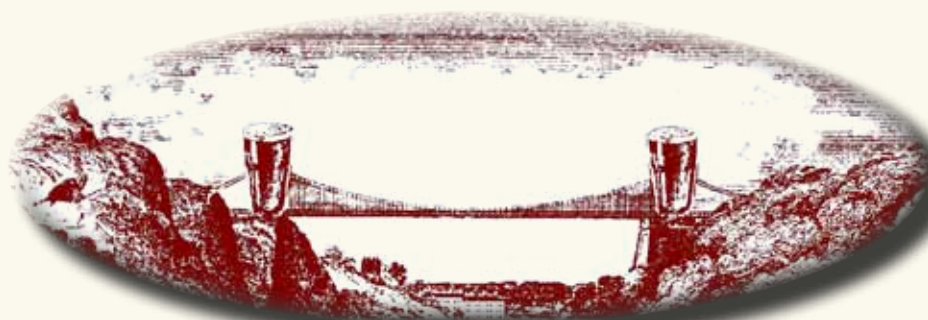




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CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

# PINTS WEST

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





# The fight to save your pint continues

A open letter to Chloe Smith MP, economic secretary to the Treasury

*Dear Chloe Smith*

HOW many more pubs do you want to see close? I was prompted to ask the question following your intervention in a debate in parliament this month when MPs representing constituencies with breweries raised their concerns about high levels of beer duty.

Andrew Griffiths, the member for Burton and chairman of the Parliamentary Beer Group, singled out the particular problem of the beer duty escalator, which automatically increases duty in the annual budget without recourse to parliament.

Your reply was breathtaking. "The duty increase forms a vital part of the government's plan to tackle the debt left by the previous government. It would be worse for everybody if we did not tackle that debt. I mean beer drinkers, cider drinkers, spirit drinkers, wine drinkers, brewers and publicans."

Worse? It's difficult to see how things could be worse for beer drinkers, brewers and publicans than they are at present. Since the duty escalator was introduced by the Labour chancellor Alistair Darling in 2008, beer duty has increased by 42 per cent. Between 2008 and 2012, more than 4,500 pubs closed. You may consider there is a connection between these two statistics.

The life is being squeezed from British breweries and pubs as a result of punitive taxes paid on beer. Here are some facts produced by the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA) and the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) about the levels of beer duty levied in Europe. For every pint of 5 per cent beer, the amounts are as follows:

Ukraine 4p; Germany 5p; Spain 5p; France 7p; Czech Republic 8p; Portugal 12p; Croatia 14p; Russia 14p; Italy 14p; Greece 15p; Netherlands 16p; Denmark 17p; Ireland 39p; Sweden 47p and... Britain 55p.

Yet, in the debate, you said the tax on beer in Britain was not "an overwhelming or unreasonable amount". You bring a whole new meaning to the word "unreasonable".

It beggars belief that you feel beer drinkers, brewers and publicans should foot the bill for the economic problems allegedly created by the previous government. This is neither the time nor the place to discuss who was responsible for the economic disaster that hit the world in 2008. But it certainly wasn't drinkers who would like to visit their pubs for a few pints of bitter without extending their bank overdrafts before they leave home.

To put the plight of British beer drinkers into even sharper focus, here's another startling fact: duty in Britain accounts for 40 per cent of all the beer taxes levied within the European Union, yet the British consume only 13 per cent of all the beer brewed and consumed in the EU.

In short, Miss Smith, brewing and pub retailing in Britain is being driven to the edge of the cliff as a result of government taxation. You made the startling claim in your response to MPs that "the government would lose £35m in 2013 if the escalator was cancelled". I would be interested to know how this figure was arrived at: it sounds like an example of what your government colleague Dr Vince Cable used to call "voodoo economics" when he was in opposition.

The reality is that the government loses far more than £35m every year as a result of the impact of the eyewatering levels of duty and VAT levied on beer, brewing and pub retailing. Every time the government increases duty, fewer people go to the pub. When the consumption of beer goes down, less duty is paid to the Treasury. The same holds true for VAT.

When a pub closes, you lose the VAT paid on food and drink in that outlet.

Employees who lose their jobs will no longer pay income tax. On the contrary: the government will have to pay them unemployment benefit. Perhaps you could ask the Treasury to analyse how much income – in the form of duty, VAT and employment taxes – has been lost in the period 2008-12 which saw 4,500 pubs close.

In the past 10 years, the consumption of all forms of alcohol in Britain has fallen by 20 per cent. Some of that decrease may be accounted for by lifestyle changes, but a substantial proportion is the result of people being priced out of the market.

Your government promised to be "pub friendly" when it came to office. It has been nothing of the sort. By continuing to operate the

escalator, you are forcing pubs to close. Your prime minister believes in the Big Society but such a society will wither on the vine if pubs, at the heart of their communities, go out of business.

Both your prime minister and home secretary have encouraged people to drink in pubs, where alcohol is consumed moderately and sensibly. But it's a hollow objective if pubs are driven out of business as a result of ruinous levels of duty and VAT.

Beer taxation is not "reasonable", Miss Smith. On the contrary, it's killing the British pub. It's time for a U-turn.

Yours sincerely,

*Roger Protz*

*Roger Protz is the editor of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide. His open letter to Chloe Smith MP has appeared in pub trade newspaper The Publican's Morning Advertiser and CAMRA's newspaper What's Brewing.*

## Sign the beer tax e-petition!

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

**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](http://CAMRA.ORG.UK/SAVEYOURPINT)

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

**SAVE THE GREAT BRITISH PINT!**

Pub closures running at 16 a week

Falling beer sales call a

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, has today called for urgent Government action to save Britain's historic pub culture in light of new research showing how 16 pubs now close across the country on a weekly basis. The campaign has expressed particular concern that Government policy is taking the peripheries of Britain with half of those (a week) taking place in the south.

1,078 pubs have been closed since 2008

Duty and VAT on a 5% pint sold at £3 accounts for over a third of the price of a pint.

CAMRA CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

# Champion Beer of Britain 2012

## Lucky No.9 for Coniston brewery

After a year of local tasting panels and regional heats leading up to the finals, CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, can announce that Coniston brewery's **No.9 Barley Wine** has been crowned the 'Best Beer' in Britain at the Great British Beer Festival held in Olympia, London.

No.9 Barley Wine, which has an ABV of 8.5%, was described by the judges as "having fantastic finesse, reminiscent of a fine cognac."

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

Roger Protz, of the final judging panel, spoke in praise of the winner. He said: "The judges in the final tasting were overjoyed by the tremendous quality of the beers this year. There wasn't a poor beer in the competition, and they were all of the highest quality. It was a tough choice, and the final results were very close."

David Smith of Coniston brewery, said: "We were delighted to win the competition in 1998 with Bluebird, and we are delighted to win again! We've always been at the top and we're glad to regain the recognition we deserve. It's an all-British beer using solely British ingredients, very fitting for this Diamond Jubilee year."

With Coniston securing the Gold award for 2012, this year's Silver went to Green Jack brewery's Trawlerboys Best Bitter, whilst the Bronze award went to Dark Star's American Pale Ale.

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All day Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays

### Front page

The view from the balcony at the Great British Beer Festival which made its return to Olympia this August.  
Photo by Richard Brooks

Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, added: "It's great to see a rare beer style being championed. Obviously it's a fairly strong beer, therefore it is a great opportunity for pubs to try third-pint glassware so consumers can enjoy this wonderful ale in moderation."

## The results in full

### Overall winners

**Gold:** Coniston, No.9 Barley Wine (from Coniston, Cumbria)  
**Silver:** Green Jack, Trawlerboys Best Bitter (from Lowestoft, Suffolk)  
**Bronze:** Dark Star, American Pale Ale (from Horsham, West Sussex)

### Category winners

#### Mild category

**Gold:** Rudgate, Ruby Mild (from York, North Yorkshire)  
**Silver:** Hobsons, Hobsons Mild (from Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire)  
**Bronze:** Son of Sid, Muckcart Mild (from Little Gransden, Bedfordshire)

#### Bitter category

**Gold:** Purple Moose, Snowdonia Ale (from Porthmadog, Gwynedd)  
**Silver:** Tintagel, Castle Gold (from Tintagel, Cornwall)  
**Joint Bronze:** Flowerpots, Bitter (from Cheriton, Hampshire)  
**Joint Bronze:** Fuller's, Gale's Seafarers Ale (from London, W4)  
**Joint Bronze:** Salopian, Shropshire Gold (from Shrewsbury, Shropshire)

#### Best Bitter category

**Gold:** Green Jack, Trawlerboys Best Bitter (from Lowestoft, Suffolk)  
**Silver:** Salopian, Hop Twister (from Shrewsbury, Shropshire)  
**Joint Bronze:** Oakwell, Senior Bitter (from Barnsley, South Yorkshire)  
**Joint Bronze:** Milton, Pegasus (from Milton, Cambridgeshire)

#### Golden Ale category

**Gold:** Dark Star, American Pale Ale (from Horsham, West Sussex)  
**Silver:** Cumbrian Legendary Ales, Langdale (from Hawkshead, Cumbria)  
**Bronze:** Hobsons, Town Crier (from Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire)

#### Strong Bitter category

**Gold:** Dark Star, Festival (from Horsham, West Sussex)  
**Silver:** O'Hanlon's, Stormstay (from Whimple, Devon)  
**Bronze:** Highland, Orkney IPA (from Swannay, Orkney)

#### Speciality Beer category

**Gold:** Dunham Massey, Chocolate Cherry Mild (from Dunham Massey, Gtr Manchester)  
**Silver:** Little Valley, Hebden's Wheat (from Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire)  
**Bronze:** Nethergate, Umbel Magna (from Pentlow, Essex)

#### Champion Winter Beer of Britain (from category winners announced in January 2012)

Coniston, No.9 Barley Wine (from Coniston, Cumbria)  
Hammerpot, Bottle Wreck Porter (from Poling, West Sussex)  
Cairngorm, Black Gold (from Aviemore, Highlands)  
Driftwood, Alfie's Revenge (from St Agnes, Cornwall)

#### Champion Bottled Beer of Britain winners

**Gold:** Stewart, Embra (from Loanhead, Midlothian)  
**Joint silver:** Great Gable, Yewbarrow (from Egremont, Cumbria)  
**Bronze:** Molson Coors, Worthington's White Shield (from Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire)

# 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.*

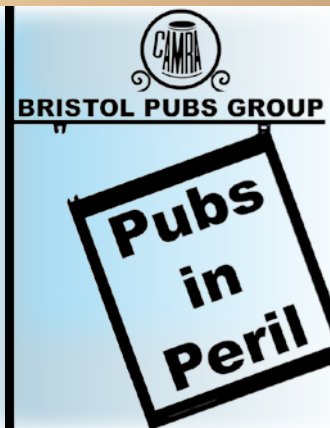
*The Bristol Pubs Group will:*

**Promote the use of community pubs.**

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

**Campaign against insensitive alterations.**

[www.camrabristol.org.uk/pubsgroup](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk/pubsgroup)  
[bristolpubsgroup@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bristolpubsgroup@yahoo.co.uk)



## Pub News

What is your preference – Indian restaurant, Tesco store or housing development? Well mine is **Public House**. But the trend is towards the first three so it is becoming even more important to support your local and arrange your social events at the pub before consideration of elsewhere. Be vigilant and treat rumours with suspicion.

There is some potential good news to start with within the city centre of Bristol where the former **Sceptre Tavern / BJ's Liquor Emporium** (and more recently O'Briens Irish Sandwich Bar) adjacent to Welsh Back in Baldwin Street has attracted the interests of Scotland's **Brew Dog** brewery and pub chain. Watch this space for news on this former pub re-opening. The **Coach & Horses** in Gloucester Lane, Old Market has been bought by the Euphorium Bakery who also own community pubs such as the Queen Victoria in St. Werburgh's and the Golden Bottle in Lockleaze, as well as the heavy metal/real ale venue, the Gryphon in Colston Street. Expect a full refurbishment and re-opening of the Coach & Horses towards the end of the year. Nearby the long-closed **Stapleton Road Tavern** is due to be put back into use as an arts centre. The **King Charles** in King Square Avenue off of North Street, Stokes Croft, which is also long closed, is the target for a fast food outlet. Along Hotwell Road the **Spring Garden** is also under prey from developers who want to convert it into flats. Their planning application, which Bristol Pubs Group objected to, has been declined by Bristol City Council.

Those contributors to the erosion of our pub stock, Tesco, have an eye on the **Forester's Arms** in Westbury-on-Trym where a planning

application for adding air-conditioning units would appear to have more to do with shop use than that of pub use. In Horfield the **Fellowship** on Filton Avenue has been taken over by Tesco despite the presence of the neighbouring Co-op and green grocery shop. This was a busy pub which will be sorely missed. Because Tesco think Bristol does not have enough Tesco stores they are also well into a conversion of the former **Bell** in St. George as another retail outlet. The former **Hobgoblin** on Gloucester Road has closed following a short spell with a French theme, and the lease is available. This well laid out, good sized corner pub also has a rear garden and is right in amongst the shopping and pubbing of busy Gloucester Road. A good pub acquisition opportunity we might suggest? The **Chequers** in Kingswood has suffered a fire and awaits the next episode in its destiny. A large pub attractively placed next to the river Avon, the **Bull** in Crews Hole is open but the lease is offered for sale. In Eastville the **White Lion** has been sold at auction. We do not know to whom or what the intention of the new owner is. Better news in Bedminster where the **Princess of Wales** on British Road has re-opened and landmark pub the **London Inn** is undergoing refurbishment to enable it to re-open soon. Meanwhile the **Kellaway** on, you guessed it, Kellaway Avenue has been acquired by the same people behind the Beehive on Wellington Hill West. They intend to retain the two rooms and continue to offer it as a pub, and the **Cotham Porter Stores**, on Cotham Road, has a new owner.

Outside of the city the **King George VI** at Filton has re-opened following a short closure, the **White Swan** at Downend still has its freehold offered by Punch, and the smart looking **Crown** at Hambrook is "To Let" by Enterprise.

Returning to an earlier theme, two pubs have been, or are being, converted into Indian restaurants. The **Plough** at Thornbury is one and the **Cross Hands** at Pilning is lined up to become one. The **Bristol House** in Milton Road, Weston-super-Mare is strongly rumoured to become a Tesco store, and the **Highwayman** in Kingswood awaits an appeal by the developer after their planning application for its demolition for a housing development was turned down.

Indian restaurant, Tesco store or housing development? I told you so.

Mike Jackson

## Happy hours

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# Bristol CAMRA Pubs Group says: “Tesco – hands off our local pubs!”

**T**he Bristol & District CAMRA Pubs Campaigning Group (or Bristol Pubs Group for short) are writing to Tesco to demand they stop converting pubs into stores. They have also asked them to pull out of possible conversions of the Bristol House in Weston-super-Mare and the Foresters in Westbury-on-Trym.

The Bristol House in Milton Road, Weston-super-Mare which is owned by Enterprise Inns, has been closed since last July. Latest reports state that Tesco have been in discussion with Enterprise Inns regarding this pub. Feelings in the area are running high and a high profile campaign by locals has been underway to try and save the pub. A petition against the conversion to a store has already attracted over 1,600 signatures at the time of writing.

The Fellowship in Filton Avenue in Horfield has been acquired by Tesco. Planning applications were submitted to Bristol City Council to enable various alterations such as change of signage and change of shop front so that the pub to can be converted to a store. Locals and CAMRA submitted objections to the application.

CAMRA understands that the Foresters in Westbury-on-Trym is also in Tesco's sights (Tesco have had a planning application for the installation of air-conditioning units at the pub granted).

Commenting on the situation, Peter Bridle, Chair of the Bristol Pubs Group, said: “Only a few weeks ago Tesco said they had no strategy to target pubs. This is an astonishing statement considering that in Bristol alone they have already converted the Friendship Inn in Knowle, the Bell in St George and the Standard of England in Southmead into stores. The Fellowship is the latest and the plan is for it to open as a store in the near future. We now have a further two pubs under threat of conversion. This is also happening in other parts of the country.

“The situation regarding the Bristol House, which has been a pub since the 1930s, is a real concern. There is clearly a lot of support for this pub. It is a focal point for the local community and it is popular with all ages. This is reflected in the very high number of people who have signed the petition to save the pub. We urge Tesco to drop any thoughts



**The Fellowship in Horfield surrounded by Tesco hoarding**

of converting the pub to a store and Enterprise Inns to either reopen it as a pub or sell it as a going concern as soon as possible.

“Regarding the Fellowship, there are very few pubs on Filton Avenue and there is already a Co-op store almost next door to the Fellowship. We could see no justification for this conversion to go ahead. Bristol City Council has recently adopted a policy (‘BCS12’) to give greater protection to community pubs which recognises the important part they play in community cohesion. Sadly, under current national planning law, there is nothing to stop a public house being converted to a store. If Tesco must build a store there why must they target yet another pub?”

Local Filton Avenue resident, Mike Wilson, said: “It is a great shame to lose the Fellowship as a pub. There are very few other options to go for a social drink in the area and, with the existing Co-op being so close, I can see no reason why we should lose our local pub. I submitted an objection to the Council and I know many other local people share my concern.”

There are already around 40 Tesco stores in the Bristol area including one less a mile away from the Fellowship on Gloucester Road North.

Peter Bridle continued: “We are writing to Tesco not only to ask them to stop these conversions but also to ask them to call a halt to targeting pubs in the future. Many of these pubs are viable and have been at the heart of their communities for many years. Tesco risk alienating many people with these conversions. Some people suggest that these pubs must be unviable or they would not be sold. However, it is often the case that the pubs are merely sold in order that the owners can realise an asset even though the pub would be viable under the right management.

We have already lost a substantial number of good pubs and it is time to call a halt to these conversions.”



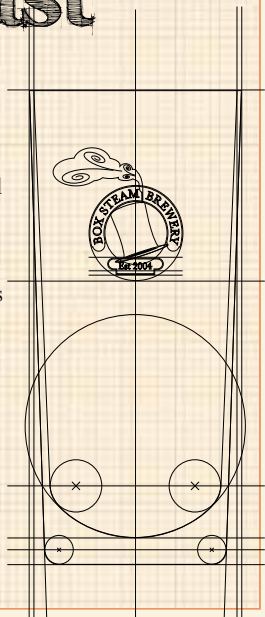
**The beleaguered Bristol House in Weston-super-Mare**

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*engineered by hand*  
www.boxsteambrewery.com

# The Hope Pole Inn, Redfield revisited



In the spring 2010 issue of Pints West (issue 85, page 4) I highlighted the threat to the Hope Pole Inn, Redfield, Bristol which closed in 2009 to raise awareness in the hope that a local micro-brewery or enthusiastic publican might be able to take it on and reopen it as a community pub.

However, sad to say after two years very little has changed, the pub is still closed and boarded up and is no doubt

suffering from neglect after being shut for so long. These days the only noticeable difference is that the selling agent has changed to Christie & Co (0117 946 8500) and that the pub is being sold freehold for £170,000 instead of £225,000.

Recently, I decided to take another look at the building with its potential fate in mind. Then after taking a few pictures for the record, I spotted something which I missed on my previous visit back in early 2010. It was not the pub itself which caught my attention but something on the ground in front of it. On the pub's Avonvale Road frontage, I saw the name "HOP POLE INN" written in yellow trellis patterned bricks within a background pattern of red trellis bricks (see photo). This pattern runs along the building's frontage and is a very rare feature in Bristol (I know of no others, unless Pints West readers know differently?).

My worries about the Hop Pole's likely future soon disappeared and armed with this new information I alerted the CAMRA Bristol Pubs Group as to its importance.

Then a friend of mine with local archaeological knowledge informed

me of a new local listing scheme for heritage buildings being introduced by Bristol City Council and said I should contact Peter Insole, Archaeological Officer at City Development, Bristol City Council, for further details. I followed this up and phoned him to explain why the Hop Pole was an important building and emphasised that it should be included on any new local heritage list. Afterwards, I contacted Stacy Yelland of Easton and Lawrence Hill Neighbourhood Management to highlight the issue of the pub being closed and neglected and asked her to support the idea of using the local listing scheme as a means to secure the building's future as a community facility (preferably a pub). Following my representations

she contacted Peter Insole herself and was informed that suggestions for local pub listings could be submitted on the new Bristol City Council "Know Your Place" website at [www.bristol.gov.uk/page/know-your-place](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/know-your-place) or alternatively by emailing [archaeology@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@bristol.gov.uk). Therefore, to give the pub some protection from redevelopment, it would help a great deal if readers could contact Bristol City Council supporting the retention of the pub as a community facility (pub). Also, by contacting the Easton and Lawrence Hill Neighbourhood Management team through their web site at [www.eastonandlawrencehill.org.uk](http://www.eastonandlawrencehill.org.uk), you can highlight why community pubs are important for social cohesion and interaction. Perhaps, there could be a happy ending for the Hop Pole Inn after all, especially if it can reopen as a community pub.

Ian Beckey



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

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

"Aye, I've got plenty of ACKERS," grumbled my friend, twiddling the umbrella

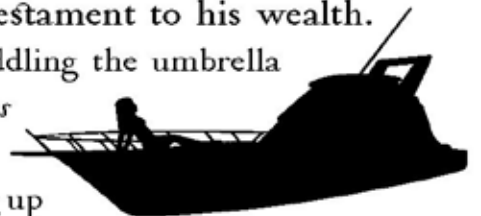
in his coçktail, "but no bloomin' pub and no bloomin' *Theakstons* Old Peculier, that's for sure." "Why don't you just go home and get

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, wiçtfully, I thought

of my very own sçpecial rain-sçattered corner of Yorkshire. The lady I loved would be there now, behind her bar serving pint after pint of *Theakstons* Old Peculier, dark, rich, and deliciously strong. With my return tiçket burning a hole in my poçket, I turned to my mate in exile.

"Fancy another Pina Colada?" I enquired, smugly.



PECULIERLY FINE COMPANY



# JD Wetherspoon - friend or foe?

**W**e have lived alongside JD Wetherspoon – JDW – for the best part of two decades in our region and have seen them establish a set of pubs that attract a loyal following. Bristol city centre locations were followed by pubs in the suburbs and more recently a spread into some of Bristol's satellite towns such as Nailsea and Yate.

In recessionary times, in particular, the low prices make an attractive proposition to consumers, and the “know what you're getting” type of offerings may help people to budget a simple night out. But is there a danger in amongst all of this that the traditional community pub is getting overlooked to the point where its existence of trying to make a living on ever declining small margins suddenly becomes unviable when a new JDW opens just up the road. In the past year the Bristol area has seen the opening of three JDW “super pubs” with another scheduled for Clifton Down as I write, whilst the closures of traditional community pubs continue.

Somehow JDW are offering ridiculously low prices on all of their drinks and food and the pubco (pub company)-owned, brewery-owned, tenanted and managed houses just can't compete. There seems to be an imbalance in how the overheads of running a JDW pubs are organised. Whilst a typical tenant of a pubco-owned pub is paying through the nose to buy drinks through a tied scheme, paying extortionate and ever increasing rent and maintenance as well as being committed to small print and red tape, resulting in having to pass on the costs to the customer, the JDW pubs seem to be avoiding these issues. I don't use JDW very often, but when I do I find myself in something that doesn't really feel like a pub. The experience is more akin to a barn-like chamber where service can be marginal and would-be tempting beer choices are “not on yet” or “just gone off”.

I am not anti JDW, they are just not my type of pub. I do appreciate the variety that our broad range of traditional pub stock offers us with their uneven floors, half-missing fixtures, un-matched furniture and locals that have been drinking there since the year dot. Not to mention the long-suffering tenant or manager that still affords you good cheer and an opinion on all things other than whether it comes with chips or new potatoes. Conversely the JDW model appears that if you've been in one then you've been in them all.

My view is that the Bristol Pubs Group should be concentrating on making life easier for the traditional community boozer rather than promoting an enterprise that already has a huge advantage over the competition.

*Mike Jackson*

**C**AMRA has been such a successful campaigning organisation that we sometimes forget just how much we have achieved. I attained legal drinking age the year the first Good Beer Guide was produced, and what a thin volume that was! In Bristol at that time it was said you could buy any beer as long as it's Courage! They owned over 75% of the pubs in the area having swallowed up both Georges and Bristol United Breweries by 1961.

CAMRA prevented the demise of draught real ale, and in its wake many small breweries started in business – some survived, many didn't – but the biggest problem they all had was getting outlets for their products. The ‘beer orders’ from 1989 enabled pubs to sell a guest cask ale, and there was an increase in free houses; some of these came and went, but one that survived and expanded into a chain was JD Wetherspoon (JDW).

Wetherspoons hit upon a winning formula – larger premises (often former cinemas, offices, banks, etc.), open all day selling food, ground coffee, a range of wines and spirits, and of course real ale. JDW do sell a couple of ‘house ales’ (Ruddles and Abbot at present), but more importantly they promote guest ales from independent breweries all year round, most noticeably during their twice-yearly beer festivals.

Those who don't like JDW should ask themselves whether their business model would work without the guest ales. Of course it would. The fact that they not only sell real ales, but promote them so actively, is helping to preserve cask beer, and promoting independent breweries. JDW are also helping to get people to switch from blander products and try real ale, or sample different beer styles.

So Wetherspoons may be good for beer, but is it leading to pub closures? Well, competition is always a factor, but in many places where JDW has succeeded, the existing pubs have often been tired, old-fashioned and serving poor quality beer to a largely older male clientele. In these areas JDW may have had the effect of getting more people to go to the pub. Other pubcos need to realise that poor quality, high rents and high prices is not a sustainable business model.

I am convinced that the main threat to pubs comes from competition from low-priced drinks sold in supermarkets and off licences, not from JD Wetherspoon. Going to the pub needs to be a good experience, and promoted, and that can't just be left to CAMRA – the pub companies must play their part too, and they are failing to do so. There may have been more licensed premises forty years ago, but I certainly wouldn't want to go back to the days of Tavern keg and little else in nearly every pub in Bristol!

*Steve Comer*

## Know Your Place – new hope in the fight to save Bristol's local heritage pubs

**A**s many of us are already too aware, the current planning system gives very little protection in saving architecturally interesting heritage pubs from demolition in the face of a determined property developer. Notable examples include Wedlocks (the Star), Ashton Gate and the Midland Inn, Midland Road, St.Philips.

When a pub is put forward for listing to English Heritage, the process is fraught with difficulty and normally ends in failure. Very often, a pub fails to be listed because it has insufficient original surviving internal fixtures or fittings even though its external features give it architectural merit. During the 1950's and 60's many pubs were refurbished and original internal fittings were removed to be replaced by modern equivalents. As a consequence, many pubs become non-listable under current guidelines and therefore under threat from developers if they decide to buy them.

However, there could be new hope on the horizon for our local vernacular pubs due to a new local heritage listing scheme being developed by the City Development team at Bristol City Council, called “Know Your Place”. It allows the general public to put forward suitable historic buildings (including pubs) which could go on a local council list which could be used to give pubs, etc, better protection from developers when they submit plans to convert or demolish them. A stakeholder consultation on the scheme was due to take place during the summer and the Council would like it to be in operation by September 2012.

Following initial groundwork by myself and Tim Belsten, contact was made by us with the City Development team on behalf of the CAMRA



Bristol Pubs Group and, due to our input, CAMRA have become important stakeholders in the process. Therefore, readers are encouraged, via the Bristol Pubs Group, to put forward suggestions on which historic pubs with interesting features should go on the list, which could then be forwarded to Bristol City Council for consideration. Suitable candidates might include the Farriers Arms in Fishponds, the Bell in Redcliffe and the Barley Mow in Bedminster, but I'm sure readers could suggest many more. For further information on the local listing scheme visit the “Know Your Place” website at [www.bristol.gov.uk/page/know-your-place](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/know-your-place) or alternatively you can email listing suggestions to [archaeology@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@bristol.gov.uk).

*Ian Beckey*

# New policy will help save pubs

**The National Planning Policy Framework – not words likely to get anyone's pulse racing are they? Yet this new document is a powerful weapon in the battle to protect our beleaguered pubs.**

Over recent years, we've lost huge numbers of pubs through conversion to housing and other uses needing planning permission. When Councils consider planning applications, they must take into account not only their detailed local policies but also the broader national policies. Until March 2012, those national policies occupied a legion of documents totalling over 1000 pages. Some policies were vaguely helpful to pubs, albeit mainly rural ones.

The new Framework sweeps away this complex set of rules, replacing them with just 52 pages of policy guidance. Thanks to intensive lobbying by CAMRA, this new guidance includes national policies which are potentially very helpful to community facilities like pubs. Most importantly, Councils are told to "guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services" which specifically includes community pubs. What's also crucial is that these rules apply to **all** pubs, urban and rural.

Councils must have in place, by March 2013, local planning policies consistent with the Framework; in the meantime, Framework policies should generally be applied.

So what does all this mean if your local is threatened by an unwanted planning application? You should object to the Council, of course, but when doing so, make sure to refer to the relevant policies in the Framework. If you can show that loss of the pub would reduce the local community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs, then the Council should refuse the application. CAMRA has produced an advice note on the best wording to use and this can be found, along with much other information on planning issues, at [www.camra.org.uk/nppf](http://www.camra.org.uk/nppf) or if you would like any of these documents posted to you then please phone CAMRA's Campaigns Officer Claire Cain on 01727 798 454.

The Framework is already making an impact. Councils in Cambridge and the Fylde have used it to refuse planning applications to convert pubs to houses. In those cases, the applicants have appealed against

the refusal and, in each case, the Government inspector, considering the appeal, has dismissed it largely because approval would run counter to Framework policies.

Sadly, not every development adversely affecting pubs needs planning consent – conversion to a restaurant or a shop for instance. CAMRA is campaigning hard to get planning law changed in these areas. In the meantime, the new Framework is very much a step in the right direction.

If you have any issues regarding a campaign to save a local pub in your area you can contact CAMRA's Local Planning Policy Advisor Paul Ainsworth on [paul.ainsworth@camra.org.uk](mailto:paul.ainsworth@camra.org.uk) or go to [camra.org.uk/nppf](http://camra.org.uk/nppf) (or the Bristol Pubs Group: email [bristolpubsgroup@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bristolpubsgroup@yahoo.co.uk) or go to [www.camrabristol.org.uk/pubsgroup](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk/pubsgroup)).

Paul Ainsworth

*Steve Comer, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Eastville, and long-standing CAMRA and Bristol Pubs Group member, added the following comments:*

The National Planning Policy Framework offers some protection for pubs, but the planning system does not offer as many safeguards as most of us would like.

Those wishing to convert a pub into houses or flats may find it more difficult to get permission from now on, but that is no longer the main problem. A change of use from pub to restaurant or supermarket does not need planning permission. We have seen the effect of this in Bristol with the Friendship in Knowle, the Fellowship in Horfield, etc.

So until CAMRA's campaign to change these use classes orders succeeds, we still could see pubs under threat, but all is not doom and gloom. Councils are charged with drawing up local plans which start with Core Strategy. The core strategy for Bristol was approved last year, and those for the surrounding areas are being considered. Bristol's core strategy has a policy in it (BCS12) which aims to protect community facilities including pubs. The key sentence is this one: "Existing community facilities should be retained, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain the use or where alternative provision is made." This takes the protection in the National framework a stage further, but following discussions with the Bristol Pubs Group, the City Council has been consulting on a draft policy to support BCS12. This would resist the loss of public houses unless it could be demonstrated that the pub is no longer viable, or there are range of other pubs in the locality. The policy specifically refers to the viability test developed by CAMRA, and makes clear reference to the social amenities provided by pubs, and their role as local landmarks.

Changes to planning rules will not in themselves prevent pub closures, but we need to do everything we can to ensure policies are in place to help preserve local community pubs, especially in areas where few remain.

WYE'S WORDS No. 12



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# Beer - looks good, tastes good and by golly it fuels the health debate

Every week without fail yet another newspaper article will announce that researchers have just discovered that drinking alcohol is good/bad for you, or red wine prevents/causes heart problems, or that we should all drink less or not at all. Their dramatic headlines make great news, causing otherwise sensible scientific findings to get exaggerated, trivialised or taken out of context just to make a story. So, what is the truth? We have known for centuries what drinking alcohol does to you – the Old Testament Proverbs describe the upside “*Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts*” and the downside “*Who hath woe? Who hath babbling? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine*”.

In the days when water was rarely clean and often contaminated, beer was the healthy, and safer, option for the ordinary man to drink. In addition to the boiling stage of brewing, the fermenting yeast overwhelmed other micro-organisms and the added hops also contain mild antiseptic agents. There is little doubt that alcohol in moderation can have therapeutic benefits, it is a drug after all. The problem lies in the overdose; that unpleasant morning hangover you get after over-indulging is your body's way of telling you that you have poisoned yourself. The government's Department of Health have produced some widely ignored 'recommended safe limits' of no more than 3 or 4 units per day for women and men respectively, but these are only meant as a guide to indicate what will do you no harm at all. As you drink more, the risk of harm will increase. Originally, the recommendation was no more than 21 or 28 units per week, until it was realised that people were saving up their units like Nectar points for an all-out weekend binge. The sex difference, by the way, is because, after absorption, alcohol is distributed evenly throughout your body water, including the bloodstream. Males have a higher proportion of body water than females, so the same quantity of alcohol will produce a higher blood level in a female than in a male of the same body weight.

One unit is equivalent to 8 grams (10 ml) of pure alcohol or one

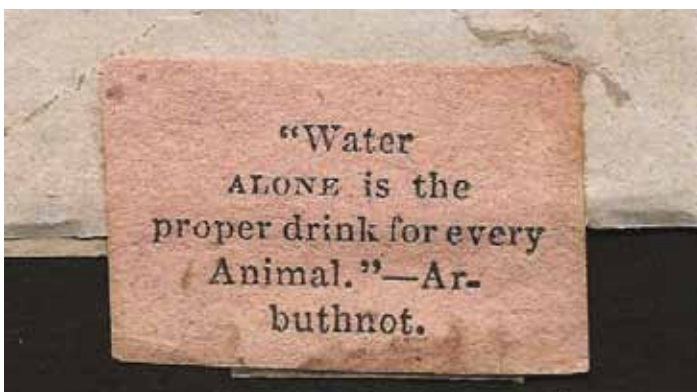
standard pub measure of spirits. Bottled beers are now required to have their alcohol content indicated both by percentage of alcohol by volume (abv) and units, so that a 500 ml bottle of 4.5% abv beer is equivalent to 2.2 units. However, it is not just the quantity of alcohol you drink that will determine how inebriated you become, it will also depend on the alcoholic strength of the drink and the rate at which you drink it. The alcohol in beers of 4 - 5% or neat spirits of 37.5% gets absorbed more slowly than the alcohol from drinks containing 15 - 20%. It is no co-incidence that drinks within this optimum range for rapid action are routinely served at cocktail parties where the intention is get everyone merry in as short a time as possible. Real ales tend to be drunk more slowly than the popular industrial lagers, so the alcohol is absorbed relatively slowly. How often do you see someone slowly sipping and savouring a lager?

Getting rid of alcohol from the body once it has been absorbed is the job of the liver. In an average healthy adult it chugs steadily away breaking down the alcohol at a fixed rate of roughly one unit an hour. A negligible quantity of alcohol is peed away in the urine, although it may not seem it at the time! The level of alcohol in your urine after a few pints is unlikely to be more than 2 grams per litre (slightly higher than your blood level). The alcohol in a pint of beer would need 8 - 10 litres of urine to dispose of it if there was no liver metabolism.

Metabolism of alcohol by the liver provides a source of energy, one unit generates 7 Cals. Apart from the alcohol, beer is also a source of carbohydrate and protein. A pint of beer contains about 180 Cals in total. Someone drinking 8 pints a day is therefore getting three-quarters of their recommended daily intake just from the beer.

One unexpected benefit of real ales comes from the water soluble vitamins derived from the yeast and malted barley or wheat. In the 1930's the British Government in India banned local home brewing. Shortly afterwards there was an outbreak of pellagra and other diseases resulting from B group vitamin deficiencies. B vitamins are found in meat and can be lacking in a vegetarian diet. The local population had obviously obtained essential vitamins from the beer they were producing. The ban was quickly lifted and health was restored. The dietary benefit of beer is reflected in the suggestion that stout be given to invalids and, in the past, milk stout to nursing mothers. For the beer drinker who wants a long and healthy life the solution is to drink it slowly, enjoy the taste, and do it in moderation. If you over-indulge, the alcohol will not be a solution, but is more likely to become the problem.

Dr Peter V Taberner



The Bar Code  
by Eddie Taberner



# News from Bath Ales



## Increased brewing capacity

Bath Ales have just commissioned the two new 100-barrel brewing vessels to be installed in their existing brewery. This will give them a 40% increase in brewing capacity. The photo shows head brewer Gerry Condell testing a brew from the new vessels.

A small pilot brewing kit is also being assembled in the new premises and will be installed when the bund (an outer wall designed to retain any leakage or spillage) is completed. The kit is expected to be commissioned in the autumn. It will be used for experimental brews or small volume runs such as Solo, the 2.8% ABV cask ale successfully trialled earlier in the year.

## Seasonal ales

Following on from *Summer's Hare*, this autumn *Forest Hare* will make its appearance, brewed with award-winning New Zealand hops.

*Forest Hare* is the new name for last year's popular *Hare and Hop*, a copper-coloured, hoppy, autumn ale with hints of kiwi fruit and gooseberry.

## Pub news

The refurbished accommodation in the **Wellington** has been popular and the rooms are getting good reviews in TripAdvisor. However due to the abysmal summer weather the new garden layout and furniture in the **Hop Pole** were not fully appreciated until that wonderful warm and sunny week in late July! The new **Graze** in Cirencester is going really well and is fully booked for meals most nights. The **Hare** in Bedminster, by the way, has no connection to Bath Ales other than being supplied with their beers. Apparently the name is a coincidence.

## Bottling success

Very soon Bath Ales will be producing their 10 millionth bottle – more news on this in the next edition of Pints West.

## Loyalty clubs

As well as the *Loyal Hare Force* loyalty club for individuals, a new corporate club is being introduced. Any business with more than eight employees can apply for membership which will give them discounts on food and drink products in Bath Ales establishments.

A further loyalty club has been introduced by **Beerd**, the real ale and craft beer bar on St Michael's Hill in Kingsdown. Bona fide students



will get 10% discount on food and drink products.

## Bath Ales biking bonanza

Due to freak good weather on the day, the Bath Ales-organised 'Biking Bonanza' in June attracted a lot more cyclists than anticipated and it is expected that over £5,000 will be raised for the designated charity, Frenchay Hospital After Burns Children's Club.


## Festivals and events sponsored by Bath Ales

Unfortunately due to the summer weather a lot of Bristol's festivals have either been washouts (e.g. WOMAD in the zoo) or cancelled (Stokes Croft festival). However the Harbour Festival and WOMAD (held in Malmsbury) have had good reviews.

Another successful Bristol festival was Brisfest, and the competition sponsored by Bath Ales and Pieminster to hold a party in the winner's workplace attracted 700 entries. The lucky company on the day was a subsidiary of Oxfam.




On the 9<sup>th</sup> of August Bath Ales provided a special **Night Glow** ale for the night glow and fireworks evening, part of the Bristol Balloon Fiesta in Ashton Court.

Roy Sanders



## Our pubs...

...for those who know






<p><b>Beerd</b> 157-179 St Michael's Hill, Bristol, BS2 8DB 0117 9741567 www.beerdbristol.com</p> <p><b>The Grapes</b> 7 George Street, Oxford, OX1 2AT 01865 791330</p> <p><b>Graze (Bristol)</b> 61 Queen Square, Bristol, BS1 4JZ 0117 9276700</p> <p><b>Graze (Cirencester)</b> 1 Goodrich Street, Cirencester, GL7 2AG 01285 655937</p> <p><b>The Hare on the Hill</b> 41 Thomas Street North, Bristol, BS2 8LN 0117 9091140</p>	<p><b>The Hop Pole</b> 7 Athens Buildings, Upper Bristol Road, Bath, BA1 3AP 01225 446127</p> <p><b>The Live &amp; Let Live</b> Childe Road, Frompton Cotterell, BS46 2JJ 01454 772254</p> <p><b>The Salamander</b> 1 John Street, Bath, BA1 2JJ 01225 428889</p> <p><b>The Swan</b> Bath Road, Wootton Bassett, Bristol, BS30 6LN 0117 9323101</p> <p><b>The Wellington</b> Gloucester Road, Bristol, BS7 8UB 0117 9511022</p>
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# News from Butcombe Brewery

**Beers:** Over 200 barrels of **Going for Gold**, the brewery's recent Olympic offering, were sold to the trade with a week of the Games still to go. And **Adam Henson's Rare Breed**, which made its initial appearance at JD Wetherspoon's autumn beer festival last year, before its official launch in January, will make a second showing in this year's October festival, a first for a successive second listing. This very popular beer will also feature nationally in Mitchell & Butlers autumn selection. Not to be outdone, **Butcombe Bitter** is now available in Browns, the restaurant chain, in central Bristol.

**Brewery:** Butcombe receives its water, an important constituent part of beer making of course, from both Chew Valley and Blagdon lakes. In order to guarantee consistency, one of Butcombe's chief aims, the brewery is to install a reverse osmosis plant which will give them the required control over what exactly is in the water used in their brewing process.

The brewery will again open its doors to the public on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September, at the beginning of National Cask Ale Week which celebrates the wonderful range of real ales we have in this country. The open day is a fun experience with free beer, brewery tours, entertainment from the Mendip Morris Men and 'in-Cider' stories from the Orchard Theatre Group. Adam Henson from BBC's TV Countryfile programme, whose partnership with the brewery resulted in the successful **Rare Breed**, will also be present.

In October, Butcombe will again help in sourcing beers for another beer festival on Weston-supers-Mare's Grand Pier. Also in October, beer festivals are planned for some of the brewery's own pubs. The **Frog & Fiddle** in Cheltenham, **Pig & Fiddle** in Bath and the **Colston Yard** in Bristol. (Check the website [www.butcombe.com](http://www.butcombe.com) for dates and beers.)

Margaret Evett



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## Simon Whitmore RIP



Simon Whitmore celebrating with three chairmen, past and present, of the Bristol branch of CAMRA on the occasion of Butcombe's 21st anniversary.

From left to right: Colin Pursey, Phil Cotham, Simon Whitmore and Richard Brooks, current chairman.

The death occurred on June 4<sup>th</sup> of Simon Whitmore, aged 79, after a long battle with illness. Simon was the legendary founder of Butcombe Brewery, back in 1978. Having been with Guinness for ten years, the last five as Commercial Director for Guinness Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, he then moved to Courage in 1972, firstly as General Manager in Australia then as Managing Director of Courage Western based in Bristol, for the last three years.

Unexpected redundancy gave him the spur to consider starting his own micro-brewery, then a relatively new concept. After overcoming planning difficulties, the redundant and derelict buildings behind his farmhouse, in the village of Butcombe, were put to good use, redundancy money financing the start-up costs.

From 1978 until 2003, when Simon retired and the brewery was sold to business friends, he and his wife Maureen had gradually built up the business. The company flourished and expansion had taken place to meet demand. Six pubs were also purchased along the way. When, in 2005, production moved to new larger 'state of the art' premises in nearby Wrington, Simon initially acted in a consultative capacity to oversee the brewing transfer. He always retained his interest in the brewery and continued to drink his favourite beer – Butcombe Bitter.

In his 25 year tenure through to 2003 Simon established Butcombe brewery as one of the great UK "new" breweries and Butcombe Bitter as the West Country's favourite beer. People who knew him and worked with him, have expressed the sentiment that he was indeed a true gentleman, with whom it was a delight to work.

Margaret Evett

# Shine on ... Abbey Ales

It seemed like such a good idea at the time. I'd visited a few breweries for Pints West before, and all had been run by thoroughly nice people, who were more than willing to let me in on a few secrets of the trade, perhaps give a little insight into what made their own brewery unique. I'd wander round, trying to look knowledgeable as I was shown a mash tun here, some dried hops there, and the brewer would kindly pretend not to notice my ignorance while patiently talking me through the process.

"So," said the illustrious Pints West editor, "How about doing the same with Abbey Ales in Bath? Of course you already know Alan Morgan." Great, I thought. I had met Alan on a couple of previous occasions and he seemed a nice enough chap. I enjoy a pint of Bellringer so that makes it easier to write about.

I should have heard the alarm bells when he was referred to by his full title ... Alan 'Bad News' Morgan. But no, a quick email exchange ensued and I was invited to meet Alan, not at the brewery, but at the Star Inn. "It's 'Thursday Club', so I'll be behind the bar."

So, with the current Mrs Shine dropping me outside the Star before heading off for a 'bit of shopping' in Bath (and I didn't hear THOSE alarm bells either), I strolled into the Star for a quick chat. It doesn't take long to get a sense of a place, so I knew I wouldn't be long...

When my wife popped in to collect me several hours later, not only did I appear to be in an entirely different pub, but I was engrossed in a conversation about Woody Allen with a group of people I'd never met before. I had had my throat burned by a Chilli Vodka, covered the 'merits' of Colt 45 and Hemmeling Lager, listened to telephone ring tones made from 1970's advertising jingles, and been one of many people roundly (but very gently) insulted by Mr Morgan.

I think we did also manage to talk about the brewery, the beers and the pubs, and certainly my notes suggest we did, but I'm not sure how or when!

So, back to the Star. For those who haven't been it is well worth a visit even if you are not meant to be 'interviewing' the landlord. A lovely old building with four linked drinking rooms and a real sense that, while the 21st century is welcome, it should wipe its feet before entering, and then sit quietly in the corner where it won't bother anyone.

'Thursday' club is a weekly gathering of a loose affiliation of the great and the good from the 'trade'. Sometimes many, sometimes few, but all



personal contacts of Alan's. There is a trade rep for the South West here, an ex-brewer there, a serial investor in pubs and breweries in the corner, and several people who everyone seems to know but for the life of me I can't work out why or what they do.

And here, actually, is where I get my first insight into the ongoing success of the brewery, and I am only on my first pint. Alan has clearly cultivated relationships throughout his time in the industry. He tells me a lot of folks don't like him because he doesn't suffer fools gladly and is blunt in telling people where they're going wrong. Well, this may well be true, but what I see is a man fiercely loyal to his friends, and who is trusted by those with whom he does business.

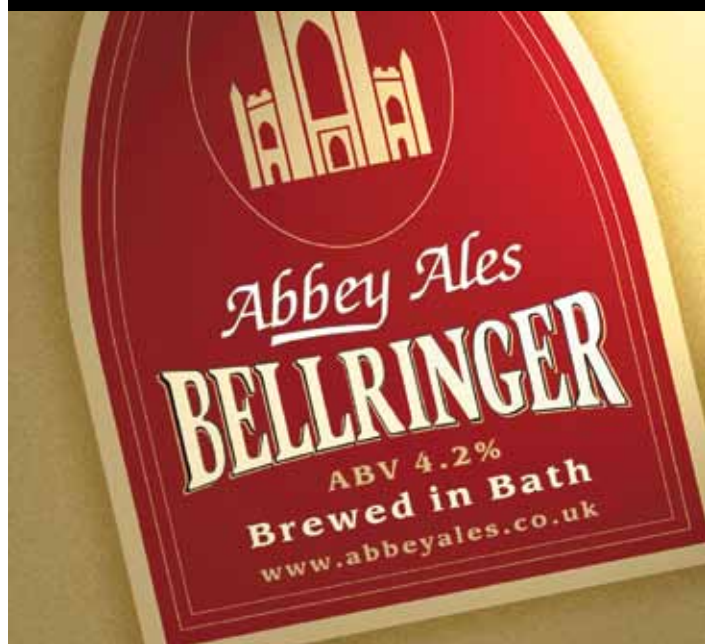
The conversation turns to Alan's time in the 'industry'. Tales of time spent repping for Marston's, back in the days when 'Pedigree' was a really good pint, before that sulphury smell suddenly appeared and the beer became harder and harder to sell. During this conversation it becomes clear that, while a decent pint of beer is very important to Alan, he is no 'Cask-Conditioned Fundamentalist'. We take a stroll down a picturesque conversational cul de sac presaged by Alan's unveiling of a TV jingle for Watney's Red Barrel that he has acquired on his mobile phone. We discuss with some nostalgia the brands of years gone by, when Colt 45 or Double Diamond were leading brands, when Harp stayed sharp to the bottom of the glass, and when Trophy Bitter was the 'pint that thinks it's a quart'.

All the while, Alan's views on these decidedly non-CAMRA brands are, I notice, almost exclusively customer-led. Such-and-such was a decent enough pint, but people didn't want to drink it; or 'but the flavour was too strong for people at that time'. He tells me of a well-established real ale, still widely available, where the taste has simply become too heavy for modern tastes. They need a lighter version.

As we sup up an excellent pint of Bellringer, Alan breaks off from an anecdote about the Great British Beer Festival to announce we are adjourning to 'The Assembly' – another Abbey Ales run pub, aimed at a younger clientele – where Alan has a wine tasting to do. As we negotiate the short walk, I ask Alan why Abbey only brew one regular cask beer, Bellringer. Alan is quite self-deprecating. He says: "I can't brew all these pump-clip beers that are designed to win an award and then never be seen again. I'm happy if we can put out a decent pint that people are happy to drink." He makes the point more than once that he's not obsessed with quality, just a decent 'commercial' pint of bitter.

I beg to differ. While we were in the Star, he got one contact to check the quality of a guest ale that had just come on; he asked a couple of semi-regulars whether they thought the current batch of Bellringer was a bit too bitter; and when we arrive at the Assembly, he regards the guest ale that is

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Blooms at the Star Inn

being poured for me with all the concentration of a kestrel hovering above a grass verge by the M4. It looks marginally hazy, but Alan immediately rejects it. It's the first of the barrel, and Alan is insistent that it is not served for 24 hours, and then only if it has cleared properly and passes his taste test.

Talking of which, the next forty-five minutes are spent with various reps, tasting wines and wheat beers vying to be added to the Assembly's, er, assembly of drinks. This is where I am presented with a Chilli Vodka that gave my voice a Rod Stewart croak for several days. But all the time Alan is concerned about what his customers will enjoy.

I ask about plans for the future, but Alan demurs to his son Simon, who is now the driving force behind the brewery. I am tempted to joke that Simon does all the work while Alan just seems to stagger from one pub to the next with his cronies getting drunk. But Alan gets there first as always. The plan is to continue in Bath, where Abbey/Alan now has four pubs (the Coeur de Lion and the Trinity as well as the Assembly and Star) and, unless Simon has a change of heart, to stick with the tried and trusted plan of having one regular brew that people enjoy, supplemented only occasional by additional brews (Mild being the latest).

We are just discussing Woody Allen's hilarious book 'Without Feathers', as my 'chauffeuse' arrives. I croak my thanks and farewell and Alan says "I don't think you've learned much today." On the contrary, I've

learned that brewing isn't all about thinking of a hundred different names for this month's new brew; I've learned that sometimes doing one thing very well is an extremely effective business plan; I've learned that being successful is as much about the people you trade with as the products you trade, and I've learned that if a bottle says "100,000 Scovilles" on the side, you sample its contents at your peril.

*Duncan Shine*

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## BADRAG - Bristol And District Rare Ales Group

It's a shame but I only saw a very few milds remaining on tap over the summer months following their big push during May, and I only came across one low ABV bitter (courtesy of the ever innovative Arbor Ales). There were plenty of gold and blond beers around but not a lot to encourage rare style enthusiasts – although we are seeing some licensees regularly running dark beers and that has to be a positive change when they were all but extinct (especially during summer) a few years back. So hope remains and there are glimmers of encouragement!

Going back to May, BADRAG enjoyed very good support for some of the Saturday Mild Trail events, whereas the regular "3rd Thursday of the month" social gatherings tended to suffer. A similar trend has continued through the last few months and it has prompted a rethink of what BADRAG is doing. Obviously, the main objective is to prove there is interest in the drinking public – and therefore a market for – different beer styles. It is a powerful plus if 20 people show up just to drink a particular beer style. The mere fact that the stuff is flowing can then spark curiosity amongst the regulars and a "slow selling" beer can turn into a winner as drinkers get interested in sampling some of the tremendous variety available in this area.

So we are going to try switching things around; running a couple of Saturday events and just the one evening social over the next three months. Here are the notes for your diary:

● **Saturday 22 September** – 'Harbourside Hop' starting at the Orchard at 12 noon. Provisional itinerary is the Cottage, Nova Scotia,

**BADRAG, the Bristol & District Rare Ales Group, is a campaigning group within the local branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. Its aim is to promote the rarer styles of ale such as stouts, porters, old ales, strong milds, barley wines, milds, low-alcohol session ales, wheat beers, brown ales and traditional strength IPAs.**

**[www.badrag.co.uk](http://www.badrag.co.uk) [BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk](mailto:BADRAG@camrabristol.org.uk)**

**Tobacco Factory and Robert Fitzharding.** Denise Swain (07821157655) will be our leader so get in touch if you need to know more or just want to catch up on the day.

● **Thursday 18 October** – 'Clifton Climb'. Details to be confirmed but get in touch with lead climber Pete Bride (07973201307) if you are interested.

● **Saturday 17 November** – 'City Stroll' starting in the Volunteer Tavern in St. Jude's at 12 noon and moving on to the Bridge Inn, Cornubia, Seven Stars, Commercial Rooms, White Lion and Gryphon (assuming they all confirm availability). Stroller in chief Phil Luxton (07796677004), call the mobile if you're catching up later.

Autumn months often see a re-emergence of coppery/red beers as well as bringing stouts, porters and strong milds out of summer hibernation so it should be a more interesting period for BADRAG. Please get in touch if you want to pass on any news or comments on rare beers in the area (email [gac5754@googlemail.com](mailto:gac5754@googlemail.com)).

*George Clarke, BADRAG Coordinator*

# News from Great Western Brewery

## Brewery news

It has been a successful year for Great Western Brewing Company so far with two new bespoke 10 barrel fermenters added to the fermenting room, taking it to a 50 barrel per week capacity. Each fermenter was insulated with 75mm of spray foam and clad in timber. This gives excellent temperature control that allows more accurate fermentations.

These were added due to the fact that *Maiden Voyage* was chosen to be included in the guest ale programme by JD Wetherspoon, distributed nationally, commemorating 100 years of the sinking of the Titanic. This amounted to 500 firkins, or one brew a week for 12 weeks. (They do say they were a little disappointed as they had one firkin returned as the label had come off!) Their new racking machine has been performing well, saving time due to the increased brewing.

They have increased their staff numbers by employing a sales representative, Mike Tremlin, who now drives what must be the smallest dray in the country – a Smart Car sporting the GWB logo! Also an assistant brewer, Noel James, who helps Ashley Stone, the head brewer (and the second generation of what is now a family brewery), with the brewing process.

GWB are participating in 'Taste of the West' again this year with an open day on Saturday 29th September. Free hourly tours and tastings will be from 11am until 1pm.

## Brewery shop news

The brewery shop sales are steadily increasing partly due to the fact that you can purchase anything from 3.5 pints up to 36 pint boxes. They now also stock bottles of Severn cider, Thatchers cider, red and white wines from small vineyards from around the world, and locally distilled gin. New three-bottle presentation packs have been designed and are at this moment being printed and also a new nine-pint bag in box is being designed that will increase the shelf life of their take-away beers. They are busy with brewery tours on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, with an insight into the brewing process and of course some sampling of the finished product.

## Seasonal ales

Their newest brew *Gold MedALEist* at 4.4% ABV was given a seal of approval after a beer tasting evening at their pub, the **Rising Sun**, which doubles as the brewery tap. Two firkins were consumed in two hours achieving a definite thumbs up. A further 120 firkins have been brewed and sent out to surrounding outlets with very good feedback reported.

They have also brewed their *Summer Nights* (3.8% ABV) with its light, clean, hoppy taste – a firm favourite amongst their customers.

## Rising Sun

The Stone family will be celebrating 30 years in the Rising Sun in December, having owned the pub since 1982. A party is definitely on the cards. The pub has been in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide for the same number of years showing their "Passion for Real Ale". The range of six ales of course includes their own brands, with *Maiden Voyage* and *Classic Gold* being permanent fixtures and one of their seasonal brews

often on as well. The other ales are *Wadworth 6X*, *Bass*, *Butcombe Bitter* and various guests including ales from Cotleigh, Vale, Glastonbury and Dorset Piddle, to name a few.

At the end of June they had their third successful beer and music festival, 'SunFest', with a fantastic turnout over the three days. They put on 20 real ales and 20 ciders, all of which went over the festival, and £2,750 was raised in aid of Help For Heroes. The weekend finished with a walk from the Rising Sun along the Frome Valley Walkway which leads to the field behind the brewery at Hambrook. Complimentary ale was served on arrival and cars ferried walkers back to the Rising Sun, where they could listen to the various bands and enjoy a burger or pork roll and few more pints into the early evening.

## Humpers 25 glorious years

Michelle Murray is celebrating 25 years at the helm of Humpers Off Licence in Staple Hill this year. Sadly her husband Jim, who she originally ran it with her, died some years ago, but she has continued with a thriving business, in an area not particularly renowned for its real ale and cider scene.

Unlike most off licences, Michelle concentrates on real ales and real ciders, selling several of each a week, and in line with trends of increasing consumption of these traditional products, she has continued to trade successfully over this period of time. Unless I am mistaken, the only other dedicated real ale and cider off licence in the last 25 years in the Bristol area was one located in the Bedminster area near Ashton Gate, home of Bristol City, but as I recall that this was a short-lived venture.

As a cider enthusiast myself, it is heartening to know that such is the demand these days that she has had to bring in additional stock and taken over some of the space previously used for wine to accommodate it. A recent example on sale was the excellent Wilcox cider from Shipham, which comes highly recommended.

During those 25 years, Humpers has been in the Good Beer Guide for the majority of that time, and has also featured in the Good Cider Guide and the Good Bottled Beer Guide, which gives an indication of the consistency that has been offered over the years.

On a personal note, I'd like to congratulate Michelle on reaching this magnificent milestone, and long may it continue!

Richard Walters

*Humpers is located at 26 Soundwell Road, Staple Hill, Bristol and can be contacted on 0117 9565525.*

The Bar Code  
by Eddie Taberner





# The Brewster, the Blogger and their Beer

Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an age when women are supposed to have achieved liberation, there are still some male beer drinkers who think that women know nothing about beer or pubs. Indeed, despite having written about both for some time now, I was myself told recently by a male CAMRA member that I knew nothing about either, and ought to get out a bit more. This sort of attitude is bad news for CAMRA, with its attempts to widen the real-ale drinking market and make it more attractive to women. So a new venture by two women, Becky Whinnerah and Sophie Atherton, may be dismissed as women being uppity by these poor benighted souls – but I advise them to read the moral at the end of this tale before doing so.



It is ironic that originally much of the beer trade was in the hands of women. Village alehouses in the medieval and Tudor periods were often run by alewives and much of the beer was brewed by brewsters – female brewers. As late as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many coaching inns were run by women, including one of the country's most important inns in London, the Swan With Two Necks.

Becky Whinnerah is, of course, one half of Dorset based Art Brew – noted for its innovative beers – but although Becky has often helped out, it is mainly John who has done the brewing. At Tucker's Maltings, they bumped into Sophie Atherton, Britain's first female beer sommelier, who told them about the courses she had taken to achieve the accreditation. Out of this came an idea to create a beer devised by one woman – Sophie – and brewed by another – Becky.

I asked Becky what the beer would be called, and what style we could expect. She told me that the beer is called Sophie's Rustic Ale and it is a 4.7% amber ale, inspired by the Belgian farmhouse style. Becky added: "We've tried to go local. It is brewed with Dorset malt and 100% British hops and infused with marigolds. In a nod to the Belgian inspiration, we've used Saison yeast. Sophie came up with the idea to do a farmhouse inspired beer with marigolds, and then we worked out together the exact ingredients."

Next question, therefore, was to Sophie – why marigolds? Sophie told me she had found a reference to the success of the marigold crop in some old Dorset agricultural records which she thought were from Victorian times.

"I was looking for an ingredient that had a connection to the



county," Sophie said. "I knew that marigolds were edible and when I did some research into what they tasted like thought they might work in a beer. I discussed it with Becky and she experimented with infusing dried marigolds in a few different beers. It seemed to work and is something a bit different so we went ahead and included them in the recipe for Sophie's Rustic Ale – hopefully drinkers will agree it was the right decision!"

By the time this comes out, the launch will have taken place in London, and readers of Pints West are therefore amongst the first to know about the marigolds – it's been kept a secret till now.

What is not a secret is Sophie's opinion of beer – she's a journalist, broadcaster, beer writer, and blogger about all things beer, which you can find at [www.afemaleview.net](http://www.afemaleview.net). I wondered how she had got interested in real ale. Partly, she told me, it was due to her father, who was a bitter drinker and always suggested that (mass-produced) lager was "for pansies". He also pointed out that bitter was by far the cheaper drink! Although he teased her about women drinking pints of beer, he didn't really think there was any reason why she shouldn't enjoy it as much as he did. She says she can measure her Dad's view of how grown up she was on the day she took him to a pub she knew and he did not, and he said to her, "So what do we drink in here then?" Her mother was also partial to a drop of light or pale ale, so no one in her family was surprised by women drinking beer.

As a trained journalist, who had enjoyed the delights of beer for almost 25 years, she had no qualms about writing about it, but decided to learn more about the subject and to train as a (beer) sommelier, to make her opinion more informed.

Finally, I asked Sophie if there was anything else she would like to add, especially to the beer and women debate. Her views were identical with mine, previously published in this august journal – but Sophie was a bit more down to earth. She states:

"A lot of rubbish is talked about women and beer, what sort of beers women like, whether it is OK for us to drink pints and suchlike and at the end of the day I think anyone who tries to pigeonhole women's tastes



or make sweeping statements about what a woman or women should, shouldn't or do drink has to face up to the fact that they are a bit (or a lot) of a sexist. Women are half the population, not a minority group so I look forward to the day that people stop talking about 'the woman and beer issue' and also to when breweries stop exploiting women by using derogatory, discriminatory and degrading images of females to sell their beer."

I whole-heartedly agree. And other women are also making their voices heard – Naomi McAuliffe wrote an equally hard-hitting article in The Guardian, on 14<sup>th</sup> August entitled 'A pint of beer is every woman's right'. But words are one thing – actually brewing beer is another step forward, so three cheers for Becky and Sophie.

Sophie's Rustic Ale will be available from the end of August and there will be a limited edition bottle run. So it may sell out fast. To any diehard males muttering into their pints about uppity women not knowing their place or their beer, let me remind them of the words of the old song, which seem particularly appropriate:

*There's a flower in my garden, they call it marigold,  
But he who will not when he may, he shall not when he would.*

I'd hate you to miss what sounds like a really gorgeous and interesting brew.

Kirsten Elliott

# News from the Bristol Beer Factory

The Bristol Beer Factory and Tobacco Factory in Bedminster are holding this year's 'Factoberfest' on 7th, 8th and 9th September.

They are putting on 40 ales from near and far, with some extra special creations from the Bristol Beer Factory. They will be running small competitions to keep everyone entertained throughout the weekend (surprisingly enough, beer tasting competitions!), with Bristol Beer Factory and Tobacco Factory prizes. There will be live music all weekend and activities for the kids to do, so it promises to be a great day out for the family. Grillstock will be providing food on Friday and Saturday with the Tobacco Factory Market opening on Sunday. Entry to the beer festival is free – just pay for the beers as you go.

In brewery news, the Bristol Beer Factory have recently installed a second 25-barrel conical fermenter which increases their production capacity up to 130 barrels of fermenting space. The results they report from their other fermenter of the same design have been fantastic, so they are looking forward to getting this one fully operational.

Turning to the beers, following on from its Gold for SIBA champion bottled beer, *Southville Hop* has just picked up a Silver medal at the International Beer Challenge, with the design and packaging picking up a Bronze medal (yet another winner from Miller Design!).

The 'Collaboration' brew with Dark Star brewery has apparently gone down a storm in cask. *Southern Conspiracy* (dominated by fresh New Zealand hops) gives a huge refreshing citrus explosion. It's described as being very drinkable for a high percentage beer, so care is advised if you are lucky enough to be slugging it back in the sunshine! The bottle version will be out very shortly (actually being bottled at the time of writing) and this has been aged in white wine casks whilst being sat on gooseberries, so is described as being "extra, extra special". Stocks aren't huge so keep an eye out for it.

The Bristol Beer Factory have already started production of the 2012 version of *12 Stouts of Christmas* (it'll be here quicker than you think!) with some ageing in various oak casks. They won't give too much away at present, but closer to the time they will reveal exactly what will be available. They plan to have an open day at the brewery again where everyone can come and pick up their cases, which will happen either late in November or very early December.

The Bristol Beer Factory are now expanding their already extensive bottled range to include *Independence*, *Acer* and *West Coast Red*.

*Independence* is also being bottled at the time of writing and so it will be ready in the time it takes to condition in bottle (approximately two weeks).

They are also brewing a *Saison* (with some very expensive yeast!) and this will be out in bottles in a month or two, all depending how the warm fermentation goes.

Richard Brooks



## 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 1993.**

Bristol's newest local independent breweries Hardington and Ross both opened the doors of their first ever pubs at the end of 1992. Hardington re-opened the Swan With Two Necks, a former Courage hostelry situated in Little Ann Street, St Judes, whilst Ross took over the former Mozarts nightclub in Stokes Croft reinventing itself as the Bristol Brew House; in fact it was a "brewery tap" in the true sense of the word. Both breweries have long since ceased brewing but the Swan With Two Necks remains open as a pub serving real ale today, while sadly the Bristol Brew House reverted to a bar/club and is now known as the Croft. Former patrons of these establishments will no doubt recall the beer festivals both pubs regularly staged during a time when such events were quite rare.

Another local independent brewery grabbing national headlines was Wickwar as it was found to be selling the cheapest pint of beer in a pub in Britain. You were able to get a pint of Wickwar Coopers in the Cadbury House, Montpelier for just 87p a pint. Elsewhere in the city, CAMRA's annual prices survey showed the average price of a pint in 1993 was £1.44.

We were also continuing to campaign for the future of one of Bristol's traditional beers, Courage Bitter Ale (or 'Boys Bitter' as it was sometimes known) by highlighting the pubs where you could still drink it.

Pub reforms were on the cards following moves by the Home Office to reform pub licensing laws in the UK. One of the issues up for debate was longer opening hours – yes, pubs were still closed on Sunday afternoons

back then! We were also starting to see the introduction of "No Smoking areas" in pubs: the newly opened Three Brooks in Bradley Stoke and the Post Office Tavern in Westbury on Trym were early adopters. The 1993 local branch Pub of the Year was awarded to the Anchor at Oldbury on Severn for its excellent range of real ale and food in a very friendly environment.

Another national campaign CAMRA was waging against during 1992 was the new "draught beer in a can" marketing initiative by the major brewers. You remember, the can with the widget! It was a campaign that CAMRA won in 1993 when trading standards bodies agreed that the term "draught" could not be used to describe canned beer.

One campaign we were unable to win was that of "full measure". The government proved unable to stand up for consumers by announcing that despite an election pledge, they would not implement Section 43 of the 1985 Weights & Measures Act which states that a pint should be a pint of liquid, the head being extra. As this would almost certainly have meant the introduction of oversized glasses, instead the Government bowed to industry pressure whereby short measure is actively encouraged under a voluntary code which states that only 95% of a pint should be liquid.

This issue is one which CAMRA continues to lobby on. In no other industry is the customer expected to get less than what they have paid for. In no other industry is the customer expected to have to ask for a full measure, rather than it being given as a matter of course. This is why when you visit a CAMRA beer festival you will always get a full pint in an oversized glass.

Alison Bridle



# Bemmy pubs

In early July I organised a social crawl in Bedminster on behalf of the Bristol Pubs Group. It was a longer trek than usual but fortunately it only rained for the first hour. The idea was to check out a variety of pubs including some not normally frequented by the Group.

Starting at the **Try Again** in Greenway Bush Lane (right past Aldi in North Street) we found that there was no apparent call for real ale here and both Courage Best pumpclips were turned around. The landlady said it went off before they could get through a cask. The main tippie there appeared to be cans of Natch. Pity there is no call for ale here as the Bristol Beer Factory is only across the road and it could be a good outlet.

Next up was the **Hen & Chicken** on North Street. There were three real ales on in good condition, including Everard's Wakata, 3.7% and hoppy and zesty. The place seemed pretty busy and family orientated with quite a bit of food being served. Having eaten there myself I can say it is of very good quality. They are well known for their pizzas and, of course, the Comedy Box upstairs.



The Hen and Chicken

Spa. It's a nice spacious pub with a big garden, catering mostly for younger people and families.

We then had a longer walk down to the **Luckwell Hotel** on Duckmoor Road. I had not visited this large public house since playing darts there about 25 years ago. We had very friendly welcome from the staff and had a chat with some of the regulars. They even offered to bring out extra seats if we wanted them. Besides darts and pool, card games are very popular there with three tables set out with green baize for poker and other card games. They had Courage Best and



The Luckwell Hotel

Bass on draught which was very good. For me, this was a pub worth visiting again if down that way. It is accessible with the number 24 and 25 buses (with a return to Centre stop just outside).

We then ventured back out onto West Street and to the **Plough & Windmill**. This was another very friendly pub and one I enjoyed a lot. It has a large garden and a skittle alley too, plus Sky TV for sport. There was a choice of four beers, St Austell Tribute being my favourite. This and the Bath Gem and Courage Best were all just £2.40 a pint. They also had Doom Bar on for £2 a pint. They keep a good pint here and we were told business is improving each week. The landlady also made some generous sized cheese and onion rolls for us at £1.50 each. I will certainly be visiting there again. (At the time of writing



The Plough & Windmill

there was a planned closure of about three days around the end of August for refurbishment.)

We then walked passed the sadly shut White Horse, but with so many big pubs in a short distance it is hard for all to survive in these tight financial times. Venturing further down West Street we went to the **Jolly Collier**, which was busy (possibly due to the London Inn being closed for refurbishment) but it had no draught beer on and I had to settle for a keg cider. Some of the Group, wishing to stick to the real ales, decided to give this one a miss.

Our next venue was to have been the **Princess of Wales**, but we had

been informed by people in the Luckwell that it was closed. I have found out since it has re-opened though, so we'll have to give it a try on a future occasion.

Ahead of time we walked back out onto North Street to the **Masonic**. This is a typical locals' place serving Courage Best and has dart boards and a skittle alley within the pub.

The last pub on our list was the recently opened **Hare**, previously known as the Full Moon. They have done great job in improving this narrow but long bar, with garden area and barbecue. Beers on offer were Bath Ales Gem and Barnsey, and guest beers including Glastonbury Hedge Monkey at 4.8%. The food on offer looked good and some of the Group did indulge and gave the thumbs up.

All in it was a very good and mainly rain-free day, with a couple of surprisingly good pubs and couple not doing so well. A few of us then went on to the **Apple Tree** in Philip Street and indulged in some Taunton cider at £2.20 a pint.

Keith Shapland

## Volunteer festivals

The Volunteer Tavern in New Street, St Judes (somewhat hidden away but actually very close to Cabot Circus) will be holding another beer festival from Thursday 27th September through until Sunday 30th. The Thursday opening session is geared towards attracting CAMRA and BRA members and friends, and the Friday to Sunday sessions for the general public. That's not a hard-and-fast rule, of course, and all visitors will be made welcome at all times.

The pub is owned jointly by two Martins – Martin Gibson who has run several pubs in Bristol over recent years and Martin Hughes who has very successfully run the splendid Hope & Anchor on Jacobs Wells Road, Hotwells for over 10 years – and is ably managed by Peter Gibbs (who himself had seven years experience at the Hope & Anchor). The pub was closed for a period and then, following a sympathetic refurbishment, reopened a year ago. The planned beer festival is to celebrate that one-year anniversary.

As with the last festival, they will be looking to get around 24 to 28 beers. This time there will be a Yorkshire theme (probably West Yorkshire) and Peter says they will try, as the pub always does, to satisfy the needs of dark beer drinkers by stocking plenty of the stuff!

The previous beer festival at the Volunteer Tavern took place at the beginning of August and had an emphasis on beers from brewers in East London (inspired by the Olympics), in addition to a few local brewery favourites. Punters were able to vote for their favourite beers of the festival, the outcome of which was: Gold – Redemption Trinity (3.0%); Silver – Skinners Ginger Tosser (3.8%); Bronze – Beavertown Neck Oil (4.3%). My own personal favourite was Urban Dusk from the Redemption brewery. What will yours be at their next festival?

SP

## Other festivals

HERE are just a few of the beer festivals coming up soon. Scan the rest of Pints West – adverts and editorial – for more.

● **Fri 7th & Sat 8th Sept - Beeses Riverside Bar and Tea Gardens** (Wyndham Crescent, Bristol BS4 4SX) will be holding its seventh beer festival. Entry price (including first pint) is £7 for Friday, £10 for Saturday, £15 for a weekend ticket. Tickets are now on sale at the bar, or call 0117 977 7412 or visit [www.beeses.co.uk](http://www.beeses.co.uk). As with last year's festival, entry to Beeses on the Saturday will only be possible with a beer festival ticket.

● **Sat 8th Sept - Annual beer festival at the Stapleton Cricket Club**, Park Road, Stapleton, raising money for the Lords Taverners Charity and incorporating great beers and ciders from the local area. Open all day from noon to 11pm. Price £8 (accompanied under-18's free), which includes commemorative glass, programme, live music and other entertainments. Contact Matt Chidgey on 07834044578 or [matt.chid@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:matt.chid@hotmail.co.uk) for advance tickets. Tickets may be available on the day.

● **Fri 14th & Sat 15th Sept - The 10th Chew Valley Beer Festival** from Ubley in the heart of the Chew Valley some 12 miles south of Bristol, featuring 32 real ales plus 6 ciders and perries. The sessions are 7pm till midnight both nights plus the quieter more relaxed Saturday lunchtime session noon till 4pm. Evening sessions will feature two live bands (including the famous Hellz Bellz). Entrance by advance ticket only price £8 including a souvenir glass. Tel: 01761 462468. [www.chewvalleybeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.chewvalleybeerfestival.co.uk)

● **Fri 14th to Sun 16th Sept - Wedmore Real Ale Festival** in the Wedmore Village Hall. Visit [www.wedmoreale.com](http://www.wedmoreale.com) for more details.

# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

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

### **Bath and Surrounding Villages**

#### **Bladud's Head, 1 Catsley Place, Larkhall, Bath**

Local landlord David Derrick has recently taken on the ownership of this pub from St John's Hospital. Mr Derrick, who also owns the Charmbury Arms in the Twerton area of Bath, also used to run the Lambretta's bar, just off the city centre. Meanwhile at the Bladud's a minor refurbishment was underway at the time of writing.

#### **Packhorse, Southstoke, Bath**

This historic Grade II listed pub in the picturesque village of Southstoke, south of the Combe Down area of Bath, closed on 14 May. We understand that shortly before its closure the pub had been sold to local resident Mr Bob Goodman, who appears to have had no intention of re-opening the Packhorse as a pub, instead announcing to appalled locals that he intended to run his chartered surveyor's business from the ground floor and live in the accommodation above. Since then a major local campaign has been organised to save the Packhorse. An e-petition was quickly set up. The huge number of signatories (1,200 at the time of writing) and comments on the e-petition site is proof, if any were needed, of the depth of feeling for the pub and the level of shock at its loss. (More information about the local campaign can be found at southstoke.net.) In June the pub was sold on to a Mr Martin Sherry, who has also indicated to locals that he has no intention of re-opening the Packhorse as a pub but rather intends to convert the building to private residential use. Planning consent will be needed to do this. Readers are urged to keep an eye out on the public access website of Bath & North-east Somerset Council, and if and when planning permission should be sought, object to it en-masse. It is believed that the council will turn down change of use if there are a great number of objections, particularly as permanent closure would go against the council's own Policy CF7, which is designed to protect pubs. An indication of how popular and well-loved is the Packhorse is that, on its last day of business on Sunday 13 May, around 800 people came to say their farewells.

#### **Piccadilly Ale House, Piccadilly Place, London Road, Bath**

This pub, situated on the busy London Road, has been undergoing an extensive refurbishment and, we understand, recently re-opened.

#### **Rising Sun, 58 Lymore Avenue, Twerton, Bath**

The freehold of this pub, which has now been closed for around six months is on the market for £325,000 + VAT. The selling agents are the nearby James A Baker who, rather worryingly, are marketing this pub as having the potential for alternative commercial use.

#### **Royal Oak, Lower Bristol Road, Twerton, Bath**

A Punk and Cider festival is to be held at the Royal Oak from Thursday 18 to Saturday 20 October 2012 with an increased selection of beer.

#### **Star, 23 Vineyards, Bath**

Bath's most famous national heritage pub held its ninth Cornish beer festival on the weekend of Friday 20 July.

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

The Trinity Brewery Inn, just to the west of the city centre on James Street West, was acquired by local brewer Abbey Ales in the spring, making it the latest addition to its growing estate of pubs in and around central Bath. Following an extensive refurbishment the pub re-opened on Saturday 14 July (although the official re-opening was on Monday 16 July). Four real ales were available on opening night: Abbey Ales Bellringer and Steeplejack, Sharp's Doom Bar and Charles Wells Bombardier. Post-revamp the Trinity has a contemporary stylish feel with comfortable chairs and a club like atmosphere.

#### **Wansdyke, 49-51 Upper Bloomfield Road, Bath**

There has been a recent change of management at this large pub on the southern outskirts of Bath. New landlords Tim and Terri seem to be taking the pub from strength to strength. The Wansdyke is a good outlet for Wadworth's. The brewery's jubilee beer Red, White and Brew has been available and, at the time of writing, the landlords were planning a free trip for locals to the Wadworth's brewery in Devizes.

### **East Somerset**

#### **Faulkland Inn, Faulkland, near Radstock**

The freehold of this recently refurbished pub is on the market for

£440,000. Christie's are the selling agents. The pub is open and is a regular outlet for the Devilfish brewery, which was established early last year in farm buildings to the south of the village of Faulkland.

### **West Wiltshire**

#### **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.

#### **Cross Keys. Lye's Green, Corsley, near Warminster**

This one-time well-used village pub has been closed since late April after the previous landlord left suddenly. At the time of writing it is believed that this Wadworth-owned pub is to be taken on by a former employee and should re-open on Thursday 9 August.

#### **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. The pub re-opened recently.

#### **Hollies, Westbury Leigh, Westbury**

This popular locals' pub closed on Monday 9 July and was due to be auctioned on Thursday 2 August by local selling agents Strakers with a reserve price of £180,000.

#### **Horse & Groom, 18 Alfred Street, Westbury**

This pub, which had been closed since around January, re-opened on the evening of Friday 27 July with a party and live music.

Steve Hunt



Abbey Ales' new pub, the Trinity



# BATH & BORDERS BRANCH

## Pub of the Year 2012

### Fox & Hounds

Deverill Road, Warminster

Bath & Border Branch Overall Pub of the Year



**Congratulations to Chris and Marion Pitcher, landlords of the Fox & Hounds in Warminster, on winning the overall Bath & Borders branch Pub of the Year award.**

This very popular pub is well supported by the local community and was, last year, made the branch's Community Pub of the Year. A freehouse, the Fox & Hounds caters for all walks of life from men's and ladies' darts and skittle team to the local church's choral society, all ages from young and old, and drinkers of all beverages (including both real ale and real cider), all at a very reasonable prices.

The partitioned large bar to the left of the main entrance has a darts bar at the front of pub, an area with a big screen for those eager to watch sport and, tucked behind a partition, the pool table. Beyond the main bar, in a major extension of the pub undertaken by Chris a couple of years ago, is the large skittle alley and club room with its own bar. To the right of the main entrance is the cosy snug bar, an ideal room for small meetings or just having a quiet drink whilst reading the newspaper.

The pub's three beers include two from the nearby Wessex brewery – Warminster Warrior and, exclusive to the pub, Foxy's Best – plus a constantly changing guest beer. The mainstays of the cider range of seven ciders are Thatcher's Traditional and Cheddar Valley and Rich's Farmhouse.

The branch held its Pub of the Year presentation on Tuesday 29th May to a packed pub. Chris and Marion, who are obviously really proud of achieving this award, really pushed the boat out on the evening with free souvenir shirts, live music and a vast buffet spread.

Steve Hunt

### White Horse

Shophouse Road, Twerton

Bath & Borders Branch City Pub of the Year



**Congratulations to Jason and his mum and the dedicated staff of the White Horse in Twerton, Bath, on winning the Bath & Borders branch City Pub of the Year award.**

Landlord Jason Clarke, who has run the Enterprise Inns-owned pub for six years, has worked hard to transform the White Horse into a first-class real ale pub, with a range of usually five beers, mostly sourced from local micro-breweries, and has gained a strong base of support from the local community. The pub hosts regular live music with both local bands and open-mic evenings. Jason and his staff also hold regular beer festivals and fund-raising events.

The City Pub of the Year award presentation was held on Tuesday 12th June and was followed by live music and a free buffet spread. More recently, on the weekend of Friday 13th July, the White Horse held one of its own regular mini beer festivals.

Steve Hunt



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# Watering Holes in the Desert

brought to you from Weston-super-Mare

Despite the headline story last time – “Weston-super-Mare no longer a desert shock!” – it was decided to retain the long-standing “Watering Holes in the Desert” banner.



## A Pome by Dr John

So Weston its desert status has kept  
And hoteliers' income will now have leapt  
Colorado's Mesa Verde Mug House  
We here now a modern copy should arouse

For staying as a true watering hole  
Will help some young people come off the dole  
And still maintaining our desert status  
Needs more ale for those off the Bristol bus

Ways of increasing international fame  
In this day and age are difficult to name  
But perhaps we could make a start by stopping  
Closing local pubs to provide more shopping

## Weston Whispers

The **Old Inn** at Hutton had single variety hop beers from *Arbor* in May, keeping up their reputation for supporting local brewers. *London Pride* in the **White Hart** has been consistently good, though they have managed to get other more interesting guest ales in from time to time. The **Regency** has had some excellent guest ales as part of their continuing mini beer festivals; in July they included *Bateman's Summer Swallow* (3.9%) and *Clare Classy Blonde* (4.2%), a golden ale with a

different variation on non-citrus hops from a brewery new to me; also from another new brewery, *Cross Bay* in Morecombe, a blonde beer called *Sunset*.

The ‘Sprackman Empire’ of pubs, the **Criterion** and the **Waverley** in Weston and the **Horse and Groom** in Bristol, are all growing in popularity, and I've had reports from many sources that the beer quality keeps improving. At the latter the guest ales they get from *St Austell* are often different from the usual ones you see elsewhere.

It is worrying that the **Bristol House** in Milton Road has closed again, and Tesco are being made the monster as usual. The real monster in my mind is the pubco that kicks its tenants out and loses the custom of a strong band of regulars.

There is no sign of the **Raglan** re-opening, and it is still on the market. However I understand that the **Captain's Cabin** has re-opened.

Robin E Wild



## Weston diary

- **Friday 21st September:** Kingsdown crawl starting at Highbury Vaults, St. Michael's Hill at 7.30pm, followed by the Green Man, Cotham Porter Stores, Hillgrove Porter Stores, ending at the Bell close to Bristol bus station.
- **Wednesday 24th October:** Waverley, Severn Road for Bristol & District CAMRA branch meeting.
- **Friday 16th November:** Bath city centre by FGW Group travel. Meet at 6.30pm at WsM station and starting at the Trinity, James Street. (Note exact train times still to be published so subject to change.)
- **Wednesday 19th December:** Seasonal Xmas Ale crawl.

Any enquiries on above outings or requests to join our social group please contact Robin E Wild by text on 07857 602293 or email [westoncamra@gmail.com](mailto:westoncamra@gmail.com).

Non-members welcome at all of the above events.

## Weston contact

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

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	<b>Last Year Sold Out! - get YOUR tickets early!!</b>	

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# What's in a name?

In days of yore, mine workers went to slake their thirst in pubs with pictorial signs outside, necessary as they could not have read the written names we use nowadays. This may have been because mines were dark before Davy Jones invented his lamp for use at great depths and Reading was thus impossible, as Oscar Wilde later discovered during his tent of blue period. The translations of some of the original pub pictographs now appear on pub signs in and around Weston-super-Mare, although there were few mines in the desert. Before the writing was on the wall, desert Weston itself may have been identified by a sign with a Conan Doyle "Creeping Man" or two.

Some of the most popular pub names are to be seen in nearby villages, the Crown in Axbridge being well ahead in popularity. Its original prices must have been low, comparing 5 shillings with the up to 90 shillings found in Scotland. The Olympic crown may also have been worth 5/- when awarded to Stan Laurel. The second most popular name is the Red Lion, not to be confused with the petrified White Lion, and a carved red lion was to be found until recent times up Axbridge High Street, or down if you were coming from the duck-breeding area. This wooden lion possibly represented the personal badge of John of Gaunt, who may have been haggard after a dodgy pint or a near miss as a jay rider or walker. If the latter, though, a more likely association would have been with the Royal Arms of Scotland and the associated bottle labels could have been red or black. The 2012 Olympics having been held in London, Pride the Lion was obviously the Team GB mascot. The nearby Lamb in Axbridge can still be seen to have originally been the Lamb and Flag, the latter of which CAMRA members still fly from their car windows, except for those who are northerners as Yorkstone flags tend to damage the bodywork. Recently, 204 flags have been flown and with the cars finally being covered Olympically in newspaper, it is difficult to see where it will all end if you Take That to its logical conclusion.

Crossing the A38 to, as one might reasonably expect, Cross, if that does not anger readers, the New Inn has another popular name that may have been chosen as the ale was delivered Daley by a family of divers draymen, the pub being right on the Old Coach Road, if one was coming from Bristol that is. However, as the ale was left at the pub, it was probably brought from the nearby brewery that was in the other direction.

One should not feel bitter that other names may be more recent, as they have their own special or strong associations, to put it mildly. Life used to be more dangerous and so villages like Banwell were provided with Brewer's Arms. Those possibly under royal protection like Bleadon had the Queen's Arms in a 16th century building built when Mary I or Elizabeth I ruled the waves. Both those regnal numbers may be mispronunciations of the word "thirst". Another Queen virtually rocked the boat at the Olympic closing ceremony, making some wish that Brian May perhaps be our next king after Bradley. If readers have not already drifted off, it should be mentioned that it is not clear whether the nearby Anchor Inn has any deep royal associations but the Letter to the Hebrews has the sign as sure and steadfast and so people must have hankered for a visit, including Morris sides led by their hanker chiefs. Incidentally, a Bolt was used as an anchor at the Olympics. Our Olympic opening Queen made her first official pub visit to the Bridge Inn in Topsham and it is a pity it was not to the Lord Nelson in Cleve, where a swift half was easily secured during the Olympic wrestling.

As some drinkers are not like Olympic athletes, the Old Inn in Hutton may have had gentlemen imbibing there in the past who performed that stomachal action in order to impress the ladies, which they probably did not do if their trousers fell down as a result. The Coach House in Locking may have had svelter clients if the reference is to personal trainers who were adepts of the medallic goddess Nike. The Woolpack in St Georges is obviously not a misnomer for an Ennisian Olympic six-pack, though.

Nautical signs are to be found in Uphill. The Dolphin may have been where local Bakers, or their personal coaches, drank. The Ship may have originally been for sailors and later for steamers who have to give way to the former unless being overtaken as the captain had over-imbibed. Both of these excellent hostelries served port in stormy weather and may have had a star board to guide travellers home. The Olympic ship was the 20,000-tonne HMS Ocean so she could not have birthed in the Uphill pool.

In Weston, the White Hart may be where it all started as Richard II, whose badge it was, made pubs display a sign and many of them simply used this one as pub signs could not be red anyway.

The Weston Cricket Club is a chirpy place when the *acheta domesticus* male is there. The 49 Club has no golfing associations, as only 14 are allowed in the bag. In the case of those setting out from the Bristol Hotel to play around, there would only have been a pair. Sadly, one may in future be walking out of the Bristol House Inn with a different pear to munch in conference. As the Britannia once again reminds us of our ruling the waves, it is possible that customers there could waive the rules without going Off the Rails, something Olympic opener Isambard Kingdom Brunel never did, and finishing up in the Claremont Vaults, except perhaps in a Polish Olympic year. The exact Criterion for suffering such a fate is lost in the mists of thyme in a gastropub. However, a rolling pin that was not one of nine awaited if one arrived home to find the Dragon Inn.

The Royal Hotel dates, under a different name, from the reign of George III and the nearby Regency refers to the slightly later period when the Prince Regent and future George IV took over as dad was delusional, as sometimes occurs. The Waverley is named after the last seaworthy paddle steamer still carrying passengers, named in turn after Sir Walter Scott's novel written during the Regency period about Bonnie Prince Charlie and the 1745 Battle of Prestonpans, which started just before six o'clock in the evening and ended in a government defeat, not to Labour the point.

The London Oak is planely not a misnomer for the *platanus × acerifolia* commonly found in the Olympic city. Nor is the Red Admiral related to the Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Gorskov, Butterflies being small sailboats that are sometimes crewed by colonels and with yellow hulls that go against the grain. The Windsor Castle records where the marathon started at the 1908 Olympics, making everyone run 700 yards more in present marathons and perhaps thus causing a change of winner in 1908, which sounds more like an impossibly fast 200 yards time, obviously without having Eton. Now winners have to wait for the closing celebrations to make sure the medals are correctly awarded.

In Worle, the King's Head, another popular name, may also have once had 5/- ale and the Lamb a flagstone floor. The Nightjar was for late drinkers and the Nut Tree sign may originally have been a silver nutmeg or a barmaid with a golden pear. The Old Manor Inn obviously did things in the old-fashioned way and, whilst being built, may have had, as a temporary outside attraction, a cerise Cadillac long enough to put a bowling alley in the back. The Summerhouse was not where Maxim de Winter stayed when Manderley burned down before he joined the Pet Shop Boys for an orange cycling display to close the Olympics and send them Flying down to Rio with Roger, rather than James, Bond.

Finally, Juliet Capulet was someone who thought that names were of little importance as, when she had to Act Two and was being Scene Two, she asked Romeo Montague, after discounting Paris in the springtime: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Equally, we love our real ale pubs whatever their name or sign so long as the ale does not ever fail to please.

Dr John



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# A Round with Robin

This has been a very diverse quarter for me with trips to the Manchester area, South Yorkshire, mid-Somerset, London (south and north east) and all the wonderful pubs in Bristol that I frequent. Firstly though let me make mention of an article in *The Times* for July 5th where Carol Midgley laments the passing of pub traditions such as pickled eggs, jukeboxes and the like. Perhaps she should visit the **Seven Stars** in Bristol where I went for the May 'Beeriodical'. Here there are certainly pickled eggs and a jukebox, and on this occasion the featured beers came from Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. Although I prefer hoppy beers generally – such as the Arbor Cornubia (3.8%) exclusive to the **Cornubia** pub, where the extremely hoppy *Spring Edition* was even out-hopped by the *Summer Edition* – at the 'Beeriodical' my preference was for three excellent dark beers: Bingham Vanilla Stout (5%); *Aylesbury The Third Switch* (4.5%), a London coffee porter; and *Windsor and Eton Conqueror* (5%). The exception was the *XT Mellow Amber* (3.8%) which satisfied my hop addiction! Also on later that week was the *Gloucester Dockside Dark* (5.2%), which makes me hope for great things from that new brewery.

With the Chalice Morris Men I visited South Yorkshire staying with Great Yorkshire Morris at Hampsthwaite, a village not far from Knaresborough. There we had (on gravity serve) *Goose Eye Chinook* (4.2%) and *Ilkley Moor Mary Jane* (3.5%), both at £2 a pint. Whilst dancing and drinking in York in great pubs and locations, the only surprising beer was to be found at the **Yorkshire Terrier**, namely *Stanley's Bitter*. However in Knaresborough at **Blind Jack's** (a Good Beer Guide pub), where nine hand pumps had a variety of beers local and not so local, my favourite was the *Acorn Vanguard* (5%).

On a longish walk through Somerset starting from Buckland St Mary (hourly bus from Taunton) the first port of call was at the **Candlelight Inn** at Bishopswood where they had four beers dispensed by gravity and on sale at £2.90 a pint.

Following a Weston sub-branch crawl from **Woodborough Arms** at Winscombe, via the **Crown Inn** at Churchill, and **Golden Lion** at Wrington, Graham and I caught the 121 bus to Bedminster and thence to the **Portcullis** in Clifton for their Eurovision Beer Festival and some crackingly good ale in good company, and where the *Tiny Rebel Urban IPA* (5.5%) at £1.95 a half deserves a mention.

Later that week one of my all-time favourite beers was on at the **Gryphon** in central Bristol – *Spire Twist and Stout* (4.5%). Another time at the Gryphon, whilst drinking delicious *Wentworth's Chocolate and Chilli Stout* (4.8%), landlord John gave me a large taster of the *Orkney Skull Splitter* (8.5%) which surprisingly (and dangerously) I found to be very easy drinking.

On the Saturday of the Jubilee weekend I visited some Good Beer Guide pubs in south London. Starting at the **Trinity Arms** in Brixton I drank the house beer, *Young's Bitter*, which was of very good quality. Then I went to two pubs in South Lambeth, the **Priory Arms** – a free house with five ales on tap from *Dark Star*, *Sambrook*, *Downton*, *Vale* and *Oxfordshire* breweries – and a Young's pub, the *Surprise*, where I picked up the latest edition of *The London Drinker* (the local equivalent of *Pints West*). This informed me that a place called **The Cat Is Back** had re-opened as the second Harvey's pub in London at Point Pleasant in Wandsworth, not far from the River Thames. It also mentioned that a great many of the artefacts from that pub were now to be found at the **Armoury** pub just near to the old Young's Ram Brewery. So I visited both pubs and am glad I did, as they are both charming and have great beers at (for London) reasonable prices. I will certainly be returning there next year. At the Cat Is Back I drank the *Elizabethan Ale* (5%), brewed using the 1952 recipe, and the hops used came from the same grower of hops used in 1952!

Back in Bristol, the Warwickshire 'Beeriodical' at the **Seven Stars** had amongst its beers the *Church End Peckham Rye* (4.7%), but the *Tunnel Queen of Diamonds* (6%), a hoppy fruity jubilee special, was my best beer that week, although I have to admit to liking the *Atomic Half Life*, best taken in small amounts though.

This year's **Cheddar Ales Family Beer Festival** was the best one yet, and the excellent programme with tasting notes including "how to taste beer" must be the envy of all non-CAMRA beer festival programmes. 61 beers were on offer, all good quality, all at the right temperature and condition. Predictably the *Bingham's Hot Dog Stout* (5%) and the *Thornbridge Jaipur IPA* were firm favourites, but the *Salopian*

*White Elephant* (4.9%) and the new *Cheddar Crown and Glory* (4.5%) were quite outstanding too.

I was at the **Seven Stars** again for the special *Arbor 2012 Double Black IPA* (7.5%) which had been recommended to me. A week later at the same establishment I had the very strange but likeable beer, *Duck and Dive* (5.9%) from the new *Green Duck Company*, with the aroma of molasses, but a good beery taste with hints of wedding cake, plus a long fruity bitter aftertaste. Worth looking out for!

The first mini beer festival at the **Volunteer Tavern** in St Judes was entitled 'Beer from the East Midlands' and my undoubted favourite was *Mr Grundy's 1914*, a 5% dark sweet stout from the *Uttoxeter* brewery, but on the Saturday to the accompaniment of a fine band (flute, uke and mandolin) called Cractan, *Sheffield Blue Bee* beers went down rather well. **Claverham's Henth** (tenth) beer festival was themed with farmyards; I liked best *George Wright Drunken Duck* (3.9%) and also *B&T Fruit Bat* (4.5%), a beer with hints of raspberry. *Millstone True Grit* was beer of the festival.

The July **Seven Stars** 'Beeriodical' was of beers from Tyneside, though Paul the landlord did cast his net a little further afield. I was most impressed with the new brewery *Truefitt* from Middlesbrough: the **Ironopolis**, a 4.7% stout, and the *Ayresome Angel* (4.2%) were awesome.

On the first Saturday in July I went to north London to visit a pub not visited since 1972 at Hornsey, the corner house **Three Compasses** which is now a free house serving many local ales in third-pint glasses. They had a *Redemption* beer festival with "meet the brewer" coming up on 25th July when the Olympic torch was due to pass the pub and I was able to drink the beers from Tottenham and Hackney there. On the way back to Green Lanes to catch the bus to central London, I was walking down Turnpike Lane and discovered the **Toll Gate**, a large pub that looked welcoming, and found to my delight that *Redemption Hopspur* (4.7%) was for sale at £1.99; regretfully the barman said it wasn't ready yet, they were cleaning the lines, and I was about to look for an alternative when the duty manager asked me if I could put up with a pint straight from the barrel! I said I could, and paid £1.49 for it with a CAMRA voucher. The back of the pub is unusual as the main lighting comes through A-frame skylights which diffuse the light giving it the aura of a reading room.

Five real ale enthusiasts from Weston and Bristol visited Manchester, Liverpool and Chester for a week in mid July. The **Smithfield Tavern** was one missed out on our last visit so we went there, and the new **Port Street Beer House** had beers from *Magic Rock*, a bit trendy and got full quickly; the quirky **Joshua Brookes** next door to the **Lass**



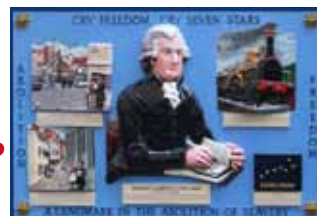
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# Bristol Beer Festival needs you!

The very successful Bristol Beer Festival is organised and run entirely by CAMRA volunteers and it has continued to grow each year. This year's post-festival "wash-up" meeting concluded that it would be beneficial for future festivals to split certain key roles into smaller, more manageable elements. This would also reduce pressure on several members of the festival committee as they were finding the scope of their tasks and responsibilities too great with the continued growth.

Therefore, this is a call for more volunteers to come forward.

Some of the roles only require work to be carried out prior to or during the festival, while others will run on through most phases of the festival. In addition it would be helpful if any existing volunteers could consider widening their list of jobs.

It looks as if we will have positions for team leaders, team members and maybe even an overall festival manager.

Whether you have specific skills, or are a willing volunteer happy to slot in to whatever task needs doing, you will be made very welcome. If you can offer some time I'm sure we can find a task to fit. The current festival committee has many years of experience which grows with every year, so help and advice will always be available.

## Team or individual roles and some of their responsibilities:

- **Bar:** beer staff, cider staff, cleaning of bar areas during the festival, staff briefing.
- **'Cellar':** beer and cider quantity and quality, casks, stillage, taps.
- **Charity liaison:** before, during and after the festival.
- **Festival programme:** production of the programme including tasting notes and adverts.
- **Finance:** initial budget to HQ, ticket sales, tokens and monies during the festival.
- **Games:** set-up, training staff, prizes.
- **Glasses:** ordering, sponsorship including artwork, checking delivery, glass stuffing during the festival, carry-out bags.
- **Health & Safety:** preparing initial H&S form for HQ, presence during set-up, takedown and during the festival, staff briefing
- **Kitchen:** washing of volunteers' glasses, cleanliness of kitchen area.
- **Membership:** for those wishing to join during ticket sales and the festival.
- **Products and tombola:** ordering and buying prizes, setting up and running the stands.

O'Gowrie had a good selection of ales and a strange outdoor balcony over a small stream. We visited the **King's Arms** in Salford, this being my sort of pub with odd artefacts around the bars, a good community centre (they even have a knitting club) and good ales. On one day we caught the train to go to the **Stalybridge Station Buffet** which everyone should visit once in their lifetime, not only for the railway paraphernalia but also the choice of ales. We bussed and walked to the **Rising Sun** at Mossley with views over Saddleworth Moor, and were content with *Millstone Tiger Rut* (4%) and table skittles. Upon hearing of our plans to visit Greenfield, a couple of locals gave us lifts there to their choice of pub, the **Railway**, which was very useful for our return to Manchester. Chester was remarkable as the first pub we went in, the **Pied Bull**, turned out to have become a brew pub in 2011 and we were invited to the cellar to see the one-barrel plant. Their ale is good even though the one I had was called *Bull's Hit*. Then to **Old Harkers** and **Mill Hotel**, and finally to the **Spitting Feathers Brewery Tap**, a very old building which unfortunately had none of their beers but the *Peerless Red Rocks* made up for that. In Liverpool, after the required visit to the **Ship and Mitre**, we went to the **Lion Returns** in Moorfields, the **Philharmonic Hotel**, **Peter Kavanagh's Bar** (with eclectic artefacts and stained glass windows) and the **Baltic Wharf** with no bad beer at any pub. My favourite beer of the whole week was at the **Crowne & Kettle** and was

- **Programme adverts:** from breweries, pubs, off licences.
- **Publicity:** of all events, sponsorship for glasses, tokens, tee-shirts, liaising with VIP guests.
- **Public days manager:** liaising with section leaders to make sure all tasks are completed.
- **Tasting notes:** compilation of the notes for the programme.
- **Security:** door security and stewards.
- **Set-up manager:** liaising with section leaders to make sure all tasks are completed.
- **Signage:** brewery and CAMRA banners, festival signage, cask labels.
- **Staffing:** pre-festival mail-outs, collection of names, meet/greet/sign-in during the set-up and festival, thank-you letters, and reward trips for volunteers.
- **Stall liaison:** food stalls and their hygiene certifications plus any independent merchandise stalls.
- **Take-down manager:** liaising with section leaders to make sure all tasks are completed.
- **Venue liaison:** including access timings plus any appropriate venue regulations and licence.

The meetings of the festival committee are monthly starting in October, though some sub-committees may meet or communicate between the main meetings.

**The first such planning meeting is on Tuesday 16th October at Horts starting at 8:00pm and we would very much like to see anyone that might be able to help with organising and running the 2013 event.**

To get involved or for more information about specific roles please talk to one of the people listed below.

Richard Brooks (festival committee chair and publicity 2012):

**richard@camrabristol.org.uk**

Steve Matthews (bar manager 2012):

**steve@sm-kj-matthews.co.uk** – mobile: 07773 669971

Tony Durbin (festival treasurer 2012):

**tonyd@fsmail.net**

Please lend a hand – the festival needs you!

Steve Matthews



*Black Rat Stout* (4.5% and brewed at the Rat and Rhubarb in Huddersfield) and best pub **Bar Fringe** for its weird décor and great beers.

Back in Bristol, after going to the **Bag O'Nails** beer festival, where mention must be made of *Ascot Ales Penguin Porter* (4.5%), I went to the nearby **Three Tuns** as they had one of the best collaboration beers I've come across, the *Arbor/Steel City Bolshevik* (2.7%) and thence to listen to Thistle & Thorne playing at the **Seven Stars** and drinking *Arbor Cats and Dogs* (3.8%).

The **Weston Lions Beer Festival** on the beach lawns in Weston-super-Mare was as good as usual. With an Olympic theme, many of the beers were one-off specials and so worth trying: from them my favourites were the dark brown complex *Abbeydale Dr Morton's Dead Heat* (4.1%) and *Red Fox Going for Gold* (4.2%), an exceptional multi-hopped non-citrus golden beer. They had a good selection of local ales, but anywhere *Arbor Yakima Valley* (7%) and *Oakham Atilla* (7.5%) never fail to satisfy for their hoppiness!

On the evening of the second festival at the **Volunteer Tavern** in St Jude's (raining again), I was happy to see a good selection of beers from East London. I started with halves of *London Fields Love Not War* (4.2%) and *Hackney Hopster* (4.2%), before going on to the *Redemption* beers, which included *Hopspur* and *Urban Dusk*.

Robin E Wild

# Meandering in the Malvern Hills

On a dull and rainy Saturday morning in June, a group of members of the Weston-super-Mare CAMRA sub-branch, along with a couple of members from Bristol, came together for the start of a mini-bus trip to some pubs in the Malvern Hill area.

Arriving at our first pub, the **Three Kings** in the lovely village of Hanley Castle, we were surprised that the local villagers had laid on bunting, pig roast and a band on the village green outside this smashing



The Three Kings

pub to welcome us. However we were to be disappointed when we learned that this was to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee and not the arrival of a group of beer enthusiasts from Bristol and Somerset! This pub quite rightly deserves its listing in the Good Beer Guide and the accolade of former CAMRA National Pub of the Year as well as being on the National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors. Beers on offer included Hobson's Bitter and Butcombe Bitter, plus a clutch of Jubilee-themed beers including Luverly Jub'lee at 4.2% from Severn Vale, Royal Knees Up at 4.8% and Jubilation at 3.6%. This pub presents a classic lesson in how much difference a benevolent owner can make. Whilst this pub has been run and managed by the same family for more than a century, the landlord, who owns the freehold, is determined that it sells beer at reasonable prices so keeps the rent at a level such that the beers on offer were in range of £2.20 to £2.40 per pint; now that is luverly!

Our next hop took us into Malvern to visit the **Morgan** which is a Wye Valley outlet with links to the eponymous sports car. The pub is located close to centre of Malvern, with a nice garden area and the beers on offer here included Wye Valley's Butty Bach and Dorothy Goodbody's Golden Ale. These were worth the wait as the staff here were a bit overwhelmed by the arrival of 16 thirsty travellers at



The Morgan

lunchtime on a Saturday.

After dropping off some intrepid walkers in our group, the mini-bus continued on to the **Wyche Inn**, also in Malvern, where the more sedentary of us waited for the arrival of the ramblers who climbed over the hill. Needless to say it would have been churlish not to have sampled what this Good Beer Guide-listed pub had to offer from a selection of Hobson's Bitter at 3.8%, Wye Valley HPA at 4% and



The Wyche Inn

Pomp & Circumstance at 4.2% plus the unpronounceable Priessnitz Plzn at 4.3%, both from Malvern Hills Brewery (MHB), all reasonably priced. This pub had an unusual layout in that it comprised what looked like two different but adjoining bar areas built on a slope with a potentially lethal set of

during this trip.

After regrouping the next hop took us to the **Brewer's Arms** in West Malvern where we sampled what were becoming familiar Wye Valley and MHB beers but in addition there was MHB Black Pear – no, not a perry, but a hoppy beer at 4.4% – and Shropshire Lad at 4.5% from Wood's Brewery. This pub is a lovely village pub located down a track with a lovely garden area and the Good Beer Guide lists this pub as having an “award-winning view to the Black Mountains” but sadly the low clouds/mist followed us again so we were unable to enjoy the view, just the beer and company!



The Brewer's Arms

Next hop took us across the county line into Herefordshire and to the **Chase Inn** in

Upper Colwall which, although having a garden with a superb view, this again was hidden by the low cloud. However an extensive range of beers made up for our disappointment. This included what the Good Beer Guide advises is a regular guest from St. George's Brewery (this time Friar Tuck at 4%), Marston's EPA at 3.6%, Batham's Bitter, Sharp's Doom Bar and the Jubilee celebration offering of Bird's Brewery, Diamond Queen at 4.5%, plus Wood's Shropshire Lad as before made for an enjoyable stop at this pleasant village pub.



The Chase Inn

At this stage, after five pubs, common sense would have dictated that we call it a day and return to Weston. However there were more treats to come. First up it was back to Malvern to visit the **Nag's Head** which by the time we arrived was very busy on this Saturday evening. This pub's owner also owns the St. George's Brewery so their range was on offer. I liked their Dragon's Blood at 4.8% despite its unappealing name and Northumberland Brewery's Main Seam Mild at 4%.



The Nag's Head

At 7 o'clock it was decided that it was time to head back to the delights of Weston-super-Mare, however we did make one quick detour to call in at the **Swan Inn** at Newland which, although not Good Beer Guide-listed, was well worth the diversion. It is mainly a foodie pub but has great beer garden for when the sun is shining and has a few decent ales on offer, including St. George's Brewery Dragon's Blood served direct from the barrel.



The Swan Inn

This was a great day out, thanks in no small part to the organisation by our group member Max French.

Bob Reynolds (photos by Adam Bell)



# Another landmark for Arbor Ales

Almost six years have passed by since I first met the remarkable Jon Comer. He turned up, with brother Paul, at a CAMRA tasting panel induction meeting at the Naval Volunteer, King Street, Bristol on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2006. We learnt that Jon was a home brewer who just happened to have a trial brew on sale locally, and Paul was about to take on the lease of a pub near where I live.

The following day I visited the Cross Hands at Winterbourne Down to sample Jon's beer. It was hidden behind an old Coach House brewery pump clip on which landlord Pete Hughes had printed the legend "Cross Hands Mark 1 Ale" under which, in felt tip pen, was added "4.2% abv". Such was the debut of one of Bristol's brewing legends.

I completed a tasting card at the time giving the beer a score of 77% overall. It is worth quoting my tasting notes from this now historic document:

*'A nicely balanced dark reddish-brown mild ale with a kick. An enticing aroma of roast malt and dark fruits also has a hint of cooking apples. A big fruity taste with a notable astringency leads to an increasingly dry and astringent finish in which fruit and hop bitterness vie for the last word.'*

In April 2007 Jon established the first Arbor Ales brewery, a two-and-a-half-barrel-length plant, behind his brother's pub the Old Tavern in Manor Road, on the Fishponds and Stapleton border, and the beer I had sampled became Old Knobbly. A light ale, Trendlewood Bitter, was added to the ales on sale in the pub. Other now familiar beers, Snuffy Jack's Old Ale (5.9%) and Slumberjack (7.0%), as well as Single Hop, began life there in the following few months. The ever-popular Motueka (4%) and the superb and award-winning Oyster Stout (4.6%) both originated there.

Supplying an increasing number of local outlets, following Jon's decision to become a full-time brewer, soon resulted in demand outstripping the brewery capacity and new premises were leased at the old Brain's faggots factory unit in Bridge Road Kingswood. The old plant, on which 80 brews had been produced, was sold to Plain Ales of Chitterne, Wiltshire, and a new five-and-a-half-barrel-length brewery installed and duly commissioned on 15th September 2008.

In February 2009 the company, now consisting of Jon his wife

Megan and brother-in-law Namaya, signed a free-of-tie lease on the Old Stillage, Redfield, Bristol and the pub reopened, with due ceremony, on 2nd March. The first of many awards came at the SIBA Festival at Tucker's Maltings in Newton Abbot in April. Distinctive Arbor Ales glasses were produced for outlets and many improvements incorporated in the brewery.

2010 saw Namaya become the freeholder of the Old Stillage and Jon pick up a further four awards from SIBA at the annual festival in Newton Abbot. As beer production continued to increase, including the addition of a range of bottle-conditioned ales, so did the 'estate'. On 1st October a lease was taken on the Three Tuns, St. George's Road, Bristol, a pub recently voted CAMRA Pub of the Year.

The following year saw the first collaboration of Bristol microbrewers when Arbor, Bristol Beer Factory and Zerodegrees brewers produced an IPA, in three versions, for the CAMRA Bristol Beer Festival in March. At this time Jon ceased to be a one-man-band at the brewery, having been joined by Paul Worsley, late of RCH brewery. Paul started by doing the deliveries in the newly acquired large van but soon became assistant brewer since the plant by this time was brewing four, or even five, times a week in order to satisfy demand. An 'travelling bar' was established for summer outdoor events appearing in Battersea Park in July successfully launching the brand in the capital. In August the fantastic Yakima Valley IPA (7%) made an appearance at the CAMRA Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) at Earls Court and Paul gained his first brewing award when his first attempt at the popular Oyster Stout was voted Beer of the Festival at the Cotswold Beer Festival. By the end of the year the business had outgrown the premises at Kingswood and a move became imperative.

By early spring 2012 the plant was installed, together with additional fermenting capacity, and up and running in new premises at the Lawrence Hill Trading Estate, Croydon Street, Bristol. A record five awards, including three for bottled beers, were netted at the annual SIBA Festival and Jon's brother Paul, now called "Hagrid" (to avoid confusion with Paul Worsley) on account of his delightfully formidable bearded countenance, joined the team as a general assistant. Oyster Stout won the category for the South West Area Champion Beer of Britain selection process and thus appeared at the finals at GBBF, this year at Olympia.

So, after having produced 546 brews since September 2008, the five-and-a-half-barrel plant was decommissioned making way for the installation of a new 12-barrel brewery. Since April 2007 Arbor Ales has produced 646 brews of about 140 different ales. At the time of writing, mid August, work is in progress fitting up the new plant. We all look forward to the first trial brews.

During the past five years Jon Comer has developed into one of the most daring, innovative and accomplished brewers in Britain, if not the world. As far as I can tell, he was the one who started the popular 'Single Hop' ale – many other micros, and recently Marston's, climbing on the bandwagon – as well as helping to revive rare old styles such as milds, old ales and oatmeal stouts. He manages to combine artistry and a consistent product of the highest quality with business acumen. Here's to the next five years!

Henry Davies

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4.6%



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## WARNING

From the Management of the

## HOPE & ANCHOR

Exceptional Public House

# BEER DON'T SPILL

# Good Beer Guide 2013 launch *First chance to buy*

2013 is not as far away as you think, and as normal we at CAMRA will be launching the latest edition of our ever popular Good Beer Guide in September– the only properly and independently researched guide to the best pubs for real ale and cider in the Britain.

As local co-ordinator for many years, I can vouch for the amount of legwork and dedication put in by our local unpaid volunteers in making sure that only the best ale pubs make it into this prestigious guide. It was hard work but we were thirsty enough to do it! The book aims to identify the best 4,500 pubs in Britain, including 63 chosen by our local branch covering Bristol and parts of South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. Those 63 were the subject of many visits and much debate amongst us over the last 12 months, and many more were nominated than we have space for. A place in the Guide is much sought after by all licensees who are serious about keeping real ale.

The Good Beer Guide 2013 will be launched locally on Friday September 14th at the **Gryphon** in Colston Street in central Bristol. The Gryphon is just about 100 metres uphill from the Colston Hall and close to the bus station and the BRI hospital. The event will run from noon to 7pm and copies of the Guide will be on hand. Last year we sold an impressive 90 copies. The team at the Gryphon relaunched the pub as a real ale and rock music venue just two years ago. In fact the event coincides with their second anniversary of reopening and they have a lot of surprises planned for that weekend. Expect lots of live bands (21 are rumoured!) and an increased range of beers. Given that they already sell up to six changing beers and are never afraid to sell rare styles (especially dark beers) or strong brews, then this should make it

well worth sticking around after buying your GBG. The pub also offers a tasty range of home-cooked food. A generous discount on all real ales also applies if you show a CAMRA membership card.

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

Even if you bought the Guide last year, the ever-changing pub industry means that a significant amount of it will now be out of date. In our own area around 20% of the pubs featured this year will be different from last year, and a similar story will be true in most other areas too.

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

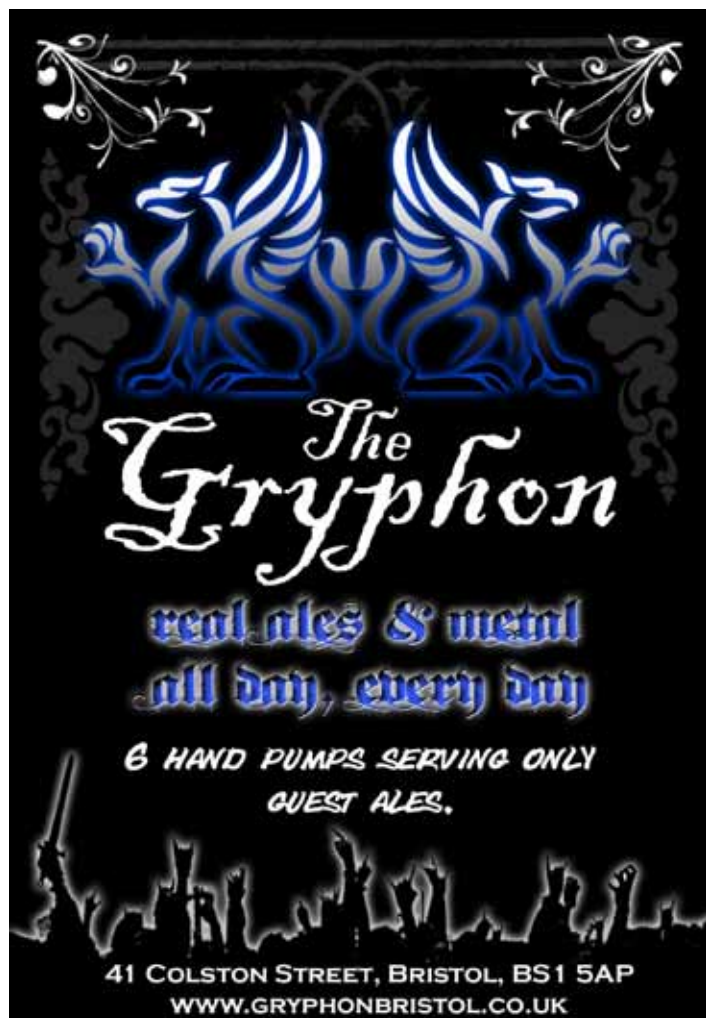
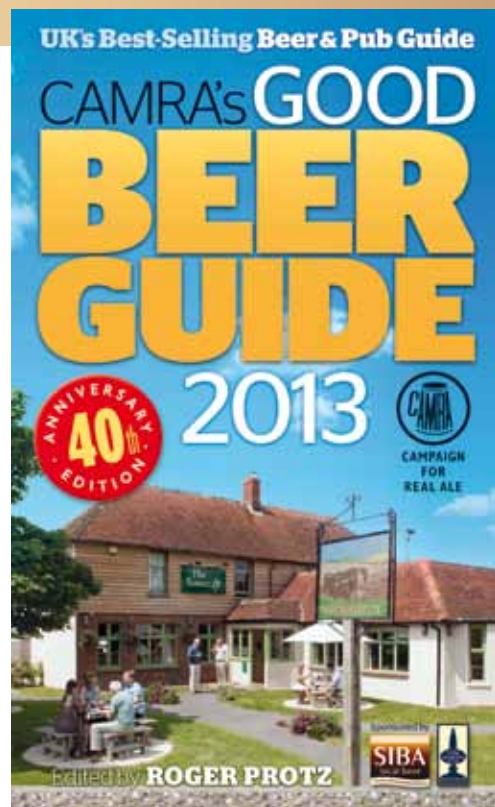
The book will be available in main book shops, or online from CAMRA from mid September, and makes an ideal Christmas or birthday present for anyone who enjoys a pint. However, we are offering the chance to buy it in person from some of the volunteers who helped write it at our annual launch event.

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

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

Vince Murray

GBG Co-ordinator, Bristol & District CAMRA



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## A marriage made in Heaven? Cider and cheese

### Jerry Says ...

Bristol has recently seen a welcome proliferation of cider festivals in pubs, including the **Seven Stars**, the **Green Man** and the **Portcullis**. The 9th Bristol Cider Festival was held at Brunel's Passenger Shed at Temple Meads, with over 100 ciders on offer. There are various views on pairing beer with food, but there seems to be a general recognition that cider is well-paired with cheese. A recent brace of cider festivals in our local pubs featured not only some great real cider and perry, but also some delicious cheeses, as Jerry Fletcher, Bristol & District CAMRA's current cider coordinator, reports.

"In Jubilee week, the **Green Man** in Alfred Place, Kingsdown, held a Cider and Cheese Festival. The ciders included Once Upon a Tree Tumpy Ground from Hereford (yes, some ciders do have strange names), Fosseway Somerset Glory and Bristol Ciderworks' Backwell – surprisingly not often seen in Bristol. There were many others, including my personal favourite, Halletts Heartraker. Of the five cheeses I chose, Dorset Red was probably the tastiest. But the others tried also went well with my chosen ciders: Godminster Vintage Goldilocks made in Somerset, but from Jersey Cows, Sharpham Rustic, Gevrik from Cornwall and Stinking Bishop".

I missed the **Green Man** Festival, but did go to another Dawkins pub's ciderfest over the Bristol Balloon Fiesta weekend. On my visit to the **Portcullis** on Wellington Terrace in Clifton Village, I stuck to halves of cider as I am a fan of dry ciders and find perries generally sweeter than my palate prefers. On his first visit, Jerry indulged in a 'perrie afternoon', enjoying Dunkerton Organic, Mccrindle's, Nempnett Piglets Choice, Severn and Hecks Blakeney Red. On his second visit, Jerry focused on cider and tried Naish Badgers Spit (a dreadful name but a heavenly dry cider which was my own favourite), Wilkins Farmhouse, Perry's Farmhouse and Parson's Choice. The **Portcullis** has recently introduced 'nibbles', great value tapas style bar snacks sourced locally, including a range of cheeses. For the ciderfest, Cornish Yarg and a Cornish

Brie were added to the list and the full range, served with chunky bread and butter, were a great accompaniment to the ciders on offer.

Clifton Village, like many other areas of Bristol, now has several pubs offering good real cider and perry, often two or three at a time. Jerry's explorations took in the **Hophouse**: "A pub that has an improving reputation for quality beer, but also offers three or four ciders. I tried the Sheppys and Burrow Hill, both good. The **Clifton** pub has a choice of three, and I much enjoyed Old Rosie and Wyldwood on this occasion." The **Coronation Tap** is probably one of Clifton's oldest cider pubs, and held its own 'Corifest' of music and cider over the same weekend as the Balloon Fiesta – just too many good things to choose from in one weekend!

Being something of a cheese addict, I was prompted by the **Portcullis** experience to seek out advice on the best pairings of cheese and cider. Interestingly, a quick flick through CAMRA's cider publications and an online search didn't really reveal too much. Perhaps not surprisingly, given their reputation as gourmets, the French offer quite a few suggestions on styles of cheese to pair with different types of cider. So does the US and Canada (particularly French Canada). Certainly reading some of the suggestions online (such as those at <http://iledefrancecheese.com/index.php/The-inside-scoop-on-cider-cheese.php>) had me salivating for a taste of the cheeses mentioned and for a wider range of cider than I might normally explore. So perhaps there's a niche here for local food writers (or licensees, delicatessen owners or restaurateurs) to provide some advice on getting the best flavours from pairing British cheeses, ciders and perries. A marriage made in Heaven, surely?

Lesley Huxley

### REAL CIDER



### SOLD HERE

## Cryptic Crossword

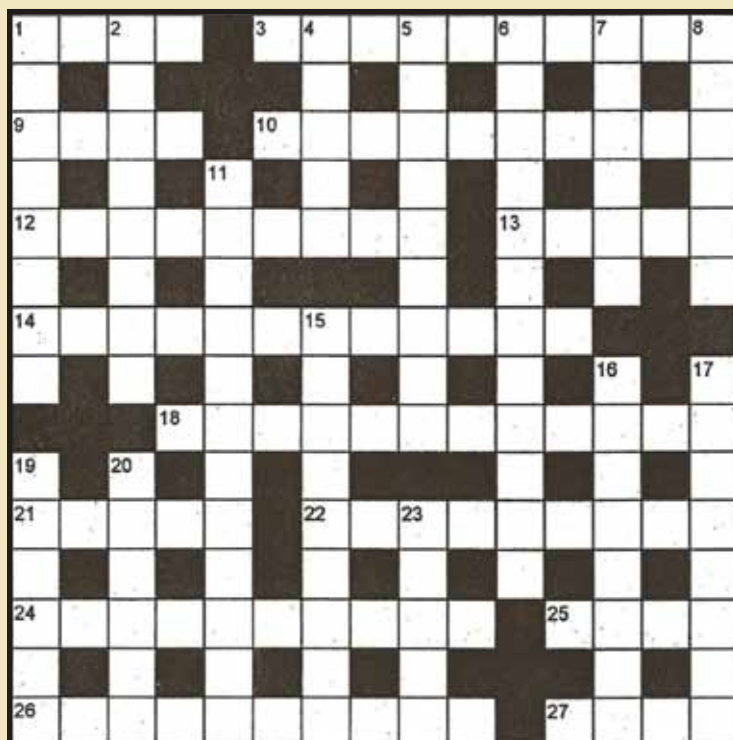
Compiled by Pete and Eddie Taberner

### CLUES ACROSS

1. & 1 dn. Sounds like one heavy load delivered to 11 dn. (3, 5, 4)
3. 11 dn. once featured a magnificent film cast (5, 5)
9. Hot Sicilian neat cocktail (4)
10. Ancient castle's gateway to the Clifton pub (10)
12. Beefy German port often at the barbecue (9)
13. Pub could be black or white, but it's rough by the sound of it (5)
14. He's into drinking culture - Wild Hare then Rog Protz to start (12)
18. Fermenting portent there, with PC connection (8, 4)
21. Had quick wash in lager in Severn Salmon pub (5)
22. Cereal bar delivering a kick to the gooleys? (3, 6)
24. Convincing story to make vile ale ebb away (10)
25. Ale with a brandy top. Can do! (4)
26. Two pints of Kelham Island beer set out for Dennis Hopper and Jack Nicholson (4, 6)
27. Originally Burton Ale smelled super (4)

### CLUES DOWN

1. see 1ac.
2. Heartless men siphon off Shepherd's while their classical companions are away (2, 6)
4. Old fashioned way to extend contents of barrel on guest list (5)
5. Prue and Tone, around north, get pissed together and start on something (5, 4)
6. 1 dn. & 1ac. missing article was manufactured in the Bristol region (12)
7. Rule out LA brew, but it does have great appeal (6)
8. Drinkers here would give a XXXX for this mild from Arundel (6)
11. Competition for CAMRA's local favourites, or just the opposite? (3, 2, 3, 4)
15. Oktoberfest region where Herald Inn is revamped (9)



16. I join Nora in club (no lefties admitted) to get drunk in 11 dn. (8)
17. Lonely Brewdog lacking mate doesn't start. No need to scratch! (8)
19. Very large measure served to the choirboy (6)
20. Elbows on ales including Norfolk Nog that's lacking body (6)
23. Miller's Lite - right on modern alternative to Thatcher's job (5)

Solution on page 33

## 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

### Save the Bristol House from Tesco

This may be of interest to you and maybe something you can help with in view of the pub being a going concern and landlords being forced out!

I am one of many disgruntled and upset customers of the Bristol House public house in Milton Road, Weston-super-Mare.

There have been rumours over the past few months that the pub may be turned into a Tesco store and these have become stronger since the tenants Wale Shonyinka and Alison Press were apparently given immediate notice to vacate by the landlords, Enterprise Inns. The last day of their tenancy was Wednesday 25th July, with them vacating the next day.

We do not know at this time if the pub will reopen with maybe new tenants or if it is indeed to be transformed into a Tesco's.

We understand the situation with Enterprise Inns' financial health and the increase in new Tesco stores opening up on empty/dead pub sites, but this is currently a going concern with the tenants being forced to leave a popular community pub with all sorts and ages of clients which has seen improving sales during the course of the recent landlords' (three-year) tenancy.

We feel this is a newsworthy story with a lot of local interest and support and will do anything we can to help keep this local community pub open.

Mark Thyer,  
Weston-super-Mare.

### Save the Fellowship from Tesco

Hoping you can help.....

I am a regular reader of Pints West, and wondered if you could publicise to other Pints West readers the planning application that Tesco's have put in, effectively to convert the Fellowship on Filton Avenue into another Tesco store. The link is below, and if enough objections come in, it might just stop another pub from being turned into a supermarket....

[planningonline.bristol.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=M4S2STDN0MC00](http://planningonline.bristol.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=M4S2STDN0MC00)

Luke Burton,  
by email.

### Children in pubs

Hopefully you will have read the letter I submitted to Pints West, which was printed in issue No 94, regarding 'Music in Pubs'. If you didn't, I wasted my time in sending it in.

Any rate, I am going to have another go with my 'Miserable Old Sod' hat on, this time the subject is 'Children in Public Houses'.

Now don't get me wrong, I enjoy the company of children. I fathered four of my own (according to my wife), who between them have presented me with 11 grandchildren, who

have brought forth four great-grandchildren, 'on the tarmac', with 'two in the hanger'.

So, I suppose you could say 'I'm something of an expert'.

So, why I am I complaining about children being in pubs? Well, it's their behaviour that I cannot stand, when they are in an adult environment.

When I was a child, children were not allowed in pubs, they had to stand outside, and hope that a packet of crisps would be handed out to them every so often. That's when crisps had a little blue piece of paper, with salt wrapped in it. Oh, happy days!

Then, once eating became popular in pubs, it became natural that children would accompany their parents to partake of a meal. When this first became the 'norm', children were made to behave themselves, and sit quietly.

Now, with the advent of 'cruelty to children', it seems that nobody is prepared to chastise them if they misbehave. The little darlings are allowed to run around and climb all over the furniture.

I must admit, my great-grandchildren embarrass me when I'm in a pub with them. I used to have a certain amount of control over my grandchildren, but being further away from the great-grandchildren in the family hierarchy, this is much more difficult.

Let me give you an instance of the attitude of parents.

I was in a pub in Portishead, with six friends, all well over their 70s, and there was a family with three or four children running around screaming, not only that, the parents were chasing them around encouraging them, as if they were in a playground.

The parents were quite upset when I complained to the management.

Then only this week, I was dining in a pub, once again with elderly friends, and there was a family with a youngster sat in a highchair who, once he had finished throwing his unwanted food on the floor, decided it was time to shout and scream at his parents. Now, what action did the parents take while their 'little darling' was disturbing the rest of the custom-

ers? Spoke up louder to each other to compensate for their offspring's racket.

So I plead with all parents who take their children into pubs, PLEASE keep them under control, as the person sat at the next table could be me.

John Gatty,  
Thornbury.

### Maltese beer

A week in Malta was enough for me – it being stinkin' hot and what have you – mostly a holiday for the family.

As a relic from the old British Empire, Malta is blessed with its own brewery where their most popular product is a lager named Cisk.

The brewery was built in 1928 by Simmonds of Reading and miraculously survived the heavy bombing of Malta in the Second World War. Now trading under the name of Simmonds Farsons Cisk plc, they still brew a few throwbacks to those earlier days. One of them, 'Blue Label' has this legend on the label:-

"Launched in 1928, Blue Label has strong connections with the British Navy. Today this Classic Brew remains a favourite amongst locals and tourists alike, and continues to represent the art of traditional brewing and beer culture. Known for its rich colour, Blue Label is brewed with a special type of malt which gives it a distinctly smooth and mild taste."

At 3.3% ABV it reminded me of 60's/70's British bottled beer – a bit of a stranger to hops.

Amazingly, they also still do a milk stout entitled 'Lacto Stout' – I didn't try it but brought a bottle home for my friend Simon Bartlett of Bristol Beer Factory. He's amazed its only 3.8% ABV but is going to give it a try. It'll be interesting to see what he thinks.

According to one of the guide books I used (Lonely Planet?) their classic ales are dying out as their older clientele pass away.

Mark Steeds,  
Beaufort Arms,  
Hawkesbury Upton.

## Rucking Mole joins the pack!

### ALL YEAR ROUND

**Tap Bitter** 3.5%<sub>abv</sub>  
Smooth malty flavour & clean bitter finish

**Best Bitter** 4.0%<sub>abv</sub>  
Well balanced, copper coloured bitter

**Molennium** 4.5%<sub>abv</sub>  
Deep amber coloured premium ale

**Rucking Mole** 4.5%<sub>abv</sub>  
Clean, dry & malty golden bitter

**Landlord's Choice** 4.5%<sub>abv</sub>  
Dark, strong and smooth hoppy bitter

**Molecatcher** 5.0%<sub>abv</sub>  
Copper coloured ale with spicy hop aroma

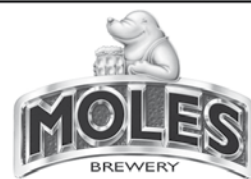
### IN SEASON

**Holy Moley** 4.7%<sub>abv</sub>  
Spring beer that's heaven 'scent'

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

**Molegrip** 4.3%<sub>abv</sub>  
Rich ruby red, Autumn brew

**Moel Moel** 6.0%<sub>abv</sub>  
Warming Winter ale



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



# Soap Box

**We offered Maurice Fells – local author, journalist and broadcaster – an opportunity to air his opinion on a subject of his choice...**

## Whatever happened to Mine Host?

Remember Mine Host? He was the (usually) jolly fellow who welcomed you into his pub by your name and was pulling your pint before you even had a chance to order it.

Mine Host is now an endangered species, if not already extinct. For it seems that these days anyone can take over a pub without knowing anything about the licensed trade or customer service.

When I started newspaper reporting, one of my assignments was to cover the annual meeting of the Bristol Brewster Sessions at the magistrates' court. One of the duties of the justices was to examine people applying for licences, although they had already been vetted by the police.

Would-be publicans would often be quizzed by the justices about their knowledge of licensing law and how they would deal with any trouble in a bar. If they were not satisfied with the answers they could tell the applicant to get more training.

Such was the importance then attached to the proper running of a pub that there were several residential training schools in the West Country for licensees.

It was at the Brewster Sessions that the justices often reported in the 1960's and '70's that Bristol had kept its place at the top of the sober cities league, despite the increasing number of licensed premises. Judging by the drunken activities around the city centre at weekends, we're probably bottom of the table now.

The heyday of the public house came at a time when Mine Host (male or female) was regarded as a pillar of the local community, someone who often organised social events for the 'locals', and was able to hold a conversation with any of the regulars. (Ever tried to have a chat with the young person who pulls your pint these days? They're often more interested in talking to their mates on the 'phone!) Many bar staff have never heard of customer service.

Often publicans were ex-services who took to the bar after being demobbed and stayed there for rest of their working lives, in some cases twenty years or more.

You'll be lucky nowadays if a licensee stays in the trade for twenty months let alone twenty years.

Don't just blame the pubcos. Put some blame on those who approach a pubco to take on a pub without having the least idea of what a business plan is, little, if any, capital to buy stock, and the minimum of marketing or social skills. After a couple of months of having to let the draymen in before breakfast and still working fifteen hours later they decide a pub life is not for them. Why didn't they think of that before?

The pub then stays closed until someone else comes along to try their luck and also lose any savings they've invested in the pub. And so this cycle endlessly repeats itself. One pub near the centre of Bristol has had seven licensees in just as many years. It's currently closed.

Don't these people realise they won't be getting much practical help from the pubco? Didn't they read their leases or seek legal advice? Long gone are the days when district managers employed by breweries with tied houses would call in and give any help that was required. Today's would-be Mine Hosts should realise that pubcos are purely and simply property owners.

It's time customers were given a fair deal with all bar staff being properly trained. They don't seem to understand that a happy customer will tell his or her friends about the experience and even return for another pint or two.

So, how about CAMRA helping to raise standards by running a competition to find the best landlord/lady and best bar person of the year? Come to think about it, would there be many nominations?

## News of Dawkins Ales

### Pub news

Landlord Joe Goldsworthy at the **Portcullis** in Clifton is hosting his annual 'Hopfest' from 18th to 22nd October, showcasing around 25 beers from microbrewers across the country with a definite tilt towards the hoppiest offerings, including a special, highly-hopped version of Dawkins Brassknocker called *Deathknocker*, which says it all really.

Wednesday 31st October sees the start of the fourth Halloween Beer Festival at the **Victoria** in Clifton, continuing until 5th November. Paul and Dee will be choosing over twenty appropriately spookily-themed ales. Last year's *Pumpkin Spice* from the Dawkins brewery was a hit and will feature again.

Look out too for the Autumn Beer Festival at the **Green Man** in Kingsdown, date yet to be decided.

### Brewery news

Brewer James has been further refining his recipes and it was most gratifying for all concerned to see much *Brassknocker* being enjoyed at the Great British Beer Festival in early August. Some modifications to their brewery kit mean they can produce a bit more than before, but they're still at capacity each week.

New Autumn brews include new versions of previous recipes, with *The Dog Delusion*, a 4.5% blonde, hoppy beer using Brambling Cross hops for the base, and First Gold hops for the late additions, with Cascade hops running throughout (one for the hop devotees methinks). *Babylon Best* (4%) will be brewed again, this time dry hopping it in a conditioner with a new technique James has devised (using a hop filter inside the tank) ... think English Best Bitter crossed with floral IPA.

He's also got hold of some more Beata hops, rare as hen's teeth in commercial quantities apparently. The *Beata Gold* produced using it will again be a 4.6%, light, citrusy blonde beer made using lager malt.

*Double Dawkins IPA* will be a 5.5% strong golden beer made with American and Australian hops; based on their *Pacific IPA* recipe from earlier this year.

The brewery is proud to having been chosen by 'Bristol Silents' (a non-profit making society dedicated to promoting silent film) to not only brew the dark, roasty 5% *Slapstick Black* again, but also a new, lower strength blonde beer *Slapstick White*; both due out in November. Every pint sold will support the Slapstick Festival, held every January here in Bristol. (So it would seem they're brewing in Black & White this year!)

## DAWKINS ALES



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### AUTUMN SPECIAL BEERS

**The Dog Delusion** 4.5% Blond and hoppy  
**Babylon Best** 4.0% Golden and hoppy  
**Beata Gold** 4.0% Golden, aromatic  
**Double Dawkins** 5.5% Blonde, rich, hoppy IPA  
and supporting the Slapstick Festival Bristol January 2013  
**Slapstick Black** 5.0% Dark, complex  
**Slapstick White** 4.0% Pale blonde, refreshing

### OUR FIVE GBG 2012-LISTED PUBS

**The Miner's Arms** Mina Rd, St Werburghs, BS2 9YQ  
**The Hillgrove** Dove St, Kingsdown, BS2 8LT  
**The Victoria** Southleigh Rd, Clifton, BS8 2BH  
**HALLOWEEN BEER FESTIVAL** 31 OCT-5 NOV  
**The Portcullis** Wellington Ter, Clifton Village, BS8 4LE  
**HOPFEST** 18-22 OCT  
**The Green Man** Alfred Place, Kingsdown, BS2 8HD  
**AUTUMN BEER FESTIVAL** DATE TBC  
Dawkins Ales Timsbury, Bath Tel 01761 472242

# The United States of Beer

## Part one - San Diego

*Two local real ale fans had heard good things about the blossoming beer scene on the West Coast of USA – so they set off to see for themselves.*

Back in 2008, after trying a few American beers at the Great British Beer Festival, I bought a copy of the 'Good Beer Guide to the West Coast of USA'. I was amazed by the sheer number of breweries and wonderful sounding beers and vowed to get out there and try them myself. Then came the recession and its threat to jobs, so the idea was put on hold. Finally in January this year I could wait no longer – my mate Phil Cummings took three seconds to agree to join me. We decided on a 10-day trip covering three cities and picked out San Diego (regarded by many as the 'beer capital' of USA), San Francisco (because it's a great place) and Las Vegas (because everyone should at least once!). A trip to Trailfinders in Corn Street in Bristol resulted less than an hour later in everything being booked. The trip was to be three nights each in San Diego and San Francisco and two nights in Vegas, followed by a night flight home. Return flights from Heathrow, eight nights in high quality hotels and two internal flights in USA came to just over £1200 each – a very fair price in my view. In addition we pre-booked helicopter flights into the Grand Canyon from Las Vegas directly with the helicopter firm.

At this point it is necessary to clarify one point – that is that most American brews are classified as 'craft beer' rather than real ale. The term 'craft' is becoming more and more commonly used in the UK and has given rise to much heated debate. Many feel that CAMRA should not promote anything that is not technically real ale, others disagree. The views expressed in this article are personal to us and do not necessarily represent those of CAMRA as a whole. I have tried a number of 'craft beers' made by UK brewers, including top cask producers like Thornbridge and Brewdog, and have been disappointed every time. They have

been served way too cold and with huge levels of carbonation. Put simply, they taste like keg beer with some added flavour and, in my view, represent no threat to well-kept traditional real ale which is far superior. The 'craft' beers that we tried many of in the States were in an altogether different class. They were served much less cold, with little discernable carbonation and were packed with flavour. The sheer range of beer styles and flavours was astonishing. I will remember my pint of New Belgium Lychee Tart with affection forever!

By UK standards it was noticeable that most of the beers were relatively strong – mostly over 5% ABV and ranging right up to 13.2% on our trip. The few weaker beers that we tried were mostly nowhere near as good – once again they represent little competition to standard strength real ales which represent a huge majority of UK beers and are much better. We also came across a surprising and pleasing number of beers being offered in traditional real ale form via hand pump or direct from the cask – the was a real sense that this is catching on and will grow rapidly. We were advised that every time a beer was sold from the cask it sold out in hours. To our amazement the bar in our Las Vegas hotel had 45 beers on, including five from hand pump. One of those was Inns and Gun Rum cask – we have tried and failed to get this Scottish beer to the Bristol Beer Festival yet they have it in Vegas! The other really heartening thing was that it was very clear that the boom in quality beer was being driven by the younger folk with every bar and many cafes seeming to sell a decent range of independent brews and Bud or Miller nowhere to be seen! In one amusing incident, a couple of older Americans enquired as to whether the bar sold 'proper beer like Bud' and were politely advised that they were in the wrong bar! Many of the beers have been heavily influenced by European beers from the UK, Belgium and Germany amongst others. In turn many styles created by these American brewers (such as double IPAs and flavoured stouts) are rapidly catching on over here.

With the West Coast beer guide now being a few years old, we did extensive internet research and were astonished to discover just how many breweries, brewpubs and specialist beer bars now thrive in all three cities. We picked out over 70 'must do' bars in Diego and around the same in Cisco and over 20 in Vegas. However thirsty we were we obviously had to decide which ones to leave out! Given our imbibing intentions, a lot of research into public transport was also vital. This proved extremely useful and very cost effective.

So it was that in late May we headed off to Heathrow Terminal 5. The hullabaloo in the press at that time about long queues at immigration turned out to be a false alarm as we sailed through both times, and were hugely impressed with the whole Terminal 5 experience. As we expected, we were held up for over an hour on arrival in San Diego though! We took a taxi to our hotel – the Bahia Resort – which was very good but in a somewhat isolated peninsula on the Pacific Coast. It was already 9pm local time but our research had thrown up three promising bars within reach. The first was the unpromisingly named *Luigi's at the Beach* which is a traditional American Italian diner that also serves 24 different beers from 24 local brewers. We fancied a snack so ordered a salad for Phil (see picture) and a Pastrami Sub roll for me for less than a fiver each. What arrived was the biggest 'snacks' ever that would have fed a family of five for a week. We had to have another beer to wash it all down. It was then a short taxi ride to the *Pacific Beach Ale House* a new brewpub with a very young and lively feel. We had the first of many 'sample trays' of beer here – a great way to sample all the beers when time is tight. A stiff walk brought us to *PBs Taproom* (also known as SD Taproom) and another set of sample beers each – the bar serves over 50 beers and we got to try samples of six each for around a fiver. The service here was superb and we found that throughout the trip, with only a couple of exceptions, that great service was the norm. In truth we had not looked forward to America's tipping culture, but rarely had any



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qualms in giving tips. If it results in great service then maybe it works? It was now beyond midnight and we had been up for 26 hours so did the sensible thing and returned to the hotel, avoiding the bar!

We started day two with a fascinating trip around the USS Midway, the famous giant aircraft carrier permanently moored in San Diego. After almost three hours on board we fancied a coffee in the nearby simple and basic Harbour café. The sight of four craft beers from the likes of *Green Flash* and *Firestone* breweries ruled out the coffee idea and the day's drinking had begun. Next we took the short ferry trip to Coronado island. We were targeting two bars in the same street and for the first, but not last, time discovered just how long American streets can be! A 30-minute walk brought us to **Leroy's kitchen and Lounge** which is a smart gastropub with 12 changing beer taps and plenty of bottled options. A tasty, if slightly expensive, lunch was washed down with great beer from rare breweries such as *Deschutes*, *Buchers* and *Dogfish*. The walk back to the ferry was punctuated with a stop at the wonderful **Coronado Brewery Tap** which is a superb modern restaurant / brewery and very family friendly. The in house brewery was in full operation and in full view near the bar we tried the *Mermaid Red* at 5.7%, *Blue Bridge Coffee Stout* and *Orange Avenue Honey Wit* and *Idiot IPA* at 8.5%. We also tried the guest beer *Karl Strauss Wreck Alley* at a mere 10.5%. After crossing back to the mainland, we were approached by an amusing two-seater 'bicycle taxi' and agreed on impulse to take a ride to the Gaslamp district. This was great fun with the crazy chap riding furiously and entertaining us all the way.

The Gaslamp district is in the older part of the centre and is packed with bars and restaurants. We had around a dozen on our hit list here and got to five of them. Please forgive us if the exact order and details are a little vague here, but we may have been drinking! First up was the **Yard House**, part of a national chain of the same name – a busy modern brash and cavernous place with 100 changing beers on tap – just choosing a beer is an effort here and we ended up with *Sea Dog Blue Paw Wild Blueberry* and *Mad River Jamaica Red*. Time was pressing so we left the other 98 for another day! Next, I think, were **Rock Bottom** which is part of a small brew pub chain – *Moonlight Porter* and their own take on *Kolsch* were enjoyed with excellent food – and **Monkeys Paw Pub and Brewery**. The latter was a proper backstreet boozier with all the emphasis on beer and conversation. It was very busy and, whilst supping the brewery's *Rauchbier* and *Oatmeal Pale*, we got chatting to a couple of young doctors who offered us good advice on our next day's plans. As far as I remember we finished the night with yet another sample tray at **The Beer Company** (see picture) – a very new smart brewpub / restaurant. We did also return there sober the next day for a very good meal.

Day three and to the planned highlight of our San Diego visit – a trip out to Escondido to visit the world renowned **Stone Brewing Company**. Escondido is around 50 miles north of San Diego and we had seen several companies offering expensive tours via minibus. Being brave we decided to make our own way there via two trains, changing at Oceanside. The first train (a triple decker!) ran along the very scenic Pacific coast and the second took us inland – a day pass covering these and all day transport around Diego was a ludicrously cheap \$14 or £9! All was fine until we reached Escondido which is a fair sized town. We were astonished, on Saturday lunchtime, to find the town totally deserted with almost nobody around. All that was missing was the tumbleweed – and any chance of our planned taxi to the brewery! Eventually we set off to walk the two miles on a hot day and mostly uphill. As we approached the massive brewery it became obvious as to why town was deserted – everyone was here at the restaurant and bar! There were many hundreds of cars in the huge car park and the restaurant, bars, visitor centre and wonderful beer garden were all packed. We fluked a couple of bar stools and spent a couple of very contented hours here. Stone pride themselves on brewing extreme and often unusual beers plus offering the best from other local brewers, and very interesting and challenging food, both of which we enjoyed hugely. In addition to trying quite a few Stone beers including the signature *Arrogant Bastard Ale* we supped *Craftsman Citrus Saison* and *Bear Republic Hop Rod Rye*. Are you starting to get the picture regarding the variety of styles in Diego yet? The beer garden is the most impressive that I have seen and this has to be one of the greatest bars in the world. I have vowed to return one day soon. After lavish spending in the gift shop on brewery clothing, we set off on the long walk back. We spotted a solitary taxi in the car park and approached him. It transpired that he was taking four Americans on an all-day tour of four breweries and had 40 minutes before they were due back. A quick bit of bartering got us a ride to the station! The cunning plan was to change trains again at Oceanside, but this time with a 90-minute break to visit the **Breakwater Brewery Tap** – sadly



it turned out to be not worth the effort with poor service and only average beer. You can't win them all!

The train dropped us back close to Gaslamp for our return trip to **Beer Company**, and then we took a very circuitous taxi to **Hamilton's Tavern**, a little way out on 30<sup>th</sup> Street. The idea was to do three bars all on 30<sup>th</sup> Street – but we failed to comprehend that it is about five miles long and that we had come to the less fashionable end! Hamilton's was a very busy free house with a very young crowd and a great range of beers from independents. However when tried to leave we found it impossible to get a taxi to come out to us! Eventually we found a bus that ran the whole of 30<sup>th</sup> (and was free on our incredible day pass from earlier). The other two bars on the same street were in a much more popular area and had taxis driving past every few seconds! **Ritual Tavern** was a small quiet bar with the feel of a gentleman's club and about eight different tasty beers, and almost opposite was **Toronado** part of a small but very highly regarded chain of free houses. This was much busier with yet another young crowd and had an amazing 50 beers on tap. As they were offering two Stone beers on traditional British hand pumps we felt obliged to try those. Unfortunately they were very strong brews – *Old Guardian Barley Wine* at 11.3% and *IPA* with Simcoe hops – a mere 6.9%. Very nice but enough for us to call time on drinking on the San Diego leg of this amazing beer adventure.

San Diego was a great place to start our trip and may well justify its claim to be the 'beer capital of the USA'. Given that we got to only about a third of the bars on our hit list, and tried only about half of the breweries that we knew of, then I think that we may have an excuse to return! Anyway it was time to pack our bags and head off to San Francisco and the Vegas but – having tried the editor's legendary patience this far – that will have to wait for the next Pints West.

Vince Murray and Phil Cummings

## Brewery news

### Cotswold Spring

In this quarter the Cotswold Spring brewery have released two more beers into their portfolio:

**Reveller**, a smooth chestnut-coloured easy-drinking nutty beer, with hints of tropical fruits which has an ABV of 4.7%.

**Aviator**, a very good take on a Cologne Kölsch-style lager which is cool and refreshing with an ABV of 5.0%.

This completes the current planned range the brewery will offer, with three beers available year round plus two beers each 'season'.

Note: each of these 'seasonal' beers will actually be available for more than the three months of the each 'season'.

Steve Matthews

### RCH

The RCH brewery reports that not a great deal is happening there at they moment. However they are on the next national guest beer slot with JD Wetherspoon for September to November with their **PG Steam**. Also that a seasonal of theirs, **Steam Festival**, is now available to the trade.

They will be taking part in the 'Made in North Somerset' food and craft show on the 29th September at Tyntesfield.

Vince Murray

# Severn Vale CAMRA

## Severn Vale pubs update

The **Cross Hands** in Pilning has now closed. The **Plough** in Thornbury has closed and re-opened as an Indian restaurant. Consequently, in one month, Severn Vale has lost 5% of its pubs.

We've also heard rumours that...

A Thornbury pub is under threat – the licensee having given notice to Enterprise Inns (the pubco owner). No names, as the rumour is unconfirmed, but there are fears that, if it closes, the site is prime to be redeveloped for housing.

The licensees of a pub in Alveston may be looking to leave.

As I say, these are unconfirmed rumours and come with apologies if unfounded.

On our borders, the **Swan Inn**, Tytherington, has changed licensees yet again, the previous licensees having only taken over this Scottish & Newcastle village pub late 2011 or early 2012. Best wishes to the new licensees, Simon and Jacqui who arrived in July.

We've recently started to take more of an interest in the clubs in the Severn Vale area, it having become apparent that many of them do serve up a good pint of real ale. Now there are a lot of clubs in the area, and we don't know all of them. So ... if you know of a club in Severn Vale (in our terms, that's more or less the area to the north west of the M5, from Hallen to Thornbury) that serves real ale, let us know (contact details below), and we'll try to get round to visit them – and maybe drop off a few copies of Pints West at the same time.

Speaking of clubs; three we know of and have visited are...

**Christ the King RC church social club**, Thornbury – usually offers a Wickwar beer on handpump and will be holding its annual beer festival on October 26th & 27th.

**Old Down Sports & Social Club**, Old Down – were offering the ubiquitous and usually uninspiring Courage Best and Sharp's Doom Bar. That said, they were both the best-kept of these I've had in a very long

**S**evern 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.

time.

The **Chantry** bar, Thornbury was selling a very passable Otter bitter and Wickwar's Cotswold Way when I dropped in there last week.

The landlords of the **Fox**, Easter Compton, have been in touch to comment on the coverage give to their pub in recent issues of Pint West. Their letter and the sub-branch's response have been circulated by email to those members whose addresses are known. Suffice to say that the Fox usually serves two of Bath Gem, Greene King IPA, Exmoor Ale and Butcombe Bitter, and occasionally Thatcher's cask cider. They have increased the number of skittles teams from two to five for next season and are working on adding a further two more. The pub continues to play an important role at the centre of the community.

*Martin Farrimond  
& Andrew Pickin*

## Old Spot beer festival

**M**uch has been written already about our monthly Friday lunch-time trips to the Old Spot, Dursley, so it was no small degree of pleasure to discover that August's visit would coincide with their beer festival, topically named the "O' Limp Pig" beer fest. By no means on the scale of the Great British Beer Festival, they offered a selection of no less than 22 different beers, most of them with an Olympic theme. Examples of these were Elgood's Beach Collieball; Exe Valley's Hop, Skip & Pump; Butcombe's Going For Gold; Plain Ales Gold Medale; and Jenning's slightly painful sounding Joggers Tipple, to name just a few.

## Severn Vale diary

- **Fri 7th Sept:** Thornbury pub survey trip. Meet at the Black Horse, 8pm.
- **Fri 14th Sept:** Monthly lunchtime trip to Old Spot, Dursley.
- **Wed 19th Sept:** Sub-branch meeting. Bowl, Lower Almondsbury, 8pm.
- **Fri 5th Oct:** Pub survey trip – Alveston, Olveston & Almondsbury. Meet at Cross Hands, Alveston, 8pm.
- **Fri 12th Oct:** Monthly lunchtime trip to Old Spot, Dursley.
- **Thur 18th Oct:** Sub-branch meeting. The Anchor Inn, Oldbury-on-Severn, 8pm.
- **Fri 2nd Nov:** Out of area visit: Frampton Cotterell, Winterbourne Down, Mayhill, Yate, Rangeworthy (check website for details).
- **Fri 9th Nov:** Monthly lunchtime trip to Old Spot, Dursley.
- **Wed 21st Nov:** Sub-branch meeting: Wheatsheaf, Thornbury, 8pm.
- **Fri, 7th Dec:** Pub visit (to be confirmed).
- **Fri 14th Dec:** Monthly lunchtime trip to Old Spot, Dursley.
- **Wed 19th Dec:** Sub-branch meeting. Anchor, Thornbury (TBC) 8pm.

○ Not a CAMRA event, but Christ The King social club, Thornbury, will be holding its annual beer festival on October 26th & 27th.

○ Trips to the Old Spot are usually by bus from Thornbury. The 311 leaves the health centre at 11:30, and normal return is from Dursley at 14:30, though other forms of transport are available (e.g. bike!).

**All are welcome to attend any of the pub visits and meetings.**

Full details and any late changes can be found on our website at [www.severnval.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.severnval.camrabristol.org.uk).

## Severn Vale contacts

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

**Martin Farrimond:** [martin@farrimond.me.uk](mailto:martin@farrimond.me.uk)



The beer festival also coincided with that rarest of rare interludes – a couple of days of sun and no rain. With this in mind, and my slight aversion to travelling on the First (rhymes with “worst”) Bus rattleathon for an hour of travel sickness inducing discomfort, I decided to have my own Olympic effort and cycle the 12 or so miles on the trusty old Dawes touring bike: a fairly straightforward ride from Thornbury, but that Cotswold Edge escarpment HAS to be climbed at some point. Even so, I still managed to beat the bus which actually left before me. Though it's only fair to say that I managed to pass the bus whilst it was stopped in a long queue of traffic at the road works in Dursley, which I was able to nonchalantly overtake!

The sun shone, the beer flowed, we sat in the garden. The beer shone, the sun flowed. Then the sheer bon, the fun slowed. The feer blowed, the shun sone until it was time to leave.

I didn't beat the bus back (I don't think), though I did witness an embarrassing encounter between a wall, a knee, a bike and a footpath a mere 200 yards from home. I least I didn't suffer any travel sickness!

*Martin Farrimond*



# Come along and help celebrate national Cask Ale Week

**Cask Ale Week will this year run from Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September to Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October. Yes, it's the only 10-day week I know as well!**

The campaign is organised by CAMRA and Cask Marque and aims to:

- Encourage non-real ale drinkers to try real ale for the first time
- Encourage inexperienced real ale drinkers to try more varieties of real ale
- Encourage experienced real ale drinkers to visit real ale pubs throughout the week
- Encourage non-real ale pubs to stock real ale for the first time
- Encourage pubs to organise a number of real ale events to encourage more real ale trade



Bristol & District CAMRA is organising a number of events to celebrate our great national drink. We are very fortunate to have 11 real ale breweries within our branch area and so we have arranged a pub crawl to take in eleven pubs. Each pub will sell at least one real (cask) ale from one of those eleven local breweries.

Eleven pubs to visit on one crawl may seem a little excessive – so it will be a crawl of two halves.

Please do come along and join us if you can on one or, better still, both of these crawls. They will be very informal and enjoyable. You will be supporting pubs and local breweries and have a great time in doing so. So, get your iphone, Blackberry, Android or paper diary out now and make a note of these events.

**Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> September - central Bristol - meeting at the first pub at 7pm, for beers from the following breweries:**

1. **Colston Yard** (Butcombe)
2. **Zerodegrees** (own brews)
3. **Gryphon** (Cheddar Ales)
4. **Bank Tavern** (RCH)
5. **Three Tuns** (Arbor Ales)

**Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> October - Clifton and Hotwells - meeting at the first pub at 6.30pm, for beers from the following breweries:**

1. **Lansdown** (GWB)
2. **Victoria** (Towles)
3. **Quinton** (Cotswold Spring)
4. **Eldon House** (Bath Ales)
5. **Grain Barge** (Bristol Beer Factory)
6. **Bag O'Nails** (Ashley Down)

*Pete Bridle*

## Special St Austell Brewery evening for CAMRA members at the Horse & Groom

As well as two pub crawls taking in beers from our eleven local breweries, the Bristol & District branch is also celebrating Cask Ale Week by holding a special evening with St Austell Brewery at the Horse & Groom, located behind the Council House in central Bristol, on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October.

St Austell Brewery has been brewing real ale in Cornwall since 1851 and is currently increasing its presence around the Bristol area. The evening at the Horse & Groom starts at 7.30pm and includes a 'meet the brewer' session with St Austell head brewer Roger Ryman (pictured) and Trade Marketing Manager Marc Bishop, and a tutored tasting of a range of St Austell cask beers. This is likely to include Bristol & District branch favourite, St Austell Proper Job, and maybe some bottled St Austell varieties in addition to the cask ales.

The St Austell beer tasting samples and some nibbles will be FREE for card-carrying CAMRA members, so make sure you bring your membership card for what promises to be a great evening. Anyone that would like to sign up to join CAMRA on the evening will also be welcome to take part in the sampling!

*Richard Brooks*



**Roger Ryman, the man who makes your Tribute**

### Solution to the crossword on page 27

Across: 1. see 1 dn, 3. Severn Stars, 9. Etina, 10. Portcullis, 12. Hamburger, 13. Horse, 14. Ethnographer, 18. Ethermet port, 21. Rinse, 22. Nut crunch, 24. Believeable, 25. Able, 26. Easy Riders, 27. Bass. Down: 1. & 1 ac. The Three Tuns, 2. No nymphs, 4. Elong, 5. Enter upon, 6. Southwestern, 7. Allure, 8. Sussex, 11. Pub of the year, 15. Rheinland, 16. Cornubia, 17. Itchless, 19. Treble, 20. Angles, 23. Tiler.

# Socials - where did that year go?

Well it's been pretty much a year since I took over from Tim Proudman as social secretary of the Bristol & District CAMRA branch and I must say the time has flown by.

We have had regular explorer/survey trips throughout the year in order to ensure that the beer quality in the pubs is up to standard for inclusion in the Good Beer Guide. These have gone well with numbers of attendees very good overall. There have been quite a few new faces on the trips which is good to see, as well of course as the 'usual suspects'.

We also managed an almost seamless transition between transport providers when our regular company unfortunately ceased trading a few months ago.

Apart from the regular trips, some of the highlights have been the 'Community Pubs Month' trip, the 'May Mild Trail', a highly enjoyable trip to the Bath Ales brewery and an interesting trip to the three country pubs for pub of the year voting. On the latter we had over thirty people split between two coaches, one visiting the three pubs in one order and the other

visiting them in the other order, thus avoiding a massive scrum to be served in each pub.

This year there were two thank-you trips organised for helpers at the Bristol Beer Festival, which were to the Cheddar Ales beer festival and to the Great British Beer Festival in London, both of which were very well attended and enjoyable days out.

It's not all socials with transport arranged either, there have been a number where people can take part on foot, or public transport. These have included a Gloucester Road crawl, an excellent Christmas social at the Three Tuns, the 'Westbury Wobble', a Bristol Pubs Group social and the Severn Beach (derailed) rail trail, to name but a few.

If you look at the branch diary you will see that there are plenty of things coming up, including a trip to the Minehead Beer Festival, a Great Western Brewery visit and a number of events during Cask Ale Week, so I look forward to seeing many of you on some of these and I would like to say a big thank-you to all of you who have participated over the past year.

*Andy Gray, Social Secretary*

## 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
- **Cider Press**, Gloucester Road, Bristol
- **Cornubia**, Temple Street, Bristol
- **Dragon Inn**, Weston-super-Mare
- **Globe**, Frampton Cotterell
- **Grapes**, Chipping Sodbury
- **Gryphon**, Colston Street, Bristol
- **Hope & 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
- **Queens Arms**, Bleadon
- **Red Admiral**, Locking Road, Weston-super-Mare
- **Robert Fitzharding**, Bedminster
- **Seven Stars**, Thomas Lane, Redcliffe, Bristol
- **Three Tuns**, St George's Road, Hotwells, Bristol
- **Volunteer Tavern**, New Street, St Judes, Bristol
- **Waverley**, Severn Road, Weston-super-Mare
- **Westbury Park Tavern**, Henleaze
- **Woolpack Inn**, St Georges, Weston-super-Mare



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The actual details of the discounts vary from pub to pub and from time to time. The discount is at the discretion of the pub and can be as little or as large as the pub feels suits their business. Some of the latest details may be found on our web site at [www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk) but, even better, visit the pubs and check for yourselves.

## Derailed!

Bristol & District CAMRA's annual "pub crawl by train" on the Severn Beach railway line took place on Saturday 11th August 2012. In total 13 people came, although no more than a dozen at any one time.

The trip was curtailed severely because the train service was badly disrupted by theft of signalling cable. We decided not to take the risk of going by train in case we were stranded somewhere for hours. Instead we caught the Number 9 bus to Clifton Down, intending to work our way downhill to Clifton Down station and resume the train trip from there.

Our first stop was the **Port of Call** where the beers on offer were Sharp's Cornish Coaster (very good) and Doom Bar, Hop Back Summer Lightning (very good) and Timothy Taylor's Landlord. The pub has been under new management for eight weeks and they are trying to build the trade back up after some years of decline.

Next we went to the **Jersey Lily** which had Tribute and Robinsons GB, both in good condition.

The **Black Boy** had Tribute (very good), Landlord (good) and Butcombe Bitter. Food is very important here but the bar has a pleasant atmosphere for drinking.

As we walked down the road to Clifton Down station we encountered the **WG Grace**, a new Wetherspoon pub which did not open officially until 14th August; however we were invited in to a training session. Several beers were available, the star of which was Thornbridge Jaipur IPA; also the Inverlmond Lia Fail and Butcombe Gold were good. Best of all the beer was all free! And Wetherspoon kindly provided a limited menu of food, also free of charge.

We spent a very pleasant couple of hours or so here, after which some of our participants went home. A few hardy souls continued to the **Old Stillage** in Redfield by bus rather than take a chance on the train, and found that all the beers tried were very good as usual (Arbor Ales Motueka, Oyster Stout, Brigstow, Hunny Beer).

Sadly contrary to the plan, this year's trip did not have the excitement of a train journey. It did have some compensation though, in the form of free beer and food!

*Norman Spalding*

## Wear Pints West

YOU can now wear Pints West! T-shirts, polo shirts, sweat shirts and fleeces are now available to order with an embroidered Pints West logo on the left breast. All are available in navy, black, bottle green, grey, red, dark royal, purple and burgundy, and in sizes S, M, L, XL and XXL. All except the fleeces are also available in jade, sky blue, gold and white. Make cheques payable to "Bristol & District CAMRA", and post your order to 19 Willada Close, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 5NG.

Email enquiries to [badrag@camrabristol.org.uk](mailto:badrag@camrabristol.org.uk). Please allow up to 4 weeks for delivery.



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# Branch diary

## Diary of the Bristol & District branch of CAMRA

- **Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept** – 'Westbury Summer Saunter', meet 12 noon, Victoria, Chock Lane, Westbury-on-Trym.
- **Sat 8<sup>th</sup> Sept** – Minehead Beer Festival, depart Cornubia 9.15am, return Centre approx 7.30pm.
- **Wed 12<sup>th</sup> Sept** – Committee meeting – Cornubia 8pm.
- **Fri 14<sup>th</sup> Sept** – Good Beer Guide 2013 launch, Gryphon from noon.
- **Wed 19<sup>th</sup> Sept** – Explorer/Survey trip, East Mendips, depart Cornubia 6.45pm.
- **Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept** – 'Harbourside Hop' – see BADRAG article page 13.
- **Wed 26<sup>th</sup> Sept** – Branch AGM, Horts, central Bristol, 8pm.
- **Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> Sept** – Bristol Pubs Group meeting, Golden Guinea, 19 Guinea Street, BS1 6XS, 7pm.
- **Fri 28<sup>th</sup> Sept** – Cask Ale Week crawl – see page 33.
- **Tues 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct** – GWB brewery tour, depart Cornubia 6.45pm. Cost approx £6 - £10 depending on numbers.
- **Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> Oct** – St Austell Meet the Brewer & Tasting Session. Horse & Groom from 7pm. Part of Cask Ale Week – see page 33.
- **Sat 6<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Cask Ale Week crawl – see page 33.
- **Tues 9<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Explorer/Survey trip, North Somerset, depart Cornubia 6.45pm.
- **Wed 10<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Committee meeting, Cornubia 8pm.
- **Thurs 11<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Bristol Pubs Groups social crawl, starting at the Trooper, Bryants Hill, BS5 8QT, 7pm.
- **Tues 16<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Beer Festival organising meeting, Horts 8pm.
- **Thurs 18<sup>th</sup> Oct** – 'Clifton Climb' – see BADRAG article page 13.
- **Wed 24<sup>th</sup> Oct** – Branch meeting, Waverley, Weston-super-Mare. Depart Cornubia 6.45pm.
- **Wed 31<sup>st</sup> Oct** – Explorer/Survey trip, Mid Mendips, depart Cornubia 6.45pm.
- **Tues 13<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Explorer/Survey trip, East Bristol, depart Cornubia 6.45pm.
- **Wed 14<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Committee meeting, Cornubia 8pm.
- **Sat 17<sup>th</sup> Nov** – 'City Stroll' – see BADRAG article page 13.
- **Wed 21<sup>st</sup> Nov** – Explorer/Survey trip, Severnside, depart Cornubia 6.45pm.
- **Wed 28<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Quarterly Branch meeting, Horts 8pm.
- **Thurs 29<sup>th</sup> Nov** – Bristol Pubs Group meeting, the Ship Inn, 10 Lower Park Row, BS1 5BJ, 7pm.

Please check our website ([www.camrabristol.org.uk](http://www.camrabristol.org.uk)) or sign up to our yahoo group for the latest information and more details on any of the above events, as sometimes events can change after press date – or email Andy Gray at [camrasocials@btinternet.co.uk](mailto: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)

## Twitter & Facebook

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

### Thanks to this issue's contributors

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

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

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## Bath & Borders diary

- **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September, 8:30pm.** A social at the Ring of Bells, Priston, Somerset.
- **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September, 7:30pm.** A social at the Stallards, Stallard St, Trowbridge.
- **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September, 8:30pm.** A social at the Cross Keys, Combe Down, Bath.
- **Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September, 8:30pm.** The Branch Meeting to be held at the Prince of Wales, Dilton Marsh, Wiltshire.

## Bath & Borders contacts

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

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

## Weston diary and contact

See page 20

## Severn Vale diary and contact

See page 32

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