later this year.

While keeping more conservative drinkers happy, however, rest assured that Art Brew will continue creating experimental, anarchic ales. Becky and John are always on the look-out for new and exciting ingredients and processes. Recently they brewed a Chocolate Vanilla Porter which sold out before it even got to the cask, so unfortunately I can't tell you what it's like. Hopefully, I'll get to sample it when the next batch is ready. What I can report on, however, is their Easter seasonal Doppelbock, a 7.4% take on the German monastic Lent classic. Apparently, German monks spent Lent drinking double-strength beer which they classified – somewhat bafflingly – as 'liquid bread'. Which goes some way to explaining all those beatific grins. Art Brew's version is, quite simply, unlike any other beer I've ever tasted, reminiscent of a fine dessert wine. Definitely one for sipping – and for beatific grins.

A new Art Brew website is currently in the pipeline and there are plans to set up a brewery blog. The brewery delivers to the Bristol and Bath area regularly. Any pubs which want to enquire about stocking Art Brew, or any off-licences or retail outlets interested in supplies of bottled beers, can phone 07881 783626 or email artbrewdorset@goolemail.com. The website is www.artbrew.co.uk.

Andrew Swift

Severn Vale CAMRA

Severn Vale pubs update

The Fox, Easter Compton

In a previous edition of Pints West, we'd reported that no real ale was available at that time. On a recent visit, an Exmoor Ale beer (possibly Exmoor Fox?) and Bath Ales Gem were both on offer.

The Cross Hands, Pilning

One of two Punch pubs up for sale in our area. A holding manager is in place. Jackie Longman who in the past has run the Bunch of Grapes, Denmark Street, central Bristol, has reintroduced real ale and Courage Directors, Courage Best and Doom Bar have been available over the past few weeks. Music and entertainment is provided every Friday night and karaoke every other Sunday. Jackie is hoping to have two real ales available at the same time in the near future.

The Plough, Pilning

The real Wurzels are appearing here on Saturday 30th June. Just enough time perhaps to pick up any remaining tickets. Information on landlord Dave's quiz nights and full music programme can be found online at www.theploughpilning.co.uk.

The Ship Inn, Oldbury on Severn

The other Punch pub up for sale in our area, with a doubtful-looking future. Recently reopened for the second time – with a holding manager. A good pint of Wye Valley Bitter was available on a recent visit. Entertainment and music nights had been arranged and it is hoped to start using the skittle alley in the near future.

The Swan, Thornbury

Good to see this traditional former coaching house on Thornbury's High Street so lively when we visited early in May. What a transformation from being the practically unused, run-down place it had become by last year, when it was closed down a couple of times. Just goes to show what an innovative and dedicated publican (Sandra, in this case) can do to turn a pub around. The real ales available were the somewhat uninspiring and almost ubiquitous (in this area) Sharp's Doom Bar and Courage Best, but at least they were served in good condition. The pub also now does meals, teas & coffees, and has live music and quizzes each week.

Rod Lees & Martin Farrimond

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.



The Cross Hands, Pilning

Severn Vale diary

- **Sat, 2 June:** Pubs trip to Horfield & Bishopston: Mostly along the A38. Meet at the Inn On The Green, 1pm.
 - **Fri, 8 June:** Regular lunchtime trip to Old Spot, Dursley.
 - **Wed, 20 June:** Sub-branch meeting: Anchor, Thornbury, 8pm.
 - **Sat, 7 July:** Pubs trip to Hotwells. Meet at Three Tuns, Hotwells, 1pm.
 - **Fri, 13 July:** Regular lunchtime trip to Old Spot, Dursley.
 - **Wed, 18 July:** Sub-branch meeting: Boar's Head, Aust, 8pm.
 - **Thur, 2 Aug:** Pub survey trip. Meet Mason's Arms, Rudgeway, 8pm.
 - **Fri, 10 Aug:** Regular lunchtime trip to Old Spot, Dursley.
 - **Wed, 15 Aug:** Sub-branch meeting: Fox, Old Down, 8pm.
 - **Fri, 7 Sept:** Pub survey trip, Thornbury. Meet Black Horse, 8pm.
- For all details and latest information, check our diary page at www.severnval.camrabristol.org.uk.

Severn Vale contact

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



The Ship Inn, Oldbury on Severn

Rucking Mole joins the pack!

ALL YEAR ROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

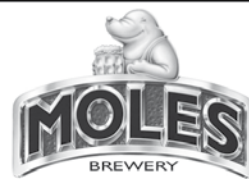
IN SEASON

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

Barleymole 4.2%_{abv}
Straw coloured Summer ale

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

Moel Moel 6.0%_{abv}
Warming Winter ale



Melksham, Wilts SN12 6TJ
Tel: 01225 708842



www.molesbrewery.com

Readers' Letters

Readers are welcome to send letters to the Pints West Editor

Steve.Plumridge.PintsWest@gmail.com

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

King's Head, Victoria Street

I'm currently doing a bit of research on the King's Head pub, Victoria Street, Bristol as part of a uni assignment. I noticed in Mark Steeds' article in Pints West 92 he mentioned that the pub's cellar could "feasibly date back to the 12th Century." I don't have Mark's contact details, but I just wanted to check what the evidence for his potential date is. Would you happen to know? Or would be able to forward this query on to Mark?

Many thanks.
David Gould
(by email).

Mark Steeds replied:

Although the KH is currently in Victoria Street (a road that ripped through the Medieval heart of Temple Parish in Victorian times) it was originally in Temple Street.

Temple Street goes right back to the time of the Knights Templar who had their church nearby and from ancient times hosted many pubs, some with exotic names like the 'Crabbs Well Inn' or the 'Yellow Anchor'. Undoubtedly the cellarage from these old buildings would have been re-used.

Current Kings Head co-landlord Andy reckoned it was very old as well!

I'm sure the earlier inns on this street would crop up in the extensive Parish Rate books that still exist and are held in Bristol Records Office – a marvellous resource if you have the time for first hand research. Some of the books consist of vellum re-cycled from Catholic prayer sheets 'liberated' after the Restoration.

I hope this helps David, and good luck with your research.



Samuel Loxton's 1908 drawing of the Crabb's Well Inn

Yew Tree

I was pleased to see the Yew Tree in Warminster included in the news from the Bath and Borders Branch in the last Pints West and thought you would be interested in an update. We took over in January 2012, taking over from the previous tenants who had been open less than a year. We are working hard to maintain it as a community local concentrating on the best real ales, coupled with log fires and good live music on Saturday nights and a great jam session on Sunday afternoons which at-

tracts musicians from as far afield as Dorchester and Glastonbury.

We have been complimented on our ales, with one of our regulars telling us (completely uninvited) that we serve the best Pedigree in town. We are tied to Marston's so have to buy all our ales from them which means that, although we have a large range to choose from, including monthly guest ales, we are unable to support small local breweries, which is a pity. We have Marston's Pedigree and Ringwood Best on all the time with a guest ale at the weekend. We open at 4.30 Monday to Friday and all day from midday Saturday and Sunday, plus we will be open all day at bank holidays. Hope this is of interest to you and your readers.

Pauline Martin,
Yew Tree, Warminster.

Music in pubs

Let me state at the start, I am a 'miserable old sod'. The family actually presented me with a medal, which states so. So this may explain why I am penning this. My moan is about music (?) in public houses.

Now, I am of an age when the only noise heard in a pub, was the chink of glasses, the click of dominoes, the thud of darts and good old-fashioned talking with laughter.

Now don't get me wrong, I enjoy music, and I have umpteen 78, 45 and 33 rpm records plus tapes and discs in my collection.

What I do not understand is why some pubs have to play their music so loud that discussion is out of the question and the only way to communicate with another human is to shout. I can understand why some pubs, who wish to attract youngsters, will play their music VERY loud so as to 'addle the mind', therefore rendering the brain incapable of realizing that the pint ordered is only 7/8ths, and the change given is 'short'. Now I do not have problems with these pubs as I give them a very wide birth.

I would like to float another thought with you. The 'powers that be' are always prattling on about the cause of trouble outside pubs is due to 'lager louts'. I would like to suggest it is due to their brains being so addled by the music they do not know what they are up to. I base this theory on the Whirling Dervishes, who had their brains constantly being hammered by the drums that they would go out and attack another village and kill all the residents for "the Hell of it". Just some thing for you to think about.

Apart from playing cribbage and dominoes of an evening, most of my pub visits are of a lunch time, when my wife and I go out to eat. Nine times out of ten we will settle down to eat, order the food, start supping a pint, when all of a sudden the ear drums are subjected to a thumping noise of a 'gorilla' on a drum, and a woman who could not 'hold a note' to save her life. When the bar person (who is usually a member of the younger generation) is requested to turn it down, they look astounded that someone should complain. They will usually turn it down, but by the least amount possible.

From my observations, the majority of pub goers of a lunch time are of the senior sort, who I am sure would rather sit and have a quite drink or have a much more sedate type of music being played. Why not classical, Beethoven, Chopin or Strauss as an example?

After all, the whole of the brewing industry talk about Braham's and Listz. (A bit of cockney slang). If loud music is required, may I suggest Beethoven's 1812 overture – that would 'raise the roof'.

As I started off stating, I am a miserable old sod who would like to enter a pub of my choice, to have a drink and a chat with other customers. (I am happy for background music, or even no music.)

Tim Martin promotes this concept in his Wetherspoon chain of pubs, and look how successful they are.

John Gatty,
Thornbury.

Not pulled down

I've been meaning to drop you a line about an entry in the Winter 2011 edition of Pints West and have finally gotten round to it.

On page 32, within Andrew Swift's article on "The Decline of the English off licence", there is a statement (under its photograph) that "The Mechanics Arms on Forest Road in Kingswood was pulled down to make way for Eaton Close". Can I say that the building, whilst no longer an off licence, is still very much in existence and I fondly remember visiting it often when I was a teenager – mainly for sweets, I hasten to add. The confusion is there's a Forest Road in Fishponds (off which is Eaton Close) and perhaps you could pass this on to Andrew for me.

Geoff Cole
(by email).

New Cider & Ale Barn

With the number of pubs closing down, including the Red Lion in Draycott, I thought that getting planning permission for change of use from a farm shop selling local produce and local ciders (closed since 2007) to a cider and ale barn selling local ciders and ales, snack meals, coffee, etc, and local produce would almost be a "no-brainer", particularly as it is situated on the main road just outside the village and that the plan was to wood-clad the current green corrugated metal building to improve it's appearance! Unfortunately the "no-brains" appears to be relevant only to local planners!

Obviously the local brewers were interested and keen to supply me, including Cheddar Ales, Butcombe, Wilcox Cider and Roger Wilkins. I live in Cheddar with my partner, a local GP, I went to school in Wells and have lived in Westbury-sub-Mendip and Rodney Stoke. I consider myself local. I have at various times run bar/restaurant facilities at the Slab House Inn (Wells), Mendip Golf Club (Wells/Shepton Mallet), the Lamb Inn (Axbridge), the Queen Victoria (Priddy), the Ring O' Bells (Hinton Blewitt) and the Crown Inn at Churchill, amongst others. The feedback from all of my friends and customers in the pubs that I still visit or run (as relief manager) has been unanimously great!

Is there anything that CAMRA can do by way of supportive email/letter or can you re-inforce the email that I have already sent to Tessa Munt MP, or is there anything that you can suggest?

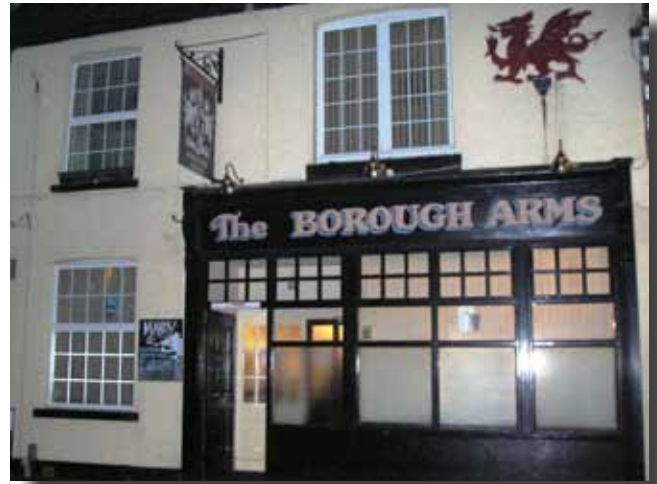
Regards,
Peter Simon,
Cheddar
(jrapeter@aol.com).

A hot night in Neath

A Saturday in March during a bit of a heatwave took me and my spiritual advisor, i.e. wife, to Neath, South Wales. Why Neath? Well, I'm having the gap year I never had – in my case I'm aiming to do things I've not done before but in unlikely, unsung destinations. This box to be ticked was watching a local Rugby Union game in South Wales. Neath happen to have a proud tradition of Rugby Union and that day their club were hosting rivals, Pontypridd, in a cup game.

Having checked that the town has at least one pub in the current Good Beer Guide, we booked a room at the **Castle Hotel** in Neath town centre. The Castle is where the Welsh Rugby Union was originally established. It only took an hour and a half by car to reach Neath which lies just short of Swansea on the M4. There is also a train station slap in the middle of town. Pre-game saw us scouting around for a decent beer which proved to be harder than anticipated. Having poked our heads into a few keg establishments and finding a previous Good Beer Guide entry, the Star (which is conveniently close to the Gnoll rugby ground), closed and in a bad state we even resorted to a glass of Guinness in another pub which only had that and John Smiths keg (whoopie) to choose from. Eventually, we found the **Greyhound** in Water Street which did have a real ale in the form of Neath Ales' Firebrick and we settled down to a pre-match drink. The Greyhound turned out to be quite pleasant with Sky Sports for entertainment. The beer was very reasonable at £2.40 a pint but a bit cold to my taste. The game itself didn't disappoint. Pontypridd ran out winners. The visiting fans turned out in force and entertained us with their chants and comments.

By now we knew there was a good reason why Neath only has one pub in the Good Beer Guide – real ale just doesn't feature much in Neath and we decided to concentrate the main part of our evening on the one pub in the guide, the **Borough Arms** in New Henry Street. Sat in a terraced street at the other end of town to our hotel, we felt at home at the Borough the moment we saw it. As we entered, we were welcomed by a blooming good pub. A central bar serves the two sides of the pub which had plenty of seating and a good mix of customers. On the wall the television was showing local rivals and big time charlies, Llanelli Scarlets – I couldn't mention their name without paying a fine – playing Cardiff Blues who also seemed to be despised but to a lower level. Oh and the beer. There were six hand pumps and five of them were in play.



A couple of Welsh beers were amongst them; one from Newmans and the other from Thomas Watkins. The beers went down well, the locals were chatty, but we were getting hungry and no food was available (another plus for me) but we had to move on.

Chumming up with a couple of Borough regulars on the walk back to our end of town we ventured into the Wetherspoon establishment, the **David Protheroe**. It was getting on for 9pm on a warm Saturday night so I should not have been surprised that the place was packed. Well, I'm no fan of the JDW phenomenon at the best of times so I headed out the doors a couple of minutes later after saying "tarah" to our new mates without trying what I am sure was a reasonable selection of ales. We decided instead to have some food at the **Castle**. The food was tip top and the Castle is a very pleasant and comfortable place if devoid of real ale.

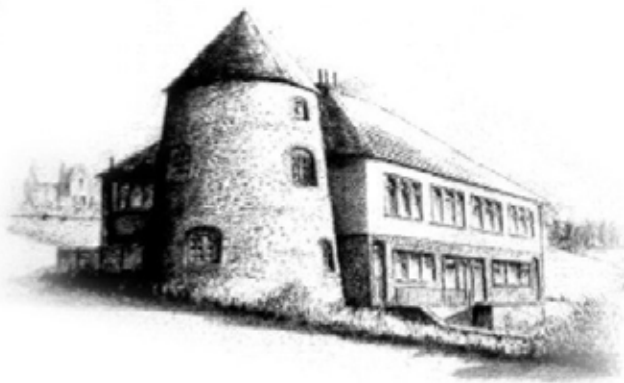
Suitably fed, we headed up to the end of Water Street. Our new mates had tipped us off that there was some live music and real ale at the **Cross Keys**. This turned out to be a good-sized, friendly and well-run establishment with Neath Ales' Firebrick again and slightly less cold this time. The excellent three-piece rock group hammered out old covers to a good crowd and finished with "Mama We're All Crazy Now". I can't argue with that!

So, what did we learn? We learned we take the variety of real ales available locally for granted. Neath has one great real ale pub in the Borough and I would heartily urge you to visit it. Neath itself is good fun but real ale does not feature highly in most of its pubs. Perhaps there is missionary work to be done there?

Neil Ravenscroft

The Windmill Inn

PORTISHEAD



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To contact us please ring 01275 843677.

Inn and around Portishead

Good News

Hall and Woodhouse have announced they are starting work on a new pub/restaurant in the Marina area of Portishead. The new development will have an informal drinking and dining area on its ground floor and a more formal dining room on the upper floor. The new building is due to be completed in August 2012. This is particularly good news for lovers of Badger ales which are very rarely seen in this town. At the moment the closest Hall and Woodhouse pub is the **White Hart** in Congresbury, the excellent Regent in Clevedon's Hill Road having closed a few years back. Personally, I can't wait to get my chops around a pint of Badger's Tanglefoot.

Bad News

Sue Hazelton, who used to run the **Poacher** in Portishead High Street, died in April after a short illness. Sue, aged 43, passed away in Frenchay Hospital and left husband Mark and daughters, Georgia (13) and Sophie (10). Sue and Mark were landlords of the Poacher between 2004 and 2010 and before that worked in the pub for Mark's parents. In their time running the pub Sue and Mark raised an incredible £40,000 for charities, including £10,000 for the Children's Hospice South West. The CHSW support their daughter, Georgia, who has a life-limiting illness.

Neil Ravenscroft

Great British Beer Festival 2012

Olympia, London, August 7th to 11th

The Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) is back at Olympia for 2012 and, with the event drawing ever closer, CAMRA is calling on all beer drinkers to put the Festival's dates in their diaries!

This year, Festival-goers should expect 800+ real ales, ciders, perries and foreign beers from around the world, with CAMRA claiming to have something to suit every drinker's taste buds! To accompany this heady range, the Festival offers a great choice of food from traditional cuisine to classic pub snacks, unforgettable live music, and a wide variety of traditional pub games.

Tickets for the event are now available and can be pre-ordered for a discounted price from the GBBF website at www.gbbf.org.uk/tickets. With such demand expected at the doors of Olympia for tickets on the day, pre-ordering is a great way of ensuring you do not miss out on the Festival fun!

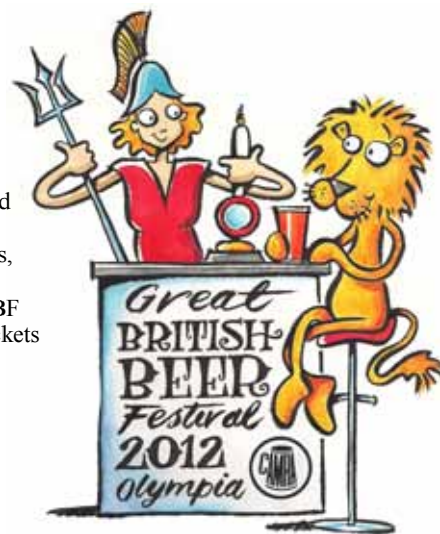
Festival opening times

Tuesday August 7th: 5pm -10:30pm

Wednesday August 8th to Friday August 10th: 12pm - 10:30pm

Saturday August 11th: 11am - 7pm

For further information on the Festival, visit www.gbbf.org.uk.



Festival round-up

HERE are just a few of the beer festivals, large and small, to look out for over the coming months. Scan the rest of Pints West – adverts and editorial – for more.

● 29th June - 1st July. An East Midlands Beer Festival at the **Volunteer Tavern** in St Judes, by Cabot Circus. volunteertavern.co.uk

● 29th June - 1st July. **Ashcott Beer Fest**, on Ashcott playing fields, in its 14th year. Free camping and .great music. www.ashcottbeerfest.org

● 29th June - 1st July. Yeo Valley Lions' 10th anniversary **Claverham Beer Festival**. www.claverham-beer-festival.org.uk

● Fri 22nd & Sat 23rd June. **Pucklechurch Beer & Cider Festival** at the Star Inn car park, 7pm to midnight. CAMRA members pay £3 on the door with CAMRA card for Friday evening only. www.beer-festival.org

● Fri 6th - Sun 8th July. Beer and cider festival at the **Bird in Hand**, Saltford, featuring beers and ciders from the South West, six live bands, hog roast, barbecue and magicians. www.birdinhandsaltford.co.uk

● 19th to 22nd July. The 10th Summer Cornish Beer Festival at the **Star Inn**, Bath.

● 13th - 15th July. **Nailsea Beer and Cider Festival** at Nailsea and Backwell Rugby Club. Friday 6pm-11pm, Saturday noon-11pm, Sunday noon-8pm. www.applefest.co.uk

● Fri 27 - Sun 29 July. The Lions Club of Weston-super-Mare present their 5th Real Ale Festival on the **Beach Lawns**, 11am-11pm Friday & Saturday, 11am-5pm Sunday. Entry is free up to 6pm and £3 after that but free to CAMRA members. www.westonlionsrealalefestival.org.uk

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Mayshill**

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PUB OF THE YEAR 2009**

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**Associate
Member**

News of Dawkins Ales

Upcoming beers

Jubeerlee 6.0% (early June): This is the brewery's special beer to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A rich, complex rum stout, the mission was to make it with something from all 53 countries in the Commonwealth. Where ingredients simply could not be sourced (it is brewed with luxurious chocolates, coffees, teas, fruits, herbs and rums in addition to the best British malt and noble Sovereign hops) the brewers had to be creative; for example the pestle and mortar used to grind the spices is from the Gambia and the final link was to purchase a website from Tivalu, realale.tv; this tiny Pacific nation has very few resources and their ".tv" domain is their main source of export income!

The beer will be out on draught just in time for the Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend and for the first time the brewery will be packaging this brew; available bottle-conditioned from later in the Summer including a boxed collectors edition of just 60 numbered, corked bottles, expected to mature and improve for many years.

Fair Ale 4.0% (mid June): This is a blonde, hoppy beer. The brewery will be donating 10p per pint sold to the St Werburghs City Farm.

NePale Ale 3.6% (mid June): A golden, lemon-scented and refreshing beer brewed with a sprinkling of Himalayan lemongrass. 10p per pint sponsors the Miner's Arms landlord Don on his volunteer mission in September to help renovate a school in Nepal.

Babylon Best 4.0% (early June): Brewer James describes this as an "Uber late hopped best bitter with strong citrus flavour – it's a traditional beer but electrified!"

The One Muskebeer 4.6% (July): A golden, herbal and spicy brew made with new hop variety from Alsace, 'Aramis', hence the pun.

Pole Vault 4.0% (July): A blonde beer made athletically with the fragrant Polish single variety 'Marynka' hop – their Olympic themed beer.

Pub news

Although taking place as Pints West is at the printers, it's worth mentioning that the **Portcullis** in Clifton hosted a 'Eurovision Beer Contest' from 24th to 28th May, Landlord Joe chose around 25 ales, many from new London breweries rarely seen in Bristol, and customers could watch the Eurovision Song Contest live on the big screen ... they'll have needed a drink in hand for that!

Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend is being celebrated by Helen and Krishna at the **Green Man** in Kingsdown with a 'British Cider & Cheese Festival' from 1st to 5th June. "A right Royal Cheese-Up!" as Glen

News from Cheddar Ales

A special-edition beer called **Crown and Glory** is being brewed by A Cheddar Ales to be available throughout the summer and to tie in with the Jubilee, European Football Championships and Olympic celebrations. Cheddar Ales say they are "proud to celebrate all things British this summer and hope to encapsulate the feel-good factor and to put back the great in Great Britain."

The beer itself is a wonderfully hoppy 4.5% golden/amber beer brewed with pale and crystal malts liberally hopped with Bramling Cross, Simcoe, Cascade and Styrian Golding hops for a "fruity little number packing a powerful punch". They go on to say, somewhat over the top perhaps, "Think of a combination of the Queen's delicacy with the finesse of the Spanish football team rounded off by the punch of an Olympic heavyweight Gold medal boxer and you may just have it in a glass."

The brewery, whilst in full production, are also in the midst of planning their **fourth annual beer festival**, to take place over the weekend of 15th to 17th June. Last year saw 1,700 guests enjoying a full programme of music and entertainment alongside a selection of 45 beers and over £3,000 was raised for charity. This year the plan is to have 60 beers and ciders and even more acts and activities to entertain the whole family. For more details contact the brewery or check out the website www.cheddarales.co.uk.

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SUMMER SPECIAL BEERS

Jubeerlee 6.0% Jubilee luxurious Rum Stout
Babylon Best 4.0% Blonde and hoppy
Dana Gold 4.6% Golden, aromatic
Fair Ale 4.0% Blonde. 10p/pt to the City Farm
NepAle Ale 3.6% Blonde fundraising mission beer
The One Muskebeer 4.6% Golden, spicy
Pole Vault 4.0% Blonde, refreshing

OUR FIVE GBG 2012-LISTED PUBS

The Miner's Arms Mina Rd, St Werburghs, BS2 9YQ
ANNUAL BEER FESTIVAL 13-17 JUNE

The Hillgrove Dove St, Kingsdown, BS2 8LT
The Victoria Southleigh Rd, Clifton, BS8 2BH
The Portcullis Wellington Ter, Clifton Village, BS8 4LE
The Green Man Alfred Place, Kingsdown, BS2 8HD

Dawkins Ales Timsbury, Bath Tel 01761 472242

Dawkins described it.

From 13th to 17th June Don at the **Miner's Arms** in St Werburghs is hosting his annual Summer Beer Festival featuring favourites chosen by Dawkins staff, colleagues and regulars. On the Saturday this coincides with the immensely popular City Farm Fair, for which they'll be selling the fundraising beer, Fair Ale, mentioned above.

Now the South West's largest independent beer festival

2012 Nailsea Beer and Cider Festival

at Nailsea and Backwell Rugby Club

Friday 13 July from 6.00pm-11.00pm
Saturday 14 July from Noon-11.00pm
Sunday 15 July from Noon-8.00pm



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Over 100 beers, ciders and perries.
 Free live music Saturday and Sunday.
 Childrens' village and free entrance to the grounds.

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See our website www.applefest.co.uk for full ticket details, directions and public transport links, or call us at the Club on 01275 810818.

Sydney microbreweries and cask ales

If you find yourself visiting the Antipodes, you may wish to know where you might find a decent beer. The good news is that in Sydney, as in the rest of Australia, microbreweries are appearing everywhere. I know of over 20 microbreweries in the Sydney area, with at least two new ones in the last year.

The beer is much better than it used to be, but most of it is in keg form. There are a few places with cask ales, and there is some fine bottle-conditioned ale. These 'boutique' beer prices are around twice the English beer prices though. Here are a few tasters...

Red Oak Boutique Beer Café - 201 Clarence Street, NSW 2000
www.redoak.com.au

I did not notice the hand pump when I visited, but I have read a comment on the internet saying that there is one. If there is, fine, but if you end up drinking a keg ale, I recommend something other than the English Bitter or the IPA. They are much nicer from the cask and this brewpub does many other fine beers.

Harts - Corner of Essex & Gloucester St, The Rocks, NSW 2000
www.hartspub.com

This boutique pub typically sells beer made by small breweries and their own Rocks Brewing Co. They did not have a hand pump when I visited, but I was told that they had plans to install one. It is not cheap here, but you can find nice beer from local microbreweries. 'Happy hour' is on Fridays 4pm to 6pm.

Schwartz Brewery Hotel - 40-44 Wentworth Avenue, NSW 2000
www.schwartzbreweryhotel.com

Only keg beer available here, but a cheap and pleasant place to drink – and even cheaper during 'happy hour' (5pm to 7pm weekdays)! Probably their best is Schwartz Bier, a fine dark beer. I also like their Hefeweizen wheat beer, a style which is not common in Australia.

Four Pines - 29/43-45 East Esplanade, Manly, NSW 2095
www.4pinesbeer.com.au

Their Pale Ale is their most awarded beer, but I prefer their other beers, which included an ESB and a Christmas seasonal beer. They do have cask ale on the hand pump, which is served at a reasonable cask ale temperature. You can get to Manly by taking the ferry from Circular Quay. Taking this ferry is one of the nicest things to do if you visit Sydney. If you do go to Manly, you might also like to go to Murrays at Manly.

Murrays at Manly - 49 North Steyne, Manly, Sydney 2095
www.murraysbrewingco.com.au/manly/manlyWelcome.php

The beer is actually brewed at Port Stephens, 190 km north of Sydney, but their main outlet is in Manly. In Australia, this probably counts as a 'brewery tap'. They make and sell some nice beers including Icon 2 IPA and Libertine. They sell a sample palette for \$19 which allows you to select the Murrays beers of your choice. They have a hand pump, but I was told that the beer came from a keg.

Australian Hotel and Brewery - 350 Annangrove Road, Rouse Hill, NSW 2154
www.australianhotelandbrewery.com.au

This huge brew pub is not easily accessible using public transport. You can also try their beers at Harts, mentioned above. They had two hand pumps on the bar which, I was told, were being set up for cask ale.

Happy Goblin - 11/1 Marina Close, Mt Kuringai, NSW 2080
www.happygoblin.com.au

I found this beer in central Sydney at the Oak Barrel, 152 Elizabeth Street. I had a Strong Ale. The label did not specify the alcohol content. Although the beer was quite expensive, it was very nice.

There is certainly no shortage of nice places to have a beer in Sydney, but if you want to find something a bit more palatable, you have to look

around. I visited Sydney in early 2010 and early this year – the number of bars selling more interesting beers is rocketing. Also, the Australian microbrewers seem to be ready to try anything different, for example, a Smoked IPA from Australian Breweries. Underground Brewing produces a Red Ale in the style of a Belgian Roddenbach, and a Black Pilsner from Pinchgut also having a sour taste.

Incidentally, the best book that I found was the *Ultimate Beer Guide Australia and New Zealand* (produced by Beer and Brewer Magazine). The book is cheaper at Dan Murphy's bottle shops, but it pays to check up online if the store you are going to has it.

Gary Frost

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
- **Brit**, High Street, Weston-super-Mare
- **Cabot Court**, Weston-super-Mare
- **Cornubia**, Temple Street, Bristol
- **Dragon Inn**, Weston-super-Mare
- **Globe**, Frampton Cotterell
- **Gryphon**, Colston Street, Bristol
- **Hopse & Anchor**, Jacobs Wells Road, 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
- **Vittoria**, Whiteladies Road, Bristol
- **Volunteer Tavern**, New Street, St Judes, Bristol
- **Waverley**, Severn Road, Weston-super-Mare
- **Westbury Park Tavern**, Henleaze
- **Woolpack Inn**, St Georges, Weston-super-Mare



The actual details of the discounts vary from pub to pub and from time to time. The discount is at the discretion of the pub and can be as little or as large as the pub feels suits their business. Some of the latest details may be found on our web site at www.camrabristol.org.uk 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

Another look back at local campaigning

In May 1989, *Pints West's* forerunner *The Avon Drinker* was launched and those early editions provide an interesting local CAMRA branch archive. So just what was the local branch campaigning about back then? This time we look at 1991.

At the beginning of 1991, many Courage licensees in the Bristol area were awaiting the outcome of talks between Grand Met and Courage who were doing a “breweries-for-pubs” swap in order to comply with an undertaking they had given to the Department of Trade and Industry to reduce their combined pub concentration in the city to below 25%. This undertaking had been driven by the then Government’s legislation to reform the brewing industry. In order to do this, Courage had already committed to disposing of about 300 pubs in the South West as part of a package with the Ushers brewery in Trowbridge and a further 150 low-barrelage pubs were expected to come on to the market. Other pubs were probably going to be leased. Later in the year, Ushers and its estate of 433 pubs became independent of Grand Met.

Meanwhile, Bristol’s newest Brewery, Wickwar, which opened in 1990 expanded its beer range to three (BOB, Olde Merryford and Victory Ale) and increased its pub estate to three (the Star in Frampton Cotterell, the Cadbury House in Montpelier and the Bell in Hillgrove Street, Stokes Croft). In the spring of 1991, Hardington Brewery in Bedminster opened its doors. Its first brew was Hardington Best shortly followed by stronger ale called Jubilee and then Hardington’s Trad, a session bitter.

One of CAMRA’s major campaigns at the time was “Support your Independent Breweries” during the month of July. Here in the South West, we entered into the spirit of this **BIG TIME!** At the time there were 28 independent breweries within the South West region (Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall), brewing 80 different real ales. In order to publicise the choice and quality of beer available, a party of CAMRA members from the South West undertook a ‘South West Indies Tour’ over the course of five days visiting all 28 of them and lived to tell the tale!

Interestingly, in 2012 there are 119 independent brewers in the South West producing 571 regularly available real ales. Just a thought, to mount the same South West campaign again would probably have to be done over a month in relay fashion – well, it is Olympic year!

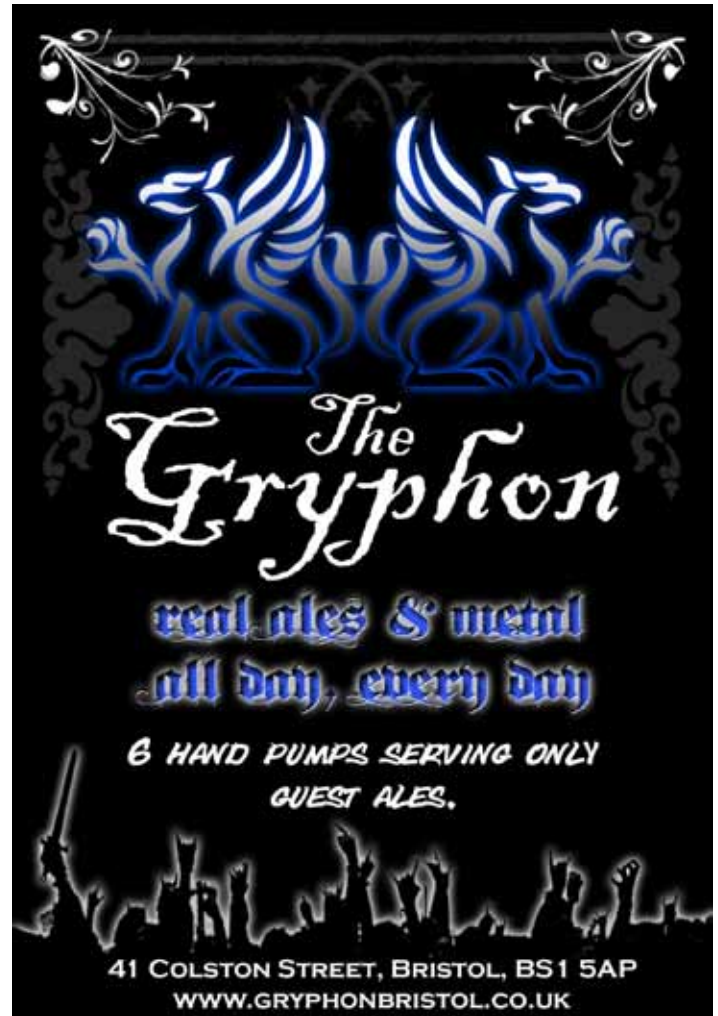
On the pubs front, it was smiles all round for Smiles. The White Hart at Littleton-on-Severn – hot on the heels of being awarded Avon Branch’s Pub of the Year award in 1990 – won CAMRA’s national award for pub refurbishment. This award was made in conjunction with the Chartered Society of Designers. Believe it or not the pub went on to do the hat-trick by then winning the Avon Branch Pub of the Year for 1991 as well. The newly opened Smiles Brewery Tap offered a new concept in pubs whereby it opened at 8am for cooked breakfasts and closed at 8pm; it offered Belgian bottled beers such as Chimay, Duval and fruit beers from Tinnerman’s brewery; and if beer wasn’t to your taste, you could enjoy fresh coffee. Wolverhampton & Dudley took over the Beaufort in High Street, Clifton (near the Downs).

Older readers may remember the legendary Great Western Beer Festivals that were held in the old Exhibition Centre down by the docks.

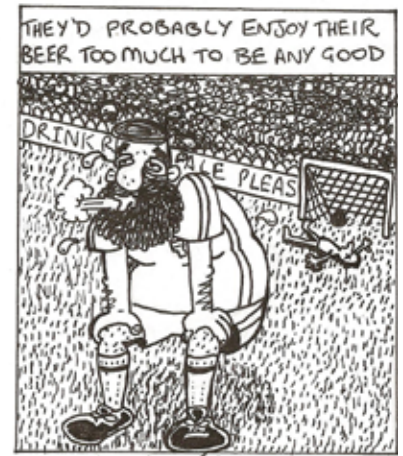
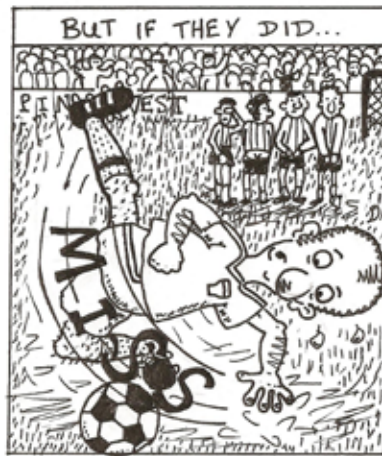
Well, in November of 1991, the Great Western was resurrected with around 50 brewers exhibiting over 150 different ales. Mark Wallington, the then owner of Archers Brewery in Swindon, took the Supreme Champion award for Archers Best. Sadly Archers ceased brewing on its Swindon site in 2010.

Towards the end of the year, CAMRA’s membership reached an all time high by passing the 30,000 mark (in 2012, we now have almost 140,000 members).

Alison Bridle



The Bar Code
by Eddie Taberner



EDDIE TABERNER 06/07/11

Home thoughts from abroad

WE recently met up with Neil Harris who had a stint as chairman of the local branch of CAMRA – then known as the Avon branch – when he lived in Bristol between 1975 and 1978. He now lives in Wales...

Real Ale at Home

The set of old photographs of local off-licences, now deceased, published in the Winter edition of Pints West was quite remarkable. Such is the dominance of supermarket sales and “mail-order” that the specialist off-licence is a seriously endangered species, essentially surviving on up-market wines and spirits trade. So are these photographs merely of historic interest?

They brought to mind another distant memory, the “Jug & Bottle”: a pub’s built-in off-licence. An outside door led to a tiny, dead-end passage serviced only by a hatch into one of the bar serveries. An outlet whither you could despatch the wife or kids – safely and legally – to fetch a top-up without stirring from the couch! Does your correspondent have a similar set of photographs of J&Bs? Indeed, do any historic Bristol pubs still retain architectural evidence of former in-house off-licences?

One thing is certain: supermarkets have sewn up the market for big brand, sterile liquids in can and bottle; at prices which no other suppliers can approach. Worse still, they and their “brewers” (I hesitate to use this term for manufacturers of “fizz”) exploit this price advantage to indoctrinate the masses into believing this is what “beer” drinking should be about: a cold, bland, gassy, soulless slurping experience.

What then is the future for real ale at home? Is home-brewing the only option? Not in my world. I look out for two- and four-pint containers in pubs, for taking away some of my favourite cask ale. A rare sight these days, so I always have my own container in the car as a precaution. But it is such hard work! Where in the pub trade is there the enterprise, the drive, to sell more cask beer? Only on the premises, it seems.

Every Indian restaurant I know cherishes its take-home trade, offering a discount for off-sales. Most offer free home delivery, with a minimum order of far less than the cost of four pints. Why don’t landlords do the same, instead of bemoaning declining trade?

Years ago CAMRA launched CART, the Campaign for Real Take-home. Brewers responded by furnishing their pubs with a colourful variety of take-home containers: plastic, card, “stone”, glass; mimicking jugs, tankards, cartons, pots. The ubiquitous plastic four-pint “Car-rykeg” – with its pressure-release cap and guaranteed to remain upright as you sweep around bends – appeared sporting the liveries of dozens of brewery companies. But promotion died in the pubs. Bar prices were not discounted. Some publicans even charged for the containers, a shifty rip-off. Game over. The in-house take-home container is now as rare a sight as the J&B: and when you flourish your own (so to speak), most bar staff think you must be carrying round a sample.

Do not be deterred. We can still enjoy fresh real ale at home, direct from the bar pump: we have to keep sending the message; and spur demand, by example.

A Pub is a Pub is a Pub?

I picked-up the newsletter on what was my first proper pub crawl in Bristol for almost 30 years: a real trip down memory lane, revisiting a selection of “old haunts” and delighting in their survival amidst the trade carnage blighting so many areas. Some detail blurs over the years, but it was salutary to note what has changed and what is timeless.

There has never been a truly stereotypical pub of any era, but coming forward in time I am struck by the greater range of established “styles” of hostelry today. In the 70’s there was but a handful of “food pubs”: Bernie Inns was blazing a trail with Prawn Cocktail and Steak & Chips¹ at a very few “upmarket” pubs like the Llandoger Trow. The Llandoger still has its separate restaurant. Zerodegrees is a restaurant with beer. Other “pubs” are much more eating than drinking establishments (especially out of town). Some focus on “family”. The “drinking pub” – with and without “Sport” – continues to prosper; but generally based on a wider range of drinks, services and clientele. Bristol is blessed with a good share of the latter, many maintaining a traditional setting and ambience (the Kings Head is still such a treat!).

¹ A real break with pub food tradition (Pork Pie & Chips, or Ploughmans if you were lucky: Chicken in the Basket was not yet upon us, at least not in Bristol).

The so-called “community pub” – means different things to different groups, I suspect – has emerged; and I encountered the Farm in St. Werburgh’s whilst trying to track down the South Wales Railwaymen’s Tavern, recalled from my earlier days about town. Different! The exterior is one great agrarian mural; the interior is like a gallery for a local artist; there are extensive covered and grassed drinking areas outside: and the pint of Gem I supped was very acceptable.

In the 70’s we witnessed – and encouraged as our only early “lifeline” – the emergence of the real ale “exhibition pubs”, with anything from 6 to 15 hand pulls. Entrepreneur Mike Cannon opened the Malt & Hops in Broad Street (now Royal Bank of Scotland?) to a great CAMRA Branch fanfare; and CAMRA Investments Ltd revived the Old Fox in Eastville.

The “exhibition pubs” star generally waned as range predominated over turnover and quality; but Wetherspoon is in some ways the legacy. Wetherspoon has a mixed reputation for ale, but it was a great joy to be engaged in informed and interesting conversation about beer character with one of the bar staff in the Commercial Rooms. I used to anticipate the quality of the beer from the preferences of the landlord: but today many “managers” do not drink whilst “on duty”. In the Commercial Rooms, our host knew his ales and indulged our passion for them freely. If only real beer appreciation became practised and extolled more widely on both sides of the bar, we could campaign less and relax more.

A purpose of these musings is to prompt the thought that CAMRA, through its pub guides and newsletters, should begin to classify pubs more specifically to type: to better steer people towards the type of establishment which suits them best, in which to enjoy their real ale. A challenging proposition, flirting with controversy, fraught with difficulty and risk; but perhaps nonetheless important if it engages a full spectrum of outlets and the widest population of real ale enthusiasts.

Campaigning

As a footnote, another “historic” feature in the Spring edition caught my eye: that on the “first” edition of your forerunner, “Avon Drinker”, in 1989. In fact that was a relaunch. The original “Avon Drinker” appeared in the mid 70’s. My copies are archived, but when I can dig them out I will forward them to the editor. They may stir more memories: and reinforce some ageless lessons.

Amongst other topics, I recall that those early editions covered the “Bristol Pub-goers Petition”: the original plank of CAMRA’s ultimately successful campaign for the right of every landlord to stock an independent draught ale of his choice (arguably the most significant factor behind the explosion of microbreweries, now a mainstay of pub trade and real ale production). They also covered CAMRA’s submission to the Office of Fair Trading of a complaint about Courage’s local monopoly of the licensed trade in Bristol: one of several such complaints around the country, which precipitated a major investigation and ultimate shake-up of pub ownership. Drinkers today owe a great debt to those early campaigners.

The threats now are to the very extent and nature of pub facilities: “no pubs” is as depressing a prospect as “nothing but Courage pubs” and “pubs with no (real) beer”.

Key to success of all our campaigns is engendering public appreciation of and demand for top quality beer: the unique, very special and diverse characteristics of well-made, well-kept, and well-presented real cask ale. Real ale is still an accessible, budget product – neither exclusive nor necessarily pricey. Our job is to help keep it this way, best of all in (or directly from) good pubs.

Neil Harris



Solution to the crossword on page 27

Across: 1. Scholar, 5. Diamond, 9. Manhandle, 10. Opals, 11. Expos, 12. Bipeds, 25. Optic, 26. Moonshine, 27. Diluted, 28. Dominos, Down: 1. Summer, 2. Handpumps, 3. Liaison, 4. Radiogram, 5. Dread, 6. Anosmia, 7. Okapi, 8. Dispense, 14. Leasehold, 15. Exemption, 16. Ringwood, 18. Meercat, 19. Unbosom, 20. Adieu, 23. Aimed.

Branch diary

Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA

- **Wed 12th June** – Committee meeting, Cornubia 8pm.
- **Sat 16th June** – BBF thank-you trip to Cheddar Beer Festival. Depart Cornubia 11.30am, return approx 6.30pm.
- **Tues 19th June** – Explorer trip, Paulton area, details tbc.
- **Thurs 21st June** – BADRAG social upstairs at the Gryphon, 7.00 for 7.30, including wash-up meeting for Mild Month of May.
- **Wed 27th June** – Branch meeting, Wellington 8pm.

- **Wed 11th July** – Committee meeting, Cornubia 8pm.
- **Wed 18th July** – Explorer trip, across city, details tbc.
- **Thurs 19th July** – BADRAG social at the Vittoria and Highbury Vaults.
- **Wed 25th July** – Quarterly Branch meeting, Horts 8pm.

- **Wed 8th August** – Committee meeting, Cornubia 8pm.
- **Thurs 9th August** – GBBF trip. Depart Cornubia 9.15am, return Centre approx 8pm.
- **Tues 14th August** – Explorer trip details tbc.
- **Thurs 16th August** – BADRAG social at the Volunteer Tavern.
- **Wed 22nd August** – Branch meeting – Horts 8pm.
- **Wed 29th August** – Explorer trip details tbc.

- **Sat 8th September** – Minehead Beer Festival. Depart Cornubia 9.15am, return Centre approx 7.30pm.

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 (Social Secretary)



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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).

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Bath & Borders diary

- **Tuesday 29th May, 8:30pm.** Branch 2012 Pub of the Year award to be presented to the Fox and Hounds in Warminster.
- **Thursday 7th June, 8:30pm.** Shepton Mallet crawl, starting at Kings Arms, Garston St, ending at the Swan (possibly quite quickly!).
- **Tuesday 12th June, 8:30pm.** The Branch AGM. To be held at the White Horse in Twerton. We will also be presenting the branch's City Pub of the Year award.
- **Thursday 21st June, 8:30pm.** Westbury crawl, starting at the Lopes Arms in the Market Place, and then on to a few nearby pubs.
- **Tuesday 26th June, 8:30pm.** The Branch Meeting to be held at the Prince of Wales in Dilton Marsh.
- **Thursday 5th July, 8:30pm.** Frome town centre crawl, starting at the George Hotel on Market Place. More details to follow.

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.

Weston diary and contact

See page 19

Severn Vale diary and contact

See page 31

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